

THE METROLINA REGIONAL SCHOLARS' ACADEMY, INC.

Open Session

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Conference Room, Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy

Monday, September 28, 2015, 6:30 p.m.

Voting Members Present

Lee Keel, Chair

Renee Alsop (phone)

Jack Wagler

Makila Scruggs

Katherine Pair

Karen Cleary

Michael Matthews

Jen McClave

Noelle Sproul

Rob Watson

Manish Mittal

Call to Order and Mission Statement. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Approval of the Meeting Minutes of August 25, 2015.

Action: A motion to approve the minutes from the August 25, 2015 meetings, with changes, was made by Ms. Scruggs, seconded by Ms. Pair, and approved by the Board.

Announcements & Adoption of the Agenda.

Action: Ms. Scruggs moved to approve the agenda (moving the discussion about staff evaluation to October). Ms. Pair seconded and the Board approved.

School Climate Survey results

Lisa Waugh (chair of the Vision Committee) presented the results from the Climate Survey performed in Feb/March of 2015. See reports in attachment 1.

Discussed schedule for events:

- Town Hall right after school November 3 at 4pm. And March 3, time TBD.
- Gifted conference April 23

Director's Report.

Ms. Cuneo updated the Board.

Enrollment: Avg Daily Membership for first 20 days was 367 (314 of those were from Mecklenburg county).

The school lost 4 seventh/eighth graders over the summer. The common reasons for withdrawal were: long commute, academic challenges, decision to home school.

Admissions Process:

According to the Office of Charter Schools, we cannot take proof of residency until after an applicant wins a seat. A new admissions policy will be drafted with timeframe for when we need the documentation.

Finance Committee Updates

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Mr. Watson presented draft snapshot and updated the board on school finances.

Will discuss amendments at the next meeting.

Policy Committee Updates

Policy committee developed priorities (see attached). Policies will be presented every other month.

Board will address policies at Town Hall, to educate community.

Action: After being presented with the policy list, Mr. Watson moved to support policy priorities. Ms. Sproul seconded and the Board approved.

Hiring & Strategic Planning Committees Update:

The committees presented a Values of our Community Statement, and a Vision for our Graduates (see attachment). These documents are meant to clarify what Scholars Academy does and why we do it. They will also guide our strategic planning process and the creation of an opportunity statement for the Executive Director search.

Given that the two documents above describe the school and vision, The Strategic Planning Committee also proposed a streamlined mission statement: "Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy provides a differentiated and challenging learning environment that supports the distinctive intellectual, social, and emotional needs of highly gifted children and enables them to form meaningful relationships with their intellectual peers." The mission of the school is unchanged, but the new mission statement is meant to focus the attention on the important aspects of the historically documented mission. In addition, with the new Vision for our Graduates document, the last sentence our or existing mission statement is no longer necessary.

Action: Mr. Watson makes a motion to approve streamlined mission statement, Values of our Community statement, and Vision for our Graduates. Ms. Scruggs seconded and the board approved.

Mr. Keel will discuss changes with the Office of Charter Schools for necessary approvals.

Strategic Planning committee will move forward to bring strategic themes to next meeting, to have approved by November meeting.

Hiring Committee We are at conclusion of phase I, must look into phase II. According to Mr. Boone's proposal for phase II, the committee plans to present an Executive Director recommendation at the January 25 board meeting.

Action: Ms. Alsop moved to approve Mr. Boone's proposal for Phase II of the ED search, ending on January 31, for \$14K. Ms. Sproul seconds the motion. The board approved.

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Community Comments:

Ms. Miller thanks the board and committees for their hard work.

Ms. Waugh requests discussion on committee structure moved to before closed session.

Committee Discussion:

The Board seeks to streamline its committee structure. Based on best practices, the four main committees proposed: Governance, Educational Excellence, Finance, Development.

- Policy and Hiring committees will be subcommittees of **Governance** and may eventually go away.
- **Educational Excellence Committee**: This committee will be responsible for devising measures to monitor how well we meet academic, social, emotional needs, and to make sure everyone understands charter. The Vision committee may be a subcommittee, to include management of the gifted conference. The committee will include Dr. Matthews, Ms. Pair, Mr. Mittal.
- **Finance**
- **Development**. Development is relationship building, in order to build resources to meet our goals. Include outreach to community.
- Ad-hoc: Strat Planning & Grievance.

Action: Mr. Watson makes motion to establish Governance, Educational Excellence, Finance and Development as main committees on the board with the responsibilities described above. Dr. Matthews seconded and the Board approved.

Motion to Convene in Closed Session. Ms. McClave moved to convene in closed session pursuant to the following statutes was made by, seconded by Ms. Sproul, 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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As discussed in closed session, the Board will continue to research the best evaluation tools for the Executive Director.

New Business:

- Dr. Miller proposal to do more work.
- Ms. Alsop recommends inviting him back at the end of the year for a session to help us evaluate ourselves as a board.

Board calendar for next meeting:

- Policies for approval
- Prep for town hall
- Staff evaluation process
- EOC/EOG results
- Finance snapshot
- AGC update

To address teacher concerns about hiring for the Executive Director, Mr. Keel and Ms. Alsop will speak on Oct 7 staff meeting.

The Board discussed the fact that staff members may not know whom to approach with questions regarding the ED hiring process. The Board suggest that Ms. Cuneo let the staff know that if anyone has questions about the hiring process, he/she can email Ms. Alsop. Questions about other Board roles and responsibilities can be directed to Mr. Keel.

Motion to Adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. McClave, seconded by Dr. Matthews and approved by the Board.

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Review of Survey Results 2015 (Revised)

Members of Vision Committee

Ari Pieper, Christy Hinkleman, Marilyn Gee, Renee Alsop, Lea Koonce, David Saye, Dr. Michael Matthews, Lisa Waugh, Rob Watson, David Johnston, Jennifer McClave, Anthony Yodice, Alyssa Dey

Points of Pride

1. Communication
2. Physical Environment
3. Instruction / Assessment
4. cooperative learning
5. interactions between different groups / cultures
6. Students feel safe

Areas to Improve

- Things run smoothly in the Classroom
- Consistency of Discipline Policy - complete
- Verbal Abuse at Middle School Level
 - Improve Discipline Policy - complete
 - make consistent across bullying and tech
 - define better the various categories of offenses
 - Discuss with the Staff
 - abusive language
 - child input into rules
 - perception that select students are leaders
- Clear and obtainable learning targets
 - to address continue to communicate the grading system and the rubrics for each assignment
- Mission and Vision of the school
 - strategic plan should address this
 - the answers are negatively written for 3 for Parent survey
- Social and Emotional
 - focus for professional development - complete
 - professional development days built into the calendar
 - talk to Dr. Cartwright about how do improve for Middle School
 - he is coming on Aug 18 for professional development
 - discuss the survey results with him

Interesting note: parents of middle-schoolers and those with multiple students consistently rated items lower. How can we explore this to understand why?

- additional survey?
- focus groups?

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2015-2016 Scholar's Academy Policy Progress				
	Current State	Priority	Status	Adopted by the Board?
Recommended Policies from NC Charter Schools				
Grievance Policy	Amend	1		Y
Conflict of Interest Policy				Y
Admissions and Enrollment Policy	Draft form	1	draft completed	
Withdrawal Policy	Draft form	1	draft completed	
Calendar and Length of School Day Policy		2		
Classroom Policies (i.e., grading scales, report cards, etc.)	Handbook	1		
Promotion and Retention Policies	Handbook	1		
Accountability Policies		2		
Student Behavior Policies				Y
Hiring and Termination Policies		1		
Criminal Background Check Policy	Handbook	1		
Staff Evaluation Policy		1		
Student Health and Safety Policies (could include Anaphylaxis policy)	Procedures exist, policy should reference but not disclose	1		
Student Records Policy		1		
Family and School Communication Policy		1		
Board Operational Policies				Y
Board Committee Policy		2		
Nepotism Policy				Y
Third-Party Agreements Policy		2		
Employee Agreements Policy		2		
Teacher Professional Development Policy		2		
Budget Approval Policy		2		
Third-Party Contracts Policy		3		
Access to Funding Policy		3		
Audit Policy		2		
Purchasing Policy		2		
Stakeholder/Other Requested				
Social Media		2		

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Tuition Reimbursement	Amend	1		Y
Volunteer/Field Trip Policy	Draft form	1	draft completed	
Teacher Board Certification Policy		2		
IEP/504 Policy		1		
Fair Labor Standards Act Policy		2		
Criminal Charges Reporting Requirement		2		
Registered Sex Offenders Policy		1		

KEY
Completed Policy/ No needed amendment
Policies in Red-- Requested by Administration
Phase 1 (2015-2016 school year)
Phase 2 (2016-2017 school year)
Phase 3 (2017-2018 school year)

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Values for our Community

At Scholars Academy, our guiding principle and true measure of success is **fostering a learning environment that supports the distinctive intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted children**. While accolades and recognition may be a welcome by-product, we are dedicated to the development of the whole child in a noncompetitive environment. The partnerships that form and grow between our students, teachers, parents, and alumni are based on thoughtful communication and mutual respect. Our shared values direct and shape the ongoing advancement of our school.

Our community values:

- Diversity, collaboration, and vibrancy
- Respect, appreciation, and trust
- Innovation, altruism, and creativity

By embracing these values, we perpetuate our desired learning environment, where:

Scholars students love to learn, to be challenged, and are able to persevere. They grow in intellect, empathy and self-awareness.

Scholars teachers love to teach; they inspire, nurture and guide students who have a wide variety of learning styles. Using a combination of proven methods and innovative practices, they cultivate each student's individual gifts and passions.

Scholars parents partner with faculty and staff as an integral component of the Scholars Academy experience. They understand and value the school's mission.

Scholars alumni are lifelong learners and engaged citizens; they are self-aware, confident and grateful for their Scholars education and friendships. They remain connected to the school community.

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Vision for our Graduates

Our learning environment celebrates individuality and supports the distinctive **intellectual**, **social**, and **emotional** needs of gifted children. We are dedicated to the development of the whole child and aspire to equip our graduates to be confident by fostering:

Intellectual Engagement

We provide a differentiated and challenging education so our graduates are:

- **Insightful thinkers** who are innovative and creative; able to productively challenge the status-quo and persevere when faced with failure or adversity.
- **Lifelong learners** who understand the value of hard work and find joy in the learning process.
- **Thoughtful communicators** who collaborate and organize effectively to make positive contributions.

Social Awareness

Through the partnerships between students, teachers, parents, and alumni, our graduates are:

- **Compassionate**, respectful and honest, demonstrating empathy and integrity.
- **Self-aware** with a realistic understanding of their own talents and limitations; able to understand their role in a global society.
- **Flexible** and able to embrace diversity of thought and ability; able to balance independence and positive social engagement with their peers.

Emotional Confidence

We nurture and guide students in a safe learning environment so our graduates are:

- **Secure** in themselves; willing to show and explore their unique intellect and character.
- **Prepared** to handle success with humility and failure with grace.
- **Balanced** with the tools to self-regulate.