



## Da Vinci Schools

### Minutes

#### Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County Regular Board Meeting (RISE High)

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**Date and Time**

Thursday November 29, 2018 at 5:00 PM

**Location**

Galileo Room, 201 N. Douglas Street, El Segundo, CA 90245

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Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County ("DVLAC") welcomes your participation at its Board meetings. The purpose of a public meeting of the Board of Directors ("Board") is to conduct the affairs of DVLAC in public. Your participation assures us of continuing community interest in our schools. To assist you in speaking/participating in our meetings, the following guidelines are provided:

1. Agendas are available to all audience members at the door to the meeting.
  2. The Order of Business may be changed without notice. Notice is hereby given that the order of consideration of matters on this agenda may be changed without prior notice.
  3. Notice is hereby given that; consistent with the requirements of the Brown Act, special presentations not mentioned in the agenda may be made at this meeting. However, any such presentation will be for information only.
  4. "Request to Speak" forms are available to all audience members who wish to speak on any agenda items or under the general category of "Public Comments," which is time set aside for members of the audience to raise issues not specifically on the agenda. However, due to public meeting laws, the Board can only listen to your issue, not respond or take action on such comments. These presentations are limited to three (3) minutes and total time allotted to non-agenda items will not exceed fifteen (15) minutes. Non-English speakers who use a translator shall have six (6) minutes in which to address the Board.
  5. The Board may give direction to staff to respond to your concern. If you wish to be contacted, please indicate on the "Request to Speak" form.
  6. The chair will recognize such individuals who wish to speak on a specific agenda item at the appropriate time. When addressing the Board, speakers are requested to adhere to the time limits set forth, and to not repeat remarks made by those who preceded them.
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7. Any public records relating to an agenda item for an open session of the Board which are distributed to all, or a majority of all, of the Board members shall be available for public inspection at 201 N. Douglas Street, El Segundo, CA 90245, during Business Office operating hours.

The agenda and documents in the agenda packet will be made available, if requested, in appropriate alternative formats to any person with a disability as required by the ADA, 42 USC section 12132, and the federal rules and regulations adopted in implementation thereof. To request a disability-related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, you must contact Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County (201 N. Douglas Street, El Segundo, CA) at 310-725-5800 at least 48 hours before a regular meeting, and at least 12 hours before a special meeting. (Government Code § 54954.2(a)(1).)

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#### **Trustees Present**

J. Morgan, L. Jennings, P. Escala, T. Johnstone

#### **Trustees Absent**

C. Pipkin, N. Whiteman

#### **Guests Present**

A. Wohlwerth, E. Whalen, K. Croft, M. Mayotte, M. Wunder, Sabrina Ayala

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### **I. Opening Items**

#### **A. Record Attendance and Guests**

#### **B. Call the Meeting to Order**

M. Wunder called a meeting of the board of trustees of Da Vinci Schools to order on Thursday Nov 29, 2018 @ 5:03 PM at Galileo Room, 201 N. Douglas Street, El Segundo, CA 90245.

#### **C. Approval of Agenda**

J. Morgan made a motion to Approve Paul Escala's addition to the Board of Directors.

L. Jennings seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

#### **D. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

None

### **II. Board of Directors' Comments and/or CEO/CFO Reports**

#### **A. From the Board**

- Dr. Tom Johnstone introduced himself, saying that he worked in the Lennox School District for 28 years before becoming the Superintendent of Wiseburn Unified School District for ten years. He is passionate about RISE High and its student population. He loves the Da Vinci Schools.
- Dr. Lida Jennings of Teach for America introduced herself, saying that she has known Principal Kari Croft and her work for several years, and has been witness to the events that helped create RISE High. She appreciates the

significance of the partnership with A Place Called Home, especially for this population of students.

- Ms. Jennifer Morgan said that she has volunteered for the Da Vinci Schools Board. She feels as a member of the community that it is important to become involved, and wants to see all students have the access to education her children have had.
- Mr. Paul Escala introduced himself, saying he believes in the Da Vinci RISE High mission and the children it is committed to serving. He is from the L.A. Harbor area, and was inspired by a teacher to work in education. He has worked over the last 20 years in the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Mayor's office, the Governor's office, in private schools, and now runs a rural charter school network in Bakersfield to give the K-8 students there educational opportunities.

## **B. From the CEO**

Dr. Wunder offered this time to the RISE faculty and staff who attended the meeting so that they could introduce themselves to the Board.

- English teacher Lauren Murray said she grew up in the Catholic schools and is a former Catholic school teacher who felt she was unable to help the students there whom she wanted to help most. She was introduced to RISE High through a mutual friend, and fell in love with RISE since attending Exhibition at its original location.
- Assistant Principal Erin Whalen said he started in education at Teach for America in Miami, where he and Kari Croft came together because they saw the same trends in the students who were being forgotten. He feels it is an honor to work with the incredible people who believe in the mission and the students.
- Science teacher Meika Nwaomah is originally from Missouri, and came to Los Angeles to attend USC graduate school. She originally taught at a K-6 school in Riverside. Her goal is to make sure students know the value of creating their own path and honoring their own interests and passions, just as she does, as a science teacher and musician.
- Spanish teacher and EL coordinator Elsa Ochoa is a Teach for America alumna. She started teaching seven years ago in the Bay Area. She is originally from Orange County, loves what she does, and appreciates her amazing colleagues.
- Math teacher Naomi Lara has worked for the last ten years as an independent study teacher and independent study administrator. She wanted to get back into teaching, has followed RISE High since the XQ Super School Project, and is happy to be teaching at RISE High, which she sees as a place which creates innovative curricula for the independent study population.
- Alison Wohlwerth supports Dr. Wunder and coordinates the multiple Boards of Da Vinci Schools.
- CFO Marshall Mayotte introduced himself. He has an MBA, has studied business economics, is a CPA and a certified financial planner and certified management accountant. He has worked with low income communities before, and is dedicated to working in education. He feels that there is always a way to make things work.
- Sabrina Ayala is a consultant working with Mr. Mayotte. She has worked in education for the last 12 years, and was in investment banking prior to that. She loves math and a good challenge, and was inspired by several teachers in her life to reach her potential, making her want to work in education.
- James Py introduced himself as a member of the IT team who supports all of Da Vinci Schools and their students by creating a good tech environment.

- Dr. Matt Wunder thought he was going to be a lawyer, but spent a year teaching in an inner city school and never looked back. He mentioned meeting Kari while she was designing this school at Harvard. He spoke of his gratitude toward the Wiseburn district and Dr. Johnstone for helping to find a way to make it work.
- Principal Kari Croft spoke about her connection to Dr. Jennings and Dr. Wunder. She expressed gratitude that the RISE High staff are so committed to working with the students, as they are all in this for the right reasons. Ms. Croft was a teacher in East L.A. before going back to her native South Carolina to teach. In each environment she found that students who were in foster care, on probation, or facing housing instability were left without support to help them through transitions. Counting the pilot year, RISE High is in its third year and they have seen students achieve growth. Ms. Croft is grateful for the staff, the Board, and Dr. Wunder.
- Dr. Wunder spoke about Nichol Whiteman, Executive Director of the L.A. Dodgers Foundation whose work at the Foundation parallels the work being done at RISE High, and about Board President Chet Pipkin, Founder and CEO of Belkin, neither of whom could attend the meeting.

### **C. Financial Update**

Ms. Ayala gave a financial update.

The First Interim report is due December 3, 2018 to the Los Angeles County Office of Education.

RISE High has a budgeted enrollment of 150 students - RISE High starts the year with low enrollment that increases through the year, unlike the other Da Vinci schools that start large and get smaller through attrition.

Staffing based on lower ADA (original enrollment expectation was 200 students)

Demand for the program leads to the belief that a high enrollment can be achieved in future years.

The XQ funds (\$2MM/year for 5 years) will help bridge the gap, if the enrollment is not achieved.

Mr. Mayotte spoke about independent study and the hope to stretch the XQ funds over eight years. Dr. Wunder mentioned that XQ wants RISE High to be good fiscal conservators of the funds, and that as long as they are kept apprised, they are supportive.

It was mentioned the annual audit is due to LACOE on December 15. (It was later determined that RISE High was included as an LLC in Da Vinci Schools' FY18 audit, so the Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County board does not have an audit of their own to approve this year.)

Ms. Ayala assured the Board that in future, they would receive the financials a week in advance of Board meetings.

### **D. Presentation - RISE High**

Ms. Croft gave a presentation on RISE High, which serves homeless, foster, probation youth, transient and out-of-school youth, and other credit-deficient students. RISE High's mission is to graduate individuals who have a strong sense of self, a strong sense of community, have the ability to think critically about the world around them, and who feel empowered to create change.

The RISE model:

Personalized Learning Plans

Project-Based Learning, Real World, College & Career Readiness

- Flexible Schedule, Rolling Admissions, Hybrid Learning
- Competency-based Learning
- Student Teacher Admin Case Manager (STAC) Teams and Student Supporter Engagement
- Holistic Care and Wraparound Services
- Trauma-informed Care & Restorative Practices

RISE actively works to engage stakeholders, whether they are parents, guardians, foster parents, social workers, probation officers, etc.

RISE partners with APCH, Children's Law Center, XQ Super School Project; HopSkipDrive, CASA (Court Appointed Social Advocates), Music to the Ears, L.A. Opportunity Youth Collaborative.

RISE provides direct case management; counseling, transportation, holistic support, jobs and internships, etc.

Challenges:

- Student population grew rapidly at the APCH site
- Balancing ongoing enrollment & stabilizing student culture
- Balancing restorative practices & student accountability
- [Significantly higher] Transportation costs
- Staff mental health, well-being, and sustainability (secondary trauma & compassion fatigue)

Progress:

- 35 students have graduated with about 20 more on track to graduate this year.
- Current enrollment is 141 students
- The first Student-led Conferences were conducted with students and their supporters; over 75 meetings (well over 50%) were held.

Vision for Future

- Open additional campuses to follow students through transitions (new staffing/facility models; boarding component?; multi-site facilities)
- Reimagining partnerships to best meet student needs
- Consideration of classroom-based model with IS program
- Additional site(s) 2020-21

Dr. Wunder commented about the sustainability beyond the first five years when the XQ dollars are depleted. Kari and Erin fill many different roles; there will be a need to build capacity to take some of these roles off their plates so that they can make plans and work on the program. The ultimate goal would be to create a replicable model that can be instituted elsewhere across the country without such generous philanthropic dollars. Due to the generosity of Laurene Powell Jobs and XQ, RISE High has the luxury of time to create this model; the need to find other sustainable funding for non-academic needs is critical.

Ms. Morgan asked about pathways. They are:

- 1) State minimum graduation requirements
- 2) RISE pathway with an additional year of English and additional career tech and community college preparedness classes (for those students who will "age out" before attaining their A-G requirements)
- 3) A-G graduation requirements

Students who have started at RISE High by age 19 and have been continuously enrolled, will "age out" of the system at 22.

### **III. Approval of Minutes**

#### **A. Approve Minutes of the September 28, 2018 Special Board Meeting**

T. Johnstone made a motion to approve minutes from the Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County Special Board Meeting (Da Vinci RISE High) on 09-28-18.

P. Escala seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

L. Jennings made a motion to approve minutes from the Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County Special Board Meeting (Da Vinci RISE High) on 09-28-18.

J. Morgan seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

### **IV. Action Items**

#### **A. Appointment of Paul Escala to Board of Directors**

T. Johnstone made a motion to approve A through D.

L. Jennings seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

#### **B. Adoption of Conflict of Interest Code**

T. Johnstone made a motion to Approve.

L. Jennings seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

#### **C. Administrative Services Agreement between Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County and Da Vinci Schools**

T. Johnstone made a motion to approve the Administrative Services Agreement and Resolution.

L. Jennings seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

#### **D. Da Vinci RISE High Employee Handbook**

T. Johnstone made a motion to approve and adopt the Employee Handbook in a form substantially similar to the version in the agenda packet to enable the CEO or his designee to make additional revisions as desired to ensure it is effective for Da Vinci RISE High.

L. Jennings seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

### **V. Closed Session**

#### **A. Conference with Legal Counsel**

No closed session necessary

### **VI. Closing Items**

#### **A. Adjourn Meeting**

T. Johnstone made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

J. Morgan seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:13 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
A. Wohlwerth