

**Board Meeting Minutes  
November 17, 2025**

A meeting of the Board of Directors for KIPP Chicago Schools (collectively, the “Board” or “Directors,” and individually each a “Director”) was held at 2007 S. Halsted, Chicago, IL on Monday, November 17, 2025. Board members present and participating in the meeting were Zaid Alsikafi, Maria Anderson, Bernetta Cannon, and Paris Clark. Ben Chereskin joined via phone.

Also present for the meeting by invitation of the Board were: Rashid Bell (Chief Executive Officer), Becky Fussner (Chief Academic Officer), Jennifer Hodges (Chief Program Officer), Milton Rodriguez (Chief External Affairs & Innovation Officer), and Michael Salmonowicz (Chief Financial & Operations Officer). Shanan Egger (Accountant) joined via phone.

The meeting commenced at 9:31am CT. Mr. Bell stated that the meeting had been called for the purposes stated in the notice of meeting previously given to each Director and confirmed that all members could hear and be heard. Mr. Bell also noted that a quorum was present at the meeting for purposes of conducting business of the School, that the meeting of the Board was advertised to the public both online and at school sites in accordance with OMA regulations. Four members of the public were in attendance.

**Governance**

The Board voted on the Officer slate for the 25-26 school year: President - Zaid Alsikafi, Secretary - Michael Salmonowicz. Ms. Cannon made a motion to approve each role, with Ms. Anderson seconding each motion:

- Ms. Anderson, Ms. Cannon, and Ms. Clark voted to approve Mr. Alsikafi’s role as Board President (3-0);
- Ms. Anderson, Mr. Alsikafi, Ms. Cannon, and Ms. Clark voted to approve Mr. Salmonowicz’s role as Board Secretary (4-0).

Mr. Alsikafi moved that the Board go into closed session to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of KIPP Chicago Schools. Ms. Cannon seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve, with Ms. Anderson, Mr. Alsikafi, Ms. Cannon, and Ms. Clark all voting to approve.

After the closed session concluded, Ms. Cannon moved that the Board return to open session.

Mr. Alsikafi moved that the Board approve the candidacy of Paul Maurer for Board membership, in the role of Treasurer. Ms. Cannon seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve, with Ms. Anderson, Mr. Alsikafi, Ms. Cannon, and Ms. Clark all voting to approve.

Ms. Cannon made a motion for approval of the June 4, 2025 meeting minutes. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve, with Mr. Alsikafi, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Cannon, and Ms. Clark all voting to approve.

## **Finance Update**

Mr. Egger reviewed the FY25 audit. Ms. Cannon made a motion for approval of the audit. Ms. Clark seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve, with Mr. Alsikafi, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Cannon, and Ms. Clark all voting to approve.

Mr. Salmonowicz noted that KIPP Chicago Schools has achieved 18 consecutive clean audits. He expressed appreciation to the Finance Team for its excellent work, and to the Board for its leadership.

Mr. Salmonowicz reviewed two other audits that were in progress: an ISBE (Illinois State Board of Education) audit of KIPP Academy that began in October 2025, and a CTPF (Chicago Teachers' Pension Fund) audit of KIPP Chicago Schools that began in August 2024. In both cases, KIPP Chicago Schools was randomly selected.

Mr. Egger reviewed FY26 Q1 financials, noting that a slight miss on the network's enrollment target and increased staffing expenses (specifically paraprofessionals for students with diverse learning needs) was resulting in a projected deficit.

Ms. Cannon asked for additional details around the increased paraprofessional need.

Ms. Fussner and Mr. Salmonowicz replied with context, with particular focus on the role of dedicated paraprofessionals (i.e., paraprofessionals who work with a single student) – as well as the costs of those positions and how projections of paraprofessional need are made.

Mr. Salmonowicz provided an update on enrollment for both the 25-26 & 26-27 school years, noting a year-over-year, double-digit increase in enrollment interest forms (i.e., applications) for 26-27.

Ms. Clark asked for information around what schools do to ensure families want to keep their children enrolled.

Mr. Bell replied that, in addition to the strong academic program, schools focus on regular parent communication and after-school opportunities. He noted that some of these items would be covered in more detail in the next section of the meeting.

Mr. Salmonowicz provided an update on FY26 revenue (down slightly due to lower-than-expected enrollment), expenses (increased due to mid-year staffing needs), and assets (days of cash-on-hand higher than 4-year average, and some money moved from bank account to investment accounts in order to achieve higher return in a lower interest rate environment).

Mr. Alsikafi asked what the biggest financial risks were for the remainder of FY26.

Mr. Salmonowicz replied that the two biggest risks were: potential additional costs due to increased mid-year staffing needs (e.g., more paraprofessionals or contractual related service providers: speech/language pathologists, psychologists, occupational therapists, etc.), and potentially lower-than-expected fundraising.

## **KIPP Chicago Update**

Mr. Bell offered framing for the 25-26 school year, including priorities & goals around student achievement, student engagement, and staff culture.

Ms. Cannon asked about student engagement and attendance.

Mr. Salmonowicz replied that details would be coming later in the meeting.

Ms. Fussner provided an overview of ISBE Summative Designations, and noted that ISBE is redesigning this system in 2026. She then reviewed the Summative Designations for KIPP Chicago's schools in 2025 and prior years. She explained that all four of KIPP Chicago's schools achieved index scores in the "Commendable" range, but CWD (children with disabilities) subgroup scores led to two campuses receiving "Targeted" designations.

Mr. Alsikafi and Ms. Cannon asked about the state's focus on subgroups.

Ms. Fussner replied with an overview of the various subgroups the state evaluates, and how those subgroup evaluations can impact a school's overall designation.

Ms. Fussner then discussed some of the curricular & instructional adjustments that will be made in 25-26 to support increased growth for diverse learners (i.e., children with disabilities).

Ms. Fussner presented a multi-year overview of Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) performance in ELA and Math, which showed increased proficiency rates in both subjects, in nearly every grade level.

Mr. Bell noted that additional coaching of teachers has contributed to these positive results.

Mr. Salmonowicz provided an update on student attendance, noting that KIPP Chicago Schools currently is outpacing other Chicago elementary schools in chronic absenteeism (CA) by 9.6 percentage points, and in average daily attendance (ADA) by 1.4 percentage points.

Ms. Cannon asked how KIPP Chicago schools' attendance compares with other schools in the neighborhoods where they are located.

Mr. Salmonowicz replied that while that analysis had not been completed yet for the 25-26 school year, historical trends indicate that KIPP Chicago's schools likely are outperforming those schools by even greater margins.

Mr. Alsikafi asked how the chronic absenteeism metric was calculated for students who enroll after the first day of school.

Mr. Salmonowicz replied that the state prorates that calculation.

Mr. Rodriguez provided a development overview, including progress toward the 25-26 fundraising goal, upcoming events, and an update on the renewal process for the 21st Century grant (which supports after-school programming).

Ms. Hodges presented on the Whole Child Initiative, with a focus on the launch of after-school programming.

Ms. Anderson asked for details regarding who runs the programs and how they are compensated.

Ms. Hodges replied with an overview of how staff members lead programming and the stipends they receive for that work.

Ms. Anderson then asked about supervision of program.

Ms. Hodges explained that she and another staff member conduct audits of programming to ensure high quality, and also conduct quarterly check-ins with each school.

Ms. Hodges then described the launch of the Frederick Douglass Initiative (FDI), including partners (Chicago Public Library, Bernie's Book Bank, Young Chicago Authors, and more) and goals (close reading gaps, increase reading fluency, build confidence, boost critical thinking skills, and more).

Ms. Anderson asked how students are able to track their reading minutes.

Ms. Hodges provided an overview of the tracking system.

Ms. Hodges reviewed a violence prevention initiative for boys that involves a number of KIPP Chicago Schools students. The program launched in spring 2025 and is continuing in the 25-26 school year. Alderman Emma Mitts' office is providing space for the program.

Ms. Cannon asked about opportunities for girls to participate.

Ms. Hodges explained that she is working with potential partners to create such an opportunity.

### **Public Comment**

The floor was opened for public comments. There were four speakers:

- Ms. Travis, a parent from KIPP Ascend
- Ms. Robinson, a parent from KIPP Academy
- Ms. Owens, a parent from KIPP Ascend
- Ms. Sardin, a parent from KIPP Ascend

Mr. Bell offered closing thoughts.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30am.

The next meeting will be held in winter 2026, date & location TBD.

*Michael Salmonowicz*  
Michael Salmonowicz, Secretary