

APPROVED



RISE Prep Academies

Minutes

Standing Board Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday November 19, 2024 at 10:00 AM

Location

30 Cumberland Street
Woonsocket, RI 02895

RISE Prep Mayoral Academy Board of Directors Meeting

November 19, 2024 | 10:00AM

30 Cumberland Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895

Zoom Link to Access Meeting Virtually:

[https://us04web.zoom.us/j/8615357511?
pwd=VVhWdElmLzRRWWhvOFZDQVVBZzQrZz09#success](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/8615357511?pwd=VVhWdElmLzRRWWhvOFZDQVVBZzQrZz09#success)

Note: Members of the public can provide public comment virtually, but the Board of Directors must participate in the meeting in-person.

A vote may be taken on any agenda item.

Directors Present

C. Dias, G. Gassey, J. Egan, J. Leveille, M. Beauchamp, P. Hamilton, T. Calouro

Directors Absent

J. O'Rourke

Directors who arrived after the meeting opened

C. Dias

Ex Officio Members Present

S. Izzì

Non Voting Members Present

S. Izzì

Guests Present

C. Colarusso, K. Waller, R. DaCruz

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

P. Hamilton called a meeting of the board of directors of RISE Prep Academies to order on Tuesday Nov 19, 2024 at 10:05 AM.

B. Record Attendance

C. Public Comment

None present

D. Approve Minutes

J. Egan made a motion to approve the minutes from Standing Board Meeting on 10-01-24.

J. Leveille seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

II. Executive Director Updates

A. October Recap

C. Dias arrived at 10:07 AM.

Ms. DaCruz & Ms. Colarusso discussed the challenges and improvements in their school's staffing and behavior management. They faced significant staffing issues, with several senior staff members leaving, but managed to restructure the model, hiring more experienced candidates and working with local universities to certify new teachers. Ms. DaCruz stated that first 2 months were challenging. Ms. Colarusso explained how they implemented a new system for managing student behavior, including the use of a Dean's Den for students who misbehave, which has led to a decrease in off-task behaviors. The

school has also improved communication with parents, using Parent Square to share expectations and policies. The team is now focusing on refining the system further and avoiding similar challenges in the future as the restructured model works much better.

Ms. DaCruz and Ms. Colarusso discussed the challenges and strategies of building a strong leadership team and retaining staff. Kat emphasized the importance of a clear common vision across the leadership team and the need to build the capacity of the Dean directors and academic operations. They also discussed the need for a staff satisfaction survey to gather real data about the current state of the organization. Ms. DaCruz shared that most of their referrals are through word of mouth and that they conduct thorough screening and hiring processes. They also discussed the challenges of finding quality applicants and the need for a balanced approach to recruitment. Ms. DaCruz mentioned that they are starting to come out of the weeds and indicated a positive outlook for the future.

B. RICAS Results 23-24

Ms. DaCruz discussed the school's performance and academic progress. Ms. DaCruz highlighted that the school had taken a hit in the previous year but was now focusing more on academics. She noted that the school had outperformed Burrillville and Woonsocket but still lagged behind North Smithfield. Ms. DaCruz also expressed concern about the school's students performing below the state average, even if it was by a small margin. Ms. DaCruz emphasized the need for the school to move out of survival mode and prioritize learning. She discussed the progress of their educational model, focusing on the achievement of specific cohorts and the need for more data analysis. It was highlighted the importance of engaging students in the actual material and providing teachers with the necessary skills to implement the curriculum effectively. Ms. DaCruz also discussed the challenges faced in the high school, particularly with the low performance of certain subgroups. The conversation concluded with the need for further disaggregation of data and a focus on meeting the needs of all scholars in every classroom.

C. Major Amendment Request Update

Ms. DaCruz reminded the board members that the Public Hearing was scheduled for the next day. Ms. Waller mentioned that the hearing was being misrepresented as an attempt to become a charter school, which she clarified was not the case. She emphasized that the best way for their scholars to receive the resources associated with the funding formula was through the current system. Ms. DaCruz agreed with Ms. Waller's points and expressed concern about the potential misrepresentation of their intentions.

Ms. DaCruz and Ms. Waller discussed the complexities of a governance change and the potential impact on families. They agreed to share a favorable template for those who want to email their concerns to RIDE. They also discussed the possibility of a positive outcome from participating in the change, despite the reduction in funding. Ms. Waller

mentioned the possibility of having a meeting with some parents and teachers who needed to understand the problem and its implications.

Ms. DaCruz and Ms. Waller discussed the potential impact of a pension system on their organization and the community. They noted that the system could have a significant impact on their finances and operations, particularly if they are unable to trigger it. They also discussed the possibility of adjustments to the model to accommodate the system. The conversation also touched on the potential for public comment and the need for clarification on certain aspects of the system. Ms. Waller mentioned that she would be present at the Public Hearing discussion and would work on simplifying the explanation of the system for others. Lastly, it was discussed the importance of maintaining a positive tone in the face of adversity.

D. November/December Happenings at RISE Prep

Ms. DaCruz informed the Board about the two events scheduled for Friday 11/22:

- Lower Academy Q1 Honor Roll & RICAS Recognition Breakfast, 8:00-9:30 AM
- Lower Academy K-2 Family Breakfast/Morning Meeting, 7:45-8:30 AM.

Ms. Hamilton informed the Board that the Business & Personal Podcast Interview of Dr. Rosalind DaCruz with Ryan Armbrustmacher will be aired on Monday, November 25th.

III. Development Committee Update

A. Meeting Recap

Ms. DaCruz discussed the development committee, which includes Ms. Waller, Ms. Gassey and Mr. Egan. She stated that their strategy was based on securing larger grants and organizing potential campaigns or events, such as Giving Tuesday. They also considered the possibility of a fundraiser that will include the families and the kids or "theater night". The committee also touched on the topic of the school's 10-year anniversary and the possibility of a cultural exchange program.

IV. Governance Committee Update

A. Committee met to set strategy

Ms. DaCruz stated that the first meeting took place, and the committee will meet again will update their agenda based on the outcome of the major amendment.

V. Finance Committee Update

A.

Audit Update

Ms. Waller stated that there was no major update, as the audit is in process.

B. ERC Update

Ms. Waller informed the Board that there were no updates and that was normal.
Finance committee will meet on mid December.

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

J. Egan made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

T. Calouro 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 11:04 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
G. Gassey

Documents used during the meeting

None