

Board of Education Minutes- Southwest Leadership Academy December 15, 2020

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 at 10:30 AM on Tuesday, December 15, 2020. One or more Board members participated telephonically. The meeting took place at Southwest Leadership Academy, 4301 West Fillmore Street, Phoenix, AZ 85043.

1. Call to order and roll call. Board President Mike Gantt called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM. Present telephonically (Zoom) were President Mike Gantt, Brian Heath (Secretary/Treasurer), Terry Hines, and Drew Ainsworth. Ruben Olivas joined the meeting telephonically at 10:40 AM.
2. Introduction of Visitors: Also present telephonically (Zoom) were Dr. Greg Fowler (Principal), Dr. Philip Geiger (Superintendent), Rachel Parson (Compliance Officer), and Paula Signorelli (Director of Business Operations), President Gantt also called on the public who may be present on zoom but there was no response.
3. **Approval of minutes of September 22, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes.**

A motion was made by Mr. Heath, seconded by Mrs. Hines to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2020 board meeting attached. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Introduction of our new compliance officer, Rachel Parson.** Mrs. Parson was previously the principal of Prestige Day School which has temporarily closed due to low enrollment. She is an experienced education leader and has assumed this new role when Nancey Carter accepted a transfer to be the national compliance officer for the ROP behavioral health program. No action was taken.
5. **Finance-** Ms. Signorelli reviewed the financial reports for the school for September, October, and November 2020.

A motion was made by Mr. Heath, seconded by Mr. Olivas to receive the financial reports as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

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- 6. Receipt and Acknowledgement of FY2020 Audit** – Ms. Signorelli reviewed the annual school audit for FY20. She indicated that the financial portion of the audit had no comments and was in full compliance. She also noted that the school had only one issue identified in the legal compliance questionnaire relating to the enrollment calculations where a difference existed between the PowerSchool data and that of the Arizona Department of Education. She indicated that Dr. Geiger will work with PowerSchool and the ADE to determine what needs to be done to ensure that enrollments coincide in the future.

A motion was made by Mrs. Hines, seconded by Mr. Heath to receive, and acknowledge the FY2020 annual audit. The motion passed unanimously.

- 7. Principal's Report** – Dr. Fowler noted that students were still playing basketball and have an upcoming competition. All games have significant restrictions for attendance and strict rules to mitigate any transmission of COVID 19. There are 14 girls and 18 boys playing basketball this season. Athletics are scheduled to re-start on January 4, 2020. He spoke about the benefits of teachers using the Box Light boards that enable teaches to instruct both in-person and remote learning students simultaneously. He said that students are eager to return to school on January 4th, following the school recess from 12/21/20 to 1/4/21. He talked about the recent Saturday school where students attended for help from teachers before the end of the semester. He was also pleased to announce that enrollments are continuing with many of our new students having special needs that are not being addressed by other schools. Dr. Fowler was pleased to announce that Eric Thomas was selected as the Teacher of the Year and Hector Ortega was named the Classified Personnel of the Year.

Mr. Gantt asked Dr. Fowler about the Elevate program in which the school is involved with the AZ Department of Education. Dr. Fowler said that several administrators, teachers, and student services personnel participate in this training program to help us improve student performance, increase the graduation rate, and better serve our English Language students.

Dr. Fowler also told the Board that our current special education teacher is resigning effective December 31, 2020, and we are searching for a new SPED

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teacher. He also noted that a part-time staff person was hired to liaison with group homes and homeless students who is funded by a grant from the AZ Department of Education. He also reported that the administration will have completed the first round of the Danielson evaluations by the end of 2020.

No action was taken by the Board.

- 8. Update regarding Board Policies** – Board member Brian Heath developed a document that identifies those policies that ROP feels can be adopted by the Board for which it does not have a policy or for which the ROP policy requires additional input and those that ROP feels should retain the ROP policy only. Mr. Heath indicated that the version he provided is not the correct one and that the final edits were not included but he will have an updated report and updated proposed policies for the March Board meeting. Mr. Heath said the ASBA format will require all policies to be reformatted to meet the ROP design. (Policy Manual Implementation Process attached)

No action was taken.

- 9. Acknowledgment of AZ Department of Health Services Emergency Measure 2020-01-** The Board received a copy of the emergency order from the AZ Department of health mandating on page 3 that all faculty, staff, students, contractors, and visitors must wear a mask at all times on campus, on the school vans and during school associated activities with exceptions as noted.

A motion was made by Mrs. Hines, seconded by Mr. Ainsworth to acknowledge the AZ Department of Health Services and direct the superintendent to reconfirm this requirement to everyone at SLA and to post prominently at the school entrance. The motion passed unanimously.

- 10. Status of Pursuing a New Charter School Under Existing SLA Board** – Board member Brian Heath will provide a report on the search for a suitable location to place a new charter school under the existing SLA board. Mr. Heath said that ROP has engaged Colliers Real Estate to search for suitable land and/or facilities to locate a second SLA charter school in tie to open July 1,

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2023. He noted that Colliers has a unique research system to find the right spot for a school using demographic information. He also said that ROP would be exploring bond financing and will plan to meet with bond counsel and underwriters to learn more about the tax-free bond option. Mr. Ainsworth asked Mr. Heath what capacity he would suggest for a new school to which Mr. Heath said 300-400 students. Dr. Geiger said that for the AZ State Board for Charter Schools to approve an expansion school it would be best if the SLA Board applies before October 2021.

A motion was made by Mr. Heath, seconded by Mr. Ainsworth to reconfirm the authorization for the administration to submit an expansion request for a new charter school under the SLA charter and the existing board for FY23 and authorization for Superintendent, Dr. Philp Geiger, to submit the required documents to open the new charter at the beginning of the FY23 school year. The motion passed unanimously.

- 11. Adoption of 2021-2022 School Calendar-** The recommended school calendar for 2021-2022 is attached.

A motion was made by Mr. Olivas, seconded by Mr. Heath to approve the attached school calendar for the FY22 school year. The motion passed unanimously.

- 12. FY21 Budget Modifications** – Dr. Geiger noted that typically school districts throughout the country adjust their annual budget at least twice per year to have the budget aligned with actual expenditures since circumstances change throughout the year. SLA has not done that before, but we need to so at the end of the year funds have been reallocated to the programs that required adjustments and eliminated from those that did not require as much as originally expected. Although by using a zero-based budget approach to the budget that Dr. Geiger was working on with each school administration, we will have more specificity in the budget, one can never fully anticipate how priorities may shift. As long as the administration is operating within the overall budget allocation, we do not come back to the board for individual purchase approvals, but we do need to reconcile the budget regularly. Therefore, we plan to add budget modifications to both the March 2021 and

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13. June or early July 2021 board agenda. There being no objection or further discussion, Dr. Geiger said that this would be added to future agendas.

No action is required.

14. **Notification to Renegotiate the Management Agreement between Rite of Passage and Southwest Leadership Academy** – Article II (Term) section 2.02 requires the SLA Board to provide 180 days’ notice to ROP if it intends to terminate or renegotiate the current agreement. (Current agreement attached). Mr. Gantt said that unless someone had any objection to the current ROP-SLA agreement, he recommends that we continue the current agreement for another year. There was no objection and limited comments. Without a motion to renegotiate the agreement, it will automatically renew for one year on June 30, 2021.

No further board action was required.

15. **Discussion regarding School Reopening January 4, 2021** – Dr. Fowler presented his recommendation and analysis to the Board regarding the reopening of school on January 4, 2021. Dr. Fowler said that he believes that if we do not open again on January 4 for in-person instruction that we will lose enrollment that may be hard to recover in the future. He said that the school was able to provide a hybrid approach so that parents and students that want to learn remotely can do so but those wanting in-person instruction could also do so. He said that the faculty was on board to reopen for in-person instruction on January 4, 2021.

Mr. Heath said that all DHS indicators for the zip code served by SLA were in red and going up and the same applied to the indicators for Phoenix Union High School which SLA generally follows. Some board members expressed concern about the safety of students and staff if SLA reopens for in-person instruction upon return from the Christmas break.

It was determined by consensus that a decision would be deferred until a special meeting is held on Tuesday, December 29, 2020, at 10:00 AM.

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16. Announcements:

January 15, 2021, 100th Day

January 24-31, 2021 National School Choice Week

February 28, 2021, FAFSA Event

May 19, 2021 – Graduation for 2020 and 2021 graduates

The next Board meeting is March 23, 2021, at The University Club of Phoenix. Future scheduled board meetings include: March 23, 2021 (including board retreat – 5:30 PM), June 29, 2021 @ SLA @ 10:30 AM

17. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 PM.