



First 8 Memphis Board Meeting**Date:** May 5, 2020**Time:** 11:00am – 12:30pm

Board Members Present: Jim Boyd, Kathy Buckman Gibson, Dr. Antonio Burt, Tanya Hart, Tomeka Hart Wigginton, Amber Huett Garcia, Dr. Carol Johnson Dean, Keva Latham, Yvonne Madlock, Mary McDaniel, Patrice Robinson, Alex Smith, and Michael Whaley

Board Members Absent: Dr. Marion Hare and Rebecca Yeung

Staff Present: Dr. Kandace Thomas, LaDora Watkins, LeAmber Hill, Ginny Renfroe

Visitors: Marie Dennan (Big Green Memphis), Marquita (Guest), Ronda Hughey (Hughey's Debits and Credits), Andy Jones (Burch Porter Johnson), and Mark Sturgis, Jamilica Burke, Haley Simmons (Seeding Success)

The First 8 Memphis Board of Directors meeting was held electronically in the Zoom platform. State of Tennessee Executive Order by The Governor No. 16 provides that electronic means of conducting business is "critical to limiting the community spread of COVID-19".

Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chairperson Buckman Gibson called the meeting to order at 11:07 a.m.

Board Business

Review of February 20, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes

Chairman Buckman Gibson referenced the meeting minutes from the February 20th meetings that were included in the board materials sent via email. The Executive Session minutes are still being prepared and will be provided to the Board for approval at the next meeting. A motion to approve the minutes from February 20th was made by Mary McDaniel with a second by Tanya Hart. There were no objections therefore, the motion was approved.

Executive Director Report



The new Executive Director, Dr. Kandace Thomas, provided her first ED report using PowerPoint to capture the work of First 8 Memphis. The report included a Quarter 2 update, Pre-K Operations during COVID-19, Year 2 Pre-K RFQ Process, Home Visiting and Childcare and Other updates.

Q2 Report

- First 8 Memphis gave a Quarter 2 update to its investors and stakeholders- (Maycomb 3/13/2020), City of Memphis (4/23/2020) and Shelby County Government (4/29/2020) that includes Memphis and Shelby County high level Pre-K data.
- Q2 Data: Data is gathered around kindergarten readiness, enrollment and attendance, and growth – academic and social/emotional - using I-Station Data. The Q2 report represents Oct 2019 - Dec 2019 results. I-Station and Kindergarten Readiness data was not available for this report. There was an increase in Pre-K enrollment in Q2. Approximately 1100 students enrolled in Q1; Enrollment increased to 1223 students in Q2. There was a decrease in attendance in Q2. Many of the reasons are related to poverty and the lack of resources – transportation, day to day necessities needed to go to school ready to learn, and students taking “extra” days outside of those allocated during the holidays. Additionally, in Fall 2019, there was an incidence of more illness and flu like symptoms in Shelby County than other counties in Tennessee. All these factors are assumed to have contributed to the decrease in attendance for Q2.
- Q2 Next Steps: First 8 Memphis will finalize data and reporting for Q3, end of year, and year 2 budget justification. Staff is currently working on the Q3 report and YTD reports. These will be used as an opportunity for budget justification. The YTD report will include fiscal updates, an COVID-19 response update, and recommendations to the County for the Pre-K budget Academic Year 20-21.
- Q2 Fiscal Report (2020): As of April 2020, \$6.5 million dollars has been spent to fund 66 classrooms. \$4.5 million remains. That includes Q4 payments for Pre-K classrooms.

Pre-K operations in the midst of COVID-19

- Our Pre-K classrooms were surveyed about what has happened given COVID-19 and school building closures since the middle of March 2020. Teachers and operators are contacting Pre-K students no less than weekly. Some are making connections daily, while others make contact twice a week. Phone calls, online videos, virtual meetings, emails, and hand delivered learning packets keep them in touch with students. COVID-19 has highlighted the digital divide across the country. Here in Shelby County, hand delivered packets are extremely important and afford



children and families without the technological resources to stay connected to learning opportunities. When asked how regularly teachers and operators are able to contact students, they reported between 75%-90% of the time. Barriers to accessing parents were indicated on the survey as families choosing not to participate, lack of technological resources, phone disconnected/number changed, lack of tangible resources, and wrong mailing addresses.

- Additionally, teachers and operators shared the following direct quotes when asked to share their thoughts and/or ways that First 8 Memphis could be helpful: “We need to slow the rush to make all of the learning digital”, “F8M can advocate for us with key partners at the local and state level with respect to policies around attendance, and funding for schools and related support services (i.e. food service coordinated by the district and nonprofit partners, health services from community and state agencies, etc.)”, “Continue to update the resource page on the First 8 Memphis webpage”, “Continued funding and communication. BCS receives wrap around services and our casework continues to reach out to families” and “Ongoing support with families service information and tools”

Pre-K RFQ process and next steps

- First 8 Memphis is in the process of reviewing the Pre-K applications for year 2. Our goal is to expand and improve the quality of Pre-K and provide a funded seat to every eligible four-year old. The goal is to have 100 classrooms by School Year 2021. We anticipate a growth gain of 5-8 classrooms for the school year 2020. All the classrooms in the First 8 Memphis program receive wraparound supports services. We are cautioned that the determination for the 2020-21 academic year may be influenced by COVID-19 and any ongoing disruptions to the early care and education system. First 8 Memphis received 16 applications - 10 from current F8M operators and 6 new operators. The new applicants are Able Academy, Horn Lake Road Learning Center, Perea Preschool, Promise Academy, Barbara K. Lippman Early Learning and Research Center, and Lambs and Ivy School. While the goal of the application process is to ensure First 8 Memphis endeavors to reach 100 classrooms, a deep dive is being done to identify any opportunities of concern from current operators prior to contracting for year 2. There is an evaluation committee for the Pre-K operator proposals. Committee members are paired with another member. They read each proposal individually and then review as a pair to develop a shared numerical score of each application. They are currently finalizing their recommendations. The Oversight Committee will also be updated this week. On May 12th, the Board will receive recommendations and by May 18th, Operators will



receive decision letters with a noted caveat regarding City and County budget decisions.

Home Visiting and Child Care

Home Visiting has shifted to telehealth services. They have increased the frequency of communication online as well as professional development offerings to home visitors with resources and news. Families are still being recruited into the Nurturing Parenting program, a program that seeks to develop parent-child attachment. Enrollment has continued despite COVID-19 and 54 referrals were received in April 2020.

Regarding Childcare, Next Memphis has a plan to recruit and work with a cohort of childcare providers annually. This year, they have selected 11 childcare partners to understand their resources and begin to implement their shared services platform.

30-60-90-day Onboarding Plan

- First 8 Memphis and Seeding Success has hired a firm to support the transition and onboarding of the Executive Director. The transition includes a ton of meetings with First 8 Memphis staff, Seeding Success staff, board members, and key stakeholders and partners. Onboarding meetings with staff have begun and non-staff meetings are forthcoming. This is an opportunity for Dr. Thomas to understand the history of First 8 Memphis, how far we've come in the first year of operations and how to expand the 0-3 and K-3 work. Beginning phases of what the organization looks like overall and what some of her thoughts, ideas, and strategies are for the organization. Parent and community engagement was incredibly important to First 8 Memphis and the previous ED, Regina Walker, when Dr. Thomas visited in February 2020. Dr. Thomas is committed to that and will explore it over the coming months. Dr. Thomas will also be thinking about operations related to First 8 Memphis staff and First 8 Memphis board. She acknowledged that the meeting materials were sent the evening before the meeting. Going forward, she hoped that we would have a better process in which we hold ourselves accountable as staff. The board will also be asked for things that are needed so we can move forward in a cohesive way.

Other updates include upcoming meetings: Oversight Committee meeting on May 7th, Early Childhood Consortium meeting on May 14th, and Leadership Council meeting will be pending a date in June.

Chairperson Buckman Gibson thanked Dr. Thomas for jumping into all the initiatives “both feet first” during a very difficult time in terms of how we best support our parents, families, providers, etc. Board members were invited to ask questions Commissioner Whaley gave Dr. Thomas a shout out for the presentation at the County Commission last week. He noted that the presentation highlighted some of the things that members



of the Commission care about, specifically how we are maximizing the opportunity and maximizing the investment.

Commissioner Whaley asked “Regarding the survey results from our operators, is there a space that F8M can occupy in terms of aggregating best practices around the country and the world in how we rethink early childhood education going forward and sharing those things out?” Dr. Thomas stated that there was much more survey data. It will be shared with the Early Childhood Consortium so that they have a sense of what each other is doing, the virtual platforms, and other strategies used to reach families. Dr. Thomas has given thought to the question of what early care and education looks like given a global pandemic. The staff will allocate some time to learn from others and bring back some best practices.

Dr. Carol Johnson Dean: “Do you have a sense of how other providers are thinking about technology or cell phone access? Do they have a strategy? Dr. Thomas deferred to staff for thoughts. More learnings are expected to come out of the Early Childhood Consortium meeting on 14th. Many of the families are being assisted by Family Service Workers (Porter Leath) with accessing internet services. Some internet providers are making it available for free, however many families do not know how to tap into it. There are some spots in our community, considered “dead zones”, that are being looked at to ensure there is access countywide. Some providers have given I Pads to families; however, many are preferring to hand deliver learning packets to homes versus providing technology resources. The technology tools and access continue to be challenges.

Mary McDaniel had two comments. She was surprised to see 60% (ASD) and 70% (Shelby County Schools) as it relates to lack of participation due to technology. Even though we have a strategic plan and we have to rethink our learning model, would it not be better for us to try and shore up some of the existing issues that reveal themselves throughout the COVID-19 process. If we move right into expansion, we may lose some of our current operators because they need more assistance, not less.

Chairman Buckman Gibson invited Dr Burt to comment on the digital divide. He pointed out that the issue is greater than a digital divide with devices. SCS is working on a plan to ensure that through change management, there is some adult learning for adults that should support instruction. It’s a year- long process to drive instruction through devices This change management process will work with teachers and the community. Many online resources have been provided for parents at home but may seem boring to the individual at home. SCS is doing a communication plan to address adult learning of



change management as well as how to best support guardians at home to extend I Ready. Surveys from community members reveal that parents are overwhelmed with providing additional support at home. It's a three-prong approach. Over the next two weeks, Dr. Ray is developing a cross functional committee from the public and private sector to discuss a county wide initiative to address all these layers.

Dr. Carol Johnson stated that Comcast gave devices to students in the 38116-zip code. Dr. Burt added that a larger scale initiative several years saw the District attempting to do blended learning. It was supposed to support 17 schools. Many dollars were raised, but at the time the model did not consider reaching the adult learners. It was not a true, comprehensive plan and it was learned that the assumption should not be made that teachers are tech savvy and when devices go home, adults know what to do with them. The Comcast initiative was about rewarding students. It was not aligned to instruction taking place in the schools. Another example, in Alabama, is the use of mobile hotspots to ensure students can access technology services during certain times of the day. These and other ideas are being looked at to determine a long-term approach for students through this COVID-19. Ginny added that authentic learning opportunities at home are more critical than learning packets sent to the home. Dr. Burt added that the State had approved student ability to approve grades acquired prior to March 20th. SCS teachers for grades K-12 are giving authentic learning assignments that do not involve technology, but things within the household, over a two-week period. A total of five points will go toward the 4th quarter average. The district is also looking universally at how this opportunity can help students develop mastery over a period.

Yvonne Madlock made a comment. The other perspective is that if we approach this right and can identify solutions, we emerge stronger than we were before because of the issues of digital divide and the challenges that low-income children and families face with educational opportunities, we are there for. She is very excited about the conversation around creating learning opportunities for parents and how they can respond to and utilize tools. There is opportunity to think on how First 8 Memphis can support these areas and develop relationship building. If we can do those things, we will advance the educational processes and opportunities.

Chairman Buckman Gibson added that in terms of evaluating competencies in learning, we had used attendance as a proxy this past year. We will have to rethink some of that because there may be situations in which parents may not be comfortable sending children to school. We will need to rethink how to evaluate whether we are making



progress around the learning and competencies of these children but with multiple learning opportunities.

Banking resolutions

A holdover item from the last meeting is related to the banking resolutions. There was not a quorum present to take an official vote. The Board would like to add Dr. Kandace Thomas to the bank accounts with signing authority up to \$10,000. Anything above that amount will require two signatures. We also want to add a second board member, Mary McDaniel, to the accounts, as well as the Treasurer, Keva Latham. Commissioner Michael Whaley will also be added, but with view access only.

A motion was made by Tomeka Hart Wigginton to add Dr. Kandace Thomas, Mary McDaniel, Keva Latham, and Commissioner Michael Whaley to the bank accounts and seconded by Amber Huett-Garcia. The following resolution was approved without objection:

BE IT RESOLVED, the Board hereby approves adding Mary McDaniel, Director and Member of the Finance Committee, Keva Latham, Treasurer and Member of the Finance Committee, and Kandace Thomas, Executive Director, as a signatory to the Operating, Loan and Money Market Accounts for First 8 Memphis at First Horizon Bank; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board hereby approves providing Commissioner Michael Whaley as Chair of the Finance Committee access to information regarding all First 8 Memphis accounts at First Horizon Bank.

Committee Reports

Commissioner Michael Whaley, Chair of the Finance Committee, provided a brief update of the committee meetings held since the last board meeting. Some items will be considered in the Executive Session. February and March financials were reviewed. These will be available for approval at the next board meeting. Additionally, the audit is wrapping up and there are currently no red flags to report.

Adjournment

Chairman Buckman Gibson invited our guests to ask questions prior to adjournment to the Executive Session but there were none. The guests exited the call and the meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m. to the Executive Session.



Public Meeting

The Executive Session adjourned at 12:50 p.m. so that a public vote could be made. Directors present included Jim Boyd, Kathy Buckman Gibson, Amber Huett Garcia, Dr. Carol Johnson Dean, Keva Latham, Yvonne Madlock, Mary McDaniel, Alex Smith, and Michael Whaley. A motion to authorize First 8 Memphis staff to present IV Quarter Payment recommendations to the board at the May 12th meeting and taking into account the parameters that were discussed today and advice from legal counsel. Motion was made by Commissioner Michael Whaley with a second by Mary McDaniel. There were no objections to the motion. The meeting adjourned 12:53 p.m.
