APPROVED

Élan Academy Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday March 31, 2021 at 6:00 PM

Location
Via Zoom Meeting Conference as per State of Louisiana Proclamation Number 2020-30
Phone Discussion (646) 558-8656;
Meeting ID: 825 6221 7713;
Password: NONE

709 Park Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70114; (504) 619-9720; www.elanacademy.org

The matters listed are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may, in fact, be discussed. Other items not listed may be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. All agenda items are informational unless otherwise denoted, though all committee reports require a vote for acceptance. The meeting will be held on the campus of the school.

Directors Present
A. Olatunji, A. Shabankareh, D. Barnes, D. Hoover, D. Patin, D. Willeman, G. Thomas-Batiste, J. Stewart, R. Watkins, S. Brown, T. Taylor

Directors Absent
None

Directors who arrived after the meeting opened
D. Barnes

Ex Officio Members Present
R. Carter

Guests Present
Jenny Tabor, M. Clark, Michael Chen

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Patin called a meeting of the board of directors of Élan Academy Charter School to order on Wednesday Mar 31, 2021 at 6:06 PM.
A roll call was conducted, and it was acknowledged that we have a quorum of 10 board members at the meeting beginning.

C. Approval of February 24, 2021 Board Minutes – Darren Patin (Voting)

Motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 02-24-21.
A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the meeting minutes.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

D. Approval of Today's Meeting Agenda - Darren Patin (Voting)

Board Chair Darren Patin asked for a motion to approve today's meeting agenda without changes.
Motion to approve today's meeting agenda. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the meeting agenda.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

II. Head of School Report

A. Head of School Report – Melanie Askew (Voting)

Ms. Askew presented the Head of School report which included the following:
Head of School Report – March 31, 2021
ÉLAN General Updates:

- We are currently in the process of planning for a summer school program as well as the upcoming school year.
- Pre-K will have a STEP-Up ceremony on May 14th at 9:00 a.m.
- Kindergarten graduation is May 21st at 9:00 a.m.
- Ms. Askew becomes Dr. Askew on May 16th at 3:00 p.m.

NOLA-PS & LDOE:

- We will undergo a child-find audit the week of April 12th. NOLA-PS is supporting our preparation for the audit.

Facilities & Operations:

- We had a leak in one of the modular units.

Human Resources:

- Our lead teacher has returned from maternity leave.
- We currently have 100% of desired teacher retention. Offer letters will go out after break. Returning letters go out April 1, 2021.
- Open positions for 2020-2021:
  - Office Secretary
  - Development (Reopening Position)
- Open positions for 2021-2022:
  - Kindergarten Teacher
  - 2nd Grade Teacher
  - 3rd Grade Math
  - SPED Teacher
  - 3rd-4th Science (Relay/Xavier)
  - Interventionist

Partnerships & Resources:

- A local video vendor is shooting a GiveNola day video for Elan.
- Received a grant from NSNO to support middle school curriculum (math & science).
- Ms. Askew spoke on a women in education panel for InspireNOLA on Tuesday.

Enrollment:
Preliminary matches are on track for 2021 - 2022 school year. Current year enrollment, 2020 - 2021 remains the same as the previous month.
Academics & School Culture:
STEP Round 5 has shown significant improvement in student reading levels in all grade levels, with several students testing out of their STEP level program. Additionally, students who are new to ELan for 2020 - 2021 are improving, exponentially, as they approach reading AT level, but we still have a long way to go.
A significant number of students did not do well on LEAP prep testing. The belief is they are making many adjustments from virtual to in building testing, and from the regiment of focus required for testing.
Motion to Board Chair Darren Patin called for a motion to approve the Head of School Report, and a motion was made, seconded, and approved.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

III. Governance

A. Governance Committee Report - Darren Patin (Voting)

Board Chair Darren Patin stated the committee met, and these were the outcomes from that meeting:

Discussed the succession plan. Document circulated with Board on Track, as well

Discussed a Board retreat with either Ms. Hertilien and Kelly Peterson. Reaching out to both to determine best route.

Discussed the current vendor contracts, including the janitorial vendor versus in house employee. Reviewing possibilities. Talked about food vendor and the RFP process, with the hope of getting more options in the coming years.

Discussed the budget process, Dan Willeman is working on the outline for the deadlines, as well.

Discussed the insurance portfolio, Dan Willeman will circulate to the current vendors.
Jonathan Stewart will help with review and with helping to recruit more options through the RFP process, if we decide to move in that direction. Dan is pulling together policy declaration pages, all are asked to provide vendors who may be interested.

Talked about the HoS evaluation process, and mentioned an upcoming evaluation webinar. The evaluation process is in progress.
D. Barnes arrived at 6:22 PM.
Motion to accept the Governance Committee Report, and a motion was made, seconded, and approved.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

IV. Academic

A. Academic Committee Report – Anane Olatunji (Voting)

We welcomed a new member, Mr. Steven T. Brown, and provided him with a brief overview of the committee's job description. He is eager to work with the committee and we look forward to his participation.

The inquiry that Dr. Olatunji initiated with NOLA-PS in January has been concluded. As the committee has been exploring how school data might be used to improve the board's oversight of Élan Academy, Dr. Olatunji reached out to see if NOLA-PS, as our authorizer, might be of assistance. After considering the inquiry, the office of school support and improvement, headed by Dr. Kelli Jordan, recommended that we seek assistance from our head of school in order to learn more about student assessments. Consequently, the description of assessments provided previously to us by school staff is

attached to this report. We encourage all board members to familiarize themselves with this information.

The focus of this month's meeting had to do with the same data collection project referenced above. The committee chair stated that we are now in a position to review school data more holistically, given that it has been collected for at least the past three months. The discussion that ensued, however, suggests that there may still be some confusion within the board about the purpose and potential value of this project. Therefore, the remainder of this report restates and elaborates on key points from previous committee reports this academic year.

1. During the board retreat last July, the trainer and facilitator, Erline Hertilien (BES.org), indicated that our board should be monitoring school/student data to ensure that stakeholder concerns about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) might be met. (See attachments for a copy of the initial draft of the action plan.)

2. Consequently, in August the committee began working with the head of school and her staff to devise such a plan. The two parties (board and staff) agreed upon collecting new data points to supplement those already monitored by the board. Page 2 of 9 709 Park Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70114; (504) 619-9720; www.elanacademy.org

3. As a logical starting point, the parties agreed to collect data that centered around the demographic groups used in state systems of educational accountability, including Louisiana. Other points deemed as relevant by the committee and as feasible by staff were included. Importantly, these points included student assessment as well as non-assessment data. (See attachments for a copy of the minutes from the committee meeting of 09/22/20.)

4. With no previous roadmap to follow, the committee chair stressed that this project should be viewed as a work in progress, subject to change, if needed. Accordingly, throughout the fall, the chair expressed concern about the feasibility of the effort, given the limitations of the school's current database(s), as explained by staff, and the nature of the new data points. The head of school was helpful in providing data despite this concern.

5. At the regular board meeting last December, the chair shared some preliminary findings from the project. He also reiterated his contention made at the beginning of the school year that, aside from improving the board's responsibility of monitoring school performance, this effort could potentially provide new opportunities to market the school.

For example, as a point of reference, Dr. Olatunji shared national data on student achievement, highlighting gaps between subgroups. Unless we monitor data, we will not know whether Élan Academy has similar gaps. If it does not, then that information could

benefit our efforts to market the school. However, if it does, then we could decide whether or how to address the situation.

The presentation ended with an emphasis of caution, however, when interpreting the preliminary findings. The chair stressed further the importance of examining findings overtime before forming any conclusions. (For more information, see the report of 12/16/20.)

Over the course of this spring term, therefore, the committee looks forward to sharing with the board more results from the school data collection project. To the extent that the results reflect trends over time, rather than individual snap shots as in last December, the data may become more useful to the board in fulfilling its role of monitoring student achievement in particular and school performance in general.

Board Chair Patin called for a motion to accept the Academic Achievement Committee Report.
Motion to accept the Academic Achievement Committee Report, and a motion was made, seconded, and approved.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

V. Finance

A. Finance Committee Report – Roger Watkins (Voting)

Robert Carter gave the Finance Committee report, highlighting the variances from the projected budget. Finances are on track to end as planned.

Roger discussed the PPP loan forgiveness status, expects to hear something in 60 – 90 days given PPP extensions.

Board Chair Patin called for a motion to accept the Finance Committee Report.
Motion to accept the Finance Committee Report was made, seconded, and approved.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

VI. Development

A. Development Committee Report – Ashley Shabankareh (Voting)

Ashley Shabankareh gave the Development Committee Report.

The committee discussed the GiveNOLA Day plan. Outcomes were developing the postcard and distribution process. Asked board members to provide additional names for our recruitment database, and discussed the social media plan.

Board Chair Patin called for a motion to accept the Development Committee Report.
Motion to accept the Development Committee Report, and a motion was made, seconded, and approved.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

VII. Additional Business

A. Consideration and vote to include Afina Lockhart to the Academic Committee - Darren Patin (Voting)

Dr. Olatunji spoke with Afina Lockhart to discuss her interest in membership on the Academic Committee. Dr. Olatunji found her to be a wealth of knowledge and information, and was impressed with her credentials.

Tiffany Lewis gave a personal professional assessment of her ability, her commitment to education.

Board Chair Patin asked for a motion to approval Dr. Afina Lockhart for service on the Elan Academy Charter School Academic Committee.
Motion to approval Dr. Afina Lockhart for service on the Elan Academy Charter School Academic Committee. It was so moved, seconded, and approved.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Old Business

No old business was discussed.

C. New Business - Darren Patin

No new business was discussed.

VIII. Closing Items

A. Chairman's Remarks

Board chair wrapped meeting with some guidance on items he hopes we will wrap up in our April 2021 meeting.

Board director Brown provided some food for thought on pandemic relief funds, and the distribution and utilization of those funds.

Board chair Patin called for a motion to adjourn, moved by Roger Watkins, and seconded by Dr. Anane Olatunji. The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.
Motion to adjourn, moved by Roger Watkins, and seconded by Dr. Anane Olatunji. The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
T. Taylor

Guests are welcome to speak during each agenda item with recognition from the presiding officer. In the event to comments or debate may appear to be lengthy, the presiding officer will set a time limit the open comment period; will define the time length each person is afforded to speak; will recognize the order of the respondents, and each person will be asked to state their name, city, parish, and affiliation with the school (examples: employee, administration, parent, community guest, school board representative). This policy subject to change, as necessary.