



## **Governing Board**

**Meeting Agenda for May 8, 2025 at 7:00pm**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Call to order by Adam Caskey at 7:06 pm.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Adam Caskey, Walter Bell, Kelly Mandy, Veronica Johnson. Head of School Neal Christian, Jennifer Bradley, Eddie Lovett, Lawrence Stephens, and Gregg Stevens were also present.

#### **I. Administrative Functions**

- Approval of Agenda  
Chairman Caskey called for a motion to Amend the Agenda to postpone the Annual Meeting items until the June meeting and to add a Marketing Contract approval to the action items.  
**Motion to Amend the Agenda to Move Annual Meeting Items to June**  
1<sup>st</sup> – Walter Bell; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Kelly Mandy; Unanimous vote of those present
- Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes  
**Motion to Approve the Meeting Minutes of April 17, 2025**  
1st – Kelly Mandy; 2nd – Walter Bell. Unanimous vote of those present.

#### **II. Public Comment**

None

#### **III. Academic Related Reports**

- Head of School Report  
Mr. Christian provided the Head of School Report. In his report, Mr. Christian, the Head of School, highlighted the success of the May 6 PBL Night, where students showcased projects including a literary magazine and a math poetry book. He praised the effective administration of the Georgia Milestones, crediting the assessment team for streamlining logistics and reporting early results. Mr. Christian reviewed academic progress across grades, emphasizing strong growth in math proficiency, particularly in grades 4-8, where students met or exceeded state benchmarks. Mr. Christian noted the importance of tracking student cohorts for more meaningful performance analysis, and he outlined plans to expand STEM initiatives, including coding, robotics, and Esports. Regarding enrollment, Mr. Christian reported 519 current students and a waitlist of 146, including unusually high interest in 8th grade, highlighting BIA's growth potential. Mr. Christian also mentioned support for homeless students under the McKinney-Vento Act and plans to maintain full enrollment across all grades. Finally, Mr. Christian stressed the importance of finalizing a five-year strategic budget and continuing facility improvements to sustain the school's momentum.
- Academic Committee Report  
Chairman Caskey then delivered the Academic Committee Report. The academic committee report focused on student achievement data and instructional strategies driving recent gains. Mr. Christian discussed preliminary results from the Georgia Milestones, showing upward trends in proficiency across most grade levels in math, and notable progress in science and social studies. The committee discussed the success of remedial math strategies, including double-dose scheduling during specials and high teacher-to-student ratios in critical classes. Mr. Christian emphasized cohort tracking to better assess year-over-year student growth and projected that BIA will earn future recognition in science and social studies. Mr. Christian concluded by reviewing performance-based bonuses and accountability measures for teachers, reinforcing the school's commitment to academic excellence and professional consistency.

#### **IV. Finance Committee Report**

- **Monthly Reports**

Mr. Stevens then presented the monthly financial report for the month ending March 31, 2025. Mr. Stevens reported improvements in key debt ratios and strong cash on hand. Mr. Stevens reported that BIA's debt service coverage ratio remained strong, driven by a healthy cash reserve, and noted that the state commission plans to adjust financial metrics to distinguish between strategic (facility-related) and operational debt, which are changes likely to benefit the school. Mr. Stevens confirmed that the school maintains approximately 240 operating days in unrestricted cash, well above the required days-cash-on-hand threshold.

He emphasized that, despite a reduced monthly QBE payment—from \$899,000 to \$302,000—BIA continued to show strong net income. He advised the board to consider prepaying software licensing and other known expenses while they have budget flexibility. Mr. Stevens also addressed insurance cost projections, noting a likely increase to health insurance premiums next year, but Mr. Stevens assured the Board that the administration is actively exploring alternatives through educational insurance collectives. He concluded by affirming the board's financial oversight obligations and preparing the group to finalize the FY26 budget at the June meeting, incorporating staffing additions and programmatic investments under discussion.

- **Proposed Amended FY25 Budget Hearing**

Mr. Stevens then presented the school's proposed FY25 amended budget. Mr. Stevens noted that the amended budget accounts for the school's revised QBE allotment as well as the school's actual expenditures through the year.

- **Public Comment**

**The Board opened the meeting for public comment on the FY25 amended budget.**

There was no public comment.

- **Proposed FY26 Budget hearing**

Next, Mr. Stevens presented the proposed FY26 budget. Mr. Stevens noted that BIA Charter School is expecting revenues for FY26 similar to its funding levels for FY25, and the proposed budget tracks current programs with adjustments for salaries, increased debt service, and a few additional programs like after-school and more school nutrition options.

- **Public Comment**

**The Board opened the meeting for public comment on the FY26 budget.**

There was no public comment.

#### **V. Operations Committee Report**

Mr. Bell presented the Operations Committee report for May. Mr. Bell highlighted key facility upgrades and confirmed that summer projects—including painting, weather stripping, HVAC improvements, and breezeway repairs—are on schedule, with vendors selected. Mr. Christian reported that the school had distributed contracts to all returning teachers and paraprofessionals, with salary addenda to follow after board approval. He noted that administrative staff contracts remain pending while leadership finalizes compensation structures. The committee also discussed technology infrastructure, highlighting a presentation from a consulting firm that evaluated future IT needs. The operations update concluded with a review of hiring progress, open positions, and planning for expanded use of leased classroom space.

#### **VI. Governance Committee Report**

Chairman Caskey then presented the Governance Committee report, noting the need for Board Members to complete governance training and highlighting the plan to conclude training during an upcoming strategy session.

#### **VII. Consultant's Report (Ed Innovation Partners)**

Chairman Caskey thanked Ed Innovation Partners for support in April and May before asking Mr. Stevens to present the recommendation for the approved auditor program.

#### **VIII. New Business**

- Approved Auditor Program

Mr. Stevens presented the recommendation of the Finance Committee to select Mauldin and Jenkins as BIA Charter School's auditor for the FY25 school year. Mr. Stevens noted that the committee discussed the level of service received during the previous audit and determined that the firm's knowledge of the school's financial records outweighed dissatisfaction with the service. Mr. Caskey recommended that Mr. Christian and Mr. Stevens reaffirm client expectations with Mauldin and Jenkins before beginning the audit.

**Motion to approve the selection of Mauldin and Jenkins for the SCSC approved auditor program.**

1<sup>st</sup> – Walter Bell; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Kelly Mandy; Unanimous vote of those present.

#### **IX. Old Business**

- School Nutrition RFP Update

Next, Mr. Stevens provided an update on the ongoing school nutrition RFP. Mr. Stevens noted that BIA received two responses by the RFP deadline. Mr. Stevens highlighted that BIA staff and stakeholders would rate the RFP responses and negotiate with the responsive offers accordingly.

- Marketing RFP Update

Chairman Caskey then highlighted that BIA completed its interviews of potential marketing partners and selected DK Brand Strategy as the recommended partner for leading BIA's marketing and communication efforts.

**Motion to approve a one-year contract with DK Brand Strategy at a cost not to exceed \$72,000.**

1st – Veronica Johnson; 2nd – Walter Bell; Unanimous vote of those present.

- Intercom System Update

Mr. Christian then noted that the upgrade to the intercom system was approved in April and will commence as soon as the final purchase order is signed by Chairman Caskey.

#### **X. Annual Meeting**

- Election of Officers
- FY26 Board Meeting Schedule
- Conflict of Interest

**Pursuant to the Motion to Amend the Agenda, these items were postponed.**

#### **XI. Executive Session**

**At approximately 8:10 PM, Chairman Caskey called for a motion to enter into executive session to discuss personnel matters.**

1st – Walter Bell; 2nd – Kelly Mandy; Unanimous vote of those present.

#### **XII. Required Actions following Executive Session**

**At approximately 8:24, Chairman Caskey called for a motion to exit executive session.**

1st – Walter Bell; 2nd – Veronica Johnson; Unanimous vote of those present.

There being no additional business before the Board, Chairman Caskey called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Motion to Adjourn.**

1st – Walter Bell; 2nd – Veronica Johnson; Unanimous vote of those present.

#### **XIII. Next Regular Meeting Date: June 12, 2025 at 7pm**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**