APPROVED

Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy

Minutes

Board Meeting

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

Location
LIVE : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwKjhgpyJfE

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
Ammeilia Sommer (remote), Anne Mitchell (remote), Enrique Alvarez (remote), M. Vespa (remote), N. Zagorski (remote), Natesha Morrison (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 Mar 22, 2021 at 6:33 PM.

C. Read Mission Statement

A. Starling read the Mission Statement.

D. Administrative Meeting Review

M. Dixon gave the Administrative Meeting Review by going over the rules and procedures for the Zoom Webinar Platform.

E. Approval of Prior Minutes

A minor change needs to be made to the minutes from the February meeting as there was an error in the record of the wording of the Governance Update. The correction will be made and the Board will vote to approve the minutes at next month's meeting.

F. Adoption of the Agenda

M. Ramasamy made a motion to adopt the March 22 meeting agenda.
A. Starling 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.

Hybrid and Virtual Attendance - We are currently at 224 hybrid students (160 virtual) which is a significant increase over quarter 3. Changes were made to the enrichment schedules in order to maintain social distancing throughout the day.

Health and Safety - Children continue to eat outdoors. Cleaning protocols remain. Staff and student illness are closely monitored. There have been no COVID-19 cases for students or staff all year.

Staff Vaccinations - 95% of staff indicated intention to become vaccinated. Staff have been directed to not answer parent inquiries about their personal vaccination status. Administration will update the community on school wide vaccination rate.

Legislation changes - Legislation is being considered currently that may directly affect charter school autonomy to choose which plan to use. There is a possibility of changes based on changes to legislation. The specifics of these changes are unknown at this time. More information may be available to the school within the coming weeks.

Flexibility and Responsiveness - We will continue to monitor the situation and respond as required. Local or state mandates, school based cases, hybrid numbers, and teacher availability are all factors that could cause a change in the format or schedule.

Educational Program -

- End of year Testing is required this year for both Hybrid and Virtual Students. Testing must be done in person on-site.
- There is a 2021-2022 Proposed School Calendar which will be reviewed by the Board tonight.
- The admissions lottery will be held on Thursday by Zoom Webinar.
- The library has reopened.
- Third quarter is over on Friday this week and report cards will go out Friday next week.

End of Year Testing -

- K-4 hybrid students will turn in their school issued chromebooks on May 10.
- K-2 students will operate on a regular hybrid/virtual schedule throughout the testing period (5/14 to 5/24).
- Attendance for 3-8 will be adjusted for the testing period.
- Drop off: Hybrid student drop off 7:45-8:10 Virtual student drop-off 8:10-8:30. Hybrid and virtual students will be testing in separate rooms.
- Dismissal: Virtual students 12:00-12:20. Hybrid students who are in the building for testing have the option to be picked up between 12:00 and 12:20. They may stay for the full school day.
- On Wednesday May 19, all students testing will be picked up between 12:00 and 12:30.
- Testing schedule and days of attendance will be in this Friday's newsletter.

2021-2022 School Calendar - State of NC has not given any guidance on the calendar for school year 2021-2022, so the assumption is that school will return in the Fall with a full 5-day-a-week in-person schedule.

- There will be an early release day approximately one-time per month (typically on a Friday or Monday) so that there is dedicated staff professional development time.
- Childcare will be offered on early release days.

- Teacher conference days will be dedicated virtual days.
- There will be additional virtual learning days the two days prior to the scheduled Thanksgiving Holiday.
- Dismissal will begin 5 minutes later (at 3:10pm).
- Two weather-related days are built into the calendar.
- First day of school will be 8/24. Last day of school will be 6/5.

S. Liner made a motion to adopt the 2021-2022 school calendar as proposed.
S. Korrapati seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
End of Year Activities:
Yearbook: May 21st (8th Grade), May 24th-25th (K-7th grade)
Talent Show: May 25th
5-8 Hybrid Tech Turn-In: May 25th; K-8 Virtual Tech Turn in: May 26th
8th Grade Graduation: May 25th (Rain date May 26th)
Field Day/Awards Day: May 27th
Last Day of School - Dismissal at 11:25 - May 28th.

Staff: Staff has been asked to show intent to return on a form. Several positions are open and are in process of being filled. Professional development continues. The staff is very pleased with the new instructors and are looking forward to continuing to work with them.

Compliance and Finance: GEER applications for funding submitted. These grants will go toward tutoring for students and covering a portion of the costs of having a school nurse. The state is requiring the school to created and implement a mental health plan including staff training hours in order to address any mental health challenges that arise among students as a result of the pandemic.

IV. Governance Committee

A. Status Review

S. Liner gave the governance committee update.

The committee met twice this month. The committee discussed Board recruitment. Information is on the website including the application packet. The deadline is May 25th. There is an interview process. The Board will vote on new members in the June meeting.

Some feedback from the SOS committee will be discussed in the next meeting and there will be an update next month.

The NC Access Grant application was submitted. Final approval decisions are expected to happen in June. If approved, funds would be disbursed in July.

The Executive Director Evaluation will be discussed in closed session.

V. Diversity & Inclusion

A. Status Review

S. Dasu gave the Diversity and Inclusion Committee Update.

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee met in March. The progress of the Marketing Plan was discussed. The Committee has reached out to multiple organizations to promote Scholars Academy to prospective families and has also been able to post notices of open staff positions on a more diverse platform. There was a discussion about how to maintain relationships with these organizations. This has also been discussed in the Governance Committee as a goal for the new Foundation to build and maintain relationships with diverse organizations in the community through membership. The Board committees, Diversity and Inclusion in particular, would then focus on outreach and promoting Scholars Academy. The Staff committee continues to work on promoting the school and creating programs to encourage inclusion.

M. Dixon mentioned that the Governance Committee, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and Foundation Committee have discussed the differentiation between community relations and marketing so that those specific roles and tasks are appropriately assigned and budgeted as we move forward with the creation of the Foundation.

The next online community read event will be March 24 from 3-4:30 PM (C9, C10 & Conclusion)

VI. Educational Excellence

A. Status Review

C. Lewis gave the Educational Excellence Committee Update.

The Committee met on March 16 to discuss school calendar, end of year testing, and the possibilty of adopting the Math Dimensions program for grades 6-8, which would be a continuation of the K-5 Math program, and heard diversity and marketing updates as well.

VII. Whole Child Committee

A. Status Review

S. Schroeck gave the Whole Child Committee Update.

The whole child committee met on Tuesday, Feb 23. The committee continues to engage with the community through the weekly "Did you know" Facebook posts, which highlight and inform readers about topics regarding the social and emotional well-being of gifted learners. The theme for March is twice-exceptional. We are happy to report an

enthusiastic reaction to the first round of Eagle Vision Awards. The hope is that the program will encourage students to develop attributes outlined in the Vision For Our Graduates document. The committee discussed plans for virtual Grandpeople Day on May 5. The Development Committee will be sending out a registration link in the next couple of weeks. The committee also discussed new ideas to encourage students to better engage with the school counselors and also how the school may incorporate the parents and alumni community in SEL programs in the future when guests would be allowed in the building. The Committee will meet again tomorrow.

VIII. Policy Committee

A. Status Update

A. Young gave the Policy Committee update.

The Policy Committee met on March 16. The Committee discussed the Admissions Policy (2.1). If the NC Access grant is approved, a new admissions policy with a weighted admissions lottery will need to be adopted.

This policy change will be voted on at next month's Board meeting.

IX. Development Committee

A. Status Review

A. Farooqi gave the Development. Update.

As of March 19, 2021, $280,515 has been received for the Annual Community Giving Campaign. Including outstanding pledges and recurring monthly gifts, the toal is $473,695 which is 95.5% of the financial goal of $495,000. Family participation is at 81.5%.

Parent Ambassadors are calling those who have not yet pledged to remind them to pledge.

2021 Science Exploration Expo (SEE) Virtual Awards Program is March 31st at 6pm. The whole community is invited to attend.

20 years in 2020 Post-Event Outreach - event photos and slideshow sent to all attendees on March 7, 2021.

X. Foundation Committee

A. Foundation Committee Update

M. Ramasamy gave the Foundation Committee Update. Per attorney advice, some changes needed to be made to the by-laws of the Foundation to make the Foundation a supporting organization for Scholars Academy. Some fundraising activities will move to the Foundation for the next school year. The fundraising license document will be reviewed in closed session.

XI. Finance Committee Update

A. Finance Recommendations

A. Starling gave the Finance Committee Update.

The Committee met last week and discussed the budget. Some budget items will need to be amended. There was higher revenue and lower expenses than anticipated. There is a budget surplus.

The Committee discussed the Foundation and how to initiate a bank account for the Foundation and how to move some funds from the school account to the Foundation so that it can begin its operations. A CPA is being consulted in order to make this transfer properly.

M. Dixon clarified that the fact that the Foundation will be a supporting organization means that the Scholars Academy Board will continue to be responsible for financial and budget decisions as the Foundation Board of Trustees majority membership will be Scholars Academy Board members.

The revised 990 tax form has been distributed to the Board. Edits will be discussed in closed session. The Board will vote on the edits to the form tonight.

Budget Amendments: $11,200 increase in expenses to account for teacher bonuses that were already paid out. The money came from the state of NC. There will also be some changes to properly label certain revenue and expenses which will not have an effect on the budget totals.
A. Starling made a motion to approve the budget amendments as proposed.
S. Liner seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

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

A. Agenda Item Summary

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

XIII. Closed Session

A.

Closed Session

S. Dasu 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. Schroeck made a motion to move the vote of the adoption of the February meeting minutes to the April Board meeting.
S. Liner seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
A. Farooqi made a motion to approve the 990 tax form as recommended by the Finance committee.
A. Starling seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
M. Ramasamy made a motion to amend the Foundation bylaws and file the IRS amendment form.
S. Dasu seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

XIV. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

S. Dasu made a motion to adjourn.
A. Farooqi 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 9:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
S. Schroeck