

Meeting Minutes for the Board of Directors
The Experiential School of Greensboro
Tuesday, February 9th, 2021
5:30pm
Virtual/Zoom

Meeting ID: 856 6568 3740

Passcode: 222690

Present: Leila Villaverde, Jay Hawkins, Greg Bush, Joanna Lower, Travis Laughlin, Roy Carter, Yacine Kout

Guests: Beth Meyer, Jennifer Smith, Terri Watson, Robyn Mykytyn. Denise Louhichi, Kerri Clavette, Jennifer Rogers, McKenzie Wallace, Kristen Kavorikian, Carrie Helton, Amanda Davee Lomax Stephanie Kriner, Velvet, Caldwell, Tany Gold, Jennifer Gustin

Leila Villaverde called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

Leila Villaverde called for a motion to approve the agenda. Travis Laughlin motioned, Jay Hawkins seconded, all were in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of January Board Meeting Minutes

Leila Villaverde called for a motion to approve the January Board meeting minutes.

Roy Carter motioned to approve minutes from January, Jay Hawkins seconded, all were in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Report from Executive Director

Board members have access to Tracy Shaw's report. Tracy Shaw highlighted that remote learning continues to go well. There is a 96% attendance rate and 96% engagement.

Enrollment is 323. We have lost a few families due to staying remote. Most left to home school, went back to their district school for in person instruction, and one family went back to a private school (where they had previously attended before this year).

Application numbers are doing well. There are 69 applications in K for 36 spots. We have a total of 130 applications for 90 openings. We have wait lists in K, 1, 2, 3, and 6. We have been increasing presence on Facebook, created a promotional video, and have had one of two interest meetings. The first interest meeting had 5 families. The next interest meeting is February 10.

We are still being told from DPI that we must give end of grade (EOG) assessments (in person) however a waiver is being requested for greater flexibility with assessment. Tracy Shaw indicated that she attends every DPI Zoom meeting, so she is staying up to date on requirements.

We ordered furniture for the school including new lunchroom furniture, furniture for 7/8 house, and some other furniture needs. Once everything is in and we can assess, we may need to order more. The current order arrives in the next 6 weeks.

Tracy Shaw thanked the Board for input on her professional development goals and indicated she was working through those.

Yacine Kout asked if we had a wait list in every house? Tracy Shaw clarified that we do not have a wait list in 7th or 8th grade, 4th or 5th grade.

Jay Hawkins asked if there was information about the interest session on the website. Tracy Shaw replied that the information was on the website.

Travis Laughlin asked about other outreach through channels other than the website. He asked if Tracy could briefly speak of recruitment initiatives. Tracy Shaw shared that social media, the website, and information meetings have been the primary ways for outreach. She indicated Covid-19 had limited some methods and she was open to ideas. Travis Laughlin indicated that he recognized the challenges and encouraged everyone to push through their networks. Joanna Lower added that there was also an “enroll now” sign outside the school building and that was up during the holiday parade as well. Leila Villaverde raised the idea of advertising on radio or paper. She had received a quote from News and Record. Travis Laughlin asked about Yes Weekly. He noted that Yes Weekly had been forward thinking in their reporting this past year. If we are targeting families that would seek out social justice education, Yes Weekly may be good to consider. Leila Villaverde indicated she would reach out to get a quote.

Standing Committee Reports

- Curriculum Committee report
- Finance Committee report
- Grievance Committee report

Leila Villaverde indicated that the financials had been shared out and that we received 21K more for our EC headcount and that the PPP loan covered 2.5 months of payroll. She shared that Kotis had let us know that we qualified for the PPP loan, we applied and were approved, so that will help with the revenue deficit based on enrollment.

Old Business

New Business

1. Covid Taskforce recommendation for third trimester and vote.

Tracy Shaw shared that the Covid Taskforce sent a letter to the Board earlier today. The Taskforce is recommending that we stay remote for the duration of the school year. The Taskforce came to this decision based on what the CDC guidelines are for reopening schools and ever-changing experience of COVID-19 and the vaccine. The Taskforce does not believe we can bring students back without significant loss of instructional time. Due to the protocols and amount of cleaning, students would receive less instructional time than they are receiving now. The Taskforce also took into consideration attendance and engagement from students, and parent/teachers. The Taskforce was cognizant that this is a stressful time for families. TESSG's first set of MAP data indicated 75% of students scored average to high. Tracy indicated she is confident to see learning and growth in all students.

Leila Villaverde asked if there were any questions or comments.

Joanna Lower shared her appreciation for the Taskforce's work and their attention to the data that informed their decision. Leila Villaverde shared that she knew districts all over the state have wrestled over this. There is no easy solution. The ideal is to be back safely. She echoed appreciation for what the Taskforce put into these decisions and thinking of staff and community.

Greg Bush indicated that he agreed with the remote decision but asked if the Taskforce had started thinking about what the fall will look like, what other changes would we need to make, so that we are prepared from a budgetary standpoint. Tracy Shaw indicated that we have enough cleaning supplies. We had flexibility with COVID-19 relief funds, and purchased several foggers and wipes, there will be no impact in terms of cleaning supplies. Another part time custodian during the day will be needed, and we may want to entertain a part time nurse. As far as set up of the school, we have a return to school plan, and we will go back to it and update it in preparation for the fall.

Roy Carter indicated that teaching will be affected. He asked, is the task force looking at operation – day to day – what they are saying about the impact of materials/shareables for the classroom? How would you foresee that information getting rolled out to prepare the teachers/train at the next level? Tracy Shaw indicated that she will ask teachers to come back early in August to walk through the day to day without students in the building so they understand where there are stops, how to limit shared materials, assign individual supplies/spaces, cover book cases, etc, as necessary.

Jay Hawkins asked about virtual summer enrichment and if we do take EOGs, if a core number are not performing, are we prepared to offer summer enrichment to ensure they are ready for the fall? Tracy Shaw responded that this was something they were discussing. She also confirmed that the Jump Start program would be offered again this summer for elementary students. On top of that, they are exploring options for 5-8th grades. Jay Hawkins asked if she saw that impacting the budget. Tracy Shaw indicated that we would need to have a conversation about stipends for teachers. Leila Villaverde also clarified that we have funds from the state to employ teachers for the Jump Start program. We would just need additional funds for the higher grades.

Roy Carter asked about the return plan. Tracy Shaw indicated that the Taskforce received the feedback from the Board, that it was a living/breathing document, and that they would be updating it based on

new information. Prior to returning it will be released to families. Currently there are different requirements around distancing for young and older students. This is another reason it makes it difficult to return with K-8 all in one building. Leila Villaverde also noted for fall, that because our windows do not open, we have to consider ventilation and how we may improve air quality within the building, so we are looking into that. We have 17 air handlers. Air filtration within the rooms will impact the budget depending on how things evolve in the next few months.

Roy Carter shared that this has an impact on our social justice and equity mission that is not as pragmatic as wash your hands, keep distance, there are certain things that we are going to have to take on. This will impact us differently because of the sensitivity of others. We would expect certain things that look different for us and I'd like to know where we are with those changes. We need to plant that flag on the ground. Tracy Shaw indicated that this was something to be thought about and that she would add this to the agenda for the Taskforce. Leila Villaverde indicated that is also the beauty of policy and they can take on the culture of the organization so, we have a different kind of compliance than at the state level who aren't committed to social justice. Roy Carter noted that earlier today he saw another county's board meeting as example of something he would not want us to get into – there is a contradiction of power and trust and people are forsaking trust for power at several levels. Roy Carter indicated that we have put our best foot forward in trust building than in operating in power and with any family paying attention, and those are those families we want to speak to, foster, and support. Leila Villaverde indicated that in that county, they were not consulting their teachers at all, and just pushing the plans, and not thinking about successes. Joanna Lower urged the Taskforce to continue to be critical when reviewing data and creative in their problem solving.

Leila Villaverde called for a motion to approve the recommendation of the Taskforce to continue remotely through the third trimester. Jay Hawkins moved, Yacine Kout seconded, all were in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

2. 2021-2022 school calendar approval/vote.

Tracy Shaw noted that we have not received guidance from the state for remote days or length of the year so, the calendar mirrors the previous year. The calendar was posted for public comment and is ready to be approved. Joanna Lower asked about winter break and why it seemed shorter. Tracy Shaw mentioned that she usually looks to other school calendars to compare but that other schools have not posted them. She also noted that due to the remote days there are potentially 5 more days that may be removed. Because guidance has not been given from the state, there will likely be another iteration. Leila Villaverde shared that once the state comes back with new bills around COVID-19 and reopening, we will likely need to adjust the calendar. The start and end day is mirrored from this year's calendar.

Leila Villaverde called for a motion to approve the calendar. Roy Carter suggested the motion be to approve this draft of the calendar since we may need to make changes due to the previous points. Leila Villaverde retracted her previous motion and called for a motion to approve this draft of the calendar for the 21-22 school year. Joanna Lower motioned, Jay Hawkins seconded, all were in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

Announcements

- Leila Villaverde shared that the Spring Swag Sale was coming soon. Joanna Lower indicated it would run from Feb 26 – March 12.
- The Lottery will run March 1.
- Leila Villaverde shared a dear friend of TESG, sadly passed in October, Dr. Rochelle Brock also a UNCG Professor. Dr. Brock's family is making a donation to TESG for 25K and wanted to commemorate her. Dr. Brock volunteered at TESG with the 5/6 book clubs. So, we are going to call the open book/maker space area on the second floor the Brock Commons and have some information about her there. She was an advocate for urban education and culturally relevant pedagogy, and we will use funds to support PD in that area. We are looking forward to having that displayed and we are also working on a donor wall in the lobby for TESG through these first years.

Leila Villaverde called for a motion to adjourn. Roy Carter motioned, Travis Laughlin seconded, all were in favor, and the motion carried unanimously. We adjourned at 6:17 p.m.