October 29, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL
[redacted]

RE: Resolution of Complaint Concerning I Dream Public Charter School Board's Compliance with the Open Meetings Act (#OOG-2025-0026)

Dear [redacted]:

On February 12, 2025, the Office of Open Government ("OOG") received your complaint #OOG-2025-0026 (the "Complaint") [which is a part of collective complaint (#OOG-2025-0003) (the "Collective Complaint")] alleging that I Dream Public Charter School Board ("I Dream PCSB," or the "Board") has not provided meeting location or links to its meetings and the last meeting minutes was published in December 2024.[1]

This response only addresses your Complaint against I Dream Public Charter School Board since the Office of Open Government has responded to your (Collective) Complaint (#OOG-2025-0003), and as with complaint #OOG-2025-0026 and the others to which we have responded, OOG will respond to the remaining complaints under their assigned respective (sub)-complaint numbers.

As you are aware, the Office of Open Government has the statutory charge to ensure that public bodies adhere to the Open Meetings Act.[2] The OMA reiterates the District of Columbia's long-standing public policy that "all persons are entitled to full and complete information regarding the affairs of [the] government and the actions of those who represent them."[3] To support this policy, the OMA requires that its provisions be construed broadly to increase public access to public bodies' meetings.[4]

Pursuant to 3 DCMR § 10400 *et seq*.,[5] OOG reviewed and assessed the Complaint and the response from the former Chairperson of I Dream PCSB. OOG also reviewed I Dream Public Charter School's ("I Dream PCS," or the "school") website. The Board relinquished its Charter at the end of School Year 2024-2025 and is not in operation. Thus, I recognize that the allegation in your Complaint is moot. Notwithstanding, I have decided to address the matter and issue this

[1] Email from [redacted] to Office of Open Government (OOG) on February 12, 2025.
[2] D.C. Official Code § 2-571, *et seq*.
[3] D.C. Official Code § 2-572.
[4] D.C. Official Code § 2-573.
[5] 3 DCMR § 10400 – Filing and Presentation of Complaints.

Advisory Opinion for the benefit of the stakeholders of active Boards of Trustees for Public Charter Schools and should I Dream PCSB resume operation under a new Charter Agreement.

I find that I Dream PCSB violated the OMA by not (1) providing location or login information and links to its meetings and (2) posting its January 8, 2025, meeting minutes within the statutorily required three (3) days on I Dream PCS' website and/or Central Meeting Calendar ("CMC"). However, prior to relinquishing its Charter, the Board corrected the issues in part, by posting its 2025 meetings minutes on the school's website and the Chairperson, in response to your Complaint, stated her resolve to ensure that all links to the Board's meetings will be published in a timely manner.[6]

My analysis begins with the facts, followed by a discussion of the relevant section of the OMA. I will conclude with a discussion of my enforcement authority under the OMA.

I. BACKGROUND

A. The Complaint

On February 10, 2025, you sent an email to OOG concerning alleged OMA violations by eleven Boards of Trustees, followed by an email inquiry about whether to submit separate complaints against forty-seven Boards of Trustees in alleged violation of the OMA or a detailed report of the total violations. In response to your question, OOG suggested that you "submit one complaint that collectively captures the 47 (or more) charters with [] a detailed report of the total, elaborating the potential problems with each."[7] On February 12, 2025, you submitted the Collective Complaint (Complaints) via email to OOG. Your Collective Complaint contains the Complaint against I Dream Public Charter School Board, as follows: "No locations or links; last minutes from 12/24."[8]

The following is a summary of the then I Dream PCSB former Chairperson's email response to the Complaint.

B. Summary of the then I Dream PCSB March 6, 2025, email response to the Complaint.

To issue this response, OOG provided the former Chairperson of the then I Dream PCSB with a redacted (for personal identifiable information) copy of the Complaint, thereby availing I Dream PCSB of the opportunity to respond to the said Complaint. The former Chairperson responded via email on March 6, 2025, and stated in part the following:

> For 2025, the I Dream Public Charter School Board has two meetings this year. One was on January 8th, and the other was yesterday (March 5, 2025). We were able to vote on the January meetings yesterday evening, and those meetings

[6] Email from (former) Chairperson Chante Chambers, (the then) I Dream Public Charter School Board (I Dream PSCB) to Attorney Advisor Joan Lelma (OOG) on March 6, 2025.
[7] Email from [redacted] to Office of Open Government (OOG) on February 10, 2025.
[8] Email from [redacted] to Office of Open Government (OOG) on February 12, 2025.

> will be posted shortly. There was no formal board meeting in February, hence the 30-day lag, because we had to wait until the board could vote to approve the minutes.
>
> Concerning locations, our board meetings are virtual. On the I Dream website, the dates of the meetings are listed. We use a virtual Zoom account to conduct our meetings. Moving forward, we will work to ensure that all links to our meetings are published in advance.[9]

The former Chairperson expressed a willingness to provide additional information or take further steps if required by the Office of Open Government.

I now, move to discuss the Complaint, that I Dream PCSB has not provided meeting location or links to its meetings and the last meeting minutes was published in December 2024.[10] This is followed by a discussion of my enforcement authority under the OMA.

II. DISCUSSION

A. The OMA requires that the meeting notice of a public body includes the date, time, location, and planned agenda to be covered at the meeting.

Your allegation in part is that I Dream PCSB has not provided meeting location or links to its meetings. All meetings properly constituted to conduct public business, as defined under the OMA,[11] unless specifically and legally exempted,[12] are presumed to be open to the public, and the public must receive advanced notice of the date, time, location and draft agenda.[13] Also, pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 2-576(1), the public must be given notice of the change of schedule of a meeting, as soon as possible, or at least forty-eight (48) hours or two (2) business days, whichever is greater, before a meeting. If one of the requirements of the notice is absent (date, time, location, and draft agenda) pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 2-576(5), a proper meeting notice has not been provided.

The District of Columbia's Open Meetings Regulation instructions on how to conduct electronic meetings demonstrates that the means of access to electronic meetings is included in "location" in the OMA.[14] 3 § DCMR 10409.7 states, "[a] Public Body conducting a meeting by electronic means shall ensure the meeting complies with the Open Meetings Act and take the following actions: (a) Provide a dial-in number for the public to participate in the meeting if the meeting is held by teleconference; (b) Provide login information if the meeting is held by web-conference." Furthermore, OOG has provided clarification through one of its issued Guidance on electronic public body meetings. The guidance, together with the OMA and Regulation, shows

[9] Email from (former) Chairperson Chante Chambers, (the then) I Dream Public Charter School Board (I Dream PSCB) to Attorney Advisor Joan Lelma (OOG) on March 6, 2025.
[10] Email from [redacted] to Office of Open Government (OOG) on February 12, 2025.
[11] D.C. Official Code § 2-574(1).
[12] D.C. Official Code § 2-575(b).
[13] D.C. Official Code § 2-576(5).
[14] 3 DCMR 10409.7, D.C. Official Code § 2-576(5).

that for virtual or hybrid meetings, "location" includes valid login information and website link, if the meeting is held by web-conference, and if the meeting is held by teleconference, valid dial-in number and access code to the meeting.[15]

I find that I Dream PCSB was in violation of the OMA for not having posted full meeting notices for its meetings, as required by the OMA. If a public body's meeting is held at a physical location, it must be stated and the address clearly written on the meeting notice. Where the meeting is virtual or hybrid, valid login information and website links must be provided for a web-conference meeting. If the meeting is held by teleconference, valid dial-in number and access code to the meeting must be on the meeting notice. The Complaint and OOG's investigation show that I Dream did not adhere to these statutory requirements. However, the Chairperson's response shows a resolve to post the meeting links on the school's website before its meetings. While this is a good step forward to posting meeting notices before the Board's respective meetings, such notices must adhere to the OMA's time requirement of at least forty-eight (48) hours or two (2) business days, whichever is greater, before a meeting.[16]

I now move to discuss the second allegation in your Complaint that I Dream PCSB last published meeting minutes in December 2024. This is followed by a discussion of my enforcement authority under the OMA.

B. The OMA requires that public bodies record all the bodies' meetings (open and closed sessions), and when not feasible, detailed meeting minutes must be taken. Also, the open session records must be made available for the public's inspection and be preserved for at least five years.

The OMA applies to public body meetings where there is a "gathering of a quorum of the members of a public body, including hearings and roundtables, whether formal or informal, regular, special, or emergency, at which the members consider, conduct, or advise on public business."[17] The term "public body" means "any government council, including the Council of the District of Columbia, board, commission, or similar entity, including a board of directors of an instrumentality, a board which supervises or controls an agency, the board of trustees of a public charter school, or an advisory body that takes official action by the vote of its members convened for such purpose."[18] The OMA applies when members of a public body meet as a quorum and conduct any form of public business.

Where an entity is found to be a public body under the OMA[19] and a meeting within the meaning of the OMA[20] has been conducted, all the requirements of the OMA must be adhered to. Among the requirements are that open and closed session meetings must be recorded, and the former must be available to the public. D.C. Official Code § 2-578(a) states, "All meetings of

[15] OOG's *Guidance for Conducting Electronic Meetings After the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency* (Amended October 17, 2023).
[16] D.C. Official Code § 2-576(1).
[17] D.C. Official Code § 2-574(1).
[18] D.C. Official Code § 2-574(3).
[19] *Ibid*.
[20] D.C. Official Code § 2-574(1)(A).

public bodies, whether open or closed, shall be recorded by electronic means, and the recording shall be preserved for a minimum of 5 years; provided, that if a recording is not feasible, detailed minutes of the meeting shall be taken and preserved for a minimum of 5 years."

Furthermore, where pursuant to the OMA, copies of records of public meetings are not exempt from public inspection as closed/executive session records, the records must be made available to the public in accordance with the statute.[21] D.C. Official Code § 2-578(b) (1-2) states as follows: "A copy of the minutes of a meeting shall be made available for public inspection as soon as practicable, but no later than 3 business days after the meeting, or in the case of a board of trustees for a public charter school, no later than 30 business days after the meeting.[22] A copy of the full record, including any recording or transcript, shall be made available for public inspection as soon as practicable, but no later than 7 business days after the meeting."[23]

Based on the preceding, Chairperson Chambers' response on behalf of I Dream PCSB, and OOG staff's research, the Board had violated the OMA by not posting draft meeting minutes or (access to) recordings on I Dream PCS' website and/or Central Meeting Calendar within the specified time under the statute. OOG staff's research of I Dream PCS' website on February 26, 2025, revealed that draft meeting minutes or recordings were not posted on the PCS' website for the Board's meeting that was held on January 8, 2025. Furthermore, the following response from Chairperson Chambers stating the reason for having not posted the draft meeting minutes requires addressing.

Chairperson Chambers stated that "[t]here was no formal board meeting in February, hence the 30-day lag, because we had to wait until the board could vote to approve the minutes."[24] D.C. Official Code § 2-578(b)(1) mandates that a copy of the minutes of a public body's meeting must be made available for public inspection as soon as practicable, but no later than three (3) business days after the public body's meeting. The publishing requirement for board of trustees for public charter school is within thirty (30) business days after its meeting.[25] I Dream PCSB erred in not posting its draft meeting minutes within the statutorily required time. A public body must not wait until its meeting minutes have been finalized (voted on and adopted) at its next meeting before posting meeting minutes of a previous meeting for the first time. The draft minutes must be posted in adherence to the OMA. The draft minutes also must have a notation at the top that states that detailed meeting minutes will be posted to the public body's website on the next meeting date.

I find that I Dream Public Charter School Board was in violation of the OMA for failing to (1) post meeting location or login information and links to its meetings on the school's website and (2) publish the Board's draft meeting minutes from its January 8, 2025, meeting within the statutorily required three business days. The Office of Open Government takes notice that I Dream PCSB's meeting minutes from the three meetings held in 2025 (January 8, 2025; March

[21] D.C. Official Code § 2-578(b), § 2-575(b).
[22] D.C. Official Code § 2-578(b)(1).
[23] D.C. Official Code § 2-578(b)(2).
[24] Email from (former) Chairperson Chante Chambers, (the then) I Dream Public Charter School Board (I Dream PSCB) to Attorney Advisor Joan Lelma (OOG) on March 6, 2025.
[25] D.C. Official Code § 2-578(b)(2).

21, 2025; and April 2, 2025) were posted to the school's website before the Board relinquished its Charter. However, it is unclear why the Board reviewed and voted on its March 5, 2023, meeting minutes at the March 21, 2025, meeting. In addition, Chairperson Chambers states the following in the Board's response to your Complaint: "[f]or 2025, the I Dream Public Charter School Board has two meetings this year. One was on January 8th, and the other was yesterday (March 5, 2025)."[26] Based on OOG's staff research, the Board has posted a meeting minutes for its meeting held on March 21, 2025, and not March 5, 2025. However, the Board's School Year 2024-2025 schedule had a meeting scheduled for March 5, 2025.

If I Dream PCSB had not relinquished its Charter, my directive to the Board prior to this Advisory Opinion would have been to not only ensure meeting notices are posted before the Boards meetings, but to also ensure that the notices adhere to the OMA's time requirement of at least forty-eight (48) hours or two (2) business days, whichever is greater, before the Board's meetings occur.[27] I would still have issued this Advisory Opinion. I would have directed I Dream PCSB to post the final or detailed meeting minutes of its March 5, 2023 meeting if the reason for voting on it at the March 21, 2025 meeting is because it was not voted on and adopted at prior meetings, or if the date is a typographical error, to make it clear to the public. In addition, I would have advised that if the inconsistency between March 5, 2025, meeting date on the schedule and March 21, 2025, on the meeting minutes are because of changes to the date on the schedule after it was posted, the Board must update the schedule as the changes occur to conform with the OMA.[28]

Next, I will discuss my enforcement authority under the OMA and conclude.

III. ENFROCEMENT AUTHORITY AND CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing analysis, I find that I Dream PCSB violated the OMA by having not posted meeting location or login information and links to its meetings on the school's website and published the Board's draft meeting minutes from its January 8, 2025, meeting within three (3) business days. I am empowered to seek injunctive and declaratory relief when certain OMA violations have occurred.[29] However, since I Dream PCSB has relinquished its Charter and is no longer in operation, the allegation in your Complaint to the extent of determining the appropriate relief and any directive for compliance and recommendation for training by the Board is moot. My findings are limited specifically to the facts and circumstances of this Complaint. This concludes with my opinion on the matter.

[26] Email from (former) Chairperson Chante Chambers, (the then) I Dream Public Charter School Board (I Dream PSCB) to Attorney Advisor Joan Lelma (OOG) on March 6, 2025.
[27] D.C. Official Code § 2-576(1).
[28] *Ibid*.
[29] *See* D.C. Official Code § 2-579.

Please contact OOG Attorney Advisor Joan Lelma with any questions and concerns regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Niquelle Allen

Niquelle M. Allen, Esq.
Director, Office of Open Government
Board of Ethics and Government Accountability