APPROVED

TEXAS CENTER FOR ARTS + ACADEMICS

Texas Center for Arts + Academics

Minutes

TCA+A Special Session of the Board

Date and Time
Tuesday September 7, 2021 at 6:00 PM

Location
Fort Worth Academy of Fine Arts
3901 S. Hulen St.
Fort Worth, TX 76109
Theatre

In-person Meeting Return: *Governor Abbott's March 2020 order temporarily suspending certain provisions of the Open Meetings Act due to the COVID-19 pandemic disaster expired August 31, 2021. Consequently,* ***TCA+A Special Session of the Board*** *for September 7, 2021 will be conducted in-person at Fort Worth Academy of Fine Arts.*

Directors Present
Charles Reid, Daniel Bates, Leslie Scott, Mary A. Zimmerman, Melissa Goodroe, Michael Wellbaum

Directors Absent
Leslie Wade

Ex Officio Members Present
Paul Gravley

Guests Present

Anika Perkins, Betsy Compton, Janelle Grau, Lacey Gaymon, Luke Byford, Monica Sheehan, Penny Clay, Phillip Garrott, Sheyna Ferraro

---

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

Melissa Goodroe called a meeting of the board of directors of Texas Center for Arts + Academics to order on Tuesday Sep 7, 2021 at 6:03 PM.

B. Record Attendance and Guests

II. Public Comments

A. Public Comments

- No public comments were made

III. Academics

A. 2021-2022 TCA+A Virtual Academy

- August 31st the Texas House passed Senate Bill 15
    - Provides funding mechanisms for virtual learning
- While waiting final approval by the Governor we want to create a blue print of what virtual learning would look like for TCA+A
- With required Guardrails set forth by the Texas Legislature, this virtual learning process is completely different from virtual learning in 2020 and 2021
- Guardrails required by the Bill:
    - District must have a C rating or better in latest academic ratings
    - Only 10% of a district can be enrolled in the program
        - approximately 30 students from TeSA
        - approximately 65 students from FWAFA
    - Students must be passing current subjects and must have passed last year
    - Students must have passed STAAR exams last year
    - TEA will access the Virtual Campus as if it is a separate campus of TCA+A
    - Funding is only available for 2 years
- Additional Guardrails required by TCA+A:
    - Students are not eligible for premier choirs, audition assembles, audition performances, etc.
    - Students can only enter and exit the Virtual Academy at certain times; enter September 27th and exit at the end of the semester
    - Student must maintain a 90% attendance rate

    - Only students in K - 6th grades and those younger than 12 years of age qualify
- The curriculum infuses the arts as per our mission of arts + academics
- Questions:
    - Mrs. Scott: Is attendance tracked like in public schools? Answer: The bill doesn't specify. Our thoughts are a morning and afternoon attendance check in.
    - Mr. Wellbaum: Would they have to audition to be in the program? Answer: Yes, they would have to audition and be accepted into TeSA or FWAFA to be eligible for the Virtual Academy.
    - Mr. Bates: Is there any data that suggest this virtual program is the best way to teach kids particularly in this arts-based education? Answer: No study that we are aware of. With these particular Guardrails, we feel we can approach best practices. However, administration feels strongly that the best practice is in-person.
    - Mr. Bates: Is administration requesting this for 2 years? Answer: Even though this is funded for 2 years, we are requesting only one year of a Virtual Academy at this time.
    - Mr. Bates: Tell me more about how virtual artistic training can even begin to approximate what our great faculty incorporate in-person. Answer: The arts is where we've done a really good job of that. The conservatories were virtual last year and we were able to create curriculum and standards. If we were talking about a high school senior project the approximation isn't as close but because we are talking about lower grades and basic concepts the approximation is much closer.
    - Mr. Bates: Can you give an assessment of whether there is a demand for this that warrants the time, effort, energy, etc. to incorporate this? Answer: The first thing we would do is an application to access the demand. Based on the amount of emails and phone calls we've gotten from parents asking for more protective measures, we don't think we'll have an issue filling these sits.
    - Mrs. Goodroe: What is the length of time somebody signs up? Answer: A semester.
    - Mrs. Goodroe: Doesn't it dilute what you are doing if they all aren't learning on the same level? Answer: If we were looking at virtual learning from 18 months ago, we'd see that. Mrs. Perkins will be the campus administrator for this so we'll be able to approximate what's going on in the classroom in the virtual setting. This is a different level of virtual learning than in the past year and a half. We believe that in elementary we can achieve excellence.
    - Mr. Bates: Do we have a waiting list that we can fill the slots of those who choose to do virtual campus? Answer: We have a waitlist at FWAFA but not at TeSA. However, I would caution against that because we don't want them to lose access to TeSA and FWAFA when they return in person.

- Mr. Wellbaum: Did you say funding that goes through 2023 is that the same funding we would get regardless whether they are in-person or virtual? Answer: Correct. Senate 15 gives access to that funding.
- Mrs. Zimmerman: Is there documentation as to the criteria of what to expect so they totally understand all of the provisions? Answer: We've created an application and each one of the Guardrails is listed. The parent has to initial their understanding of each of these. We really want the parent to be very informed about this decision and to choose it if they really need it.
- Mr. Bates: Administration is ensuring the board that we will remain on track to reclaim the ground that we had and move forward to greater excellence? Answer: That is certainly our aim.
- Mrs. Goodroe: If this is successful, then we need to know. But if it is not successful, then I don't want to see us get into a long term situation. Answer: One of the things Mrs. Perkins has already brought to our campuses is Map testing and while that is for secondary students, there are other assessments we are pushing down to elementary students. We'll be able to have internal comparisons of the virtual and in-person campuses in real time.
- Mr. Bates: Is any increased cost going to be covered? Answer: Yes, it will be covered and there are ESSER funds we are able to use, as well.
- Mrs. Goodroe: Will it allow you to have more space for in-person school? Answer: We would not move kids off waitlist so that we can accommodate those that come back in-person in January.
- Mrs. Scott: Are there other arts-based schools, charters or not, contemplating this and have you spoken to their administrators? Answer: We are the only two audition-based charter schools in the state so we don't have anything to compare to. However, I've talked to other charters and they are in the process of considering what to do. We are ahead of the game in this area as this was not on their radars. We are going to be trailblazers in this program and long term if we get good at virtual art stuff that opens up options for us.
- Mr. Reid: Did I hear correctly that we are the only two audition-based campuses in the state of Texas? Answer: Yes. We have an incredibly unique value.

Leslie Scott made a motion to approve authority for Mr. Gravley to create and implement a virtual learning program in accordance with Senate Bill 15.
Mary A. Zimmerman seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

IV. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:42 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Melissa Goodroe

B. CERTIFICATE AS TO POSTING OR GIVING OF NOTICE