

## **Minutes of August 10, 2020 Governing Board Meeting Southwest Leadership Academy**

Pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) 38-431.02, notice was given to the public that the Governing Board for Southwest Leadership Academy will hold a meeting open to the public. The Board reserved the right to change the order of items on the agenda, with the exception of public hearings. One or more Board members participated telephonically. The meeting took place at Southwest Leadership Academy 4301 West Fillmore Street, Phoenix, AZ 85043 at 4:00 PM (MST).

The meeting agenda was posted on August 5, 2020, on the school's website and posted on the front door of the school. Members of the public were invited to attend and a Zoom call-in number was provided.

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:02 PM (MST) by President Mike Gantt. Also, present telephonically were Brian Heath (Secretary/Treasurer), Terry Hines, and Drew Ainsworth. Mr. Olivas joined the call at approximately 4:10 PM. All board members were in attendance telephonically, so a quorum was established.
2. Superintendent, Dr. Philip Geiger introduced other attendees including Dr. Greg Fowler (Principal), Meghan Miller (Assistant Principal for Special Programs), and Nancey Carter (compliance officer). Members of the public and staff members were also present telephonically.
3. Review of Arizona Department of Health Guidelines for Reopening School, A Report from the CDC, and the Arizona Department of Health- President Gantt asked Dr. Geiger to present information on the State's Roadmap for Reopening Schools as well as other data from the CDC. The Board previously received the ADHS Public Health Benchmarks from State Superintendent Kathy Hoffman including the 20 pages "Safely Returning to In-Person Instruction from the AZDHS, the July 23, 2020, CDC publication, The Importance of Reopening America's Schools This Fall, the May 19, 2020, CDC publication, Considerations for Schools Operating Schools, the CNN report by Christina Maxouris et al, "Schools and Colleges Can Reopen, but Safety Should Come First, Fauci Says", the statement from Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General on the generational catastrophe because so many schools have been closed updated August 4, 2020.

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Dr. Geiger indicated that parents were informed several times over the past few months that Southwest Leadership Academy expected to open for in-person instruction on August 17<sup>th</sup> unless directed otherwise by Governor Ducey. He explained his concern that SLA's students have already missed 4 ½ months of school and that during the end of the FY20 school year and summer school, our students did not do well educationally using online instruction. He noted that in the CDC publication issued July 23, 2020, the CDC encouraged schools that serve at-risk and special needs students to open because these students are continuing to regress academically. They also indicated that students need to be in school for social and emotional reasons.

Dr. Geiger indicated that it might be different if all of our students were home sheltering-in-place, but they are not. They are hanging out with friends and in the streets, so they are at greater risk at home than they are at school where we have taken 24 different precautions to make the school as safe as possible.

The Board spent a lot of time examining the Department of Health benchmark recommendations and agreed that Maricopa County did not meet the benchmark requirements to open schools safely according to the AZ DHS, but the numbers were trending lower. Some discussion ensued about delaying opening until the numbers were aligned with at least moderate risk (under the benchmark guidelines).

Mrs. Hines asked if the school purchases its insurance from the TRUST which does provide member school districts with COVID 19 liability coverage to which Dr. Geiger stated that the insurance was secured by ROP through their national providers. He did say that he would request the current insurance carriers to determine if we have coverage or to determine if it can be purchased. Mr. Olivas suggested that the Board should at least have liability waivers signed before a student can return to school in-person. Dr. Geiger said he would work on making that happen.

The Board said that they wanted to be as careful as possible and not be the cause of a "spike" in infections because SLA opens on August 17<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Hines and

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Mr. Olivas said that most large districts have already postponed the in-person opening of school until September and some to October. Dr. Geiger responded that these larger districts have to provide the precautions that SLA has done in many schools and it is much easier to exercise all precautions in one building than in 40 or 50.

Dr. Geiger also reminded the Board that the Governor's Executive Order requires that the district (SLA is also a district) must provide a safe place for students to come to school in-person if needed by the student and their family. He also said that both McKinney-Vento students and special education students should be able to come to school on August 17<sup>th</sup> according to the latest executive orders.

The Board continued the discussion about the AZ DHS benchmarks and agreed to monitor them carefully. Mrs. Hines said that new statistics are provided every Thursday, so the Board needs to be aware of them.

Mrs. Hines asked about contingency plans if the school opens on August 17<sup>th</sup> and the school has an outbreak of COVID 19. Dr. Geiger stated that each student's symptoms will be checked upon entry to the school by taking their temperature and asking them if they have any symptoms and temperatures will be taken when they enter each classroom. If a student has a temperature of 100.4 or above or has any of the other symptoms, they will be required to leave school and encouraged to be tested for COVID 19. In response to a Board member's question, Dr. Geiger said students will be provided free bus passes to return home or the school will drive the student home in the school van.

Mr. Heath said that he was concerned that the school would be the first to open and that he was concerned that if there was an outbreak that the school's reputation and the good work it has done in the past will be adversely affected. Dr. Geiger said that to date 45 students have opted for on-line learning and parents always have the right to request on-line learning, but all others have chosen in-person instruction for their children. He said that many of the students

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enrolling for the first time are doing so because SLA plans to open for in-person instruction on August 17<sup>th</sup>.

Mrs. Hines raised the question if the staff had been surveyed regarding their preference for school to be online or in person. Dr. Fowler said that he has discussed this with the faculty and there have not been any major objections to return in-person.

Mr. Heath asked Ms. Carter, SLA's compliance officer, what she thought about opening on Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Carter said that she felt the school has taken all precautions possible and did not express any concern about opening August 17<sup>th</sup>. The same question was asked of Dr. Fowler who said he supported opening for the educational benefit of the students and their need for a safe and supportive school environment.

**Following a very lengthy discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Gantt, seconded by Mr. Ainsworth to approve the revised SLA FY21 school calendar (attached) which includes the opening of school in person on August 17, 2020. The motion passed 3-2 with Mr. Gantt, Mr. Ainsworth, and Mr. Heath voting in favor, and Mrs. Hines and Mr. Olivas opposed.**

#### **4. Review of Precautions in Place for the Opening of Southwest Leadership Academy – Dr. Geiger reviewed all of the precautions taken at the school to provide for a safe opening in person listed below.**

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- a) Students and staff must wear a facial mask with a filter which the school will provide.
  - b) Students will either return their facial masks daily and receive a new one in the morning or the school will provide a personal location for each student to store their mask within a container to avoid cross-contamination.
  - c) Each student will be given their own water bottle to use at school.
  - d) Bathrooms will be cleaned frequently.
  - e) Temperatures will be taken upon entry and throughout the day.
  - f) Temperature devices are installed throughout the school so students can walk up and take their temperature handsfree.
  - g) Classes will be two hours long to minimize the interaction between students.
  - h) Breakfast and lunch will be served in the classrooms.



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- i) At the end of each class, students & staff will wipe down all touch areas.
  - j) Plexiglass barriers have been installed where staff and visitors or students will interact.
  - k) Visitors will be required to have a mask while in the school.
  - l) All writing implements used by students, parents, or visitors at the school office will be disinfected after use.
  - m) Hand sanitizers will be in each classroom and throughout the school.
  - n) Social distancing will be enforced to the greatest extent possible.
  - o) Each day each classroom will be disinfected using a fogging machine.
  - p) Each week the entire school will be disinfected commercially using a fogging machine.
  - q) Gloves and facial shields will be available to any student or staff who requests them.
  - r) Special facial coverings for football helmets have been purchased for students.
  - s) Students will travel from class in a one-way direction to limit contact with other students and the floor will be marked accordingly.
  - t) Students will be given access to clothes washers and driers to wash their clothes daily.
  - u) School vans will be sprayed with disinfectant after each use and students will have temperatures taken before entering the van.
  - v) If a parent chooses not to have their student attend school in person, they will be allowed to attend school remotely. This is not as effective as being at school but it is a choice a parent may make.
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- 5. Approval of the Performance Criteria for Proposition 301 Funds for FY21-** Dr. Fowler explained the revised Proposition 301 Performance-Based Pay matrix which identifies the specific criteria teachers need to meet to obtain these additional payments. He said that they changed annually as we focus attention on different priorities and this year it will be academic performance. Mr. Olivas asked about teachers visiting homes during the COVID 19 pandemic since one of the criteria is for 25 home visits per quarter. Dr. Fowler said that the school will exercise some flexibility if necessary, but these visits were valuable to establish a relationship with our students' families and to understand each student's situation.

**A motion was made by Mr. Olivas, seconded by Mrs. Hines to approve the performance criteria for the award of Proposition 301 funds for the FY21 school year. (Matrix attached) The motion passed unanimously.**

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6. **Policy Adoption** – The Arizona State Board for Charter Schools has notified the administration that policies requiring cloth face coverings are required to open school. The state also adopted a new program on civics education that

the school is required to observe. The following policies are attached for the Board’s approval: JICAA-RB( Student Dress cloth face coverings); KI-RB (Visitors to School (cloth face coverings); GBGB-R (Staff personal Security and Safety (cloth face coverings); IHA (Basic Instructional Program (Sandra Day O’Connor Civics Celebration September 25 annually).

**A motion was made by Mr. Heath, seconded by Mr. Ainsworth to approve the following policies to take effect immediately: JICAA-RB, KI-RB, GBGB-R, and IHA. The motion passed unanimously.**

7. **Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs** – Southwest Leadership Academy has made an application to the Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs (DEMA) to address specific needs and expenses incurred because of the national COVID 19 Pandemic. To complete the process DEMA requires the Board of Education to identify and authorize specific personnel to execute and deliver the applications on behalf of Southwest Leadership Academy Board of Education.

Dr. Geiger asked Ms. Carter to explain the various programs that the school has pursued including the differences, requirements, and restrictions of DEMA and ESEER funding and said that the proposed motion meets the requirements set forth by DEMA.

**A motion was made by Mr. Heath, seconded by Mr. Olivas to designate the superintendent, Dr. Philip Geiger, as the agent of the School Board to execute applications to the Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs on behalf of Southwest Leadership Academy for the purpose of obtaining financial assistance under the Disaster Relief Act and to authorize the superintendent and compliance officer, Nancey Carter, to take all steps necessary to carry out the purpose and intent of this motion.**

8. **Announcements:**

The next Board meeting is September 22, 2020, at Southwest Leadership Academy.

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9. **Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 PM (MST).**