

## MINUTES

### Friendship PCS Board of Trustees Meeting and Retreat

Thursday, March 28, 2025 – 10:00 AM

In-Person and Virtual

**Participating Board Members were:** Donald L. Hense, Chair; Gregory S. Prince Jr., Vice Chair; Victor E. Long, Secretary; Patricia A. Brantley, Chief Executive Officer; Carol Thompson Cole; Eric McKinley King; Jeanette Mendes, Parent Representative; and Anise Walker. Darrin L. Glymph, Treasurer; Unique Fullmore, Parent Representative; and Chris White participated via Zoom.

Staff Members in attendance were: Catherine Sanwo, Chief Finance Officer; Vielka Scott-Marcus, Chief Academic Officer; James Waller, Chief of School Operations; Zac Morford, Chief Performance Officer; Dylan Gruver, Chief People Officer; Kimberly Campbell, Senior Advisor; John Glover, Chief External Affairs Officer, and Monique Miller, Director of Performance Reporting and Evaluation.

**Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order by Donald L. Hense, Chair at 10:01 AM.

**Approval of Agenda.** Mr. Hense presented the agenda for approval. On a motion by Anise Walker and second by Chris White, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve the March 28, 2025 meeting agenda.

**Approval of Minutes.** On a motion by Gregory S. Prince, Jr. and second by Victor E. Long, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve the minutes from the December 5, 2024 board meeting.

**Finance Update.** Darrin L. Glymph, Chair of the Finance Committee introduced the Finance Report approved by members of the Committee and included in the board materials. Mr. Glymph stated that at the time of the Finance Committee meeting, the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate passed a continuing resolution that removed the District of Columbia's budget authority. This removal could require Friendship to make significant cuts to its current budget. Mr. Glymph noted that the committee asked Ms. Brantley and her team to come up with a plan, which will be discussed later in the meeting.

**Ms. Brantley** further explained the Senate passed a standalone bill that would restore DC's spending authority. However, the House has not voted on this bill. Ms. Brantley added that we are creating aggressive plans to ensure our schools stay strong academically, socially, and culturally, but are responsive to what could be a 16% immediate cut to funds. Ms. Brantley closed the introduction and turned the report over to Ms. Catherine Somefun to continue with the details of the report.

Ms. Somefun reviewed the budget allocations for FY 2025 and the budget considerations for FY 2026. The FY 2026 Budget will ensure funds are distributed to schools based on student and staff projections, with additional targeted support provided for students with diverse learning needs. Also, while there is a proposed 2.74% increase to the UPSFF, it excludes teacher pay increases.

Ms. Brantley added that when the budget is presented in May, the Board can expect to see the UPSFF increase and a conservative approach to federal entitlements, but may not see the 3.1% increase in facilities due to what may happen with congressional actions. The DC PCSB has not shifted its submission deadline for charter LEAs to submit their budgets, so we should be prepared with our best and worst case scenarios.

Ms. Somefun noted for the year-over-year comparison, Friendship's year-to-date net income is \$2.9 million and reflects the increase in the uniform per student funding formulas and facilities allotment. The decrease in grants compared to prior year is primarily due to the discontinuance of ESSR and one-time OSSE Teacher Pay support. The reduction in student costs is driven by decreased spending on supplies and materials and the reduction of various contracts as services are transitioned in-house. All other expenses remain consistent with the prior year. Friendship's projected net income is \$279K.

Ms. Somefun reviewed Friendship's reserves balances, stating the goal is to maintain S & P (Standard and Poor's) levels. Ms. Brantley asked about the days cash on hand projection. Ms. Somefun stated that Friendship's days cash on hand is projected to be 165 by the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Glymph emphasized the importance of the reserves and their role in maintaining Friendship's S & P BBB rating, which is one of the highest in DC and allows for better rates when seeking bond financing for facilities.

Ms. Somefun transitioned the report to James Waller to provide a facilities update. Mr. Waller stated that Friendship received a proposal for the North Capitol office space, which is under review by staff. A more detailed update that includes financials will be provided at the next meeting. Ms. Brantley added that renting this space for the Community Office would allow us to return the current Community Office space to Armstrong space, which is important, and that we are still in negotiations. Finally, the Southeast addition will have a certificate of occupancy by the end of April; however, it will not be immediately occupied. Some services will be transitioned there along with summer programming, which will allow testing of the space prior to the new school year. This is important because it will alleviate space constraints for the elementary and middle campuses and provide more appropriate lab spaces for middle school students.

Mr. Glymph asked for an update on the lease escalation. Ms. Brantley stated that Friendship has completed the required steps and is waiting for the District to review the estimates and open negotiations.

On a motion by Gregory S. Prince, Jr. and second by Anise Walker, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to accept the Finance Committee report.

**School Performance Committee Report.** Gregory S. Prince, Jr. co-chair of the School Performance Committee, introduced the School Performance Committee report previously reviewed by the committee and included in board materials. Dr. Prince highlighted two points about the report; the new ASPIRE standards and the college report. Dr. Prince complimented our schools' performance on the new ASPIRE system and our strong performance on the college enrollment and persistence data, then transitioned the report to Vielka Scott-Marcus, Chief Academic Officer.

Mrs. Scott-Marcus opened the report with an overview and discussed how campuses are

aligning with the attributes of Friendship's Graduate Profile. Three high school scholars were highlighted to demonstrate their remarkable potential. A Tech Prep student is Friendship's first QuestBridge Scholar, earning over \$325,000 in scholarships with plans to attend Cornell University. A Collegiate student earned both an academic and athletic scholarship to the U.S. Naval Academy, and another has been accepted to Carnegie Mellon University. Mrs. Scott-Marcus also provided examples of learning experiences that showcase how the attributes are developed in Friendship scholars from PK through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Mrs. Scott-Marcus shared college enrollment and persistence data reported by OSSE in our most recent DC School Report Card. Friendship high school graduates demonstrate higher college enrollment and persistence than their peers at schools with similar demographics, ranking in DC's non-selective public high schools.

Mrs. Scott-Marcus shared our ASPIRE performance stating 14 of 15 campuses earning top ratings of Level 1 "exemplary" and Level 2 "strong." She also noted that all campuses have met charter goals for the first two years of our final review cycle, as we journey towards our 30-year renewal. Mrs. Scott-Marcus then discussed with the Board the proposed School Specific Measures submitted to DC PCSB staff to be included in each ASPIRE framework.

Mrs. Scott-Marcus concluded the report with a review of Winter MAP performance which shows that we are on track to meet our Spring DC CAPE goals.

On a motion by Victor E. Long and second by Anise Walker, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to accept the School Performance Committee report.

On a motion Gregory S. Prince, Jr. and second by Jeanette Mendes, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to enter into closed session pursuant to DC Code 2-575(b)(10) and (12).

On a motion Gregory S. Prince, Jr. and second by Anise Walker, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to end the closed session and return to the public meeting.

**Adjournment.** On a motion by Gregory S. Prince, Jr. and second by Eric McKinley King, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to adjourn the meeting at approximately 11:58 AM.