APPROVED

Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Monday January 25, 2021 at 6:30 PM

Location
Live Stream: https://youtu.be/laVHnZptSXE

Directors Present
A. Starling (remote), A. Young (remote), C. Lewis (remote), M. Dixon (remote), M. Ramasamy (remote), S. Dasu (remote), S. Korrapati (remote), S. Liner (remote), S. Schroeck (remote)

Directors Absent
A. Farooqi

Ex Officio Members Present
A. Pieper (remote)

Guests Present
Anne Mitchell (remote), Donald Morris (remote), Enrique Alvarez (remote), Megan Vespa (remote), N. Zagorski (remote), Stacey Henderson (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B.

Call the Meeting to Order

M. Dixon called a meeting of the board of directors of Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy to order on Monday Jan 25, 2021 at 6:32 PM.

C. Read Mission Statement

A. Starling read the Mission Statement.

D. Administrative Meeting Review

M. Dixon reviewed the rules and procedures for the Zoom Webinar Platform for Board Meetings.

E. Approval of Prior Minutes

S. Schroeck made a motion to approve the minutes from 1/19/21 - Special Board Meeting on 01-19-21.
S. Dasu seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

F. Adoption of the Agenda

S. Dasu made a motion to amend the proposed agenda to reflect that the Diversity and Inclusion Committee Update will not include a vote AND the Finance Committee Update will not include a budget amendment.
A. Starling seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
S. Dasu made a motion to approve the agenda as amended.
S. Korrapati seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

II. Community Comments (First Opportunity) - subject to guidelines

A. Community Comments - guidelines

There were no members of the community who wished to make a comment.

III. Director's Report

A. General Items

A. Pieper gave the Director's Report.

Educational Program:

- 2nd Quarter Report Cards will be delayed until next Thursday and Friday. They will be delivered via email.

- K-4 is taking the mid-year iReady. Results will be shared at the next meeting of the Educational Excellence Committee.
- There will be no middle school Electives this year because of time constraints. They will return next year.

Upcoming Events:

- New Hybrid Student Attendance will be on February 3rd for new hybrid students and their parents.
- Last opportunity for hybrid attendance will be pushed to March 15th. Families will need to make a decision by February 26th.
- Spring Conferences are scheduled for February 15th and 16th.

Staff and Students:

- Staff professional development with new group is beginning in February.
- Admissions is in full swing. One group test has already been tested. Another group test is scheduled. Approximately 170 students will be tested this year during the two group test dates. This is an increase over last year.

Other Items:

- 0 cases of COVID as of January 22nd.
- The school has not received guidance from the state regarding the school calendar, so a new calendar will not be approved until March.
- Proposed first day of school for 2021-2022 is Tuesday, August 24th.
- Current door security software and hardware will be upgraded in the next few weeks.

S. Korrapati made a motion to begin the 2021-2022 school year on Tuesday, August 24, 2021.
A. Starling seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

IV. Expansion Committee

A. Status Update

S. Korrapati gave the Expansion Committee Update.
As mentioned in previous board meetings, the newsletter and on our school website, the Board has been negotiating to purchase an existing building in furtherance of our commitment to expansion. Unfortunately, we were unable to finalize our intended plans and have taken our building off the market. Therefore, **Scholars Academy will remain in our current home for the next school year (2021-2022).** The Board remains committed to expansion and will continue to seek opportunities to achieve our goals.

Please keep tuned for updates and if you wish to serve on the expansion committee, please email board@scholarsacademy.org.

V. Governance Committee

A. Status Review

S. Liner gave the Governance Committee Update.
The Governance Committee met earlier this month. The Committee did submit a letter of intent for the NC Access Grant and was granted an opportunity to put in an application. The Application is very long and involved, so the Finance Committee will assist in budgetary information for the application. The application will be ready for review by the Board by the next Board meeting. The application is due on March 1. A consultant will assist with review of the application.

S. Korrapati discussed the evaluation of the Executive Director for the 2020-2021 school year. Staff and Board have been invited to submit evaluations. Ms. Pieper's self evaluation is already complete. Once all responses have been received, a report will be prepared and shared with the full Board.

VI. Diversity & Inclusion

A. Status Review

S. Dasu thanked the members of the Expansion Committee for their hard work so far.

S. Dasu gave the Diversity and Inclusion Committee Update.
The Committee met in January. The Staff committee shared a survey that will be given to students regarding their experience with Diversity and Inclusion. Parents were surveyed in July. The Committee will meet on February 9 in order to discuss the results of the survey. The Committee has found that there is some work to be done at Scholars Academy to increase understanding of D &I. A consulting and training firm will do training and development for staff. The D & I Committee has offered assistance to the Governance Committee in completing the NC Access Grant Application. Community read book is called "Biased" by Jennifer Eberhardt, PhD (C1 &C2). Discussion will be January 27th, from 3-4 PM. Sessions via zoom are open to members of the community. Details are in the newsletter.

VII. Educational Excellence

A. Status Review

C. Lewis gave the Educational Excellence Committee Update.
The Committee met in December and discussed the new Q3 hybrid attendance schedule. The next meeting has been postponed to February so that iReady test scores can be discussed.

VIII. Whole Child Committee

A. Status Review

The Whole Child Committee met in December, prior to Winter Break. The discussion focused on communicating with Scholars Academy families about the particular social and emotional needs of gifted children on a regular basis. This communication comes in the form of a weekly Facebook post via the school account which links to a more in-depth article about a particular topic. The first theme for these posts is gifted overexcitabilities. The other topic discussed was brainstorming virtual Grandpeople day wish will be planned for Spring in collaboration with the Development Committee, School Admin and Staff, and the PTO. The Whole Child Committee will meet again tomorrow to further that discussion.

IX. Policy Committee

A. Status Update

A. Young gave the Policy Committee Update.
The Committee has been discussing the Employment Policy. School's counsel has recommended amending section 4.3 and deleting sections 4.4 and 4.7. The Board will be given the opportunity to read over the proposed changes to the policies. The vote will be postponed until the next meeting.

S. Liner discussed future changes to the Admissions Policy that will need to be made in the next one to two months to provide for certain priorities in the lottery for economically disadvantaged students. This will be a required policy change to be in compliance with the NC Access Grant Application.

X. Development Committee

A. Status Review

M. Dixon gave the Development Committee Update.

Annual Campaign: Thus far, there has been $221,930 received, which is roughly $19,000 less than what was received at this time last year. Overall pledges are $417,557 this year. Compared to last year, overall pledges are up 20%. Participation, however, is down by 14%. New families - 21 of 26 new families have pledged to the Annual Campaign. A significant number of families have increased their gift. Average gift amount is up $700 over last year. New matched gift programs have increased total dollars pledged by $133,000. 2020 tax letters were mailed on Jan 2.

In regards to the Science Fair, there are 16 judges confirmed to date, most of whom participated last year.

XI. Foundation Committee

A. Foundation Committee Update

M. Ramasamy gave the Foundation Committee Update.
The Committee has received some guidance from the Governance Committee in regards to next steps in forming the foundation. Volunteer personnel, namely someone to act in a managerial role as well as someone to oversee marketing will need to be recruited to oversee the next steps. The Committee plans to define these roles and start engaging the community in recruitment. The operating agreement that was reviewed by the Governance Committee will be shared with the school's attorney for review and updates over the next couple of months.

XII. Finance Committee Update

A. Finance Recommendations

A. Starling gave the Finance Committee Update. The Finance Committee met last week to discuss items that could impact the budget. Because the Federal Government's extended disability benefits for those who contract COVID-10 expired on December 31, the committee discussed extending additional short-term disability benefits for staff on a case-by-case basis after the federal disability pay runs out should a staff member become infected with COVID-19. A budget amendment would not be required for this. Should this need to be implemented, the cost would be covered by the Substitute Teacher budget. Expenses for the new door hardware and software and Diversity and Inclusion training will require a budget amendment to be put forth in the next Board Meeting as they are new incremental expenses. Bus service related revenue and expenses will be removed from the budget as there were not enough families interested in bus service to make providing the service feasible. The Committee also discussed the NC Access Grant which was previously mentioned in the Governance Update. The Committee also discussed the transition of accounting services to another provider as the current provider is looking to transition into a different role. Tax filing with the IRS will be reviewed before submitting.

XIII. Community Comments (Second Opportunity) - Subject to Guidelines

A. Community Comments

There were no members of the community who wished to make a comment.

XIV. Closed Session (if necessary)

A. Closed Session

S. Dasu made a motion to convene in closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. §143-318.11: To prevent the disclosure of privileged or confidential information; To discuss contract negotiations; To discuss personnel matters involving an individual.
M. Ramasamy seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

XV. Closing Items

A. Vote on any items from Closed Sessions

There were no items discussed in closed session which required a vote.

B. Adjourn Meeting

S. Dasu made a motion to adjourn.
A. Starling 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 8:32 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
S. Schroeck