February Board Meeting Minutes, February 23, 2026

Board Members Present:	**Others LION asked to be in Attendance:**
Rosann Santos Talal Rojas Nicholas Ober Julie Medler Tony Stoupas David Schatsky Ruth Jarmul Catherine Jessup Herb Fixler Deborah Dumont Ana Maria Gomez	Keveney McCrillis, Director of Communications and Strategic Projects Celia Sosa, CEO Leslie Rich, CFO Maya Severns, Director of Development and Marketing **Members of the Public:**

Tony Stoupas, Board Chair, called for a motion to begin the meeting at 6:04 PM. The motion was seconded by Julie Medler and unanimously approved.

Tony Stoupas motioned to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve the December meeting minutes, which had been shared via email before the meeting. Nick Ober seconded the motion. The December meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Tony called for a motion to vote on the new three-year terms for board members Ruth Jarmul and Tony Stoupas. Herb Fixler seconded the motion and discussed both members. Ruth Jarmul and Tony Stoupas's new three-year terms were unanimously approved.

Tony revisited the new committee structure, which had been previously distributed and discussed at the January retreat, noting that changes had been made to balance the workload among board members. Committees for HR, Marketing, and Facilities would transition into liaison officer roles to provide updates. He called for a motion to formally accept this new structure, which was proposed. Nick Ober seconded the motion, and the new committees were unanimously approved.

Tony reviewed the board's action items from the previous meeting, emphasizing the need to consistently connect discussions to APPR goals. The board committed to increased engagement, requiring all members to attend at least two community events annually and attend some Family Council meetings. The Directors of Family Engagement will be invited to future board meetings for an unstructured dialogue about their work. The board confirmed its openness to expanding Lion's enrollment, provided that it continues to serve the community and does not pose a financial or cultural risk to current students and the community. The consideration for a real estate purchase would require a significantly

higher level of scrutiny. Discussions were also held around the use of AI at LION and post-secondary pathways.

Celia Sosa, LION's Chief Executive Officer, reviewed the CEO report, which was emailed before the meeting. She shared Q2 school culture survey showed notable improvements, especially in elementary school team response rates and reported trust with the principal. She then shared that LION is on track to meet or exceed its enrollment target of 1,000 students for the next school year, though they are still working to close a gap in second-grade enrollment.

Celia then discussed the quarterly academic report which included summarized winter NWEA results, showing year-over-year improvement in math and reading, as well as steady Q1 to Q2 performance. Internal benchmarks, which are aligned to state assessments and the Common Core standards, showed improvement in ELA proficiency from Q1 to Q2 for tested grades 3 through 8. Math performance remained steady Q1 to Q2. There was a board question about the internal measure of proficiency. Celia confirmed that the organization remains on track to meet or exceed all key APPR measures in high school and briefly discussed freshman credit accumulation. A board member inquired about the diminishing role of Regents exams in New York graduation metrics. Celia Sosa answered.

Finally, Celia reported receiving an email from SUNY requesting an in-person, one-hour meeting next month with the leadership team, which is likely the mid-charter term site visit.

Leslie Rich, LION's Chief Financial Officer, then presented her financial report, which was shared via email along with LION's monthly financials before the meeting. Leslie Rich shared the January closed financials, noting that the semi-annual swap valuation was factored into the numbers. She mentioned two current job postings for a high school ELA position and a part-time porter. Leslie Rich noted a significant dip in IDEA funding for special education students which will be factored into 2027 budget planning but will not have a meaningful impact this year. Celia Sosa reminded the board that any significant repairs, such as the heating system, will require board approval and the facility committee's consideration. Tony S asked Leslie Rich if a placeholder should be included in the budget for potential costs related to AI investments. Leslie Rich answered.

Maya Severns, Director of Development and Marketing, presented her report which was shared before the meeting via email. She provided an update on fundraising, noting their focus on grant funding, with many current efforts aimed at the next fiscal year. She reported that several donations for the endowment fund came in during December and January, and some three-year commitments have been renewed for a fourth year. Finally, Maya shared that LION is moving forward with its website redesign, with content being built out and a launch expected in April. Video footage is being gathered for the website and other marketing uses, such as on LinkedIn. Outdoor marketing campaigns are currently

running, focusing on the pillars of Character, Leadership, and Family.

Tony Stoupas then asked for committee updates. Celia Sosa and Nicholas Ober expressed excitement about the renderings for the elementary school renovations, which aim for completion this summer. The designs, developed with Studio Modh, will create cohesion across spaces using color, architectural elements, and redesigned common spaces. All other committee updates were given earlier in the meeting.

Tony Stoupas then called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 PM. Talal Rojas seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Notes prepared by Keveney McCrillis.