

APPROVED



Rainier Valley Leadership Academy

Minutes

Special Board Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday May 15, 2024 at 4:30 PM

Location

This meeting is virtual:

This is a virtual meeting. Use the following link:

Rainier Valley Leadership Academy Board meetings are open to the public. This meeting will be virtual with an in person option.

<https://bit.ly/3ymLsEE>

There is an in person option @ 6020 Rainier Ave S, Seattle WA 98118

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In person option @ 6020 Rainier Ave S, Seattle WA 98118

Directors Present

E. Forde (remote), J. Thiel (remote), M. Dyal (remote), M. Sahoo (remote), R. Bembry (remote), T. Marsh (remote)

Directors Absent

None

Guests Present

Amy Holton (remote), Aster Dube (remote), B. Coleman (remote), Beth Harper (remote), Bob Doss (remote), C. Catchings, Chineka Jones (remote), D. Watson (remote), Desiray Padilla (remote), Henry Jenkins Jr (remote), Jacob Taylor-Mosquero (remote), Janine Lewis, Jennifer Verbois, John Uthus (remote), Kalpana Natarajan (remote), Kesha (remote), Kyle Wallace (remote), L. Reisberg, Lashawn Jenkins (remote), Lenny Emperado (remote), Levon White (remote), Lydia Jones (remote), Lynell Owens (remote), Mary Woods (remote), Michelle Cove, Nati Hardin (remote), Parvin Eskandari (remote), Tamara Woods (remote), Tayish Mandefero (remote), Taylor Jones (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

T. Marsh called a meeting of the board of directors of Rainier Valley Leadership Academy to order on Wednesday May 15, 2024 at 4:36 PM.

II. Public Testimony

A. Call for public testimony.

1. Beth Harper (RVLA Instructional Aide): Concerned about staff turnover. Scholars are suffering and affects behavior.
2. Amy Holton: Observed complete disconnect between what we say we are and what is the reality. Teachers should be in charge of creating the programing. Feels there are more behavior problems here than any other schools she has taught at. Feels behavior program is not helpful to scholars or staff.
3. Jacob Taylor-Mosquero: Feels the daily schedule should be changed and that will help with behaviors. Blocks are too long.
4. Kalpana Natarajan: Things keep changing and it makes it difficult for scholars to learn. Lots of scholars who have IEP's. Teacher retention is a problem. Sent a document to the Board about the teachers concerns. Is it okay to be working 8.5 hours a day? She cant help scholars at the end of the day b/c too many meetings.

5. Mary Woods: Children are able to do anything they want. She believes teachers are fired because they don't agree with the CEO. Need more time for teachers to work with scholars after school. She believes we do not serve any breakfast and lunch to our scholars. Worried about enrollment numbers. She wants all the Black male teachers to stay at RVLA no matter what.
6. Kyle Wallace-He agrees with Mary. He likes the mission of RVLA, but he feels like he was misled. 3 weeks of summer PD and still felt unprepared for 1st day. Was not trained on systems. Concerned with the mental health of scholars and they need more mental health supports in the school. He thinks this is the reason for behaviors he is seeing.
7. Taylor Jones: Echoing what her colleagues are saying. High staff turnover is a concern and affects culture. Staff voice - they are scared they will be fired for speaking up. She has seen staff be reprimanded for speaking up-no specifics.
8. Levon White: What is RVLA doing well is that we have curriculum that is different than anywhere else he has taught-he can use decolonized curriculum. Concerns: half of students are not happy with meals. Standards based grading allows scholars to turn in assignments late and that is not working.
9. Michelle Cove: Returning teacher from last year. Was told Tubman Clinic was going to have a salad bar and it never happened. Scholars were disappointed. Hot meals aren't good. Game room is shown to prospective students and it hasn't been offered to them so far. They are misled. Schedule does not allow for year round math and english. Concern: scholars are worried that all staff will leave. Community Council-Why aren't teachers invited?
10. Nati Hardin-She has done family and community organizing. Would like to share some stories. A scholar told her he won't do English because credit recovery is easier. Positives-likes the anti-racist aspect, but scholars and staff want to see more. Highlight that she feels very welcome at RVLA. Recommends a trauma informed approach.
11. Jennifer Verbois: Teacher and is worried that teachers are "trapped" in a classroom with certain scholars. Scholars are not getting what they deserve. So many disruptions they can't teach. With the reduction in force they are all relying on each other. Feels kids are dumped at RVLA when they get kicked out of other schools. Admin is very supportive and this is different than other schools.

III. Executive Session

A. CEO Evaluation

M. Dyal made a motion to Move into Executive Session.

R. Bemby seconded the motion.

Per RCW [42.30.110](#) Executive Session will be 28 minutes to discuss Personell CEO Annual Evaluation. Board will return at 6:30pm. Extended 5 mins return at 6:35pm

No decisions made during Executive Session

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

Roll Call

J. Thiel Aye

Roll Call

M. Sahoo Aye
T. Marsh Aye
M. Dyal Aye
E. Forde Aye
R. Bembry Aye

IV. School Lunches

A. Who Do We Use and Why?

Review food service vendor & process. Fresh n Local is literally the only company available for meal service for Charter Schools. We have put out for bids along with other Charter Schools, but no other company made bids. If anyone knows anyone who wants to become a food service provider for schools, please refer them to us!

V. Executive Team Salaries

A. 2024/25 & 2025/26

Board decides CEO salary. CEO salary has only been given COLA and the standard raises that everyone gets. Review of CFOO and CoS salaries scale. How these salaries were decided on by looking at other salaries at similar institutions.

VI. Budget Overview

A. Gates Compliance, Fundraising, Development Director "Interviews"

Review of the Gates Foundation Budget and what is included. How it breaks down over the next 3 years. We would get prorated amounts if we don't reach our enrollment goal. What RVLA will have to fundraise in order to keep the total grant award. We are working on hiring a Development Manager.

At 56% enrollment for next year-we should be at 60%. Marketing has been an issue due to some glitches with website tracking and facebook ads. These are being resolved right now.

VII. Retention & Recruitment

A. Teacher Turnover, Scholar Retention, HR Exit Interviews

Teacher retention rates have been dropping post COVID. Hiring/Release data review from 19/10-23/24.

HR Exit Interviews: Themes given why they were leaving RVLA

1. Communication-Told things last min or not told at all. Not included in decision making. Doesn't feel collaborative. Everyone said that.

2. PD and hours we work. There is always a meeting or something and they are overwhelmed and burned out.
3. Behaviors of scholars. Even with the behavior team gone it doesn't make any difference. Some coaches not coaching for teachers struggling with behavior management.
4. They tell Admin and give feedback and nobody ever does anything. All the staff surveys were given out and they provided ideas - nothing happens, so they give up.
5. Complaints of support for new teachers. They didn't feel like they got what they needed like coaching or paired with a more experienced teacher, etc.

Did staff leave the profession as a whole or just leave RVLA? Some have left education all together and some have left for other districts.

VIII. Expansion Update

A. "Leadership" Elementary, Middle, & High

Approved for Elementary expansion, so now we can actually start enrolling. Elementary Principal and Dean are in Chicago right now visiting schools.

Have been visiting preschools to recruit. Both the Principal and Dean of Community Engagement. Many preschools are looking for partnerships with RVLA or a school like RVLA.

Executive Deputy from Commission has met with us to ensure we are fully compliant.

1. In June Elementary Team will submit Unit Plans for the curriculum to the Commission
2. They will do a site visit.
3. Hiring needs to be done by August.

Safety issues brought up? Do we feel confident we will be able to keep everyone safe. Yes logistics have been worked out and are very tight and systems will support this.

B. Bond & Property Acquisition Update

IX. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

M. Dyal made a motion to Adjourn.

J. Thiel seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

R. Bembry Aye

J. Thiel Aye

M. Dyal Aye

Roll Call

M. Sahoo Aye

E. Forde Aye

T. Marsh Aye

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

T. Marsh

Documents used during the meeting

None

Rainier Valley Leadership Academy Board of Directors Meeting Agenda 5/15/24