



Board Meeting

2/26/25

The Foundry

Call to Order: 1:07 PM

Attendance:

Alex Cassidy, Trent Fellers, Britta Muhleisen, John Wirtz, Russ Uhing, Pat Beans, Mo Boyd, Ed Schulenberg, Kaye Jesske, Joan Mendoza-Gorham, James Walbridge, Dr. James Blake, Brent Comstock, Annie Mumgaard, Ginna Clausen, Andy Martz, Dr. John Skretta, Deb Rasmussen, Guy Trainin, Mike Tavlin, Jeffery Owusu-Ansah, Max Rodenberg

Not in Attendance:

Dr. J. J. Toczek, Dr. Kris Baack, John Laflin, Karli Mackley, Nancy Hove-Graul, Sarah Wischhof

Staff Attendance:

Natalia Wiita, Angelina Cunning, Kass Mounce, Lindsay Rogers, Kayla Jacox, Allison Bock

Welcome:

Overall thank you to John and his work with the Foundation

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Minutes

- James entertained a motion to approve the following minutes:
 - December Board Minutes*
 - January Executive/Transition Committee Minutes*
 - January Special Board Minutes*
- Ed moved, Kaye seconded. All in favor — Approved for publishing.

Audit Report & 990 Report*

- Clean audit.
- Allocation/expenses are in line with other nonprofits.
- 990 information comes directly from the audit; no significant changes from previous years.

- Action Item: Look into retracted donor names — connect with Karli and Buckley-Sitzman.

December Financials*

- End of the first quarter:
 - Operating at a surplus.
 - Revenue on track.
 - Expenses are down.

Contracts Memo & Fund Change Memo*

- James made a motion to approve the Audit, 990 Report, December Financials, Contracts Memo, and Fund Change Memo.
- Motion moved and seconded by Alex — All approved.

LPS Superintendent

- Dr. Skretta thanked the Foundation for its continued support of LPS and the partnership.
- Shared excitement about his new role and working alongside the Foundation.
- Discussed the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan and aligning efforts to support shared outcomes.

Foundation Team Updates

President Transition

- Natalia introduced herself, shared her background, and work experience.
- Outlined key priorities for her first 90 days:
 - Strengthening relationships with staff and donors.
 - Developing a clearer understanding of the financial position and fundraising strategies.
 - Improving team dynamics and operational efficiency.
 - Increasing visibility in the community and within LPS.
 - Early fundraising successes aimed at long-term growth and sustainability.

Dashboard Presentation*:

Development

- Focus on donor retention — encouraging annual giving.
- Goals met; numbers are up.
- Major donor contributions exceeded \$145,000 since the last board meeting.
- Strategic planning for future growth includes:
 - Increased engagement.

- Emphasis on planned giving.
- Fund-A-Need discussion:
 - Review of money raised vs. actual usage.
 - Outreach to fund owners to assess continued need.
 - Noted disconnect with LPS accounting regarding reimbursements.

Operations

- Financials are above projections.
- Liquid unrestricted funds are in a good position (both with and without backups).
- Comparable to similar nonprofits.

Marketing

- Increased focus on email communications, with growing engagement.
- Testing performance emails for interaction insights.
- Reviewed social media strategy and demographics reached.

Spark Program

- Enrollment and staff hiring updates:
 - 50% of the curriculum is complete.
 - Partner engagement is strong.
 - Close to 100% staff hired (only two positions remaining).
 - Social media intern interviews pending.
- Camp enrollment at 70% capacity.

Annual Report* highlights:

- Showcasing successful initiatives.
- Building relationships and community with donors.

Foundation Insights

- Board education on key support areas:
 - Hope Squad, homeless student support, ELL support, emergency assistance.
- 135 funds support these initiatives in collaboration with Student Services and community agencies.
- Discussion on better connecting FLPS and LPS with available funds.
- Ensuring donors are aware of the impact their contributions have made.

Committee Updates:

Executive Committee

- Bylaws*:
 - Updated language regarding meetings, voting, and committees.
- Motion to approve by Guy; seconded by John Wirtz — Approved.

Information Items:

Marketing

- March 7: Invite to Inspire School of the Year presentation.
- Inspire Staff and Student Awards:
 - All submissions are in.
 - Sponsor board drop-off sign-up email sent.
- Educator Awards:
 - 20 awards this year.
 - Missing nominations for two awards.
 - 207 nominations received.
 - Awarding nearly \$30,000.

Spark

- Scholarships:
 - Round 2 awarded — \$168,757 to 111 students.
- Planning:
 - Middle school tech camp at Holmes (2 weeks; ~40 students/week).
 - Partnerships with LPS & UNL Center for Emerging Media.
- Expansion:
 - Continuing at one site.
 - Foundation committed to Spark for 4-5 years to support long-term grant applications and significant funding opportunities.

Operations

- Over 1,300 requests were fulfilled.
- Paid out over \$390,000 this school year.
- Supported over 90,000 students, families, and LPS staff.
- Scholarships:
 - Around 110 scholarships awarded.
 - Approximately \$150,000 paid out.

Development

- No additional updates (previously covered).

Wrap-Up

- Appreciation extended to board members for their involvement in:
 - The president hiring process.
 - Hosting board socials.
 - Providing staff recommendations to support the Foundation.
- Natalia is available for one-on-one meetings with board members.

Adjourn:

Meeting was adjourned at 2:31