

**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
Drexel Foundation for Educational Excellence, Inc.  
DBA Thea Bowman Leadership Academy  
3401 W. 5th Avenue, Gary, IN 46406  
Wednesday, August 30, 2023  
6:00 PM CT

**I. Meeting Called to Order**

A meeting of the Board of Directors (the “Board”) of Thea Bowman Leadership Academy (“TBLA”) was held on Wednesday, August 30, 2023. The meeting was called to order by the Board Chair at 6:01 PM CT.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

The pledge of allegiance was recited by the assembled Directors and attendees.

**III. Roll Call**

Eve Gomez, President	Present
Jason Beres, Vice President	Present
Michelle Dickerson, Treasurer	Present
Helen Hill	Present
Cedric Steele	Present - Online
Jerry Williams	Present
Bernard Carter	Absent

**Other Attendees:**

- Marisa Simmons, Principal, Thea Bowman Leadership Academy
- Eva Spilker, President & CFO, PLA
- Melissa Morris, NW Regional Director, PLA
- Jewell Harris, Jr., Attorney, Harris Law Firm
- Tahirah Thompson, Director of Operations Facilities & New School Launch, PLA
- Antoinette Troupe, Operations Manager, TBLA
- Johnny Jin, Chief Strategy & Development Officer, PLA
- Lauren Fihe, Development Manager, Government, PLA
- Ashley Minter, Director of Marketing & Communications, PLA
- JoAnn Gama, Chief Human Assets Officer, PLA
- Andrea Robinson, Chief Academic Officer, PLA
- Caitlin Hicks, Education One
- Paul Farrington, Associate Director of Operations, PLA

a. Approval of Board Agenda

The Board made a motion to approve the agenda for August 30, 2023.

Motion: Helen Hill

Support: Michelle Dickerson

Yays: 6

Nays: 0

The Board unanimously voted to approve the agenda.

b. Approval of Board Minutes from July 26, 2023

Motion: Jerry Williams

Support: Jason Beres

Yays: 6

Nays: 0

The Board unanimously voted to approve the board minutes.

**IV. CMO Report**

a. Principal's Report

Principal Marisa Simmons, presented the admin report and shared this school year's schoolwide theme, enrollment, academics, professional development, events, and upcoming assessment dates. The new school counselor is assisting high school scholars with applying for scholarships.

b. Academic Support Update

Melissa Morris highlighted continuous improvement and provided information on Content Week Professional Development, showcasing vendor and national team training.

c. Financial Report

Eva Spilker presented the financial review with an overview of the income statement, balance sheet, and enrollment.

**ACTION ITEM:** Michelle Dickerson requested a quarterly report on grants that have been applied for (i.e., dollar amount, date, etc.) Eve Gomez requested a search for safety grants.

**V. Updates**

a. ESSER

Lauren Fihe, PLA Development Manager, provided an ESSER overview and use of funds for ESSER III.

b. Meca Engineering presented a preliminary report and provided information on the potential building expansion.

**VI. Authorizer Report (Trine University/Education One LLC)**

Caitlin Hicks shared the authorizer's accountability update, academic performance financial performance, organizational performance, ILEARN Proficiency in grades 3-8, SAT Proficiency in grade 11, comparison schools, IREAD-3, community connections, and upcoming events.

**VII. Old Business**

**VIII. New Business**

a. Approval of Student Athletic-Sports Accident Renewal

i. Mandatory & Voluntary Blanket Master Insurance Application

The Board made a motion to approve the student-athletic sports accident renewal policy.

Motion: Jason Beres

Support: Jerry Williams

Yays: 6

Nays: 0

The Board unanimously voted to approve the student-athletic sports accident renewal policy.

b. Approval of Food Services Contract - Chartwells

The Board made a motion to approve the food services contract.

Motion: Michelle Dickerson

Support: Cedric Steele

Yays: 6

Nays: 0

The Board unanimously voted to approve the Chartwells food services contract.

c. Approval of Lawn Care Services

The Board made a motion to approve the lawn care services contract.

Motion: Helen Hill

Support: Jerry Williams

Yays: 6

Nays: 0

The Board unanimously voted to approve the lawn care services.

d. Approval of Stair Treads

This item was tabled until Ms. Troupe provides additional information on the price and warranty.

Motion: Helen Hill

Support: Cedric Steele

Yays: 6

Nays: 0

e. Approval of Technology

This item was tabled until further notice.

f. Approval of Staff Professional Development

The Board made a motion to approve the staff's professional development.

Motion: Helen Hill

Support: Michelle Dickerson

Yays: 6

Nays: 0

The Board unanimously voted to approve the professional development of staff.

g-h. Approval of Newsela and Studies Weekly (K-5) Curriculum

The Board made a motion to approve items g and h for Newsela and Studies Weekly curriculum.

Motion: Jason Beres

Support: Jerry Williams

Yays: 6

Nays: 0

The Board unanimously voted to approve Newsela and Studies Weekly (K-5) curriculum.

i. Approval of the Removal of Trustee Cliff Gooden

Mr. Cliff Gooden submitted his resignation. The Board made a motion to accept Cliff Gooden's resignation effective September 1, 2023.

Motion: Jason Beres

Support: Jerry Williams

Yays: 6

Nays: 0

The Board unanimously voted to approve Cliff Gooden's resignation.

j. Approval of the Board of Directors Bylaws

The Board made a motion to table the approval of the revised Board of Directors Bylaws until the sub-committee has had the opportunity to meet and make a recommendation to the Board.

Motion: Helen Hill

Support: Cedric Steele

Yays: 6

Nays: 0

The Board unanimously voted to table this item.

Attorney Harris did not receive any revision recommendations for the bylaws from the Board of Directors.

**ACTION ITEMS:** PLA to provide the school safety plan.

## **IX. PTA**

PTA President, Tanisha Smith, provided the PTA update. PTA will be meeting on September 19<sup>th</sup> and meets every third Tuesday. The PTA encourages more participation from parents, staff, and board members.

## **X. Open Communication/Public Comments**

- Parent Phyllis Baker has a 4<sup>th</sup> grade scholar and has several concerns regarding the students who have classes in the trailer (winter weather, rain, etc.)
- Lori Anderson made a comment about the building plan, health clinic, and the traffic that it may bring.
- Mr. Mathew Davis asked if the health clinic would be open to TBLA scholars only or to the public/community and how funds are being allocated. Mr. Davis also inquired about the Lilly Endowment Scholarship, how to obtain transcripts and copies of the board packet and bylaws, the recent board members resignation, and updates on COVID. September 15<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for the Lilly Endowment Scholarship.
- Mr. Jermaine Mead asked how to request the bylaws and athletic trainers at the clinic. Would there be any compensation? 75% of TBLA scholars are athletes; Mr. Mead inquired about the athletic facilities being upgraded and staying competitive. Mr. Mead also inquired about how board members are selected and postings of the board meetings.

## **XI. Meeting Adjourned**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Helen Hill

Support: Jerry Williams

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 PM.