APPROVED

Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Monday February 22, 2021 at 6:30 PM

Directors Present
A. Farooqi (remote), 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
None

Ex Officio Members Present
A. Pieper (remote)

Guests Present
Amy Wang (remote), Anne Mitchell (remote), Donald Morris (remote), M. Vespa (remote), Matt Mogt (remote), N. Zagorski (remote), Sharon Tam (remote), T. Hemming (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 Feb 22, 2021 at 6:32 PM.

C. Read Mission Statement

M. Ramasamy read the Mission Statement.

D. Administrative Meeting Review

M. Dixon gave the Administrative Meeting Review to discuss the rules and procedures of the Zoom Webinar Platform.

E. Approval of Prior Minutes

S. Schroeck made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 01-25-21.
M. Ramasamy seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

F. Adoption of the Agenda

S. Schroeck made a motion to adopt the agenda for tonight's meeting.
S. Dasu 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:
Mid-Year iReady Results - K-4 took reading and Math mid-year iReady. Results in Math and Reading were shared with the Educational Excellence Committee and showed comparable growth to last year from the beginning of the year to mid-year.
4th Quarter Planning - Attendance choice request form went out on Friday. Forms must be completed this week Friday. Final numbers are not yet ready yet. So far, the numbers are trending toward an increased number of hybrid students. Daily attendance schedules will not be changed unless we cannot accommodate the number of hybrid students and maintain social distancing, but that is not anticipated at this time.

Staff and Students:

Had the first session with Hines Gaither Consulting for Diversity and Inclusion training for staff and was very well received. There are three more sessions scheduled.
Staff COVID Vaccinations - Staff will not be required to be vaccinated, but 95% of staff either have appointments or intend to get vaccinated.
Admissions Update - the deadline is this Friday. Lottery on March 25.
Posted Staff Positions - there are two open positions posted on the website.
Personnel items will be discussed in closed session.

Upcoming Events:
Spring: Attendance beginning March 15th, decision by Feb 25
New to Hybrid Orientation will be on Mar 10th
Teacher Workday on Mar 26th
Spring Break Apr 5th-9th

Other Items:
0 Cases of COVID as of Feb 22nd.

IV. Expansion Committee

A. Status Update

S. Korrapati gave the Expansion Committee update.

Scholars Academy will remain in the current location for the next school year. The Board remains committed to expansion and we will continue to work towards our goals.

V. Governance Committee

A. Status Review

S. Liner gave the Governance Committee Update.

The committee discussed staff Serving Our Staff committee which is an internal staff committee that serves to brainstorm and solve problems that affect the whole school. The Board would like to better support the SOS committee. The Governance Committee reached out to the SOS committee to communicate the telework policy to ensure that if staff had questions about the policy, those questions could be answered. The SOS committee wishes to have better engagement for the Board. The Governance Committee will explore how to best support the SOS committee in its meetings this Fall.

The committee has been working on writing an application for the NC Access Grant. The application documents have been sent out to members of the SA Board for review. A consultant at Leaders Building Leaders is also reviewing the documents in order to give feedback. The application will be submitted on Friday. We are applying for up to 1.25M dollars to support our greater diversity and expansion in order to better serve

academically disadvantaged students. Strategies to support these students include additional recruiting, support services, and removing barriers to attending Scholars Academy. There will be a change in the admissions policy to give a preference to economically disadvantaged students. Priority will be given first to children of staff members, siblings of current students, legacy siblings, and then students who qualify for free or reduced lunch up to 15% of the total student population. An attorney is reviewing these documents and policy changes. The policy changes are included in the NC Access Grant Application, but have not yet been finalized. The grant would also include additional staff training and development.

The Board will vote on the submission of the Grant application following the closed session.

S. Korrapati discussed the Executive Director Evaluation. The Board has completed its evaluation of the E.D. The committee is waiting on some staff responses and will report on the evaluation at the next Board meeting.

VI. Diversity & Inclusion

A. Status Review

S. Dasu gave the D & I Committee Update.

The Committee has reviewed responses to student surveys. There was a theme of positive energy from students. Students want to learn about different cultures and experiences. The staff committee and the D & I committee is encouraged by these results. There has been a positive response to Black History Month activities as well.

Curriculum reading material is being reviewed as well to ensure that reading selections are diverse and representative of different perspectives and experiences.

Professional Development sessions provided by Hines Gaither were well received by the staff.

The Committee looks to partner with other organizations to educate the greater Charlotte community about Scholars Academy.

The next Community Read on the book "biased" will be on February 24 and all are encouraged to attend.

VII. Educational Excellence

A. Status Review

C. Lewis gave the Educational Excellence Committee Update.

The Committee met to review the iReady results which were encouraging and discussed in the ED report.

The first day of school for next year is Tuesday, Aug 24. Staff and admin have begun scheduling for next year. There are some proposed changes to the block scheduling that are yet to be finalized and will be discussed further at next month's meeting.

A program has been proposed for the summer for new students to get better acclimated and brought up to speed before they start school.

VIII. Whole Child Committee

A. Status Review

S. Schroeck gave the Whole Child Committee Update.

The whole child committee met on Tuesday, January 26, 2021. The committee reported on engagement analytics for the “Did you know?” Facebook posts. The posts are designed to inform and engage parents and members of the community with Social Emotional Learning topics as they pertain to gifted learners specifically. The analytics show that there is not much engagement in terms of “likes” or comments on Facebook, but that the posts and their accompanying links are being shared. The theme for February is common characteristics of gifted learners. March’s theme is twice exceptional issues.
The new Eagle Vision Awards were discussed as well. The awards are designed to recognize students for growth toward the values outlined in the Scholars Academy “Vision for our Graduates” document and are not meant to share requirements with or replace academic awards. 2-5 students per homeroom per month will be chosen by their homeroom teacher in any of the “Vision” categories, particularly in Social Awareness and Emotional Confidence. Recipients will be recognized by Zoom on the last Wednesday of the month. They will receive a certificate via email and their names will be published in that Friday’s newsletter.
The final topic discussed was the virtual Grandpeople Day event which will happen via Zoom in May. This event is being planned in coordination with Administration and staff and the Development Committee with additional support from the PTO. The exact details will be communicated to parents via email and a registration link will go out sometime in the next month that parents will be able to share with Grandpeople. Pre-registration will be required so that we can ensure a safe, secure, and uninterrupted online event.
The Whole Child Committee will meet again tomorrow, February 23 at 10:30AM.

IX. Policy Committee

A.

Status Update

A. Young gave the Policy Committee Update.

The Committee met and discussed Internet Safety and Acceptable Use Policy which was updated and reformatted. More significant changes were made to the Employment Policy (4.3) which was shared with the Board for review prior to the meeting. On the advice of counsel, the Hiring Policy (4.4) and the Discipline and Termination Policy (4.7) must be deleted and Employment At-Will Policy (4.3) must be amended. The purpose of these changes is to remove procedural details and restrict the language to include only policy. The changes will require a vote in tonight's meeting.
A. Farooqi made a motion to adopt Employment policy as recommended by the Policy Committee.
A. Young seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

X. Development Committee

A. Status Review

A. Farooqi gave the Development Committee Update.

We are 93.5% to the financial goal for the Annual Community Giving Campaign. Family participation is at 78.5%. Faculty and staff are at 100% and Board participation is at 90%. Pledges are currently at $464,660, which includes both pledges funds received. Family participation raffle winner will be announced this Friday. Matching gifts are over $135,000. There are 21 matching gift programs participating.

Grandpeople Day was discussed. Development Committee will assist with registration for the event.

A slideshow for 20 in 2020 is being worked on and will be presented sometime in the next month.

Science Exploration Expo planning is underway for a virtual event that will happen in March. A separate staff committee is planning that event.

XI. Foundation Committee

A. Foundation Committee Update

M. Ramasamy gave the Foundation Committee Update.

The Committee will present some foundation documents to the Board in Closed session that have been prepared by the school's counsel.

A job description for a Foundation activity coordinator has been written.

XII. Finance Committee Update

A. Finance Recommendations

A. Starling gave the Finance Committee Update.

The Committee met to discuss getting new door security hardware and software. The amount that needs to be allocated is not enough to require a budget amendment.

The Board will need to approve tonight an increase in expenses for Professional Development for Hines Gaither Consulting services.

The line item for bus service will be taken out of the budget.

Before and after care will be utilized in 3rd quarter, so that needs to be added into the budget, but it is budget neutral, so there is no effect to the bottom line of the budget.

M. Dixon asked members of the Board to review the 990 tax document so that the Board can approve its submittal at the next Board meeting. Audit documents and the contract with Acadia will also require Board approval.
A. Starling made a motion to amend the budget to increase professional development by $10,000, to remove the bus line item, and add before and after care line items.
S. Liner seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

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

A. Agenda Item Summary

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

XIV. Closed Session (First)

A. Closed Session

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

B. Vote on any items from Closed Sessions

S. Liner made a motion to approve the submission of the application for the NC Access Grant as recommended by the Governance Committee.
A. Starling seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
S. Dasu made a motion to increase the ADM for the 2021-2022 school year.
A. Farooqi seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

XV. Closed Session (Second)

A. Closed Session

S. Dasu made a motion to convene in closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. §143-318.11: (f) To discuss personnel matters involving an individual employee or prospective employee.
S. Korrapati seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Vote on any items from Closed Sessions

There were no items discussed in the Second Closed Session which required a vote.

XVI. Closing Items

A. 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 9:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
S. Schroeck