RLOACS Board Meeting

Meeting Minutes August 16, 2016

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| Present: Absent: | Dr. Rob McBrayer, Chair; Eunice Spilliards, Vice-Chair; Greg Chambers, Treasurer; Anne Bridgers; Sergio Nuno; Amleht Alston – via phone; Dr. Karen Wicks, Executive Director; Les Wicks, Facilities Development; Bill Moser, Kelly-Moser Consulting – via phone; Dr. LaQuandra Stevenson, Elementary Assistant Principal; Terri James-Moss, Middle School Assistant Principal; Brian Morse, High School Assistant Principal.  Sheree Darien, Secretary |
| Venue: | Student Dining Hall |
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A quorum was present.

* **Old business:** 
  + **Open Meeting** - Chair

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm by Chair McBrayer.

* + **Approval of Minutes of May Board Meeting** – A motion was made by Eunice Spilliards and seconded by Sergio Nuno to accept the minutes of the May 17th Board Meeting, and the motion carried. The June minutes were not available in time for the meeting with Secretary Darien’s absence. The Board will vote on them at the September meeting.
* **New business:** 
  + **RLOA New Mission Statement**– The Chair paraphrased the mission statement.
* **Amendment to the Agenda**
  + Treasurer Chambers made a motion, which was seconded by Sergio Nuno, to amend the agenda for School Updates to be presented first so that the assistant principals could leave after these updates were discussed. The motion carried.
* **School Updates:**
* **Enrollment:** As of August 16th, the second day of school, enrollment is at 633 when our goal is 650. The shortfall is in 11th and 12th grades.
* **Elementary School**: Dr. Stevenson described how we are implementing the mandates of the state’s Read to Succeed program. We provide 2 hours of uninterrupted English Language Arts and use a specific program that all elementary teachers use. We are testing reading skills this week using Fountas & Pinnell and DRA-2. With that data in hand, we will begin appropriate interventions based on the needs of the students.
* **Middle School:** Mrs. Moss changes for middle school. We have designed a more age-appropriate time of 55 minutes instead of 90 minutes per class, with more short breaks to allow students to release pent-up energy. The teachers who taught 7th and 8th grade English Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, and Science last school year are teaching 6th, 7th, and 8th grades this year, with tremendous support from Mrs. Moss, coaches, and interventionists. The students are displaying appropriate behaviors and are enjoying electives and clubs, as well as their core courses. Teachers have agreed to go digital and only make copies for assessments with an entirely flipped curriculum for science and social studies to maximize project-based learning and more individualized support. The discipline process has been streamlined with positive culture the focus. Feedback from students has been positive. August 16th pre-testing occurred, and we will use the data to begin appropriate interventions based on the needs of the students.
* **High School:** Mr. Morse explained that the focus in high school is college and career readiness, which is in line with the state superintendent’s focus. Teacher professional development was centered on the level of excellence and critical reasoning students will need to be college and career ready. Students can now choose among 3 Advanced Placement courses, dual enrollment at Technical College of the Lowcountry for seniors, and early dismissal for seniors who have sufficient credits so that they can go to internships or jobs. Another major focus of professional development is standards-based learning and standards-based grading. Several college tours, career days, and internship opportunities will be provided. In the past, the career days have exposed students to multiple fields.
* **Literacy:** Reading across grade levels was expanded last year with online books and hundreds of books and basals in the classrooms on a variety of topics. A leveled literacy library has been added for this school year. State test data is still embargoed, but preliminary data indicates that no losses occurred in reading. More kids have been reading and like it.
* **Project-Based Learning**: Middle and high school teachers came in the summer to write projects under the direction of the STEAM Team: Mr. Floyd, Ms.Blathers, Mrs.Traynham (who joins us from another PBL charter school), and Ms. Felder (our Artist-in-Residence from the Governor’s School). Teachers collaborated across subject areas. Elementary teachers did not want to come in the summer, so Dr. Stevenson organized a team (Ms. Jones, Ms. Blathers, and Mr. Williams) to choose the projects and create the framework that teachers will use throughout the year. The STEAM Team will support the teachers in the implementation of the projects, which were designed according to the Buck Institute model—the national standard for this type of curricular approach. PBL projects start with a problem/essential question that affects the community in which students have an interest. Then students set out to solve the problem lined up with the standards that must be learned for that grade level. Dr. Stevenson suggested Board members come up with problems for students to solve, as this would involve community members. For example, if dogs in Jasper County are prone to certain diseases, perhaps working with a veterinarian, students could help determine, through research and investigation, potential solutions. One student has suggested that students need to find a solution to traffic problems on I-95 in the Ridgeland-Hardeeville corridor.
  + **Visit from Superintendent Elliott Smalley:** The assistant principals and Mr. Nuno described the superintendent’s visit and the receptivity of the staff. The superintendent and the team that accompanied him are very data-driven. He said RLOA is his favorite school, but of course that will only remain true if we continue to show significant academic growth. His team is willing to come for staff development as we need them.
  + **Finance Report for the Third Reading of the FY17 Budget** – Bill Moser (via phone) went over in detail the July Budget Report. He explained the loss of planned income reflected in the report and the expenses that were lowered to compensate for the loss. The school carried $1.2m in reimbursements for new campus pre-planning expenses that Raymond James’ representative Michael Kirby now indicates will not be reimbursed in full, at least $44,8866 will likely not be reimbursed at the bond closing expected September 15th, although some expenses may be recouped over the course of the construction project. Mr. Moser also explained changes in the state formulas that reduced revenues in some categories. He indicated that toward the end of a school year the state often determines it has additional funds or less funds than anticipated and revenues streams are adjusted accordingly. He provided examples from the budget report.
  + **Historical Statement of Revenues and Expenses** were developed by Bill Moser, his firm’s accountant, and CPA per the request of Raymond James. Mr. Moser explained the implications of the statement in light of GASB 68 requirements related to retirement and the revenue adjustments. Treasurer Chambers asked when the Board will have a balance sheet, since the statement does not provide a balance sheet. Mr. Moser indicated that he is following financial reporting requirements as established by the SC Department of Education, bur that he would arrange a conference call with Mr. Chambers and the Moser CPA. Treasurer Chambers and Dr. Wicks had met before the Board meeting to go over the financial statements in preparation for the meeting.
  + **Line of Credit:** The Board was asked to approve an increase in the line of credit to $500,000, given the changes in revenue and immediate cash flow that Chair McBrayer had signed on behalf of the Board. Treasurer Chambers made a motion, that Vice-Chair Spilliards seconded, to approve the increase, and the motion carried.
  + **Update on New Campus, Financing** – Les Wicks reiterated information contained in Michael Kirby’s email regarding bond closing date of September 15th. He indicated that we will need to raise additional funds to complete the gym/performing arts center because of the project costs based on the awarded bids. Mr Wicks will meet with the builders to save where possible through value engineering after the bond closes so that the construction of the gym/performing arts center can occur with the other campus construction. Chair McBrayer suggested that the Board also bring fundraising ideas to the next Board meeting. Vice-Chair Spilliards suggested that the Board follow the practice of other school boards and form a Construction Committee to deal with ongoing urgent construction decisions that would not need the entire Board’s approval. The committee would then report to the whole Board at the next meeting to approve that/those action(s). No major decisions would be made by the committee. Vice-Chair Spilliards nominated Treasurer Chambers to serve as chair of the Construction Committee with Chair McBrayer as a member. Ms. Alston suggested criteria or guidelines would need to be stipulated first. The other members agreed that at the next meeting everyone should come prepared to create guidelines for this committee.
  + **Board Vacancy:** Since both Brandi Freeman and Pershawn Patterson have resigned, the Board discussed coming to the September 20th meeting with names for consideration. The appropriate Board representation must consist of 50% business professionals and 50% education professionals per the by-laws and state requirements.
* **Public Comment** – No public comment.
* **Executive Session** – None
* **Motion to Adjourn** – With no further business to discuss, at 8:10pm Chair McBrayer made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Nuno. The motion carried.