



Board of Trustees

Board Forum Minutes

April 16, 2024

The Palmas Academy
Multi-Use Room
Palmas del Mar, PR

Time: 6:10PM

Presenters:

1. Mr. David Sanabria
2. Mr. David Hurwitz (Chair)
3. Dr. Wendy Driscoll (Secretary)
4. Mr. Raul Cosculluela
5. Mrs. Mary Jo Espasas
6. Sir Jason Maddox
7. Mr. Jaime Palés

*Notes taken by Wendy Driscoll using Otter AI

Board Forum Notes

David Sanabria and board members discussed strategies for sustainable growth and enrollment at TPA. David Sanabria highlighted steady growth and expanding enrollment in specific grades. The team discussed catering to diverse students, strengthening technological capacity, and expanding teachings and services. David Sanabria discussed hiring additional staff, improving the student experience, and providing financial aid and scholarships. Finally, the speakers discussed the integration of comprehensive assessment systems and AI in education, emphasizing the importance of using data to inform teaching practices and addressing ethical challenges.

Minutes

1. Introduction of Board members.

- David Sanabria introduces the members of the Board of Trustees.

2. School growth, staffing, and enrollment projections.

- David Sanabria discusses TPA school's enrollment growth, focusing on specific grades.
- TPA expects approximately 550 students next year, with a focus on earlier grades for growth.
- David Sanabria discusses strategies to attract families, including adding staff positions.
- The school has hired new security guards and made additional staff decisions, including a library media specialist and an IT specialist.

3. School growth, hiring, and academic improvements.

- David Sanabria discusses school growth and hiring: Operations Manager, administrative assistant, research specialist, security person, and multiple teaching positions are being added.
- Teacher shortages and school closures are challenges.
- David Sanabria discusses improving academic quality by implementing a dynamic student-centered teaching approach.
- School aims to maintain low student-teacher ratio (20 students per section) while offering more honors and specialty electives.

4. Modernizing schools to better support students.

- David Sanabria highlights the importance of evolving schools to meet the needs of students, emphasizing the need for a more personalized and student-centered approach to learning.
- David Sanabria discusses the Learner Profile, a covenant that outlines the qualities and characteristics they want their students to embody, and the commitment to ongoing professional development for teachers.
- David Sanabria discusses teacher evaluations, focusing on the importance of separating classroom observations from evaluations to reduce stigma and promote objective feedback.
- Sanabria emphasizes the need for principals and academic leaders to learn how to observe and provide feedback in a narrative and objective manner.

5. School improvements, including teacher compensation, communications, and fundraising.

- David Sanabria discusses improvements in teacher compensation and benefits at TPA.
- TPA invests in teachers' professional development and offers retirement plan.
- David Sanabria highlights communications as a major area of opportunity for the organization, emphasizing the importance of a consistent and well-defined process for social media and content creation.
- David Sanabria notes that fundraising efforts have increased significantly this year but acknowledges that more work is needed to sustain the organization's quality and growth.

6. Improving school facilities, alumni relations, and sports programs.

- David Sanabria discusses the need for a student center at the school, where students can hang out and have access to screens for entertainment and information.
- Alumni Relations aims to connect with graduates through a database, allowing the school to provide information and support for upcoming events.
- David Sanabria outlines plans for special programs at the school, including high-performance sports like baseball and tennis.
- He distinguishes between financial aid and financial support, highlighting the school's efforts to provide scholarships and aid to families in need.

7. School funding, scholarships, and board of trustees' roles.

- David Sanabria discusses financial aid and scholarships at the school, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing education and providing support for families in need.
- The school allocates \$75,000 annually for financial aid and scholarships, with a focus on students who demonstrate academic or artistic talent.
- David Sanabria outlines Master Plan improvements for academics, arts, and athletics.
- Board of Trustees has staggered 3-year terms, limited involvement in day-to-day operations.

8. School board elections and school funding.

- Elections will occur in May for two board positions (TPA parent or Palmas resident). The required documents will be submitted from May 13-19, with interviews on May 20-24 and voting on May 28-29. Complete details will be provided over the coming weeks by email and social media.
- David Sanabria discusses FEMA funding for the school.

9. Standardized testing and academic growth in Puerto Rican schools.

- Consultant firm helping identify funding for school improvements.
- Some areas of improvement include parking lot repair and employee parking.
- David Sanabria highlights the benefits of using MAP testing to measure academic growth, including benchmark testing and growth monitoring.
- David Sanabria: Excited about other schools adopting MAP test for growth measurement.
- Jaime Palés: MAP test provides usable data for benchmarking and growth measurement.

10. High school athlete profiles and recruitment and technology investment.

- Parents ask David Sanabria about the possibility of creating an athlete profile system for student-athletes.
- David Sanabria emphasizes the importance of researching academic quality and sports programs when choosing a college.
- The group discusses why high school athletes' personal information is not publicly available.
- David Sanabria recommends direct video and email outreach to college coaches for student athletes.
- The group discusses the importance of technology education, including coding, for students.
- David Sanabria shares insights on the school's technology plan, including hiring a teacher for secondary grades and expanding space for the Learning Center.

11. AI in education.

- Jaime Palés and David Sanabria discuss their platform's ability to generate questions for teacher evaluations.
- David Sanabria and Jaime Palés discussed the impact of AI on education, with Sanabria highlighting the potential benefits of leveraging AI in education.
- David Sanabria emphasized the importance of taking baby steps in implementing AI in education, rather than trying to do everything at once.
- The group discusses the challenges of implementing AI in education, including ensuring accuracy and dealing with misinformation.
- They emphasize the importance of onboarding teachers and students in using AI tools and addressing concerns about safety and privacy.

12. Education, AI, and school growth.

- David Sanabria and the group discuss creating an ethical framework for AI use in education.
- The audience discusses space constraints due to growing enrollment. David Sanabria mentions fundraising goal for elementary school wing, with hopes for additional FEMA funding and potentially moving the golf cart parking to allow for the conversion of the current golf cart parking to regular parking spots.

13. The meeting concludes at 7:45 PM.