

Meeting Minutes for the Board of Directors  
The Experiential School of Greensboro  
Tuesday, June 2nd, 2020  
5:30pm  
Virtual/Zoom

Meeting ID: 871 5990 4492

Password: 9zG4Wy

Present: Leila Villaverde, Jeannette Alarcon, Yacine Kout, Joanna Lower, Roy Carter, Greg Bush, Jay Hawkins, Travis Laughlin (intermittently by phone), Heather Moore and Melissa Bocci

Three guests were also in attendance.

Leila Villaverde called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

### **Approval of Agenda**

#### **Approval of May Meeting Minutes**

Leila Villaverde called for a motion to approve the agenda and the meeting minutes. Yacine Kout motioned, Jeannette Alarcon seconded, all were in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

### **Public Comment**

Leila Villaverde introduced Jennifer Rogers and indicated she had 5 minutes for public comment. Jennifer Rogers stated:

Thank you for the opportunity to address you this evening. I am Dr. Jennifer Rogers. I am an associate professor of in the Department of Counseling at Wake Forest University and the parent of a third grader who just completed his second year at TESG. I requested to speak in order to share some observations and reflections about our experiences at TESG, particularly as related to the school's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

After the reality of school closures set in, and we began to receive information about distance learning, I quickly realized that our family's experience at TESG was unfolding very differently from those of many of my peers. I have several friends who are public school teachers, and many more who have children enrolled in public schools across our area and beyond. Over the weeks of the spring, I heard about teachers quickly learning new technology and developing online curricula, children and teachers attending lengthy daily synchronous sessions, and completing or grading onerous amounts of asynchronous work via multiple software platforms—all of which was presented as required, with serious consequences for noncompliance. None of this represents best practice for online learning, child development, equity, or leadership strategy—and all of it seemed aimed at asserting and enforcing top-down control in what was and is a rapidly-shifting and unprecedented situation. Many teachers, parents, and children whom I know were in a great deal of distress, adding to that from our current public health crises.

I would like to publicly express my gratitude and admiration towards Directors Melissa Bocci and Heather Moore for their humane and pragmatic leadership over the last several months. During what I am sure they hoped would be the first “normal” year for the school—starting out in TESG’s permanent downtown space, and with no last-minute location scouting or mid-year moves to contend with—they instead have been met with ongoing opportunities to demonstrate the same skillfulness at crisis management that they evidenced last year. I have felt protective of my child’s wonderful teachers, Ashlee Eplee and Kristine DeBell, whose expertise and pedagogical practice have exceeded our family’s expectations. I have checked in regularly regarding their professional wellbeing. They have reported feeling supported, inspired, and allowed to teach according to their on-the-ground assessment of the multiple variables at play—even amidst these difficult circumstances.

As a parent, my child has been known and understood, challenged, and had the opportunity to form life-enriching and perspective-enhancing relationships with his teachers while engaged in the learning process, both before and after the shift to online. These dynamics have also been reflected in his peer relationships at school, in my relationships with his teachers, and—per their report—in his teachers’ relationships with their supervisors.

The Donuts with Directors events have long provided TESG parents with opportunities to engage with the school’s two administrators, and I know I speak for many when I say that their cooperative leadership and accessibility, both at these organized forums and through individual contact, has been a major benefit and reason that we have remained committed to the school. Then, during the most recent crisis—when external pressure for answers and the ever-changing circumstances could have certainly led to a decrease in transparency, accessibility, and engagement—our administrators made themselves available every weekday for virtual walk-in office hours. Their commitment to TESG—to its values, mission, and to its community of teachers, parents and caregivers, and—most importantly, children—has been inspiring. It gives me reason to believe in the future of the school, despite the complexities of the current environment.

All public health data suggest that TESG’s third year will be another filled with challenges, requiring flexibly adaptive and stable leadership that attends to individual needs and microsystem relationships in the context of powerful macrosystem realities. Melissa and Heather, as well the teachers and staff, have demonstrated that collaborative, progressive, humanistic, practical approaches are possible even in these uncertain times. I trust the board is similarly committed, which is why I wanted to take time today to make our family’s experiences part of the public record, and to formally offer my support of these educators who have worked so tirelessly on behalf of all the families at our school. I look forward to the ongoing development of TESG—as it relates not just to educational processes and outcomes, but as the organization has the opportunity to serve as a model of how a school can support and empower its administrators, teachers, staff, families, and students through transparency,

shared governance, productive discourse, and systemically-aware strategy for the present and future.

Thank you for your time.

### **Report from School Directors**

Melissa Bocci stated that she shared the task force binder with the board if they would like to look at the materials. She also noted that she sent out updated results from the family distance learning survey. Regarding the second distance learning survey, data was shared in the last Board bi-weekly update. It has been shared with all Teams except 5th/6th because their Directors Meeting was rescheduled for tomorrow. Joanna asked if house results were shared across the school so that teachers could consult with teams that may have done especially well in an area, that there were differences across houses. Melissa Bocci indicated that each house received the school data and their team data, but not aggregated data by house.

### **Updates re: State-Level Guidance on COVID-19 Closure (per DPI communications)**

- Reopening Plans: Machado and Johnson assured us that charters have the flexibility to stagger starts or pursue hybrid/blended models for the fall. Our remote instruction plans are now also required to include our reopening plans, but there is no new or specific guidance for which components of a reopen plan should be included. We will not be asked to submit charter amendments because our plan will be communicated via the Remote Instruction Plan. To guide these plans, we've been told we will be getting information from NCDHHS this week about safe reopening protocols. Then DPI will work to support schools in meeting those guidelines (no details on funding support). They will continue bi-weekly superintendent/charter leader calls for Wednesday afternoons, beginning next Wednesday. Tomorrow I am attending a meeting with school leaders and Guilford DHHS to learn more about f2f re-opening considerations.
- Allotments: DPI is still working on allotment formulas. They are hoping to present these at the SBE meeting this week. No word on when these funds will be available. All funds will have to be used by Dec. 30, 2020.
- Jump Start: Guidance will be coming by June 4, including a template. The plan will be due June 22. Virtual info sessions are also coming, TBA. These will be distributed after they are approved at the next SBE meeting. There will be a lot of flexibility allowed re: virtual, f2f, hybrid, timing (but must be before school year begins), length, etc. The COVID-19 Task Force is also working on this plan.
- Remote Learning Plans: The COVID-19 Task Force has been working on our plan (it can be viewed in the Binder linked above). I attended the overview session today to learn more about what they will be looking for and to get the template for the plans (to be sent Friday) so there is a standards format since these are all going to SBE and then the NC GA. We seem to be in really good shape so far. I've shared what I learned with the COVID task force.

### **Financial Reports**

- CSADM projection phase II was entered June 1 at 374.
- The state has not yet passed the budget.
- Leila sent out unreconciled financial reports today.

Melissa Bocci stated that she is working with Leila Villaverde and Acadia to make needed purchases. Melissa Bocci also noted that there are a few students moving or choosing another middle school for 6<sup>th</sup> grade but, that currently all spaces are accepted and enrollment is still strong.

Heather Moore indicated her report is short because not much has changed. She indicated that the EC program includes 17% of the school population. The house websites have not changed because the teachers are conferencing and doing 4<sup>th</sup> quarter narratives.

For professional development.

Program Goal 3: All teachers will be trained in experiential education, project-based learning methods, portfolio assessments, and the adopted social curriculum.

Professional Development

- April 21- May 28- EC Teachers and Ms. Moore are participating in a 6-hour PD on Social Thinking.
- Vintage Innovation- All teachers have received the Vintage Innovation web course link as an option to participate in while we are doing online learning or over the summer.

Heather More stated there was not much more to report due to the current COVID-19 situation.

### **Standing Committee Reports**

- Finance Committee report – Leila Villaverde shared that the finance committee met to go over the budget. She reminded everyone that the proposed budget is always a sketch about the best case scenario, it is not written in stone because there may be changes such as adm count, we have current requests out for insurance and liability, and some of our contracted services may change, and any future hiring where salaries will change budget as well. But we have a balanced budget and that is good. Leila Villaverde noted that after today the budget will get filed with our accountant.

### **New Business**

1. Approve by vote the 2020-2021 budget.

Leila Villaverde called for a motion to approve the 20-21 budget. Jay Hawkins motioned, Greg Bush seconded, all were in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Approve 2020-2021 school calendar in accordance to SB 704.

Leila Villaverde called for a motion to approve the 20-21 school calendar in accordance to SB 704. Jeannette Alarcon motioned, Yacine Kout seconded, all were in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

Leila Villaverde stated that she was going to ask for a motion to go into closed session and that our guests would need to leave or she could put them in a virtual waiting room. All guests left the meeting.

3. Motion to go into closed session to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of this State or of the United States, or not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes.

Leila Villaverde called for a motion to go into closed session to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of this State or of the United States, or not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. Roy Carter motioned, Jeannette Alarcon seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried unanimously. We entered into closed session at 6:02 p.m. and exited closed session at 6:57 p.m.

Leila Villaverde called for a motion to vote on the decisions made during closed session. Roy Carter motioned, Jay Hawkins seconded, all were in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

Leila Villaverde called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jeannette Alarcon motioned, Jay Hawkins seconded, all were in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.