

1. Call to order @6:03 p.m.

This Special Board meeting is being called pursuant to and under Minnesota Statute Section 13D.04, subd. 2.

2. Roll Call

Present	Chair	Board Members
X	G	Melanie Persellin - President
	C	Community Board Member Seat:seated March 25, 2024
X	I	Idara Uko - Vice-Chair
X	A	Sara Sweeney
X	B	Brenda Maulik
X	F	Sana Soussi
X	E	Durowaa Agyeman - Secretary
X	D	Jacob Stith
X	H	Emily Uhl - Treasurer

Guests
Beth Topoluk - Friends of Education
Jason Ulbrich - Eagle Ridge
Brett Wedlund - Nova Classical
Jack Shields
Jenny Kopecky
Julie Kresh
Amna Soussi
Tatum Severson
Stephanie Severson

Guests
Catherine Manella
Allison Smith
Chrissy Rosenberg
Seliana Berg
Mitch Cailbert
Slah Mkhinini

3. Adoption of Agenda and Addendums 2 minutes

- Motion to approve the March 12, 2024 special meeting agenda by Jake, seconded by Brenda, it passes.

4. Review status update regarding Continuity Plan Proposals Persellin 60 minutes.

- There were previous questions surrounding whether Dr. Wedlund could do the contracted work solely or the contracted consulting services were contingent on Dr. Wedlund working together with Mr. Ulbrich.
- Mr. Ulbrich
 - His motivation for doing the consulting work is his willingness to serve.
 - He would like to prioritize supporting the incoming Executive Director and assisting the incoming leadership team.
 - The Eagle Ridge Academy Board is invested in DaVinci because it is another FOE school, and charter pacts have a commitment to see each other succeed.
 - He has personal investment into DVA because has friends and family at DaVinci who want the best for this school.
- Dr. Wedlund

- Most of his consulting experience is in curriculum and coaching other Executive Directors in financial management.
- He has been at Nova Classical Academy for 5 years and had a strong foundation starting the position because Nova hired someone external to come in and help with the financial situation. (The school situation was so dire that they had to freeze pay, and the school was struggling financially).
- Jason and Brett haven't consulted together, but have been working closely together in many other capacities.
 - Staffing, facilities, and budget are all intertwined duties.
- Nova Board prefers that there are two consultants coming in because there will be less workload required of Brett.
- Addressing DVA community's previous concern around outsiders
 - Eagle Ridge brings in people for literacy programs, data-driven instruction, facilities/safety professionals every other year.
 - Nova brought in specialists for their equity audit and an upcoming special meeting, employee investigations, financial and compensation reviews.
 - There is about 20% of the work that people may have to come in to do.
 - Any time there is an issue of significant size and has emotion tied to it, someone from the outside can help clarify from a neutral perspective what the community wants to/should do.
 - Making hard budget decisions is easier when you do not have to live it long term.
- There are two general ways a school handles leadership transition mid-year.
 - A school may elevate one person and everything else stays the same.
 - If you don't have a person to elevate, then you usually bring in a consultant or one-year interim Executive Director.
 - It is currently difficult to get an interim because of the 3-4 week search and time of school year.
 - The goal is to try to minimize the disruption to the school.
- Everything the consulting Executive Directors could do is actually just a recommendation to the Board, especially personnel and budget.
- How do the consulting EDs plan to build or maintain trust?
 - Support team leads, staff, and leadership if there are any trust gaps.
 - Focus groups, surveys to find out where there are strengths and gaps.
 - Work from somewhere strength-based.
 - This will help us build a profile for the ED that we want to bring in.
 - Are there gaps in leadership that we need to fill?
- The process of recruiting a new ED is very competitive right now.
 - We will consider using a MSBA for the search - credibility with a wide network of qualified applicants
 - Both charter and traditional
 - Attracts superintendents from small districts the last few years
 - Interviews staff, parents, and Board throughout
 - MSBA will meet the timeline that we give them
 - Flat fee of \$10,000 which is one of the cheapest

- External consulting agencies provide confidentiality, and vetting.
- School Exec Connect, Raye and Associates (National), and Bruce Miles are other options for external consulting agencies.
- In 2016, the Eagle Ridge Board determined that the two greatest risks to charter schools are politics and the closure of charter schools.
 - Consulting is a part of Jason's duties and contracted hours with Eagle Ridge.
- Jason and Brett believe that they can get a high quality ED by July 1st.
- What Jason and Brett need from the DVA community to successfully do work: an open-mind, being able to articulate needs and sharing technical knowledge, maintain as much calm as you can, have constructive conversations about difficult issues.
- Strategic planning ties in with financial planning, and support of the leadership team so that we can maintain consistency.
- Major concern for Nova's Board was the pull on Brett, so they liked that there was going to be a partnership from Brett.
 - The contract for Brett will go up for approval at the Nova Board meeting on Monday, March 18th.
- Jason would be able to be on-site next Monday.
- Brett's Board would decide March 18th, 2024 and could start thereafter pending approval.

Jack Shields

- Cut \$600,000 from budget with the task force
 - The new budget has not been presented to the finance committee and Board at this time.
- He would like to give most of the middle school principal responsibilities to Sioban Payne or Dr. Jessica Murphy.
- Jack Shields does not want to be the next DVA Executive Director.
- Jack Shields stated that the community does not trust the Board.
- He has the institutional and educational knowledge to run the school.
- Mr. Shields is currently working to hire contracted personnel as an employee in SPED.
- Mr. Shields and Ms. Kopecky are willing to work with consultants as they have in the past.
- Would like to improve: financial status (bond issue), build trust with the community, someone to listen and act on staff concerns, and someone to listen to the community
- Looking for the Board's trust, Board to be visible with school and to volunteer, show staff and community that we are listening
- Would like to implement a regular listening session with the teachers
- Believes that the Board sets the vision for the school, so it is acceptable that their proposal is task-oriented
- Focus on putting resources towards specializing on Arts and Science

Beth Topoluk

- FOE has been authorizing schools for over 20 years
 - Strategic plans - many of them are honey-do lists and some of them are actually strategic
 - The plan proposed by the Leadership looks more like a to-do list than one of strategic leadership

- Accountability is difficult in the Leadership proposal plan because there are too many people in leadership

Teachers

- Two teachers expressed that they have done research on Mr. Ulbrich and Mr. Wedlund, and have found that they are well-loved in the charter world and have a lot of experience that could positively impact DVA in a consulting capacity.
- One teacher had a change of heart since the last meeting about bringing in outside consultants after former DVA employees who work at Eagle Ridge and Nova confirmed confidence in Mr. Ulbrich's and Mr. Wedlund's leadership.

Board Action

- Motion to rescind the approval of the proposal by Mr. Jack Shields and the DVA Leadership team by Brenda, seconded by Jake, it passes unanimously.
- Motion to appoint Jack Shields to Interim Executive Director by Jake, seconded by Brenda, it passes unanimously.
- Motion to enter into a consulting agreement with Jason Ulbrich and Eagle Ridge Academy as set forth in the consulting agreement by Melanie, seconded by Jake, it passes unanimously.
- Motion to modify the consulting agreement approved March 9th to include duties 1e and 1i by Melanie, seconded by Brenda, it passes unanimously.
- Motion to execute the contract with Eagle Ridge Academy and revision with Nova Classical Academy by Emily, seconded by Jake
 - Votes for: Emily, Jake, Melanie, Idara, Brenda, Sara, Durowaa
 - Votes against: Sana
 - Votes abstained: None
 - The motion passes.
- Motion to direct Eagle Ridge Academy and Mr. Jason Ulbrich to work with the DVA Leadership team regarding temporary job duties pending hiring a permanent Executive Director with recommendations provided by April 1st, 2024 to the Board by Melanie, seconded by Emily, it passes unanimously.

Next Steps

- Jason and the DVA Leadership Team will further discuss and re-evaluate the scope of work.
- Holly should add Jack Shields as a secondary designee or proxy to IWA.

5. Discuss and take action on Executive Director Search and review Executive Director Job Description **Persellin 60 minutes.**

- Ask Brett, Jason, and Amy to solicit quotes from MSBA and at least one other vendor.
- Can put preferred with a Master's and Administration licensure
- HR Chair chaired the ad hoc committee,
 - Google form to invite people to apply
 - Parents and certain employees of the school will be eligible to be on the committee, but no Board members.

- Brett, Jason, Amy, and Brenda will reach out and get more information from MSBA to present to the Board.
- March 25th Board meeting will be used to create the ad hoc committee.

6. Discussion on DVA policies and applicable laws regarding communication by Board Member and Board communication protocols. Persellin 60 minutes

- Motion to move Item 6 to the March 17th meeting by Melanie, seconded by Jake, it passes unanimously.

Adjourn Meeting

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:04pm by Sana, seconded by Durowaa, it passes.

Actual end time: 9:04 p.m.

Estimated end time: 8:00 p.m.