

THE METROLINA REGIONAL SCHOLARS' ACADEMY, INC.

Open and Closed Session

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Conference Room, Metrolina Regional Scholars' Academy

Monday, November 23, 2015, 6:30 p.m.

Voting Members Present

Lee Keel, Chair

Renee Alsop

Jack Wagler

Makila Scruggs

Katherine Pair

Michael Matthews

Jen McClave

Noelle Sproul

Rob Watson

Karen Cleary

Call to Order and Mission Statement. The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m.

Approval of the Meeting Minutes of October 26 & November 12, 2015.

Action: A motion to approve the minutes from the meeting was made by Ms. Alsop, seconded by Mr. Watson and approved by the Board.

Announcements & Adoption of the Agenda.

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

Mr. Keel announced that the new mission statement is on agenda of state Charter Schools Advisory Board in January, with approval most like in February. The school will therefore wait until approval to begin using the revised mission statement.

Executive Director's Report.

Ms. Scruggs arrived at the meeting.

Testing

1. Ms. Pieper presented the **EOC/EOG test results**. Last year (2015), Scholars Academy met expected growth.
2. Regarding nationally normed tests, Scholars Academy students often reach the ceiling on the Terra Nova tests, even though they are currently given the tests that are approximately six months to one year ahead of their numerical grade (to better align with their classroom material), so the administration recommends beginning to test grades 3-8 one additional grade level higher.
 - a. This will stretch students and get more valuable data about how much they know.
 - b. The administration understands that this will require educating parents so they understand why results may be different than in the past.
 - c. They would eventually like to consider different tests (MAP test), but they are cost prohibitive right now.
 - d. The Board requested that Ms. Cuneo research costs and options for long-term solution.

Intervention Process.

Ms. Cuneo and Dr. Romanoff explained the intervention process. The state is encouraging schools to move to the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Since our school is different from most, we need different support and guidance from state.

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At Scholars Academy:

- Most support is differentiation in the classroom. Currently serving 6% of our students with this process.
- Our new process is streamlined and cooperative.
- The new process includes professional development so teachers understand that the students can learn, just learn differently

The administration will consider putting information on the intervention process in next year's handbook.

Finance Committee Update

Mr. Watson updated the Board.

- There are no proposed amendments at this time.
- It appears that State funding will be \$30k more than in the original budget, however this will continue to be adjusted into January/February. Once the State funding number is finalized, the Board will discuss any further adjustments to budget.
- Audit is complete. Clean, with no exceptions. No identified concerns.

Mr. Watson shared a draft charter for the Finance committee (see attached), to codify the role and processes of the committee.

Action: Motion was made to approve the Finance Committee Charter, with discussed changes, by Ms. Sproul. The motion was seconded by Ms. Scruggs and approved by the Board.

Policy Committee Update

Ms. Scruggs updated the Board.

Admissions, Enrollment, Residency Policy

Action: Motion was made to approve Admissions policy by Ms. Sproul, seconded by Ms. Alsop and approved by the Board.

Enrollment & Residency Policy

The Board suggests changing the wording of the residency requirement to "by the date posted on the school calendar and/or our admissions page of our website"

Action: Dr. Matthews moved to approve the Enrollment & Residency policy with changes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Alsop and approved by the Board.

Lottery priority

There was a request that the Board consider changes to the lottery priority to include children of former teachers. The Board declined to make such changes because state regulations specifically state which categories

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may be included in lottery priority and do not allow schools to expand beyond what the state allows. These regulations are in place to ensure charter schools are truly public schools.

Hiring Committee Update:

Ms. Alsop updated the Board.

- The committee is extending deadline for application January 5.
- The Board will meet candidates in round 2, early spring.

Board Improvement

Mr. Keel suggests the board revisit by-laws in upcoming meetings:

- Discuss potential areas to revisit (such as board terms, Vice Chair description) or
- To double check (such as whether we annually sign to acknowledge receipt of by-laws).

Development Committee Update

Ms. Hemming updated the board:

As of November 23, 73% of families have given or pledged, with over \$400K given or pledged.

Committee has provided each board member with thank you notes to sign and mail by November 30.

Town Hall recap:

Lisa Waugh updated the board on the Town Hall , which was held on Nov. 3 at 4pm.

- Video has been posted.
- 11 parents attended, which was better than past two events.
- Thanks to Weezy Jones and Maura O'Sullivan for providing childcare.

Vision committee also provided the Board with results of the Climate Survey for dissemination, and asked the board to review.

Community Comments:

- Ms. Hemming congratulated the board for running the meetings so professionally.
- Ms. Cuneo mentioned how wonderful PTO is doing this year. We will get new lunch tables after winter break.

Motion to Convene in Closed Session. Ms. Scruggs moved to convene in closed session pursuant to the following statutes was made by, 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

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- 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).

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

Open Session

Board Calendar & Planning for Next Meeting:

Board discussed cancelling January 4 meeting (unless there is an emergency).:

Action: Ms. Pair moved to cancel the January 4 meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sproul and approved by the Board.

Ms. Sproul will send out form for executive director evaluation before Winter Break.

Motion to Adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Scruggs. Ms. Sproul seconded. The meeting adjourned.

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Finance Committee of the Board Charter

Purpose

The Finance Committee is commissioned by and responsible to the Board of Directors (the "Board") of Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy ("Scholars Academy"). The Finance Committee's primary purpose is to provide information to and make recommendations for the Board to assist with their responsibility to evaluate the financial position and solvency of Scholars Academy.

Composition

The Finance Committee shall be made up of the following voting members:

- The Treasurer of the Board, Chair of the Finance Committee
- The Executive Director of Scholars Academy
- One Board member who is not the Treasurer (selected by the Treasurer)
- The Accountant for Scholars Academy
- One non-Board member with financial experience (selected by the Treasurer)

In addition to these voting members, the Board Chair will serve as an ex-officio member. The Executive Director and the Treasurer may also ask any other stakeholder(s) of Scholars Academy to participate as a non-voting member(s) at their discretion.

Responsibilities

The Finance Committee will:

- Review the annual budget for the Scholars Academy and present budget for approval by the Board.
- Review the results of the annual audit and present to the Board.
- Present annual calendar of planned Finance reporting to the Board.
- Review monthly financial statements and variances from budget, and recommend action to the Board, as appropriate.
- Report to the Board on the financial position of Scholars Academy on at least a quarterly basis.
- Assist with significant debt or cash management decisions, including recommendations to the Board, as appropriate.
- If requested by the Board, provide board-level training to ensure that all directors can be effective stewards of Scholars Academy's financial resources.
- Annually evaluate the Board's finance policies, making recommended modifications, as appropriate.
- Annually evaluate its work as a committee and update objectives, as necessary.

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Admissions Policy - Draft

Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy is a tuition-free K-8 public charter school for residents of the state of North Carolina. Any child who meets the admission criteria of Scholars Academy, as articulated below, is qualified for admission. Scholars Academy does not limit admission to students on the basis of disability, race, creed, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, or ancestry.

Admissions Criteria

To qualify for admission to Scholars Academy, a student must be 1) highly intellectually gifted, as objectively determined by Scholars Academy, and 2) qualified under the laws of North Carolina for admission to a public school, which includes satisfaction of the North Carolina residency requirement. See Enrollment & Residency Requirement policy.

Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, Scholars Academy may refuse admission to any student who has been expelled or suspended from a public school under G.S. 115C-390.5 through G.S. 115C-390.11 until the period of expulsion or suspension has expired.

Open Enrollment

Scholars Academy will establish an open enrollment period annually. The enrollment period will be long enough to provide reasonable opportunity to submit applications, and no less than three months. The enrollment period, along with any Open Houses, will be listed on the Scholars Academy website (www.scholarsacademy.org).

Application Process

To determine if a student meets the admissions criteria of Scholars Academy, Scholars Academy will annually establish an application process with strict-adherence to deadlines. The application process, along with any applicable admission documents and forms, will be published on Scholars Academy's website at the commencement of Open Enrollment.

Scholars Academy will use a standard application form in English which may be downloaded from Scholars Academy's website or requested by email. Applicants may contact Scholars Academy to verify receipt and completion status of their application. An application must have all required components to be considered complete.

Scholars Academy relies upon accurate and truthful information on the application forms. If a parent/legal guardian provides false or incorrect information on the application, such as but not limited to providing an incorrect grade level in order to obtain a better chance of enrollment, the application will be considered invalid and the student will be deemed ineligible for admission. If it is found that the IQ tests submitted are not valid based on evidence presented by the parent/legal guardians, and/or test administrators, the application will be considered invalid and the student will be deemed ineligible for admission.

Application Review Process

A School Based Admissions Team ("Admissions Team") composed of at least three (3) or five (5) members appointed by the Executive Director will be established on an annual basis to review completed applications to determine if a student is a qualified applicant. A qualified applicant is defined as an applicant who meets the admission criteria established by Scholars Academy. An applicant who does not meet the admissions criteria will not be considered a qualified applicant.

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In composing the Admissions Team, the Executive Director shall ensure that the Admissions Team has the following competencies: an individual qualified to review evaluation results, a recognized expert in gifted education, and a teacher certified in gifted education. Board approval of the members of the Admissions Team is not required, unless the Executive Director deems that it is necessary to deviate from the composition competencies described above.

The Executive Director will provide the Admissions Team written admission procedures and training on the application review process. In formulating the procedures, which procedures shall be reviewed by the Executive Director on an annual basis, the Executive Director will use the best available practices in identification of gifted children and the mission of Scholars Academy. The procedures should take into account strong behavioral characteristics or evidence of a learning disability (e.g., large discrepancies between sub-test scores), and consider that the purpose of individually evaluating applicants whose standardized scores fall between two and three standard deviations above the mean is to "widen the net" and expand the pool of potential applicants and not to exclude applicants. The Admissions Team shall consider that the goal of Scholars Academy is to serve highly gifted students, including those who might not be identified if decisions were made strictly on the basis of test scores. Identification will not be based on a single measure or a single cut-off score. Instead, admissions will be based on multiple indicators of giftedness, including assessments of intellectual potential and information from significant adults. Parent and teacher questionnaires will be used to elicit relevant behavioral information about the potential applicant and will be used by the School Based Admissions Team in making decisions about applicants whose scores on an acceptable IQ test fall between two and three standard deviations above the mean.

All admissions procedures and training materials for a given year will remain on file for two (2) years or such longer period as may be required by law.

Applicants whose IQ test score falls at least three standard deviations above the mean on an acceptable IQ test are automatically deemed to meet the admissions criteria of Scholars Academy, and are qualified applicants.

Applicants whose IQ test score falls between two and three standard deviations above the mean on an acceptable IQ test will be deemed a qualified applicant, in the sole discretion of the Admissions Team.

For the avoidance of doubt, students with an IQ test score below two standard deviations above the mean on an acceptable IQ test are not qualified for admission into Scholars Academy.

A student seeking admission as a kindergartener but who will not be five (5) prior to August 31 of the relevant school year shall only be eligible for admission to the extent they satisfy the guidelines published by the State of North Carolina for early entrance into kindergarten.

Accurate records of all applications and admissions decisions will be maintained by Scholars Academy for one calendar year from the last day of open enrollment, or such other longer period as required by law.

While certain qualified applicants will be given enrollment priority in accordance with the Enrollment Priorities set forth below, the applications of all applicants will be evaluated without consideration of priority status and all names and other identifying information regarding any student shall be removed from the application file reviewed by the Admissions Team.

Scholars Academy will use reasonable efforts to notify applicants who submitted complete applications whether or not they are qualified applicants and are eligible for entry into the lottery (if applicable) at least seven (7) days prior to the lottery.

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Enrollment Priorities

Scholars Academy will give enrollment priorities in certain instances as provided by G.S. 115C-218.45(f). Scholars Academy will grant the following enrollment priorities to qualified applicants, and will implement them in the manner and order provided below:

1. Children of Scholars Academy's full-time employees.
2. Siblings (defined to include the following who reside in the same household: half siblings, step siblings, and children residing in a family foster home) of currently enrolled students who were admitted to Scholars Academy in a previous year (such siblings are referred to as "qualified siblings").
3. Legacy Siblings (defined as siblings of students who completed the highest grade at Scholars Academy and who were enrolled in at least four grade levels at Scholars Academy).
4. Children of current board members who are in good standing with the Board of Directors (defined as being in compliance with the Board Member Expectations Agreement) and who have served as board members for at least eighteen (18) months at the time of lottery.
5. Returning Student (defined as a student who was enrolled at Scholars Academy within the past two years but left for academic study abroad, competitive admission residential program or due to vocational opportunities of the parents). The Executive Director may elect to give enrollment priority to such student upon request of the parent, which request must be made at the time of withdrawal from Scholars Academy and re-made prior to the application deadline for the year for which re-admission is requested. Such determination will be on a case-by-case basis, and the Executive Director may consider any factors they deem relevant in making such determination. Notwithstanding, re-admission priority cannot be given to a student after the application deadline, though a qualified returning student may be granted admission if a seat is available and may otherwise be placed on the waitlist.

Enrollment priority for the children of full-time employees and board members shall be limited to no more than 15% of Scholars Academy total enrollment.

Should there be more children with priority enrollments than there are open slots in any given grade, separate lotteries (a lottery for each enrollment priority) will be held to randomly select the students who receive a slot in Scholars Academy. The lottery will follow the same procedures as outlined below for the school-wide lottery and will be held on the same date, but prior to, the school-wide lottery.

Any siblings who do not receive an enrollment slot will be placed at the top of the grade-level waiting list, in the order their names were selected in the lottery. In the following year, un-enrolled siblings may be given priority under the sibling preference (number 1 above).

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Lottery

Should the number of applications for any specific grade level fall below the number of open slots, all qualified applicants will be offered enrollment, and Scholars Academy will continue to accept applications on a rolling basis until all slots are filled. Should the number of qualified applicants for any specific grade level exceed the number of open slots, per North Carolina law, Scholars Academy will schedule a lottery. All qualified applicants (e.g. those deemed to meet the admissions criteria of Scholars Academy) will be notified of the date, time and location of the lottery and have the right to be present.

Scholars Academy will utilize a random number generator designed to randomly assign the list of qualified applicants at each grade level to a selection order. For qualified applicants assigned a placement number within the number of openings at the applicable grade level, those qualified applicants will be designated as "Admitted." Qualified applicants assigned a placement number outside the number of openings at the applicable grade level will be designated as "Wait List" in the order of such assigned placement numbers (subject to any Enrollment Priorities).

Multiple birth siblings shall be entered into the lottery under a single surname representing the multiple birth siblings provided they are seeking admission to the same grade level. If they apply for admission for different grade levels, they must elect the grade level in which their single surname will be entered, or be entered into the lottery separately. The placement number assigned for that surname in the lottery will be assigned to all of the multiple birth siblings, and if that placement number is admitted, all of the multiple birth siblings with that number shall be admitted.

Other siblings (i.e. not multiple birth siblings) who register for admission in the same year shall not be given the option to elect to be placed in the lottery under a single surname. Instead, each sibling will be submitted in the lottery for its own grade level.

Upon completion of the lottery at each grade level at which a lottery is required, the Wait List order will be determined in accordance with the Enrollment Priorities. Thereafter, a student will be admitted from the Wait List in order of priority, upon an opening becoming available at the applicable grade level.

If any mistake is made by Scholars Academy in registering students and administering the lottery (or if any discrepancy occurs in the lottery process as a result of the actions of Scholars Academy that is not corrected during the lottery), such mistake or discrepancy will not invalidate the lottery and the lottery results will stand with respect to all qualified applicants who were registered at the appropriate grade level through the lottery. The mistake or discrepancy will be corrected (after recognition of the mistake) as set forth below. If a mistake is made by a qualified applicant resulting in the qualified applicant not being placed at the appropriate grade level in the lottery, the qualified applicant will not be registered and may submit a corrected registration, which will be subject to the post-deadline registration rule in the prior paragraph.

(a) If too many students were included in the lottery at a grade level or if a student name was duplicated in the lottery at a grade level, the student or students who should not have been included (or the duplicate with the lower priority placement number, as applicable) will be removed, and any qualified applicants with placement numbers behind the qualified applicant so removed will be advanced in order on the list. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if a student name is duplicated in the lottery and Scholars Academy administration determines that the student was intentionally registered more than one time, the student will be assigned the lowest priority placement number assigned to the student in the lottery.

(b) If a qualified applicant is left out of the lottery at a grade level by mistake, the number of students who were included in such lottery for such grade level will be determined (the "Number of Qualified Applicants"). For each

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qualified applicant not included by mistake, a random number generator will be used to select a random number between zero and the Number of Qualified Applicants, and the qualified applicant will be assigned that number as his placement number. If the student with the corresponding placement number (who was included in the original lottery) is admitted to Scholars Academy, the student excluded from the lottery and assigned that number will also be admitted.

(c) If a student receives a placement number through the lottery at a particular grade level and is offered admittance, and subsequent to the lottery it is determined by Scholars Academy that the student will not be advanced to that grade level (based on Scholars Academy assessment, which may consider the recommendation of his or her prior school), then the student will be assigned a placement number at the appropriate grade level on the same priority. The effective date of such priority shall be the date of the admission offer to the student at the incorrect grade level.

Accurate records of the lottery process and any resulting lottery decisions will be maintained by Scholars Academy for one calendar year from the date of the lottery, or such other longer period as required by law.

Upon conclusion of the lottery, Scholars Academy will notify qualified applicants of the results. Notice to qualified applicants who are admitted will be made utilizing any contact information provided on the application form, including voicemail message, email or letter.

Date Adopted: _____

Date amended: _____

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Enrollment & Residency Requirement Policy - Draft

Enrollment

For students admitted prior to August 1 of the calendar year, an Admitted applicant must accept the enrollment within ten (10) calendar days of notice. For students admitted after August 1 of the calendar year, an Admitted applicant must accept the enrollment within three (3) calendar days of the notice.

If the Admitted applicant does not accept enrollment within the prescribed time, the Admitted applicant will be determined as having declined the enrollment, and the student will lose his/her available spot in the grade level. Accordingly, the qualified applicant with the next placement number will be admitted.

Residency Requirement

By no later than June 1 prior to the start of each school year, the parent/legal guardian of all newly-admitted students and continuing students (upon request), should provide evidence of North Carolina residency status by submitting three acceptable forms of residency verification. A list of acceptable residency verification will be made available on the Scholars Academy website. To the extent that such evidence is not provided by such date, the right of a child to enroll at Scholars Academy will be withdrawn.

Date Adopted: _____

Date amended: _____