

Southwest Leadership Academy Board Meeting Minutes for October 24, 2017

SOUTHWEST LEADERSHIP ACADEMY GOVERNING BOARD

Pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) 38-431.02, notice was given to the general public, that the Governing Board for Southwest Leadership Academy will hold a meeting open to the public on Tuesday, October 24, 2017 at 10:30 AM (MST) at Southwest Leadership Academy at 4301 West Fillmore Street, Phoenix, Arizona.

1. **Call to order and roll call.** The meeting was called to order at 10:37 AM by Board President Mike Gantt. Other Board members present were Jenny Diaz, Mark Hendershot, Ruben Olivas and Brian Heath (Ex-Officio)
2. **Introduction of Visitors and Administration:** Terry Hines who will be considered for board membership at this meeting was present along with School Principal, Dr. Gregory Fowler; Regional Director of Education, Dr. Philip Geiger and School Compliance Officer, Matthew Boucher and Chief Financial Officer, CJ Bower (telephonically).
3. **Board Additions to the Agenda:** President Mike Gantt asked if there were any additions to the agenda. There were none.
4. **Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes** from the September 26, 2017 board meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Hendershot, seconded by Mr. Olivas to approve the minutes of the September 26, 2017 Board meeting which were attached. The motion passed unanimously.
5. **Election of New Board Member-** Having reviewed the application resume and qualifications of Ms. Hines Mr. Hendershot enthusiastically made a motion to elect Terry Hines to a two year term on the Southwest Leadership Academy Governing Board effective immediately that expires June 30, 2019. The motion was seconded with gusto by Mr. Olivas and approved unanimously by the Board. Ms. Hines fully participated in board activity from this point forward.
6. **Discussion of Nursery and Child Care at Southwest Leadership Academy:** Dr. Greg Fowler explained to the board the need for a program to accommodate teenage girls who have children so that they complete their high school education. He said that until we were able to find a licensed provider to open a day care at the school, he is planning to open a classroom for young moms permitting them to complete their high school requirements by completing their courses on the computer program available in the school while the mom also brought her child to school. Dr. Fowler noted that a paraprofessional would work with the students and the students and their children would be isolated in a secure room at the school.

Southwest Leadership Academy Board Meeting Minutes for October 24, 2017

Several board members had questions including Mr. Olivas who asked about the quality of the instruction these students would receive if they also had to care for their children while attending school. Ms. Diaz expressed her support for the program reinforcing the need for this type of program for young teens with children. Ms. Hines noted that there needed to be provisions to secure the facility and to be sure that the children of these students were properly protected, especially if the parent had an emergency. Mr. Heath expressed concern that the children would possibly be at risk from an intruder in the building or open doors at the school which could create a breach of security. Dr. Fowler indicated that whatever may be approved, the program would not start until after the 1st of January 2018. Following significant discussion, the Board President indicated that he would like the administration to further explore the issues raised, create proposed policy to ensure safety of both the parent and the child and to create an environment also conducive to the student learning. The board agreed and this matter will be reconsidered at the November 28th meeting.

7. Presentation Regarding In School Suspension Program – Dr. Fowler

Dr. Fowler explained the planned modifications to the In School Suspension program, the new staffing for that program and expected outcomes. Dr. Fowler introduced the teacher for ISS and a school within a school (SIS) who is certified in both science and mathematics. Dr. Fowler said that some students who are frequently in ISS will be considered for the school within a school (SIS) whereby they will get 1:1 and small group instruction for a period of 8 weeks in order to address their academic deficiencies.

After discussion a motion was made by Mr. Olivas, seconded by Mr. Hendershot to approve the revised In School Suspension Program for FY18.

8. Student Achievement Presentation by Dr. Fowler – Dr. Fowler presented information on student achievement and growth for AZ Merit and STAR. He also noted that the staff receives in-service professional development each Wednesday afternoon when the school has a shortened day.

A motion was made by Ms. Diaz, seconded by Ms. Hines to receive the report on student achievement and growth. Motion passed unanimously.

9. Presentation of New Staff: Jennifer Farrugia, HR representative, introduced 2 new staff members to the Board and reported that complement of teachers is now filled. The Board received copies of the resumes of four new teachers and Ms. Farrugia described the staffing at the start of the school year and activity that has taken place since then. She also reported on teacher and staff turnover.

Southwest Leadership Academy Board Meeting Minutes for October 24, 2017

10. **Guidelines for Hiring of Hard to Find Staff Positions:** Dr. Geiger explained the guidelines for the employment of personnel for hard to find positions. The guidelines were attached. Dr. Geiger noted that the guidelines provide for the potential of both one-time bonuses and salary differential stipends for positions that are hard to fill or for which there is a teacher shortage.
11. **Modification of the Mission Statement:** In order to be certain that the Southwest Leadership Academy Mission Statement clearly reflects the intent and population of students we serve as an alternative high school for at risk youth, revisions have been made to the mission statement which, if approved, will also be forwarded to the Arizona Charter School Board.

A motion was made by Mr. Olivas, seconded by Mr. Hendershot to approve the revised Mission Statement for Southwest Leadership Academy below: Our Mission: Southwest Leadership Academy is dedicated to improving academic achievement of at-risk students by providing an alternative educational program and supportive school environment that includes rigorous academic and social skills instruction that lead to student success in school, in their lives and within their community. Motion passed unanimously.

12. **Discussion Re: Enrollment, Attendance, Staffing, Extracurricular Sports, Calendar of Events, Curriculum and Instruction, Professional Development, Vocational Courses, Facility Updates and Current Status of the School** – Dr. Greg Fowler noted that the school currently has 352 students enrolled and more students are enrolling daily. He said that this week’s football game is important in that if we win this week we will be in the playoffs. He also mentioned the draw of the career and technical education programs such as culinary arts, A+ computers, barbering and cosmetology. In terms of sports, this year we are starting girls wrestling led by SLA teacher, Jon Walker, which is being added to boxing, basketball, football, boy’s wrestling, girls softball, and cheerleading.
13. **Maricopa County Environmental Services Inspection of Southwest Leadership Academy** – Dr. Geiger reported that on October 12, 2017 the County Health inspector visited Southwest Leadership School, cafeteria and kitchen and found no violations. The full report was provided to the Board.
14. **Lease Extension for Southwest Leadership facility from the Isaac School District** – Mr. Heath reviewed the proposed agreement with Isaac School District to continue to lease the school at 4301 West Fillmore Street, Phoenix, AZ. Mr. Heath also mentioned that the Isaac School District repainted the school this summer, resurfaced the parking

Southwest Leadership Academy Board Meeting Minutes for October 24, 2017

lot, repaired water fountains and bathroom handwashing equipment and made other facility improvements at their cost.

Regarding the terms of the agreement, he noted that the termination clause however had to be amended in order for the school to operate responsibly. Mr. Heath then recommended that the Board approve the proposed contract with the condition that Article 18- Termination is modified to provide no less than one year notice to Southwest Leadership Academy if the District no longer desired to lease to Rite of Passage on behalf of Southwest Leadership Academy. Mr. Heath also noted the positive relationship the school has with Isaac School District.

Following additional board discussion and questions and answers, a motion was made by Mr. Olivas, seconded by Ms. Hines to approve the amended lease between Rite of Passage and the Isaac School District for the property now housing Southwest Leadership Academy for the period July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018 contingent upon the desirable revision of Article 18 and to further authorize Dr. Philip Geiger to execute the agreement on behalf of the lessor. Motion passed unanimously.

- 15. Review of Food Service Program and Community Eligibility Program and Financial Projections:** Dr. Geiger discussed with the Board the financial projections for the FY18 food service program including the \$45,000 startup expense which enabled the school to operate its own food service program rather than use vendors as it had in the past. Dr. Fowler commented on the improved quality of food that our students are receiving and Dr. Geiger reminded the board that we have been approved for the Community Eligibility Program which enables all students to eat breakfast, lunch, and snacks without charge and without parents being required to complete a school lunch program application.

Dr. Geiger said that the Board would likely experience a deficit in the food service program unless more students participate. The Board and administration discussed various options to increase participation. Mr. Heath commented on the fact that we are currently using the Rite of Passage national menu which means that our menu is not designed to address the cultural aspects of our menu which, if modified, could result in a more culturally sensitive menu and increase student participation. Ms. Bower commented on the fact that the projections did not include personnel burden costs which would increase the projected deficit.

The board encouraged the administration to find ways to increase participation so more students would be properly nourished during the day. Mr. Heath and Ms. Bower stated that they would support the school creating a different menu for Southwest Leadership's student demographic in particular but also noted that a new menu would have to be

Southwest Leadership Academy Board Meeting Minutes for October 24, 2017

reviewed by a nutritionist in order for the menu to receive the approval of the National School Lunch Program. Ms. Bower thought that this one time cost might be \$15,000 but Ms. Diaz said that she felt we could do it for far less.

Following additional discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Diaz, seconded by Ms. Hines to direct the administration to take steps to increase participation, to employ a temporary, full time kitchen worker, and to provide additional, updated financial projections at the November Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

At 12:39 PM, Mr. Olivas had to leave the meeting but indicated he would call in to the meeting.

- 16. Report on Compliance Reports Due Dates and Procedures:** Matthew Boucher discussed all required reporting dates since the last board meeting and the October board meeting as well as enrollment and attendance. The Board received a copy of the “tracker” in use to monitor all due dates and compliance. No board action was required.

Mr. Olivas called into the meeting to resume participation at 12:45 PM

- 17. Review of FY18 Budget and financial Report:**

CJ Bower reviewed the monthly budget summary, expenditures, revenue and projected budget performance and answered questions.

A motion was made by Ms. Diaz, seconded by Ms. Hines to receive the September 2017 financial reports.

At approximately 1:00 PM Ms. Bower and Board member Olivas left the meeting (both had been participating telephonically).

- 18. Approval of Phone System Purchase:** Dr. Geiger spoke about the fact that the current phone system is inadequate to provide effective communications with parents, public agencies, vendors, teachers and other ROP offices so we are recommending the replacement of the system with the same system recently installed at ROP locations. The current system produces periodic static, has too few lines for use by personnel, and does not provide direct dial to a SLA number. Funds are available from surplus to meet this need which is a good use since it is one-time expenditure.

A motion was made by Mr. Hendershot, seconded by Ms. Hines to approve the purchase of a new voice over IP phone system from Pacific States Communications at the cost of \$20,525.41 plus \$2,007 in annual maintenance fees. The motion passed unanimously.

Southwest Leadership Academy Board Meeting Minutes for October 24, 2017

19. **Purchase of Student Accident Insurance:** Dr. Geiger discussed the insurance quote we have from the insurance broker used by ROP. He noted that currently the school does not have student accident insurance for SLA students, even for athletics, despite the fact that sports injuries are fairly common and many of our students have limited insurance coverage. It appears to be prudent to secure coverage for all of our students in the event of an injury to avoid liability for the school and to assist the student's family to secure coverage for accidents that occur at the school or during sporting events. The Board asked that the administration also check with the Athletic Association to determine what coverage it provides for students.

A motion was made by Mr. Hendershot, seconded by Ms. Diaz to authorize the administration to enter into an agreement for Southwest Leadership Academy to purchase Student Accident Insurance for the entire student population at the annual cost of \$6,406.95 including \$100 deductible per injury and 100% coverage to a maximum of \$1M per covered accident. The motion passed unanimously.

At approximately 1:20 PM, Mr. Hendershot had to leave the meeting.

20. **Status of FY14, FY15, and FY16 Audit Appeal:** Dr. Philip Geiger discussed the negotiations with the Arizona Department of Education and the Attorney General's office to resolve all outstanding issues regarding the audits for FY14, FY15, and FY16 resulting in a \$150,000 refund to the State. The Board also discussed the terms of the agreement and the schedule for repayment and asked to have the repayment schedule on the next board meeting for further discussion to include input from Ms. Bower.

A motion was made by Ms. Diaz, seconded by Ms. Hines to authorize Dr. Geiger to execute the settlement agreement presented to the board in the amount of \$150,000 based on the state audits for FY14, FY15, and FY16. The motion passed unanimously.

21. **Review and Approval of STEPS Contract for Special Education Services – Dr.** Geiger reviewed the differences between the previous STEPS contract and the current one and presented the board with the complete agreement for review.
22. Following discussion, Ms. Diaz made a motion to approve the contract between STEPS and Southwest Leadership Academy for the period of August 14, 2017 to June 30, 2018 and to authorize Dr. Geiger to execute contract on behalf of the Board. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hines and passed unanimously.

23. **Approval of Special Education Policies:** Dr. Geiger noted that there were a series of special education policies for the Board to consider but considering the length of the

Southwest Leadership Academy Board Meeting Minutes for October 24, 2017

meeting, President Gantt requested that this item be tabled until the November Board meeting. The Board concurred.

24. **Expulsion of Student:** Dr. Fowler described the incidents leading to the recommendation to expel the student GP based upon danger to other students in the school. Dr. Fowler informed the guardian at the group home of the student's expulsion hearing and their right to attend the board meeting and appeal to the board for which the board would reconvene in executive session. Since no one appeared on behalf of the student, the board took action in public:

Ms. Diaz made a motion to approve the expulsion of GP (male) effective immediately based on the information provided to the board. Ms. Hines seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

25. **Approval to Apply for Approval to Replicate the Southwest Leadership Academy Program:** Dr. Geiger described the process for the Board to authorize the request to open another charter school for FY19 and requests that the Board approve a motion to submit the required documents for approval for one new school and to request that the Arizona Charter Board consider the request of the Board to open one new school for FY19.

A motion was made by Ms. Diaz, seconded by Mr. Gantt to approve the submission of an application to replicate the Southwest Leadership Academy for one new charter school under the current board for the FY19 school year. The motion passed unanimously.

26. **Identify future agenda items:** President Gantt asked if there were any items to add to the next Board meeting agenda other than the ones he requested to be postponed. There were none.

27. **Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

28. **Adjournment:** President Gantt adjourned the meeting at 1:39 PM.

Next regular meeting: November 28, 2017 @ 10:30 AM (MST) @ Southwest Leadership Academy (telephonic attendance is acceptable).