

**THE METROLINA REGIONAL SCHOLARS' ACADEMY, INC.**

Open and Closed Session

**Meeting of the Board of Directors**

Conference Room, Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy

Monday, October 27, 2014, 6:30 p.m.

**Voting Members Present**

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**David Saye, Chair**

**Renee Alsop**

**Karen Cleary**

**Shila Fisher**

**Lee Keel**

**Michael Matthews**

**Jen McClave**

**Krista Newkirk**

**Noelle Sproul**

**Eileen Woodward**

**Call to Order and Announcements.** The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

**Adoption of the Agenda.**

Action: A motion to approve the agenda with a reordering of topics was made by Ms. Newkirk, seconded by Ms. Woodward, and approved by the Board.

**Approval of the Meeting Minutes of September 22, 2014.**

Action: A motion to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2014 meeting subject to discussed changes was made by Ms. Woodward, seconded by Ms. Fisher, and approved by the Board.

**Director's Report.** Mr. Yodice presented the Director's report to the Board.

**Community concerns:**

Mr. Yodice apologized about the tone of letter regarding cancellation of Marine Quest and is sorry it caused angst. He explained the reasoning for cancellation: the deadline was approaching to give solid yes/no and attendance numbers had not been cleared up enough confirm the dates. He will try to get all parents and Ms. Torres together to clear up concerns and talk about future field trips. He explained that Ms. Torres is not against field trips this year and will explore new trips so children do not miss out. It was also pointed out that sometimes students get to go on Marine Quest on different years. Board is drafting chaperone policy to help in future.

**Director's report:**

First admissions open house this Saturday (Nov. 1). Staff is expected to attend at least one and parents volunteer. There will be general discussion about program and admissions. The attendance at the open house helps us get sense of applications for the upcoming year.

We got big ad in Observer as make-up for messed up ad. Also ad in Hispanic newspaper, Charlotte Pride, Hispanic radio.

High School Information night coming up Nov. 10. CMS, Union County, Private Schools. Sessions for parents and students (including alumni).

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Intervention specialist is working on intervention model. They work with individual children to accelerate or to remediate. The team came up with model for teachers to refer to intervention team and to evaluated outcomes of intervention, and potential EC evaluation. Mr. Keel asked how the parents would be communicated with regarding EC evaluation – this will be the responsibility of teacher.

### School day schedule

Lunch time change seems to be sufficient and works with PTO lunch service.

We are locked into schedule for this year (DPI won't let us change). We will solicit community comments regarding what to do for next year. We are limited to what we can do with schedule – if school day is shorter, then additional days must be added to calendar.

### Total enrollment/withdrawals

Mr. Yodice sent board enrollment numbers. We have **365** Students enrolled:

K = 35

1st = 37

2nd = 41

3rd = 42

4th = 42

5th = 44

6th = 44

7th = 43

8th = 37

**Total Female: 167 Male: 198**

### Parent Teacher conferences

First round of parent teacher conferences were held Oct 16 and 17. Teachers thought it went well. Middle school split up into different rooms and parents took advantage of one-on-one conferences and got a lot out of it. Second round will be in February. Ms. Newkirk commented that the middle school conferences went better this year than last.

### Copier contract.

Konica/Minolta has new contract for new, better copier at better rate (more copies, overage rate lower, Color copies significantly less expensive). Other benefits: makes banners and replaces fax machine, has better confidentiality. Maintenance included.

Action: Motion to approve contract as long as includes language approved by Ms. Newkirk and Ms. Sproul. Made by Ms. Newkirk, seconded by Ms. Alsop, approved by the board.

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**Community Comments (7:00)**

Brad Forsythe encourages a relatively quick communication (both to kids and parents) regarding field trips in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Let families know that you are working on a trip, and that maybe it won't happen this year, but maybe next year. He appreciates the chance for a face to face meeting and that the board is working on a new chaperone policy.

Julie DiBella commented that the school day is too long. Charter says our kids don't need the extra time in the day and they need time for extracurriculars. She would prefer more days in the calendar. She can help with survey to get sense of what families want. In addition, she noted that she didn't have good experience with conference – they didn't see a single one of her son's teachers.

Maura O'Sullivan had similar poor experience with conferences. Didn't feel that teachers were really accessible.

**Development Update (7:10)**

Ryan Moschel updated board on Annual Giving Campaign which ended on Friday. Board gave 100%. Staff 100%. 94.6% of current parents. Currently at \$523,990 – goal was \$575,000.

Grants and proposals – Jimmie Johnson technology grant will get back to us in Nov/Dec.

Fundraising event planned for March 21. Chef Stybe from Johnson & Wales willing to help with students and site. Compass Group getting back to us regarding getting a name chef (Ivens-Brown).

We are pushing off the Donor Wall celebration to January to have more time to plan.

Ms. Ellis & Mr. Yodice met with Smartcore. They may help improve our Wifi.

Potential sponsorships for science fair – Xoom, Avita Drugs, Positec.

**Charter School Institute Leadership Report (7:15)**

Mr. Yodice, Ms. Cuneo, Ms. Alsop and Ms. Sproul attended conference (see attachment). Report summarizes recommendations for board improvement: 1) Complying with open meeting laws for both board and committee meetings, 2) Committing resources for regular board training, 3) Giving administration policies to guide their decisions. Regarding recommendation 1, Ms. Newkirk notes that it isn't statutory requirement to post for committee meetings, but agrees that it's best practice.

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Mr. Yodice noted that there are many things the board does right (even though there are areas to improve). School is on solid footing and we just need to take it to the next level.

### Policy Committee Updates

**Goals:** Establish policies that guide decisions of school. Ms. Sproul provided list of proposed goals for policy committee (see attachment), and have sample policies from Lake Norman Charter School, Community School of Davidson, and Charlotte Secondary as starting point (will also contact Pine Lake Prep and Socrates). First committee meeting will be Wed Nov 12 at 8:15 and will have a call-in number.

- Ms. Alsop has agreed to take on communicable disease policy. Other members will head up other policies and will share with board ahead of time for discussion. Except in emergency situations, policies will not be approved at initial meeting.
- Time to do comprehensive review of employee benefits.

Action: Ms. Sproul asks to adopt slate of policies. Ms. Alsop seconded. Board approved.

**Chaperone policy:** Ms. Sproul shared draft chaperone policy with board. Board will review and provide comments. Ms. Newkirk is willing to share UNC-C chaperone policies to help.

Dr. Matthews asked for clarification regarding criminal background checks. Ms. Sproul said that this will be worked on by policy committee. Background checks take about 48 hours and cost about \$30 per check.

### Vision Committee Update (7:35)

**Town Hall meeting:** Wiki page went up on Friday to gather questions for upcoming Town Hall meeting. Will be November 17 at 6:30-8pm.

**Outside survey options:** Lisa Waugh explained that it is time for survey (they are performed every two years to understand school climate). Our current survey too confusing so we have received quotes - two came in at \$3-4,000 and the other was \$20K. She proposed that board authorizes a member of the committee to spend up to \$4,000 to procure survey to administer to school so we can move forward. Ms. Alsop explained that the surveys gather opinions from students, teachers, and parents. Funding for the survey is not currently in the budget.

Action: Ms. Sproul moves to give Vision Committee authority to make decision between two viable options, subject to budgetary constraints. We will have to approve budget amendment at next meeting. Motion was seconded and board approved.

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**Gifted conference:** Started developing save the date communications (April 25). Mr. Yodice has nationally-known presenters lined up: Dr. Richard Courtright of Duke TIP will do session for teachers, we are negotiating a price with Michael Clay Thompson, and Heidi Tringali (OT specialist) will offer session for parents & teachers. Dr. Matthews will also present.

**Five year plan:** Committee is just starting to work on five year plan, which will help us set priorities and will benefit fundraising. Last plan was many years ago and we've already accomplished them. Ms. Newkirk noted it might be helpful to create dashboard once plan is created – color code progress being made and why things may not be moving forward and allows you to build budget for each objectives.

**Committee on the Board Report.** Renee Alsop presented on the work of the Committee.

**Update on action items:** have already accomplished items 1-4 on goals for this year.

**Completed board self-assessment:** (see attached report) The two areas where we can do better are: 1) Policy and 2) Defining roles. As such, two short term goals are: 1) develop document that outlines specific duties, 2) in general develop specific policies that are consistent.

Action: Ms. Newkirk made motion to support goals to be attained within school year. Mr. Keel seconded. Board approved.

**New member recruitment:** we have received four applicants for the open board position and the interviews will be held on Nov 3. Ms. Alsop will have recommendation at next meeting.

**Committee recruitment:** COB still looking for non-board member.

### **Conflict of Interest policy:**

Ms. Newkirk explained concern regarding gifts to employees and board members. We are not subject to state statutes, so Ms. Newkirk edited our policy and added two bullet points at end of our policy (see attachment).

Action: Ms. McClave moved to accept changes. Dr. Matthews seconded. Board approved.

### **PTO Update (7:55).**

Melody Perrotta gave quick update on PTO.

- Go Play Save made about \$6800 for technology grant.
- Fall festival was a success and under \$600.
- Lunch program is up and running and new process is working well.

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- A volunteer recognition board has been set up.
- Lock boxes set up to minimize loss of checks.
- Spirit Wear will be available next week.

**Financial Reports and Budget Amendments (8:00).**

Lee Keel presented the financial reports, sent by Ms.Richter. There are no budget amendments this month.

Audit is scheduled for completion this week. Drafts have been prepared and reviewed, should be finalized this week. We will work on incorporating in annual report

Refinancing is moving forward. Appraisal is in process. We haven't decided whether to swap – if we do, we will need a swap advisor. We will need term details by November meeting so we can approve before Dec. 15 deadline.

Letter for acquisition of property went out but we haven't heard yet.

**Motion to Convene in Closed Session.** A motion to convene in closed session pursuant to the following statutes was made by Ms. Newkirk, seconded by Mr. Keel, and approved by the Board:

- a. Pursuant to N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(1), to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of this State or of the United States, or not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes, such privilege or confidentiality arising under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. §1232g) or N.C.G.S. Ch. 126, Art. 7, and
- b. to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee pursuant to N.C.G.S. §143-318.11 (a)(6).

CLOSED SESSION

*The closed session minutes are filed in the office of the Executive Director of the Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy, Inc.*

OPEN SESSION (9:25)

**New Business.** The Amin family has donated two new awnings.

**Motion to Adjourn.** Ms. Newkirk, Mr. Matthews. There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

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### Report on 2014 Charter Leadership Institute

Sponsored by the Office of Charter Schools

Ms. Alsop, Ms. Sproul and Mr. Yodice attended on October 6, 2014, and Ms. Cuneo attended on October 7, 2014.

Ms. Alsop chose sessions directed toward board members or both board members and administrators: Charter School Board Fiduciary Responsibilities, EVAAS [Educator Evaluation System] Update, Performance Framework for Board Members, Governance Moodle, Developing a Healthy Board Culture, and Section 504 Plans. Ms. Sproul chose sessions directed toward both board members and administrators: EC 101, Understanding the Instructional and Legal Implications of IEPs, Charter School Policies and Procedures Core Principles, Charter School Procurement and Contracted Services Core Principles, Charter School Time and Effort Core Principles, and Section 504 Plans. Mr. Yodice chose sessions directed toward administrators or both board members and administrators: Understanding School Accountability and Reporting, Charter School Internal Controls Core Principles, Expand Your Course Catalogue with NC Virtual Public School, Testing Policy, HomeBase and Differentiated Instruction. Ms. Cuneo attended general sessions including presentations from Dr. Joel Medley, Mr. William Cobey (State Board of Education), and Ms. Robin Kendall (OCS Education Consultant).

Below is a summary of information gained from the various seminars attended by Ms. Sproul and Ms. Alsop, along with take-aways shared by Ms. Cuneo and Mr. Yodice.<sup>1</sup>

#### Charter School Board Fiduciary Responsibilities, Performance Framework & Developing a Healthy Board Culture

Presenters: Leigh Ann Kerr (OCS) - Fiduciary Responsibilities; Robin Kendall (OCS) - Performance Framework; Shannon Stein (Administrator, Lake Norman Charter) & Michael Manahan (Chair, Lake Norman Charter) - Board Culture.

OCS recommends that a board be composed of directors with the following skills, expertise and experience: financial, legal, human resources, school operation, academic oversight, fundraising, public relations/marketing, strategic planning and real estate. Current board members have a duty to recruit. Means of recruitment include contacting community gatekeepers, conducting information sessions, holding open houses and conducting workshops.

All board meetings and committee meetings are subject to the open meeting policy. Minutes should be detailed – if not reflected in the minutes, it didn't happen. OCS specifically addressed executive compensation and the need to reflect in minutes factors in deciding compensation and relevant discussion in the related meetings. Regarding open meeting laws, all committee meetings are subject to the same laws. For example, doors must remain unlocked, committee meeting announcements posted.

The primary responsibility of a charter school board is to focus on finance, policy and student performance. The message from all presenters was that all time of the board should be centered on those three topics and that, when board attention strayed from one of those three areas, the board chair should ask the conversation initiator to classify the particular topic into one of those three areas. If that classification is not possible, the board should cease discussing. As such, board's role should be limited to the following: maintaining school's mission and the integrity of the school's academic program, creating and monitoring strategic plan; allocating resources for systemic and sustainable implementation of educational

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Yodice and Ms. Cuneo also received reinforcements on information that is discussed below in the summaries of sessions attended by Ms. Alsop and Ms. Sproul.

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programs, development of policy, hiring and evaluating of director, and finance. The administration is tasked with running the school, including creating procedures to facilitate policies, hiring and evaluating staff, developing budget and reporting to board.

In regards to finance, board must ensure that necessary financial policies are in place to prevent fraud, waste and misappropriation. Finance committee (subject to open meetings law) should meet monthly and should review bank accounts and loans as review needed, financial statements and student enrollment/ADM monthly, and comply with annual financial obligations (tax, audits, review of fiscal policy/procedures and salary schedule) in a timely manner. OCS also provides a list of recommendations to minimize financial risk. OCS also recommends having a separate audit committee.

An effective board is (among other things) ensuring continuity of board by ongoing recruitment of board members with appropriate skill sets, setting the tone for the future with a strategic plan looking for continuous improvement, setting clear expectations for the school director, and regularly monitoring school policies, student performance and financial performance. Board members should be held accountable to attendance and commitment to active committee participation, recruitment of committee members and future board members and establishment of board goals. The school should commit resources to board training and board governance. Board members should be held accountable to regular training on how to be a board member and the mission of the school. Boards should be active in establishing policies, consistent with mission, that guide the administrator in establishing procedures consistent with those policies.

Board members should be trained on how to respond to parent concerns. Responses to typical questions should be scripted and agreed upon by all members. This ensures due process and appropriate channels for information flow are being used.

**Take-Away:** All board committee meetings should be noticed and the chair of each committee shall maintain meeting minutes (or designate a committee member to do so). Minutes should be available to public upon request.

Committee on the Board should continue its efforts regarding director evaluation and should complete its goal of establishing a policy for board member expectations, which should cover recruitment, committee involvement and attendance. Board self-evaluation is critical and should be used for setting strategic goals.

The Board should commit resources (time, money) to developing a sound governance foundation. This must be intentional and should involve an outside consultant for best results. Recommendations from Lake Norman Charter included: Dr. Tom Miller's nine-week virtual boot camp beginning October 23, Dr. Brian Miller's Board Wiser Program (Lake Norman Charter Board committed to meeting every other month one hour before their meeting to use this program), and Mr. Brian Boone, consultant for strategic planning and governance (Lake Norman Charter also used him for retreats, planning, fundraising).

Board should implement procedure for more efficient meetings, including the use of mandated written reports for (among other things) student performance and enrollment, which reports should be incorporated into minutes. Minutes should reflect a challenge of ideas by members. If information regarding a discussion is not included in the minutes, then legally it did not happen. Ideally the board will not all vote the same way. This is encouraged and is seen by the public (and auditors) as a good, strengthening situation.

Board members should be coached in providing a uniform response to parent concerns.

Policy committee should begin a comprehensive review of existing policies and should survey other charter schools regarding their policies. Policy committee should make recommendation for any changes to existing policies and for drafts of new policies. Resources to be explored include "best practices" recommended by OCS and policies of other



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charter schools. At minimum, Board bylaws should include language to address: nepotism/conflict of interest and number of meetings members may miss before replacement.

### EVAAS Update

Presenter: Sandy Horn (OCS)

Student test score predictions require at least three prior test scores from any content area. For example, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade BOG + 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EOG + 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math EOG = 4<sup>th</sup> grade prediction of growth.

On the EVAAS charts, blue = more progress relative to same age peers across the state, green = meets expected growth, red = does not meet expected growth (based on predicted scores).

**Take-Away:** Administrators and members of the Board of Directors (one area Board should address is student achievement) may access EVAAS data and should do so to stay current with school achievement. To setup an account to view data, contact Sandy Horn via EVAAS.

### Policy Core Principles

Presenter: Curtis Terry (OCS)

Policies (established by board) are guiding principles adopted toward an objective (what should be done). Procedures (established by administration) prescribe specific ways of doing specific activities (how "it" should be done).

Policies encourage stability and continuity in operations and provide a means for organization accountability.

Policies are used to provide someone unfamiliar with a process or organization direction and to set out our school's expectations.

Policies must be clearly documented and easily understood by outsiders. Procedures need to be realistically maintained given resources.

Employees should be given training/exposure to new policies before they are put into effect.

Charter schools should review their policies regularly and should establish a rotation in which the board reviews policies and make recommendations.

OCS recommends several financial policies including the following: internal controls, cash management, payroll preparation, cash disbursement, mileage reimbursement, travel reimbursement, purchasing procedures.

OCS provides that Boards are responsible for knowing procedures even if they don't establish them or use them daily.

**Take-Away:** Policy Committee should begin comprehensive review of non-financial policies, including by surveying other charter schools. Finance committee should begin review of financial policies, including employee benefits and impact on recruitment.

Resource: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/guidebook/gov/index.asp>

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### EC 101, Understanding IEPs and Section 504 Plans

Presenters: Glendora Hagins (IEPs) and Cande Huneycutt (504 Plans)

Charter schools must ensure that every child is provided a Free and Appropriate Public Education ("FAPE") consistent with IDEA (funded mandate) and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act (unfunded mandate). "Child Find" under IDEA requires schools to identify any "child with a disability" as defined by IDEA, to gather information that will help determine a child's educational needs, which information will guide the determination of an appropriate educational program for each child.

If interested, please refer to IDEA PowerPoint for more information on the procedure behind IDEA.

Ms. Huneycutt of OCS began her Section 504 presentation by stating that Section 504 creates the greatest risk for schools. Section 504 provides students and parents substantial rights BUT it is an unfunded mandate. State departments of education have no enforcement authority for issues arising under Section 504, which is administered by the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. She also advised that the Office of Civil Rights is more likely to side with the parent than it is with the school.

Section 504 states: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability...shall, solely by reasons of his or her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." The related regulations state "students may not be denied participation in or be denied benefits from services that are afforded nondisabled students." They go on to define an appropriate education "as a program designed to meet the individual educational needs of individuals with disabilities as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met."

Section 504 provides "accommodation" for handicapped persons (defined broadly) while IDEA provides "special education" for students with disability (defined narrowly).

The "grey" of Section 504 is the broad definition of what is an individual with a disability: Any person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having an impairment. Section 504 is not clear as to what it means for a student to have a disability, and it is a LOCAL decision about what is an "impairment" that "substantially limits" a "major life activity". Impairments include physical impairment, mental or psychological disorder and specific learning disabilities. "Major life activities" include reading, concentrating, thinking, speaking, learning and communicating. In addition, the success of mitigating measures taken to limit the effect of a child's handicap on their major life activity cannot be considered in determining whether a child is disabled. For example, if a child is having success because of a hearing aid or out of school academic tutoring, the expected outcome of the child without those mitigating measures is what should be used to determine whether the child has a disability.

School districts shall provide notices regarding discrimination and shall identify the official responsible for Section 504 compliance. School districts shall adopt grievance procedures and appropriate due process standards that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging discrimination.

Section 504 best practices include: (1) acting on parental request for evaluation, (2) develop a parent-friendly brochure outlining the referral process, which brochure should be distributed to parents and otherwise available, and (3) implement 504 accommodations.

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Best practices dictate that schools consider whether a disability might exist and thus a referral for evaluation referral be made in the following circumstances:

- 1) Parent request
- 2) Suspension or expulsion is being considered
- 3) Academic performance is lower than expected
- 4) A student is evaluated under IDEA but not found eligible for special education
- 5) A student exhibits ongoing medical problem
- 6) A student enrolls with a 504 plan from another district
- 7) An impairment of any kind is suspected
- 8) A student is chronically absent due to health/medical issues
- 9) A student receives medication on school grounds

OCS also recommended the best practice of considering the implementation of a formal process for Personal Education Plans (PEP) for children that are not found eligible for Individualized Educations Plans (IEP) under IDEA or Section 504 Plan accommodations. The use of PEPs helps assure continuity from year to year for a child receiving informal interventions in the classroom. The disadvantage of a PEP over an IEP or Section 504 plans is that successful accommodations used in the classroom (including in classroom testing) are only available on mandated standardized tests to the extent a child has an IEP or Section 504 plan.

Section 504 also provides handicapped students protection in connection with student misconduct. Under Section 504, a handicapped student may not be suspended for more than ten days without a manifestation hearing (determination that misconduct is not caused by disability). If the misconduct is directly caused by the disability, the Section 504 team shall modify the current educational placement. If the misconduct is not directly caused by the misconduct, normal disciplinary procedures can be initiated. Special education discipline restrictions apply if district "had knowledge" before the misconduct that the student was disabled – parent expressed concern or requested evaluation, teacher or other personnel have expressed concern about student's behavior or performance as needing special education. That is, the student does not need to have been formally identified, but the school is open to liability if they had knowledge of the disability and did not explore whether the misconduct related to the disability.

**Take-Away:** Scholars Academy should publish clear policies/procedures to parents regarding available IDEA and 504 rights. Scholars Academy Board of Directors should establish policies with Child Find in mind to make sure evaluations are considered when any of the indicators identified above exist, and all staff should be trained on those policies. Scholars Academy should consider charter and mission when setting policy with regards to "substantial impairment" of "major life activity" and should consider "Scholars Academy" grade level as opposed to "traditional grade level" when considering a child's eligibility for 504 accommodations. Scholars Academy should establish policies for using PEPs when IEPs or Section 504 plans

#### Procurement and Time and Effort

Presenters: Leigh Ann Kerr and Keisha Davis

While identified for both board members and administrators, these sessions were more appropriate for administrators.

In Procurement, we learned about the required practices for use of federal funds and recommended best practices for use of all funds. Specifically, OCS recommends that all expenditures should have a clear and documented benefit to students,

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we should use purchase orders which includes a detailed description of services/good, and we should follow competitive bidding practices. See PowerPoint for more detailed information.

In Time and Effort, we learned about required practices regarding time reporting for employees paid with federal funds. See PowerPoint for more detailed information.

In addition, pursuant to N.C.G.S. 115C-238.29H, all contracts entered into by Scholars Academy should include the following language: No indebtedness of any kind incurred or created by Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy shall constitute an indebtedness of the State or its political subdivisions, and no indebtedness of Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy shall involve or be secured by the faith, credit or taxing power of the State or its political subdivisions.

**Take-Away:** For the expenditure of federal funds, use of funds should be in line with best practices. In other situations, we should review (or establish) policies regarding purchase of goods and when we should follow best practices. For school of our size, it is not practical to comply with federal "best practices" in all situations (i.e., obtaining bids for purchase of extended care snacks). With regards to Time and Effort, we should document the time of employees paid with federal funds in accordance with the guidance outlined by OCS. Sample policy available from Socrates Academy. Our contracting policy should reference the statutory language referenced above.

#### Take-Away from Mr. Yodice<sup>2</sup>

OCS recommends that the school obtain the Public School Law handbook, which is published every two years. The next edition will come out in 2015.

Mr. Yodice and Ms. Cuneo both discussed recruiting concerns with various charter school contacts he formed. Other schools have had success recruiting at the UNCG and Winthrop teacher job fairs and by advertising at "teachers-teachers.com". Several schools discussed forming at charter school job fair, where various Charlotte-area charter schools come together to recruit.

Mr. Yodice solicited information from several schools about participation in the state retirement system and the state health care system. He recommends that the Finance Committee do a comprehensive review of the school's benefit package, including analyzing whether we should join the state retirement plan or make other adjustments to retirement benefits and whether we should take advantage of the state health plan. He also recommends reviewing our PTO policy, including the consideration of a policy that would allow employees to share PTO with other staff members.

Most of Mr. Yodice's take-aways were ideas for teachers about differentiation (more pre-assessments). Mr. Yodice concluded that Scholars Academy is doing extremely well in most areas. He views Scholars Academy as a well-established school with good oversight and practices. He recognizes that Scholars Academy needs to catch up in some policy areas where we are lacking policies that we did not need when we were much smaller.

#### Take-Away from Ms. Cuneo

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<sup>2</sup> "Take-aways" prepared based on meeting with Mr. Yodice, Ms. Cuneo, Ms. Alsop and Ms. Sproul held October 15 and/or provided by Mr. Yodice or Ms. Cuneo, as applicable, directly.

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Ms. Cuneo attended a session where OCS recommended beginning each board meeting by reading the mission statement. This serves as a reminder of where board focus should be – mission/policy, finance and student achievement. Off-topic discussions should be delegated to committee or administration.

Scholars Academy can charge any fee that CMS charges (i.e., athletic fees), up to the amount CMS charges. Charter schools can adopt single gender admission (within a school or within a class).

Ms. Cuneo learned about school replication - to fast track the successful existence of a current charter school, the mandatory planning year is not required.

The law has been clarified to make it clear that teachers can be non-voting board members. The law has also been clarified to make it clear that charter schools must comply with the public records act and NC open meetings laws. Finally, to stay up-to-date on laws impact charter schools, we should review both the budget bill and charter statutes for new laws regarding charter schools.

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers is a useful resource for best practices for charter boards:  
<http://www.qualitycharters.org/>

A schedule for record retention and disposition requirements is available from the Department of Cultural Resources:  
<http://www.ncdcr.gov/archives/ForGovernment/RetentionSchedules.aspx>

Charter schools can opt-in to the state property insurance system.

New epi-pen regulations are not effective until November 1.

The President of Elon University spoke on strategic planning: solidify school's identity, goals have to be measurable, annual planning and goal setting should be tied to the budget process, it should be well vetted and everyone understands it, plan should be a living document, transparency in communication.

# THE METROLINA REGIONAL SCHOLARS' ACADEMY, INC.

Open and Closed Session

## Meeting of the Board of Directors

Conference Room, Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy

Monday, October 27, 2014, 2014, 6:30 p.m.

### Report on Charter School Boot Camp – October 23, 2014 Session – Thomas Miller

Conversations at Board meetings should focus on:

- 1) Why do we exist - mission of school?
- 2) What is vision of school for long term?
- 3) How do we get there?

Boards should govern, not operate. As such, school needs clear roles and responsibilities (board vs. administration), policies and procedures should be developed to guide the administration but should not micro-manage. And board should develop a clear executive job description.

Board contract is needed for accountability.

Pitfall - recent change in law that gives priority to board members which can lead to potential board members who join not to do work but rather to get their child in the school. [Take-away: Consider modifying lottery policy to make it clear that board members do not get lottery.]

Board is responsible to be aware of the laws binding the charter school and to make sure that there are policies in place to make sure that the school is in compliance with the laws. Concerns regarding children with special needs specifically referenced. Boards should monitor compliance with policy.

Board self-evaluation should include: 1) what do we need to start doing, 2) what do we need to continue doing, 3) what do we need to stop doing.

Board members are responsible for recruitment - board service, committees, staff development. "Recruitment committee" should be active year-round and should have plan on the skill sets and diversity (gender, race) sought for the board.

Quality organizations do not have boards full of "yes" men and women.

Charter manual should include: Charter and other governing documents, board member expectations document, school's strategic plan (crucial), student handbook, staff handbook, school policies (including hiring policy), cheat-sheet on open meetings law, charter school law

Schools that are not attracting quality staff should do self-reflection to ascertain why they are not attracting quality candidates. A quality organization that focuses on people, treats them like professionals, etc, will be able to attract quality candidates.

See "Design the Partnership" slide on breakdown of roles & responsibilities.<sup>3</sup>

Board should provide scripted response to parent concerns about following the designated process (teacher, admin, grievance, etc). Board should have relationship of trust with administrator and show united front in public, with clear guidance and evaluation behind closed doors.

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<sup>3</sup> I will forward the presentation PowerPoint and this slide when available; it has been requested from Mr. Miller.

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Board discussions should be centered around "how well" are things going. Board should seek out clear evidence of success or failure. Board should ask questions like "how well" are parents responding to changes in curriculum, calendar, policy, etc.

Board should make sure all programs are effectively evaluated, both internally and externally.

Board must know the school's education plan. Board has responsibility to make sure that teachers are provided sufficient professional development so that they can carry out the school's education plan.

Board must set clear evaluation measure for administration.

Reports to the board should be sent at least 7 days in advance. They should be on time and accurate and board members must review.

Board responsible to make sure that leadership has resources and training he/she needs to carry out the school's mission.

Board is responsible to investigate unacceptable results.

Board members do not run school and should only be at the school for appropriate business and not for administrative oversight (i.e., avoid micro-management).

Board should focus effort on people, priorities and performance.

Board should have method to get regular (at least quarterly) reporting on student performance.

Boards should have policies in place to make sure that federal funds are spent in compliance with law. [Take-away - need procurement policy.] Schools should have credit card policy.

Every school has to have a diabetes & healthcare plan. [Take-away: Do we have this?]

Policies, by-laws and handbooks should be reviewed and updated annually.

Charter renewal: 1) no audit findings in 3 years, 2) no legal compliance issues for past 3 years, 3) student performance is comparable

Boards should invest in board training at every board meeting.

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<b>Primary Goals of the Policy Committee Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy 2014/2015</b>			
	Task	Responsible Party	Status
1.	Review Existing Policies, including (as requested by Ms. Cuneo) to review bullying/discipline policy for consistency and clarity	Policy Committee	
2.	Solicit policies from variety of charter schools	Noelle Sproul/Policy Committee	In progress – obtained from Lake Norman Charter (“LNC”) and Community School of Davidson (“CSD”); requested from Lincoln Charter and Socrates; available on website of Charlotte Secondary School
3.	Draft Policy for Adoption/Revision of Board Policies	Noelle Sproul/Policy Committee	In progress. See CSD policy as reference.
4.	Draft Overnight Chaperone Policy	Noelle Sproul/Policy Committee	Requested by J. Cuneo. Draft circulated to J. Cuneo and A. Yodice on 10/22 and to Board on 10/24 for discussion at 10/27 meeting. Note – policy will ultimately be incorporated into larger volunteer policy.
5.	Draft Professional Development Policy	_____/Policy Committee	See charter for guidance.
6.	Draft Board Meeting Reporting Policy	_____/Policy Committee	See LNC and Socrates monthly director’s report.
7.	Draft IEP/504 Policy	_____/Policy Committee	See LNC policy manual and Socrates parent manual as starting point.
	Task	Responsible Party	Status
8.	Draft Policy in Support of Serving Emotional Needs of Students	_____/Policy Committee	See charter for reference.
9.	Draft	_____/Policy Committee	See LNC policy as reference.



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	Volunteer/Chaperone/Transportation Policy	Committee	
10.	Draft Policy on Withdrawing Students	_____/Policy Committee	
11.	Draft Policy on Decision Making Between Board Meetings	_____/Policy Committee	
12.	Draft Policy on Board Self-Evaluation	_____/Policy Committee	
13.	Draft Communicable Disease Policy	_____/Policy Committee	
14.	Work with Finance Committee on Procurement Policy	_____/Policy Committee	Guidelines available from OCS.
15.	Work with Finance Committee on Employee Benefits Review and Policies, including use of PTO	_____/Policy Committee	See LNC policy regarding donating PTO to other staff members

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Scholars Academy – Committee on the Board

**Monthly report: October 27, 2014**

Committee members: Renee Alsop, Karen Cleary, David Saye, Noelle Sproul

1. Update on COB action items for 2014-2015 year.

ACTION	TARGET DATE
1. Compile Executive Director work goals for 2014/2015	ASAP <b>Completed 9/22/14</b>
2. Select Executive Director evaluation tool for 2014/2015	ASAP <b>Completed 10/1/14</b>
3. Complete Individual Director self-assessments (overview, brief)	BEFORE OCTOBER MEETING <b>Completed 10/20/14</b>
4. Complete a Board (group) self-assessment (overview, brief)	BEFORE OCTOBER MEETING <b>Completed 10/20/14</b>
5. Set specific short-term Board goals for 2014/2015 based on Board (group) self-assessment	BEFORE NOVEMBER MEETING <b>Presented at meeting 10/27/14</b>
6. Compile Executive Director preliminary evaluation	BEFORE DECEMBER MEETING
7. Create BOD job description and expectations document	BEFORE DECEMBER MEETING <b>In process – Ms. Sproul</b>
8. Create a Board Member agreement document	BEFORE JANUARY MEETING
9. Set long-term strategic goals for the school	BEFORE MARCH MEETING
10. Compile Executive Director final evaluation	BEFORE APRIL MEETING

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11. Solicit new member applications	APRIL - MAY
12. Complete a Board (individual and group) assessment (in-depth)	BEFORE MAY MEETING
13. Conduct potential new member interviews	BEFORE JUNE MEETING
14. Plan an annual Board retreat to be held in August before the start of school for the purpose of strategic planning, goal setting, and training	JUNE-JULY

These items will allow for more productive meetings, greater ease with new member transitions, objective evaluative processes and strategic planning.

2. **Board Self-Assessment Update** - Preliminary (brief) self-evaluation as individuals and as a group were provided to all Board members. All ten members responded. Individual assessments should be used by members for self-reflection. Group assessments were compiled into areas of strength and areas for improvement (see Board Governance Indicators Assessment Report, attached).
3. **Board Recruitment Update** – We have several potential candidates and will be conducting interviews on Monday, November 3. The COB will have a recommendation for the Board to vote on for a potential new member by the November meeting.
4. **Committee Recruitment** - The committee is seeking a new non-Board member to serve on the committee (with the exception of Director evaluation business). Please send suggestions to Renee Alsop.
5. **Next committee meeting:** Monday, November 3 (interviews).
6. **Motion:** To approve the goals submitted by the Committee on the Board as short-term goals for the Scholars Academy Board of Directors for the 2014/2015 school year.

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**Board Governance Indicators Assessment Report - Fall 2014  
Compiled by the Committee on the Board**

One of the responsibilities of the Committee on the Board is to complete a Board self-assessment at least annually. In fulfilling that responsibility, the Board Governance Indicators Assessment (included) was distributed to all board members and responses were collected between September 22, 2014 and October 22, 2014. All ten current board members responded to the survey. The raw data was discussed with the committee in a meeting on October 23, 2014.

From the information gathered, it was determined that there are some areas in which the Board is meeting the expectations of a high-functioning charter school board. Those areas include: maintaining a conflict of interest policy, having bylaws that legal counsel has reviewed, having the minimum number of members as outlined in our bylaws, board members do not receive payment, meetings have written agendas, and board members have an operations manual.

It was also determined that there are some areas that the Board has the potential for growth and improvement. Those areas include: carefully defining the roles of the Board and administrator. Board to focus on policy, planning, and governance and the administrator is the manager of operations. Another area for growth includes written policies. The Board needs to develop comprehensive policies such as (but not limited to): how to handle urgent matters between meetings, board member expectations and accountability, measuring organizational performance in order to set the stage for the future rather than reacting and responding to immediate needs.

*In response to the areas for growth that were identified in this survey, the Committee on the Board proposes the following short-term goals for the 2014/2015 school year:*

- 1. The Board of Directors will develop a document that outlines the specific expectations of Board members (job description) and that all members shall sign as a demonstration of their understanding and commitment to their role. This document will be completed and presented to the Board for approval by December 2014.**
- 2. Develop written policies (in order of priority set by the Policy Committee) consistent with the goals for the Policy Committee adopted by the Board at the October 2014 board meeting. The first of these policies will be presented to the Board by January 2015 and will continue on an ongoing basis throughout the school year as needed.**

**Responses to Board Governance Indicators Assessment**

Item	# Responses Met	# Responses Needs Work	# Responses N/A
1	1	9	
2	6	4	
3	4	6	
4	4	5	1
5	5	5	
6	4	6	

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7	7	3	
8	10	0	
9	6		4
10	10	0	
11	10	0	
12	7	3	
13	8	1	1
14	0	9	1
15	10	0	
16	9		1
17	8	2	
18	9	1	
19	3	1	6
20	2	7	1
21	3	7	
22	1	7	2
23	1	9	
24	2	8	

**Items identified as “MET” (in green above) = What we are doing well:**

- 8. Each Board member has a Board operations manual.
- 10. The charter school has at least the minimum number of members on the Board of Directors as required by their bylaws.
- 11. The charter school’s bylaws conform to the state statute and have been reviewed by legal counsel.
- 15. Board directors serve without payment unless the agency has a policy identifying reimbursable out-of-pocket expenses.
- 16. The charter school maintains a conflict of interest policy and all Board directors and executive staff review and/or sign to acknowledge and comply with the policy.
- 18. Meetings have written agendas and materials relating to significant decisions are given to the Board a reasonable amount of time in advance of the meeting.

**Items identified as “NOT MET” (in red above) = Areas for growth:**

- 1. The roles of the Board and the Administrator are defined and respected, with the Administrator delegated as the manager of the charter school’s operations and the Board focused on policy, planning, and governance.
- 14. The Board has a written process for handling urgent matters between meetings.
- 22. The Board has individual performance expectations for directors that are written down and holds each Board member accountable to these.
- 23. The Board has formal tools and measures in place to measure organizational performance.
- 24. The Board spends most of its time setting the stage/creating the future rather than reacting and responding to immediate needs.

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Board Governance Indicators Assessment

Use the ratings in the last three columns to develop a plan for board improvement.

Indicators ratings: E=essential; R=recommended; A=additional to strengthen organizational activities				
Rating	Indicator	Met	Needs Work	N/A
E	1. The roles of the Board and the Administrator are defined and respected, with the Administrator delegated as the manager of the charter school's operations and the board focused on policy and planning and governance.			
R	2. The Administrator is recruited, selected, and employed by the board of directors. The board provides clearly written expectations and qualifications for the position, as well as reasonable compensation.			
R	3. The board of directors acts as a governing trustees of the charter school on behalf of the community at large while carrying out the charter school's <u>mission and goals</u> . To fully meet this goal, the board of directors must actively participate in the ongoing planning process to ensure the mission is being met.			
R	4. The board's nominating process ensures that the board remains appropriately diverse with respect to gender, ethnicity, culture, economic status, disabilities, and skills and/or expertise.			
E	5. The board directors receive regular training and information about their responsibilities.			
E	6. New board directors are oriented to the charter school, including the charter school's mission, bylaws, policies, and programs, as well as their roles and responsibilities as board directors.			
A	7. Board organization is documented with a description of the board and board committee responsibilities.			
A	8. Each board member has a board operations manual.			
E	9. If the charter school has any related party transactions between board directors or their family, they are disclosed to the board of directors, the Internal Revenue Service and the auditor.			
E	10. The charter school has at least the minimum number of members on the board of directors as required by their bylaws.			
Rating	Indicator	Met	Needs Work	N/A
R	11. The charter school's bylaws conform to state statute and have been reviewed by legal counsel.			
R	12. The bylaws should include: a) how and when notices for board meetings are made; b) how members are elected/appointed by the board; c) what the terms of office are for officers/members; d) how board directors are rotated; e) how ineffective board directors are removed from the board; f) a stated number of board directors to make up a quorum which is required for all policy decisions.			
R	13. The board of directors reviews the bylaws.			
A	14. The board has a written process for handling urgent matters between meetings.			
E	15. Board directors serve without payment unless the agency has a policy identifying reimbursable out-of-pocket expenses.			
R	16. The charter school maintains a conflict-of-interest policy and all board directors and executive staff review and/or sign to acknowledge and comply with the policy.			
R	17. The board has an annual calendar of meetings and an attendance policy. The			

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	board has quorum by attendance at least quarterly.			
A	18. Meetings have written agendas and materials relating to significant decisions are given to the board a reasonable amount of time in advance of the meeting.			
A	19. The board has a written policy prohibiting employees and members of employees' immediate families from serving as board chair or treasurer.			
E	20. The board has working, effective committees that provide regular reporting.			
R	21. The board establishes strategic board level goals that are specific and measurable.			
R	22. The board has individual performance expectations for directors that are written down and holds each board member accountable to these.			
A	23. The board has formal tools and measures in place to measure organizational performance.			
E	24. The board spends most of its time setting the stage/creating the future rather than reacting and responding to immediate needs.			
Indicators ratings: E=essential; R=recommended; A=additional to strengthen organizational activities				

Adapted from survey provided by NC DPI, OCS and from Meetinghouse Solutions 2008 - Revised 9-19-14