APPROVED

Excel Academy Rhode Island

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday March 21, 2024 at 5:30 PM

Location
Center for Southeast Asians (CSEA)
270 Elmwood Avenue
Providence, RI 02907

Meeting Notice Posted Publicly: 3/19/24

Please note: All items listed on the agenda are subject to a possible vote by the Board of Trustees.

Trustees Present
C. Chhay, C. Heng, F. Rojas, I. Blake, L. Cariaga-Lo, L. Giordano

Trustees Absent
B. Smiley, C. Lombardi, G. Goldberg, M. Rivera

Guests Present
A. Kaynor, A. Solomon, C. Reed, O. Stearns

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

C. Chhay called a meeting of the board of trustees of Excel Academy Rhode Island to order on Thursday Mar 21, 2024 at 5:36 PM.

C. Public Comment

D. Approve Minutes for 1.25.24 Board Meeting (4:30pm)

C. Chhay made a motion to approve the minutes from 1.25.24 (4:30pm).
L. Cariaga-Lo seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
C. Chhay	Aye
I. Blake	Abstain
C. Lombardi	Absent
G. Goldberg	Absent
M. Rivera	Absent
F. Rojas	Abstain
L. Cariaga-Lo	Aye
B. Smiley	Absent
C. Heng	Aye
L. Giordano	Abstain

E. Approve Minutes for 1.25.24 Board Meeting (6:00pm)

L. Giordano made a motion to approve the minutes from 1.25.24 (6:00pm).
C. Chhay seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
C. Chhay	Aye
M. Rivera	Absent
L. Cariaga-Lo	Aye
F. Rojas	Abstain
L. Giordano	Aye
G. Goldberg	Absent
B. Smiley	Absent
C. Heng	Aye
C. Lombardi	Absent
I. Blake	Abstain

F. Reminder: Annual Ethics Disclosures due 4.26.24

Kaynor provided the Board with a reminder about the Annual Ethics Disclosure requirement and process. Cariaga-Lo and Giordano recommended that new Board

members complete the requirement online, to make it easier to fill out the paperwork again each year in the future.

G. Approve Public Comment Policy

L. Cariaga-Lo made a motion to approve the Public Comment Policy as presented.
C. Chhay seconded the motion.
Kaynor summarized the draft Public Comment Policy presented to the Board. The policy was developed based on several strong examples from other schools and is intended to provide the Board with some helpful structure and guidelines for the Public Comment section of Board agendas in the future.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Lombardi	Absent
L. Giordano	Aye
C. Chhay	Aye
L. Cariaga-Lo	Aye
B. Smiley	Absent
G. Goldberg	Absent
F. Rojas	Aye
C. Heng	Aye
I. Blake	Aye
M. Rivera	Absent

H. Update regarding BoardOnTrack

Kaynor provided the Board with an update on a new software called BoardOnTrack and asked the Board to sign in and provide feedback on the platform as we work to implement it fully.

II. Team Builder

A. Team Builder & Welcome to New Members: Frangely Rojas & Imani Blake

Stearns facilitated a team builder discussion on the following question:
"If you could teach a course at Excel, what course would it be and why?"

III. Academic Oversight

A. State of the School Update

Stearns provided the following updates on the State of the School:

- Staffing
  - Retention - We are still in the process of offer letters and re-hiring conversations, but anticipate high staff retention and most staff returning to their roles for next year.

    - Hiring - We are actively recruiting staff for open positions (7th grade roles, instructional coaching, and leadership roles to account for growth). We will have an update on hiring and any vacancies in June. We are seeing some initial strong talent in some roles (mid-level leadership) and will have more in-person interviews in the coming weeks.
- Academics
    - RICAS will be starting in April for ELA and May for Math & Science. Our winter (January) practice test in ELA demonstrated less progress in ELA than we had hoped. Since then, the leadership team has been working closely with teachers on responding to this data, has incorporated a writing bootcamp taught by Dr. Ring and a DCI, and iis closely tracking the data to ensure student improvement. Our practice math test was taken earlier in March and the team is working on action planning from that data now.
- Student Culture
    - Family Conferences are next Thursday, March 28th.
    - Attendance - 93% (dipped in January (91%), but has climbed back up)
      Chronic Absenteeism - 19%, with our goal of less than 15%
      Discipline - We are at a 5% suspension rate for the year and have continued to see improvement in discipline at the school.
- Professional Development
    - Dr. Ring and three leadership team members will be participating in All Means All this year (15-month program) with a focus on driving student outcomes for all students and closing our differentials. This is the second year Excel has participated in the programming. The program continues through next spring.

Giordano reflected on how well the school is doing and expressed gratitude to the school-based and network leadership teams for their good work.

Rojas noted how positive the school culture was at a recent basketball game. Rojas observed that many parents were in attendance and that the students were very supportive of each other. Rojas echoed the reflections Stearns shared about the sense of stability at the school.

Rojas also noted that teachers' one-on-one meetings with students and parents are helping to ensure that they feel informed and bought into the work that is happening at the school and its future.
Stearns provided an update on the lottery and student recruitment and enrollment trends, as detailed in the Lottery Update document that was provided to the Board in advance.

Solomon noted that XLRI's recruitment successes are particularly notable within the broader context of recruitment challenges in the sector. Heng echoed this sentiment.

Cariaga-Lo asked a clarifying question about applicants not from XLRI's three catchment areas. Kaynor and Heng clarified that they may be students experiencing homelessness.

IV. Governance

A. SY23-24 Board Goals - Mid-Year Check-In

Stearns expressed gratitude to the Board for leaning in on many important issues, participating in many committees and joint committees, and making great progress broadly across its goals.

Stearns provided an update on fundraising needs, as an area for continued work to build a strong donor base in Rhode Island. Stearns reminded the Board of the broader context that we believe in operating schools sustainably on the public dollar, but that fundraising is needed for growth, real estate, and our exceptional College Access and Post-Secondary Success (CAPS) programming.

Chhay recommended that the Board participate in the 401 Gives program next year.

Cariaga-Lo requested materials to facilitate outreach, which Kaynor offered to send to the Board after the meeting.

V. Real Estate

A. Update on XLRI real estate search

Reed provided the Board with updates on the real estate search, including:

- Reminder of how the school's enrollment plan and real estate needs over the next 8+ years
- Update on 99 Kenyon St. school building, RFP process, and lease process
- Update on partnership with Achievement First
- Update on financing
- Reminder and update on other real estate prospects

Kaynor provided the Board with a summary or the proposed resolutions that were provided to the Board in advance.

Stearns updated the Board on advocacy efforts with respect to real estate and meetings with XLRI's Family Leadership Council.

Kaynor expressed gratitude to Cariaga-Lo for representing the Board in joint working group meetings and to Rojas for assisting with parent engagement and uplifting parent and family voices in this process.

Giordano and Heng asked clarifying questions about financing strategy, which Solomon answered.

B. Approve Lease Resolution

L. Cariaga-Lo made a motion to approve the resolutions as presented.
L. Giordano seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

G. Goldberg	Absent
I. Blake	Aye
C. Heng	Aye
C. Chhay	Aye
F. Rojas	Aye
L. Cariaga-Lo	Aye
C. Lombardi	Absent
L. Giordano	Aye
M. Rivera	Absent
B. Smiley	Absent

VI. 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 7:04 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
C. Chhay

Documents used during the meeting

- 1.25.24 XLRI Board Minutes - 4.30PM.pdf
- 1.25.24 XLRI Board Minutes 6PM.pdf
- Draft Public Comment policy - 3.21.24.pdf
- Lottery Update - XLRI Board - 3.21.24.pdf
- RI Board Goals - mid-year update - 3.21.24.pdf
- XLRI Resolution - 3.21.24 - FINAL.pdf

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