APPROVED

Kestrel Heights Public Charter School

Minutes

Regular Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday July 21, 2020 at 6:30 PM

Location
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Meeting ID: 917 6505 0859
Dial by your location
+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)
+1 267 831 0333 US (Philadelphia)
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
+1 470 250 9358 US (Atlanta)

Directors Present
A. Davis (remote), B. Paris (remote), J. Featherstone (remote), S. Foy-Watson (remote), S. McGarrah (remote)

Directors Absent
Y. Powell

Ex Officio Members Present
J. Hensler (remote), M. Callahan (remote)

Guests Present
A. Touchette (remote), Alicia Sutton, Anthony Jorge, Arnetta Dalton, B. Buckholz (remote), Carla Proctor, Carlton Mooring, Chase Stokes, Derick Proctor, Dottie Heath, Elise Pritchett, Eric Johnston, Erin Mahaffey Lowe, Haneefah Siddiq, Jerod Cohen, Joseph Gordon, Justin Matthews, Kee Alston, Kim Keith-Thompson, Melissa Sledge, Naeemah Siddiq, Nikki Walker,

Nikko Tayleor, Robin Clement, Robin Featherstone, S. Bowens (remote), S. Vargas (remote), S. Villegas (remote), Saleem Qadri, Shannon Chestnut, T. Jackson (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

J. Featherstone called a meeting of the board of directors of Kestrel Heights Public Charter School to order on Tuesday Jul 21, 2020 at 6:34 PM.

C. Public Comment

No public comment.

D. Approve April 2020 Meeting Minutes

S. Foy-Watson made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 04-14-20.
A. Davis seconded the motion.
Accept minutes as presented.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

E. Approve May Meeting Minutes

S. Foy-Watson made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 05-12-20.
A. Davis seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

F. Approve June Meeting Minutes

S. Foy-Watson made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 06-09-20.
A. Davis seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

II. Presentations

A. Jumpstart Update

Ms. Villegas shared that the Jumpstart camp was virtual for the first time and had been underway for 1.5 weeks. She shared that it had been successful so far with campers and staff working remotely from their homes.

B. 2020-2021 Medical Benefits Renewal

Ms. Buckholz introduced Mr Jarod Cohen from Eben Concepts to talk about the Kestrel health benefits renewal. He introduced medical renewal from Blue Cross Blue Shield for insurance renewal at 5% (flat rate across the board) over the current rate after

negotiations. Mr. Cohen covered the rate increases, which totaled about $15,000 for Kestrel on an annual basis if the school keeps the benefits and cost-sharing the same. There were no changes for non-medical benefits in terms of renewal costs or benefits.
S. McGarrah made a motion to Approve the medical and non-medical benefits renewal as presented by Mr. Cohen keeping rates for employee only HSA at $0 and other rates as presented.
B. Paris seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

C. Bond Discussion

Mr. Paris introduced Justin Matthews, who has extensive experience in education, teaching and working with and for charter schools. Mr. Paris and Dr. Tracy met with Justin Matthews, conferred with the bond committee, and they are introducing Mr. Matthews as a contractor who can help Kestrel Heights work through a bond issuance and planning for Kestrel's future building and facilities. He has worked with four schools in the Charlotte area.

Mr. Matthews walked us through a process of working through a sale with an existing building while simultaneously working through the design of a new building that Kestrel will add on. The process will likely take 24 months, but could go more quickly. Given the circumstances with COVID-19 and the bond markets, Mr. Matthews thinks that this would be an advantageous time for Kestrel. He also shared the importance of working with a design firm and civil engineer that have worked with schools and can help work through design questions. He thinks that having an existing school is a substantial advantage.
Mr. Bowens and Mr. Matthews discussed the costs for turn lanes on roads and the ability for the school to be reimbursed for those expenses by the NC Department of Transportation.

Dr. Tracy answered questions from parents by sharing with them that the Board has a committee who is working on this issue. Additionally, the discussion is around purchasing the middle school building and constructing a new facility to allow the school to move the elementary grades so that Kestrel can have a K-8 campus.

Mr. Matthews shared that his fee structure is a fraction of a percentage of the cost of the project and would be willing to put a ceiling and a floor for his fee for the Board.

III. Governance

A. Board Member Recruitment

Dr. Tracy has uploaded the board member candidates' applications. Ms. Shani Foy-Watson provided an update that 2 of the 3 board member candidates are willing to interview and proceed. She will contact the two additional candidates who are interested.

The Board also discussed the number of members that they would like to recruit, and the target range is between 8 to 11 members.
S. Foy-Watson made a motion to Set a target size of 13 board members for the 2020-21 school year.
S. McGarrah seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Board Elections for the 2020-21 School Year

Mr. Featherstone asked Attorney Bowens to explain the rules for the Board elections to take place remotely. Board members need to email their ballots to the current Secretary (Shani Foy-Watson) to have a paper copy of the votes.

Nominations from June meeting:
President - Shani Foy-Watson (nomination withdrawn)
Vice President - Adrienne Davis
Treasurer - Brandon Paris
Secretary - Stephanie McGarrah

Given the current situation, Mr. Featherstone agreed to serve in the role of Board President until it could be filled, which is consistent with Article 10, Section 6 of the Kestrel Heights Board of Directors bylaws. This article serves as an exception to the Board term limit rule of 7 years, which would apply to Mr. Featherstone. Mr. Featherstone could serve in the role until his replacement is found.

Shani Foy-Watson reported the ballots that each person was elected unanimously as follows:

President - Joseph Featherstone (until filled) - 4 votes
Vice President - Adrienne Davis - 4 votes
Treasurer - Brandon Paris - 4 votes
Secretary - Stephanie McGarrah - 4 votes

C. Executive Director Report

Dr. Tracy shared his Executive Director report. There were 24 total vacant seats in 3rd, 5th and 7th grades. Dr. Tracy and Ms. Vargas will evaluate reasons for withdrawals.

D. Policy Review

Dr. Tracy shared the Return to School guide for a hybrid schooling model during the COVID-19 pandemic. In reference to the staff handbook, the Board is scheduled to review that handbook during this meeting. Dr. Tracy recommends that the staff handbook not be modified to reflect the COVID-19 pandemic, but that the staff refer to the

Return to School guide. The Board will table the staff handbook modifications, including the LGBTQ changes to reflect the Supreme Court ruling, until the August meeting.

E. Revised Mission (Update)

Dr. Tracy uploaded the revised mission that was approved at the last Board meeting to the official Kestrel Heights School charter.

F. 2020-21 Accreditation Process

Dr. Tracy noted that Kestrel's accreditation will expire this year, so the school will start the reaccreditation process in September. The school has paid the renewal fee, and the administrative team has met to discuss the roles and responsibilities during the process.

Dr. Tracy will update the Board monthly on the school's progress through the process.

IV. Finance

A. Monthly Budget Report

Dr. Tracy reported on the monthly budget report. The overall budget is projected to have a cash surplus of about $35,000 for the 2019-2020 school year, but it will likely change given the finalization of several bills. The school repairs and equipment purchases have nearly been completed. Additional resources were received from coronavirus relief funds. Dr. Tracy reviewed specific line items and answered questions from the Board.

Dr. Tracy also noted that several advisors had noted that the more cash that Kestrel can save for the bond process the better.

V. Academics

A. Return to School Proposal

Dr. Tracy introduced the topic and noted that Governor Cooper has instructed schools to choose either a virtual or a hybrid plan, noting that full in-person return is not allowed. Further, he thanked the administrative team for their work on developing these plans.

Remote Learning

Ms. Villegas presented the Hawks at Home Virtual Plan. Families had an option to sign up for the virtual Hawks at Home plan with a commitment for at least a semester. Ms. Villegas noted that the staff missed the scholars and wanted them to be able to return to campus when it is safe to do so. She also noted that parent survey information was incorporated into the plan, including:

1. More live teacher and student interaction
2. Reduction of the number of apps or places to go for

3. Increased accountability for grades and attendance
4. Staff requested more training for distance teaching
5. Improve student support services, particularly for EC, ESL, AIG and others

From 8 am - 11 am every day, students will have live instruction in math, ELA, science and social studies. From 11 am - 12 pm, there will be a device-free lunch. In the afternoons (12 - 3 pm), students will have independent work, small group options and opportunities for students to ask questions of teachers. This will be the schedule for Mondays through Thursdays, and Fridays will be reserved for catching up on assignments and on elective participation. All K-8 students will be able to participate in all electives of art, music/band, PE and dance. Attendance will be taken, and parents will have to call the school if students will be absent. As of now, the State of NC is going to require EOGs. On Fantastic Fridays, students will have pre-recorded options for electives, and teachers will have professional development.

Ms. Jackson reviewed student support services for EC, ESL, AIG and other students. In March, Kestrel provided one-on-one support for EC and ESL students. For the 2020-21 school year, Kestrel will move to small group instruction to increase the frequency and duration of these services for remote and hybrid learning. For AIG services, the Kestrel program will continue with the AIG classroom and materials and other resources that Kestrel has purchased to increase the intensity of these AIG services. If parents have a concern or need a referral, they can reach out to Kestrel, and the school will address these services on a case-by-case basis. All Kestrel students will be issued a Google Chromebook. Teachers will report to school on Mondays through Thursdays in person to allow more consistency in the process.

Questions were asked by parents with the following responses:
Ms. Villegas noted that content was spiraled to cover a review period for students. Dr. Tracy noted that teachers had data from fourth quarter to help them understand what students need to review. Dr. Tracy also noted that Kestrel Heights received federal funds to help fund Google Chromebooks and other technologies for remote and distance learning.

Hybrid Model

Mr. Touchette covered that the hybrid plan would differ in August than what it would look like in September or October. Kestrel wants to be able to provide live education in a classroom with a teacher in a way that is as safe as possible. Students will take rotations for in-person and online instruction. This plan would work in the following manner:

- Drop off is at the same time;
- Families must complete attestation forms at drop-off and student temperatures would be checked as students get out of cars;

- Students go to class as usual with hallways moving in only one directions and spaces on the floor marked off at 6-foot intervals;
- All students and teachers will be required to wear masks;
- Hand sanitizer will be available to students at multiple points throughout the day;
- Surfaces will be wiped down throughout the day;
- All teachers who work in the hybrid academy will also work in the virtual teaching role as well;
- The school day will run from drop off (between 7:20 and 7:50) and then it will end at 11 am. Students will get core academic content in math, reading, science and social studies. Electives will happen virtually on Fridays;
- Students will pick up a boxed lunch when they leave each day.
- The afternoon will be virtual instruction for all students (it will differ slightly from all virtual students).

As the year progresses, student rotations will not last quite as long as families determine how best they will participate in the hybrid model. Data from the parent survey shows that only around 40% of parents would choose the hybrid model at this time.

Questions were asked by the parents with the following responses:
Dr. Tracy addressed that scholars will be able to pick up textbooks and other materials (e.g. workbooks). There is not an expectation that parents will have to print out a lot of materials. HMH has an online site that has all workbook and textbook materials.

Discussion by the Board included a discussion of why the electives were conducted only on Fridays instead of in the afternoons of Monday-Thursday. Next, the NC Athletics Association has suspended the sports season through September.

75% of the staff did respond to a survey that they would be willing to report to work in a virtual model; Dr. Tracy and the administration will follow-up with the 25% of the staff that expressed concerns. There was concern expressed by staff about reporting to work in a hybrid model.

Dr. Tracy and the team did consider a hybrid model on the basis of a grade-level hybrid, but there were a number of factors that made this difficult to achieve.

Dr. Tracy's recommendation is for Kestrel to go remote for the first 9 weeks and re-evaluate the situation on September 21 to determine how Kestrel moves forward. The Board also asked how the school can support families who need resources (e.g. childcare, internet hot spots, art supplies, etc) that they would need to help the Kestrel families that need them for remote and hybrid models. Attorney Bowens also expressed concern about the liability of the school if a student or staff member contracts COVID-19 while on campus.

A. Davis made a motion to Approve Dr. Tracy's recommendation to use a remote model for the first 9 weeks of school with a reevaluation based on COVID-19 indicators recommended by State of NC during the week of September 21.
S. McGarrah seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VI. Closed Session

A. Closed Session: Staffing 2020-2021

B. Paris made a motion to Move into closed session to discuss staffing changes and legal issues.
S. McGarrah seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Closed Session

During closed session, the Board received an update on a potential lawsuit related to the school, discussed a contractual matter related to the school, and discussed the hiring of new staff. No votes were taken in closed session.
S. McGarrah made a motion to Return to open session.
A. Davis seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

VII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

A. Davis made a motion to Approve the hiring of recommended staff for the 2nd grade position and 3rd grade position.
S. McGarrah seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:48 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
S. McGarrah