

THE METROLINA REGIONAL SCHOLARS' ACADEMY, INC.

Open and Closed Session

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Conference Room, Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy

Monday, March 23, 2014, 2015, 6:30 p.m.

Voting Members Present

David Saye, Chair

Renee Alsop

Lee Keel

Makila Scruggs

Eileen Woodward

Karen Cleary

Michael Matthews

Jen McClave

Noelle Sproul

Rob Watson

Krista Newkirk

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

Adoption of the Agenda.

Action: A motion to approve the agenda was made by Ms. Newkirk, seconded by Ms. Sproul, and approved by the Board.

Approval of the Meeting Minutes of February 23, 2015.

Action: A motion to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2015 meeting was made by Mr. Watson, seconded by Ms. Scruggs, and approved by the board.

Development Update

Ms. Ellis updated the board

- Annual campaign: \$567K has been pledged, \$343K received as of today (\$224K difference). Some of the outstanding pledges are due to the delay in receiving corporate matching funds. Arts & music sponsorship - \$9K has been raised.

Board discussed the option of allowing targeted giving (where donors can donate for specific uses). The board recognizes:

- Parents have been coming to Ms. Ellis with desire to fund projects.
- We don't want to risk losing money in general funds
- If we don't meet the fundraising levels for the general operating fund, we would have to increase class size or cut programs
- Dr. Matthews asked to be presented with benchmarking with other organizations to present at next meeting.

Vision Committee

Lisa Waugh updated the board.

Climate survey:

- Parent survey: the survey had 118 responses out of approximately 250 families. The survey company was very impressed by how high our response rate was.
- Staff were given a link to the survey at the staff meeting and were allowed to do it there or at home.

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- Students took theirs in Language Arts class.
- Vision committee will schedule a meeting when responses come in April.

Town Hall

- The Town Hall meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 31. There were 7 questions submitted from five different people.
- Ms. Sproul asked to be provided with the questions ahead of time to prepare.

Gifted Conference

- The conference will be on April 25. So far 56 have registered online.

Mathematics Committee

Ms. Cuneo and committee (Ms. Pieper, Ms. Miller, Ms. Zagorski) presented. See Attachment 1 for report.

Recommending Singapore Math

- The system is Mastery based – it delves deeply into the curriculum.
- It is not spiraling – it builds upon skills in subsequent lessons.
- Builds strong number sense, mental-math skills, deep understanding.
- Intent is to build problem-solvers.

Cost:

- \$15,100 for all materials, including \$7-14K for professional development.
- We could cut costs if we can piggy-back with another school to split training costs.
- Impact on the budget will not be as big as it looks because there is already professional development in budget.

The committee has an assessment plan in place to evaluate whether the curriculum works as intended. Will use state's K-2 common core assessment as base but to our standards.

Will target approval for April meeting.

Director's Report.

Total enrollment/withdrawals: 0

Admissions Lottery: Details are on the website.

Other issues:

- Mr. Yodice attended Office of Charter School training and noted some suggested changes in lottery procedures. The OCS does not want charter schools to ask for proof of residency until after a spot is offered. We will need to update policy for next year's lottery. Ms. Sproul volunteered to read the law and draft a policy.

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- Ms. Cuneo is implementing new reading program for K-2. He saw that other schools are also in the same process.

Bell Schedule options:

The administration presented options with teachers. Teachers can use 10 minutes at beginning and end that teachers can teach kids how to organize themselves. Doors open at 8am, close at 8:15am. We can end classes at 3:10, with dismissal at 3:20. The teachers approved of this schedule.

Action: Ms. Newkirk moved to approve the proposed bell schedule. Ms. Scruggs seconded the motion and the board approved.

Community Comments

- Ms. Waugh wants to caution board from delving into operational issues. She feels we are creating too many new policies that give too many details instead of just providing broad guidance.
- Ms. Moschel advocates for the new math suggestions

Committee on the Board

Ms. Alsop and Ms. Richter confirmed that the final meeting of the fiscal year will be on June 29, in order to allow for the most complete financial reporting to be available.

The board will plan on this meeting occurring on June 29. However, if Ms. Richter sees any issues that need to be addressed, she will notify the board and recommend an additional meeting on June 22.

Regarding the retreat at end of the summer, Ms. Alsop will coordinate with Dr. Miller. We will target August 7 or 14.

Strategic Plan

Ms. McClave proposed kicking off a strategic planning process. She will move forward with trying to gather a core team, which will meet virtually.

Policy Committee Updates

Media Policy

Mr. Yodice reported that no teachers requested changes to the proposed policy.

Action: Ms. Scruggs moved to approve the policy previously circulated and to ask Mr. Yodice to create guidelines based on such policy. Ms. Alsop seconded the motion and the Board approved.

April 22 will be next policy meeting.

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Financial Committee Update

Tax Return

The Tax Return needs to be filed by May 15 and the Board needs to approve it. Ms. Richter pointed out that the 990 form is public and highlighted the following issues for the board to approve:

- On Page 3 – Disclosure of board relationships. Does the school have contracts with the business of a board member or former board member? On Page 6 - verify number of board members on given dates
- On Page 10 Statement of functional expenses

Action: Ms. Sproul moved to approve with Ms. Richter's suggested changes. Mr. Saye seconded the motion and the board approved.

Financial reports

Mr. Keel provided the Financial Reports for March.

He updated the board on the **recent meeting with BB&T**.

- Our financial position is in good position for covenants.
- We were able to get \$190K of restricted money to be switched to unrestricted. This money has been restricted since the original financing associated with the building, but is released based on the recent refinancing. We could use it to pay down the second loan to BB&T (approximately \$675,000). This second loan would not be protected with an interest rate swap or cap.
- There is no risk of not having the money to fund the math curriculum, so it is safe to pay down the loan. In addition, the funds were originally given by the donors for the school building campaign.

Action: Mr. Keel moved to apply the approximately \$192K of recently unrestricted funds to pay down the second BB&T loan. Mr. Watson seconded the motion and the board approved.

Amendments:

Presented amendments, which increases the surplus; however, this will likely be spent to fulfill the 1% bonus and to cover upfront cost of interest rate cap (see below).

1% Bonus:

As determined in the June 2014 Board meeting related to establishing the budget for 2014-2015, the board agreed to the following:

Teacher Raise reduced to 2% with 1% bonus at the end of the 2014-2015 school year if funds are available at such time (at the discretion of the Board)

Based on the current status of funding, the funds are adequate to fund the 1% bonus.

Interest Rate Hedge

The Finance Committee recommends a 3.5% cap. This will incur upfront cost (\$33,000), but will take advantage of current low rates. Swaps are expensive to get out of and auditors prefer caps.

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Action: Ms. Alsop moved to approve moving forward with 3.5% cap. Dr. Matthews seconded and the Board approved.

Phones

Tech committee is working on phone system and paging system that will improve security. Will not change service provider, just equipment. We have room in capital expenditures (\$13K) in budget to help fund. Portions of the system can be expensed over 5 years.

In April we will make a decision.

Sound system:

If we want the system in time for the musical, grandparents' day, other events we should consider approving now. We have raised \$9K so far, but we have enough of a surplus for the school to cover cost.

Mr. Yodice wants to make sure that we prioritize bonus and implementation of math curriculum.

Action: Mr. Watson moved to approve the budget amendments. Ms. Newkirk seconded and the board approved.

Action: Dr. Matthews moved to approve a 1% teacher bonus. The motion was seconded by Ms. Scruggs and approved by the board.

Action: Ms. Newkirk moved to approve spending up to \$10K in addition to the money raised from outside donors for a new sound system. Mr. Watson seconded the motion and the board approved.

Motion to Convene in Closed Session. A motion to convene in closed session pursuant to the following statutes was made by Ms. Watson, seconded by Mr. Scruggs, 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.*

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OPEN SESSION

New Business.

Dr. Matthews saw Science Olympiad team at middle school tournament.

Motion to Adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Scruggs, seconded by Ms. Sproul and approved by the Board.

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Attachment 1

Math Committee: Jessica Cuneo, Tracy Miller, Ari Pieper, Noelle Zagorski

Singapore Math

March 23, 2015

Introduction What is Singapore Math?

- K-6 math curriculum that focuses on mastery rather than memorization
- 3 step learning model: Concrete-->Pictorial-->Abstract
- Naturally differentiated
- Singapore has had a consistent top ranking in the TIMSS (Trends in International Math and Science Study)
- Singapore Math uses a mastery method, where students are asked to go a mile deep rather than a mile wide. Textbooks are sequential, building on previously learned concepts and skills, which offers the opportunity for learning acceleration without the need for supplemental work.
- Graphics make the material easy to read and understand. These illustrations are used to aid the learning process, making it easier and eventually encouraging students to begin to perform mental mathematics
- It does not use memorization of formulas and rules to teach concepts. Learning is built by asking students to give meaning to the material being used
- Fewer topics are covered during the year, but in an in-depth way that ensures students have a foundation to move forward without needing to re-learn concepts

Adapted from www.soperarticles.com

Justification for the program

- Singapore Math emphasizes the development of strong number sense, excellent mental-math skills, and a deep understanding of place value.
- The curriculum is based on a progression from concrete experience—using manipulatives—to a pictorial stage and finally to the abstract level or algorithm. This sequence gives students a solid understanding of basic mathematical concepts and relationships before they start working at the abstract level.
- Singapore Math includes a strong emphasis on model drawing, a visual approach to solving word problems that helps students organize information and solve problems in a step-by-step manner.
- Concepts are taught to mastery, then later revisited but not re-taught. It is said the U.S. curriculum is a mile wide and an inch deep, whereas Singapore's math curriculum is said to be just the opposite.
- The Singapore approach focuses on developing students who are problem solvers.
- **We reviewed and evaluated 6 different curriculums (Everyday Math, Investigations, Bridges, Math Expressions, Singapore Math, and Saxon Math). We used a rubric that scored each curriculum in the areas of content and layout, assessment, teacher support, mathematical practices, and technology. Singapore Math and Math Expressions were the top performers on the rubric.**

<http://www.sde.com/singapore-math/faq.asp>

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Budget

Grades	Text (One time purchase)	Teacher Materials	Workbooks (Annual purchase)
K	\$550	\$310	\$1225
1	\$1127	\$270	\$1080
2	\$2250	\$318	\$1807
3	\$1672	\$270	\$1267
4	\$1672	\$165	\$1267
TOTAL	\$7270	\$1227	\$6646

Total cost estimate for full implementation - \$15,100.

The textbook and teacher costs are one time purchase items.

The workbook are consumable and this will be an annual cost.

Cost saving options include:

- 1. Purchasing one class set of textbooks per grade level which reduces the overall cost by \$3300.**
- 2. Implementing Singapore only for grades K-2 in the first year. This will reduce the overall cost by \$6000.**

Professional Development

- total cost estimate for 2015-2016=\$5,000.00
- Mrs. Zagorski will be our school representative as the Singapore math expert, receiving extensive professional development. This will take place over the two to three years. Her role will help be the key to continuously update the professional development for current and new staff in the upcoming years. Her first responsibility will be to participate in a 6 week, online course-costing \$139.00 on Model Drawing.
- In late July 2015, we will require all K-4 math teachers and the math committee to participate in a 2 day professional development on-site. A trainer from Staff Development for Educators will spend

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the two days with us training on the foundations of Singapore math-both number sense and model drawing-cost is pending at this time.

- July 2015-All teacher and student materials will be purchased for teachers to review and plan lessons prior to school starting.
- July-Aug 2015-All K-4 math teachers and math committee will be required to read *Why Before How* to help build the math community among the teachers and create a common language.
- In August 2015, the K-4 math teachers and math committee will dedicate one teacher work day to practicing lessons and further development to implement Singapore at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year.
- 2015-2016 school year-recurring common planning for teachers to meet and discuss math concepts and strategies. This will be required at least 1x per quarter.
- Sept 2015-hold a parent information night
- Feb 2016-K-4 teacher development day for further strategies to effectively implement Singapore Math
- March 2016-K-4 teachers participate in professional development focusing on math interventions
- 2015-2016 school year-all K-4 teachers and math committee take one online course (6 weeks) covering a professional development area of their need.

Assessment

We are going to create an end of year assessment, beginning this year, to assess the effectiveness of the program. We are beginning with a K-4 assessment at the end of this year based on the Common Core to have a baseline of what the children are able to do in Math. Beginning next year, we will assess the children on their end of year math skills after implementing the Singapore math program to see that the needs are being met in regards to the Common Core Standards.