APPROVED

Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy

Minutes

SA Monthly Board Meeting

Date and Time
Monday February 24, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Location
You are invited to a Zoom webinar.

Topic: Scholars Academy Monthly Board Meetings
Register in advance for this webinar:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_QnF5XYNnTLmdSvALkzNuPQ

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

You may also watch the meeting live via YouTube stream, at Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy - Charlotte - YouTube

Directors Present
A. Hall (remote), A. Starling, D. Palmer, D. Tijerina, E. Alvarez, E. Womer, J. Doll, K. Becnel, L. Lopez, M. Dixon

Directors Absent
None

Directors who arrived after the meeting opened

K. Becnel

Ex Officio Members Present
C. Carper

Guests Present
Mel Ahlers (remote), Nancy Abell (remote), S. Dasu (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Palmer called a meeting of the board of directors of Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy to order on Monday Feb 24, 2025 at 6:37 PM.

C. Read Mission Statement

E. Alvarez read the mission statement.

D. Administrative Meeting Review

D. Palmer read the Zoom Webinar Etiquette/Rules

E. Approval of Minutes of Board Meeting - 1/27/25

E. Alvarez made a motion to approve the minutes from SA Monthly Board Meeting on 01-27-25.
M. Dixon seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

F. Approval of Minutes of Board Meeting - 2/3/25

E. Alvarez made a motion to approve the minutes from Special Board Meeting - Virtual Meeting on 02-03-25.
M. Dixon seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

G. Adoption of the Agenda

E. Alvarez made a motion to Approve the agenda.
M. Dixon seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

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

A. Community Comments - guidelines

No community comments

III. Director's Report

A. General Report

Celebrations

- MathCounts Team - 2nd place finish at the UNCC Chapter Competition
- Dear Edwina Junior was wonderful
- Thanks to Executive Staff for hosting the very successful Gifted Minds Conference

SEL Program 24/25

- Drummers assembly
- Protect Our Student's Presentation
- The Anxious Generation - this Wednesday is the open discussion meeting with parents
- Let It Grow - solving student anxiety
- Service Day for students and staff - currently being planned
- Wellness Fair- Mental Health Focus

HR Updates

- Staff survey - who plans to return next year, everyone has indicated they are returning except one retiree

Updates on Academic Director Search

- In progress - nearing the end of the process

K. Becnel arrived at 6:43 PM.

IV. Governance Committee

A. Charter Compliance

- We reviewed the status of our compliance reporting to the Office of Charter Schools and we are up to date with all of our items.
- There are 3 pending submissions that are coming up (Parents Bill of Rights collection, school mental health plan, and school safety plan)

B. Townhall in April

- As done last year and the year before that Board will be hosting a virtual and in person townhall. Dates will likely be in April 2025 but still TBD.

V. DEI

A. Community Engagement

Guest Speaker Initiative:
- Low parent participation reported.
- Suggestions: Continue promotion in the newsletter and use social media.
- Discussion on tracking success and considering Career Day for next year.

PTO and Staff Collaboration
- Plan to attend the next PTO and Staff DEI meetings (March 20, 2024).

VI. Policy Committee

A. TITLE IX - Revert to 2020 as required by Law

The Biden administration's Title IX rules were struck down in court in January 2025. Consequently, SA must revert to the previously approved 2020 policy because the 2024 policy is no longer applicable.
Three changes are required to implement the change:

1. Personnel changes;
2. The 2020 Title IX policy must be posted on the website;
3. A training manual must be provided to the staff.

The committee proposes a vote to reinstate the previously amended and approved 2020 Title IX policy.
E. Womer made a motion to Recommendation to revert to the 2020 Title IX previously approved policy noting personnel changes, website update, and staff training.
E. Alvarez seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Responding to Law Enforcement Activities on School Grounds

- The Trump Administration rescinded a 2021 DHS memo that designated schools and other community services as “protected areas.” This 2021 rule stated that ICE agents should avoid enforcement activities in these locations whenever possible. Consequently, counsel has recommended that the SA develop a protocol or policy to address ICE enforcement and ensure all staff are informed of the appropriate actions to take.

- The Policy Committee suggests its adoption as soon as possible to ensure, among other protections, that student records are safeguarded against legal enforcement actions, especially given the evolving immigration landscape.
- The Policy Committee recommends a vote on the proposed policy, which was first communicated by email for First Read to the Board on February 1, 2024.
- The Procedures are included in the agenda as supplemental material.

M. Dixon made a motion to vote on the policy to respond to law enforcement activities on school grounds.
D. Tijerina seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

VII. Foundation

A. Update

- Reviewed the current numbers for total pledges and donations and how it compares to last month and last year.
  - As of February 21, total pledges and donations = $368,499 with $151,909 outstanding pledges. The following have pledged and/or donated: 80.5% returning families; 81% new families; 80.6% overall family participation; 100% volunteer leadership (includes Board and Trustees.
- Numbers look very similar to last year, and we eventually met our goal. However, this year, pledges are behind where we were last year.
- Discussed the employee match program and how important that piece is to meeting our goal. There is a tool on the website to find out if your employer participates in donation matching.

VIII. Finance Committee

A. Financial Updates

Finance committee met this morning.
New contract for the auditor:

- Good practice to change auditor every 3-5 years and we have had ours for 4 years
- The auditor is independent from the accounting services provider
- Received 2 RFPs
- Not a lot of options - we have one good choice. Very few firms serve Charter Schools.
- The new recommended auditor is highly regarded. They will be more expensive (approximately $5000 more - a 50% increase). This is because this option is a firm versus a sole proprietor. The auditor being part of a firm may also result in additional beneficial financial advice.

- The new auditor will perform the next audit.

New Accounting Services provider:

- Current accounting services provider is (formerly) Acadia. They have been our accounting services provider for many years. Their quality of work has deteriorated over the last couple of years. The Finance Committee has tried to make it work but has now chosen to hire a new provider.
- The Finance Committee received 3 RFPs
- The recommended provider is in the middle of the three from a cost perspective (and a 20% increase from the current provider).
- The recommended provider is entirely digital (currently the school is working with paper checks and invoices)
- We anticipate many process and efficiency improvements, increasing time savings for the Finance Director.
- Acadia has been notified of the termination and transition. The transition will occur over the summer.
- The Board requested the Finance Committee to provide updates on the transition process.

B. Vote on New Audit Contract as presented by the Finance Committee

M. Dixon made a motion to vote on the new audit contract proposed by the finance committee.
A. Starling seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

C. Vote on New Accounting Services Provider as presented by the Finance Committee

E. Alvarez made a motion to on the new accounting services provider as presented by the Finance Committee.
M. Dixon seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

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

A. Community Comments

No community comments

X. Closing Items

A. Closed Personnel Matters

E. Alvarez made a motion to Enter into closed session to discuss personnel matters.
M. Dixon seconded the motion.

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

B. Adjourn Meeting

E. Alvarez made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
M. Dixon 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 8:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. Doll

Documents used during the meeting

- February 2025 Executive Directors Report
- 2.17_Title_IX_Policy_10302020.pdf
- 2.17_a__Title_IX_Reporting_and_Grievance_Policy10302020.pdf
- Responding_to_Law_Enforcement_Policy.pdf
- Responding_to_Law_Enforcement_Procedure.pdf