



**Board Meeting Minutes
February 4, 2026**

A meeting of the Board of Directors for KIPP Chicago Schools (collectively, the “Board” or “Directors,” and individually each a “Director”) was held at 730 N. Pulaski, Chicago, IL on Wednesday, February 4, 2026. Board members present and participating in the meeting were Zaid Alsikafi, Maria Anderson, Bernetta Cannon, and Paul Maurer.

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

The meeting commenced at 10:02am CT. Mr. Alsikafi 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. Alsikafi 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. Two members of the public were in attendance.

Mr. Alsikafi welcomed Mr. Maurer, who was attending his first Board meeting as Treasurer.

Mr. Bell noted a “bright spot” update: Students from KIPP One Primary recently had the opportunity to participate in a compilation dance performance at a national KIPP Foundation event.

Mr. Alsikafi made a motion for approval of the November 17, 2025 open session minutes. Mr. Maurer seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve, with Mr. Alsikafi, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Cannon, and Mr. Maurer all voting to approve.

Ms. Cannon made a motion for approval of the November 17, 2025 closed session minutes. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve, with Mr. Alsikafi, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Cannon, and Mr. Maurer all voting to approve.

Public Comment was opened, but no one had a comment. Mr. Salmonowicz noted that Cory Washington, Senior Head of Schools, was in attendance to support with any parent questions or concerns that may have come up during public comment.

KIPP Chicago Update

Mr. Bell noted that Ms. Fussner was not able to attend, so he would be presenting academic updates on her behalf.

Mr. Bell began by reviewing academic priorities and how they are measured (state test, chronic absenteeism rate, etc.).

Ms. Anderson asked if state testing was administered in English or Spanish. Mr. Bell replied that the ACCESS test is administered in Spanish, but all other state tests are administered in English. He also explained that assessments students take throughout the year are in English in order to ensure students are prepared for state tests.

Mr. Alsikafi asked about dates of state testing. Mr. Bell provided the dates.

Mr. Bell noted that over 99% of students were assessed on DIBELS (reading), and provided an overview of student growth for all schools and grade levels. Nearly 60% of students achieved average, above average, or well above average growth.

Mr. Alsikafi asked what performance looked like for the students who did not achieve this level of growth. Mr. Bell replied that while these other students showed growth, it was not at the rate that is needed – and specific interventions have been created to address students who are achieving lower levels of growth.

Ms. Cannon asked if the data were representative of all of KIPP Chicago Schools. Mr. Bell and Mr. Salmonowicz replied that it was, and noted that the nearly 60% of students achieving average or higher-than-average growth was equal to about 2,000 students.

Mr. Bell noted that over 99% of students were assessed on i-Ready (math), and provided an overview of student growth for all grade levels, as well as a year-over-year comparison. 6th and 8th graders achieved the most growth, and also showed the most improvement year-over-year.

Mr. Alsikafi asked if this is typical to see so much growth in the later elementary grades.

Mr. Bell explained that enrollment duration has a significant impact on student achievement: A student who has been enrolled with KIPP Chicago Schools for 4 years is twice as likely to be proficient on the DIBELS assessment as a student who is new. Similarly, a student who has been enrolled with KIPP Chicago Schools for 4 years is 71% more likely to be proficient on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) as a student who is new.

Mr. Bell noted that our schools are focused on working with families to ensure high retention (i.e., students staying with us as they move to the next grade level in the fall), because we know our academic program leads to large academic gains when students stay with us for many years.

Ms. Cannon noted that she saw this academic growth firsthand with her own children (now adults) when they attended KIPP Ascend years ago.

Ms. Anderson, who has been a KIPP Chicago Schools parent for the past 10 years – with one child an alum who is in high school, and the other currently enrolled at KIPP One – agreed with Ms. Cannon.

Mr. Bell presented results of the “Parent Pulse” Survey that was provided to KIPP Chicago Schools parents in fall 2025 in order to get feedback on academic support, school experience, family communication, and overall satisfaction. He noted that any parent who did not answer “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to the statement, “My child enjoys their time at school” received 1:1 outreach from Senior Head of Schools Cory Washington to understand any concerns.

Mr. Bell closed by noting that the national KIPP Foundation has provided financial support for some of our alumni to enroll in vocational programs – with our KIPP Forward team providing counseling and other support. One alum just completed a program in automotive technology and now is pursuing his Associate’s Degree. Three other alumni are scheduled to finish their programs in May.

Mr. Salmonowicz presented year-to-date attendance data for KIPP Chicago Schools students, as well as data for elementary students across CPS.

Mr. Alsikafi asked if a comparison with the CPS schools located near our schools was available. Mr. Salmonowicz replied that while those data were not a part of this presentation, it would be included in the attendance presentation at April’s Board meeting.

Ms. Cannon asked for context around chronic absenteeism rates. Mr. Salmonowicz replied with data points, and also described daily, weekly, and monthly practices that are being used by our schools to support higher average daily attendance (ADA) rates and lower chronic absenteeism (CA) rates.

Mr. Rodriguez provided a development overview: progress toward the FY26 fundraising goal, upcoming events, Board engagement opportunities, and an update on the renewal of the 21st Century grant for after-school programming. He also noted an opportunity to engage with a grant around chronic absenteeism.

Mr. Alsikafi asked for clarification regarding whether 21st Century funding was a considered private fundraising. Mr. Rodriguez replied that 21st Century funding is separate from private fundraising since it is a federal/state grant.

Ms. Hodges provided updates on Whole Child efforts, including the Frederick Douglass Initiative, adult education cohorts, the Operation Warm coat drive, and student programs for girls & boys that focus on violence prevention and processing emotions.

Mr. Salmonowicz noted that a parent had arrived late for Public Comment, so he stepped into the hall to speak with her along with Mr. Washington. She came to the meeting to offer feedback on the CPS school that co-shares the Penn facility with KIPP Ascend Middle School. She had concerns about unfair scheduling of gym time and lunch time for students, and the lack of responsiveness from the CPS school’s administration when feedback was given. Mr. Salmonowicz said that he would look into her concerns and would ensure that she received follow-up communication.

Finance Update

Mr. Egger reviewed FY26 Q2 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.

Mr. Salmonowicz reviewed a number of audits that were in progress: CPS Multilingual Program audits at KIPP Academy, KIPP Ascend, KIPP Bloom, & KIPP One; CPS desk audits of KIPP Academy & KIPP One; an ISBE (Illinois State Board of Education) finance audit of KIPP Academy; and a CTPF (Chicago Teachers’ Pension Fund) audit of KIPP Chicago Schools.

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. He also provided context on KIPP Chicago Schools' enrollment over the past few years.

Mr. Salmonowicz updated Board members 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).

Ms. Anderson asked about paraprofessionals, specifically, whether they stay with the same student over multiple years, and if students continue with their IEPs over multiple years?

Mr. Salmonowicz explained that paraprofessionals can support multiple students, or can be "dedicated" (i.e., supporting a single student). In either case, it is possible that a paraprofessional may work with a student over multiple years, but that is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Bell noted that our goal is to help students move out of their IEPs when possible. However, if that does not happen, we continue to provide whatever support is needed for as long as needed.

Governance

Mr. Salmonowicz explained that annual Board training modules were due at the end of June.

New Business

Ms. Cannon asked if anything was being taught around the 250-year anniversary of the United States.

Mr. Washington noted that current lessons were focused on Black History Month, but in 7th grade classrooms there would be a focus on the 250-year anniversary as a part of Constitution test that is taken during that year.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:07pm.

The next meeting will be held in April 2026 at 2007 S. Halsted.

Michael Salmonowicz
Michael Salmonowicz, Secretary