APPROVED

Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy

Minutes

SA Monthly Board Meeting

Date and Time
Monday April 28, 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 (remote), E. Alvarez, E. Womer, J. Doll, K. Becnel (remote), L. Lopez, M. Dixon

Directors Absent
None

Ex Officio Members Present

C. Carper, T. Hemming (remote)

Guests Present
Elena Stoldt (remote), K. Ely (remote), Mel Ahlers (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 Apr 28, 2025 at 6:34 PM.

C. Read Mission Statement

Erica Womer read the mission statement.

D. Administrative Meeting Review

D. Palmer read the zoom webinar etiquette/rules.

E. Approval of Minutes of Board Meeting - 3/24/25

E. Womer made a motion to approve the minutes from SA Monthly Board Meeting on 03-24-25.
L. Lopez seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

F. Adoption of the Agenda

E. Alvarez made a motion to adopt the agenda.
E. Womer seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
E. Alvarez made a motion to amend the agenda to include a vote on the slate.
L. Lopez seconded the motion.
After Closed Session, a vote was added to the agenda.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

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

A. Community Comments - guidelines

There were no community comments.

III. Director's Report

A. General Report

See attached for full report, summary as follows:

- Celebrations for the month
- Title VI Certification
- School calendar revision
- Important dates for May -there are many events, and parent volunteer support is necessary for the success of these events.

Board member question - what was the participation like at New Scholars Day? Answer - 36 students/families attended.
Board member question - was someone from the Foundation present? Answer - yes, Toni Hemming was there to field questions.
Board member question - how is Ms. Delp doing during her first few weeks? Answer - great!

E. Alvarez made a motion to approve the proposed 25/26 Calendar revision.
A. Starling seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

IV. Governance Committee

A. DEI Certification

- Discussed Certification of DEI form
  - https://www.ed.gov/media/document/reminder-of-legal-obligations-undertaken-exchange-receiving-federal-financial-assistance-and-request-certification-under-title-vi-and-sffa-v-harvard-april-3
- ~$85,000 in federal funding (average yearly basis with carryovers from the previous year)
- Governance Committee is not aware of any policy or practice that would subject us to risk for violating False Claims Act by signing the certification.
- Received guidance from outside counsel.
- Form was signed by Mr. Carper and delivered to the State on April 11, 2025 on time.

B. Town hall in April Recap

- Attendee Metrics
  - 3 attendees in person
  - 46 unique viewers (excluding those by phone) & max of 45 concurrent viewers out of 60 registrations
  - 1 person over phone

- Zoom Metrics
  - Average attendance 52 mins
  - 75% of attendees stayed for 45+mins
- Questions:
  - Management of next year's 7th grade class (also represents all 3 pre townhall questions)
  - Expansion, growth, and high school as well as building modifications
  - Bus and ideas regarding the school bus drivers
  - Sexual education
  - School counselor needs
  - 2025-26 calendar
  - Kindergarten class size
  - Impact of current political environment to School's federal funding resources

C. Vote: Parental Leave Opt In

- Each year the board needs to approve the Parental Leave Opt In by October 1 for the fiscal year the Parental Leave option is intended to be used.
- MRSA has approved this for the last 2 school years.
- Governance Committee recommends opting in for the 2025-2026 school year now, before the summer, to give assurance to the staff.
- Rule:
  - http://reports.oah.state.nc.us/ncac/title%2016%20-%20education/chapter%2006%20-%20elementary%20and%20secondary%20education/subchapter%20c/16%20ncac%2006c%20.0408.pdf
- Board member question - what is the cost to us? Answer - it is variable but in the opinion of the Board, well worth it.

E. Alvarez made a motion to approve the parental leave opt in.
E. Womer seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

D. Board Recruitment

- 2025-2026: 1 opening and 1 potential opening
- 2026-2027: 2 openings and 2 potential openings (all of which are uncommitted as of yet to renew for a 2nd term)
- Zero applications as of yet
- We are seeking nominations - this can be from the applicant or anyone else.
- We have a specific need for someone with financial acumen, but this is not required.
- Feel free to reach out to board@scholarsacademy.org or ask a board member if you have any questions about the process or expectations.

V. DEI

A. DEI Compliance

- The committee continues to discuss what actions are necessary in light of the United States administration's new executive orders on DEI to protect the school's DEI mission and federal funding.
- One of the key actions identified is the review of the external webpage, including the School's Equity Statement and DEI Equity Plan (links below) that may otherwise be subject to scrutiny from the federal government. (Refer to Policy Committee and Governance update on DEI Certification).
- Recommendations will be reported back to the Board in the next meeting.
- See SA Equity Statement and DEI Action Plan below:

Link to our SA Equity Statement
https://www.scholarsacademy.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=345044&type=d&termREC_ID=&pREC_ID=1011894

Link to our DEI Action Plan
https://www.scholarsacademy.org/ourpages/auto/2022/7/13/49735814/DEI_Plan_docx.pdf?rnd=1657720751081

VI. Policy Committee

A. Committee Work on Policy Updates and Best Practives for Policy Publication

- The committee continues to work on reviewing policies.
- The committee is also looking into best practices for efficiently publishing policies once they have been approved by the Board.
- A federal court in Maryland has issued a preliminary injunction against the Department of Education, essentially preventing the DoE from enforcing the certification that schools were required to sign this month. For now, this means that the DoE cannot enforce that certification and or withhold funds to public schools pursuant to that certification. It also puts on hold the False Claims Act use as a tool against public schools in this context.

VII. Foundation

A. Update

- Annual Giving Update
- Parent Ambassadors have begun to reach out to 75 families for the Pledge is a Promise Campaign
- Pledge fulfillment due date is May 15, 2025

- $314,288 in donations received
- $101,140 in pledges NOT fulfilled
- 39 pledges with amounts still to be determined
- Board member question - is there a way to send pledged families the pledge amounts as a reminder? Answer - the Foundation will look into it.

VIII. Educational Excellence Committee

A. Committee Updates

- The Parent Survey will be sent to the community this week
- The Board looks forward to family participation. If you were at the Town Hall and had questions/comments, please share on the survey too!

IX. FAST Committee Updates

A. Upcoming Building Updates to improve Safety & Security

- Additions in the coming months:
  - Safety shades on all indoor windows
  - Safety stops for classroom doors
  - Perimeter fencing with a key fob system is projected to be installed in the summer of 2025

X. Finance Committee

A. Financial Updates

- Finance Committee updates - the finance committee has an additional meeting this month for budget planning for next year
- Explored a private bus company - early ideas and unsure of feasibility yet. Administration will be meeting with them tomorrow to explore options.
- Finally fully reimbursed by the insurance company regarding the bus accident in December 2023.
- Vote to approve annual filing of 990 form with the IRS

A. Starling made a motion to approve the 990 tax filing for the 2023/2024 school year.
E. Womer seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Review preliminary 2025-2026 budget

- Preliminary 2025-2026 annual budget was shared with the Board this month for review, vote to approve in May (this was shared on the screen during the Board

meeting - for more details about the budget, please review the Board meeting recording)

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

A. Community Comments

There were no community comments.

XII. Closed Session

A. Vote to go into Closed Session

E. Alvarez made a motion to go into closed session.
E. Womer seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

XIII. School Staffing

A. Vote on discussion from Closed Session

E. Womer made a motion to approve the slate as proposed in Closed Session by the Executive Director for the 2025/2026 school year.
A. Starling seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

XIV. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

E. Alvarez made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
L. Lopez 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 10:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. Doll

Documents used during the meeting

- April 28th Board Meeting ED Report
- Title VI, Doc 2 (1) (1).pdf