RLOACS Board Meeting

Meeting Minutes March 15, 2016

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

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 pm. Greg Chambers made a motion to start the meeting; Amleht Alston seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

* + **Approval of Minutes of February 16, 2016 Board Meeting**  – A motion was made by Eunice Spilliards and seconded by Amleht Alston to accept the minutes of the February 16th Board Meeting, and the motion carried.
* **New business:** 
  + **RLOA New Mission Statement** – The Chair read the mission statement.
  + **Finance Report for January Budget Report and the First Reading of the FY17 Budget**– Bill Moser presented and reviewed the February Finance Report. Greg Chambers made a motion to accept the February Finance Report, and Amleht Alston seconded the motion. The motion carried. Mr. Moser then reviewed the FY17 budget. Dr. Wicks advised the board that she is still refining the salary numbers based on staffing decisions. No vote was necessary since this was only the first reading of the FY17 budget.
  + **Robotics Team and TransformSC Update**– 1) The Board asked Mr. Floyd to begin with an update on the Robotics Team so that Bill Moser could hear the report before he headed back to Columbia. Robotics: Full Metal Robotics will be among only 4 teams in the last 4 years to represent SC in the Robotics World Championship in April in Louisville, Kentucky. Bill Moser asked how much money the team will need to raise to compete in the championship. Mr. Floyd explained that between the cost of 2 vans, hotel accommodations, and registration fees, the team will need approximately $6,000. Mr. Moser committed to Kelly-Moser Consulting’s paying for the cost of 2 vans. Mrs. Spilliards recommended that Mr. Floyd contact Palmetto Trust for a donation, as well. 2) TransformSC: RLOA has just been accepted as a TransformSC school, one of 39 in the state. Dr. Wicks, Mr. Floyd, and Ms. Blathers will be attending the TransformSC Conference in Columbia on March 17th.
  + **Update on Modular Buildings and New Campus Building, Finance, and Architectural Work** – 1) We have received the Certificate of Occupancy for the 2 new modular buildings. 2) The timeline for groundbreaking on the new campus is anticipated in May, as the bonding and USDA process should be complete at that time.
  + **Ameris Bank Line of Credit:** Dr. Wicks reviewed the Board Resolution that needed approval to increase the line of credit from $175,000 to $250,000. Greg Chambers made a motion to approve the Resolution, and Eunice Spilliards seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the Chair signed the Resolution.
  + **FACES Memorandum of Agreement:** Dr. Wicks discussed the new arrangement with FACES that is based on the US Department of State’s new requirements for FACES teachers to be paid directly by the district or school for whom they provide services at a rate commensurate with their years of experience and degrees. FACES would charge a fee for each teacher the school secures through FACES. Eunice Spilliards made a motion, seconded by Rob McBrayer, for Dr. Wicks to sign the Memorandum of Agreement on behalf of the school, and the motion carried.
* **School Updates:**
* **Enrollment:** As of March 7th enrollment remains steady between 550 and 560.
* **Modular Buildings Certificate of Occupancy:** We finally received the Certificate of Occupancy for the 2 new modular buildings. Related Arts and ESOL teachers are thrilled to finally have a home!
* **TransformSC:** We received word this week that we have been selected as a TransformSC school! Kudos to Mr. Floyd and Ms. Blathers for their tireless efforts in the application process. We are looking forward to building partnerships with education and business leaders to take our school to the next level of achievement and innovation.
* **EVAAS High 5 Recognition:** The charter school Board will be recognizing the 4 charter schools that achieved a rating of 5 on student growth on the 2015 state tests at their Board meeting on March 24th. Eunice Spilliards and Dr. Wicks will represent the school at a breakfast with the Board at 9:00am and the Board meeting that follows. At the meeting, Dr. Stevenson described what EVAAS means and why RLOA is rated an EVAAS 5 school. Dr. Wicks described the celebration of our school by Assistant Superintendent Dr. Robbie Compton that occurred on March 11th and number of 21 teachers receiving bonus checks for their students’ performance last school year.
* **Jump Rope for Heart:**  Our students went all out this year and raised more than $2,000 to contribute to the American Heart Association. On March 10th, we held an Event Day for all grade levels to be able to participate at different times of the day in some extended, fun physical activities on the soccer field. Prizes were awarded to the students who raised the most money. Thanks to Ms. Moore for organizing this fundraiser and the event activities.
* **Teacher Recruitment:** We held a Career Day on Saturday, March 12th, for prospective teachers. We advertised on radio, newsprint, and online. We are also recruiting at several college career days.
* **Robotics Team:**
  + The Robotics State Championship was Saturday, March 12. We are going to return to the project of T-shirts for elementary school students that want a shirt like the Robotics team. This will be only for elementary in hopes of spurring interest in math and science.
  + Dr. Wicks, Mr. Floyd, and the Robotics Team will make a presentation to the Jasper County Council at their March 21st meeting at the Hardeeville City Hall.
* **Elementary School**:
  + Black History Assemblies were held on February 25th in the afternoon. We had a number of outstanding student skits and presentations. A large number of parents attended.
  + MyMath Training: The MyMath presenter was impressed with how organized teachers’ thinking was regarding the MyMath program. She mentioned that she focused most on the tools teachers could find online to support instruction. Teachers confirmed that they enjoy the sequential, deep flow of the material to EveryDay Math. Teachers have been given information that pertains to SC Ready and PASS. They have received examples of text- dependent analysis questions for their grade level, a SC Ready scoring guideline, and any other information we receive about the state tests.
* **Middle-High School:** 
  + Black History Assemblies were held on February 29th in the afternoon. We had a number of outstanding student performances, including an acapella mini-concert. A number of parents attended.
  + Most all middle-high school students really appreciated our first Career Day on March 2nd. Over 30 presenters were on campus.
  + We are researching ideas to create a school shield to represent four areas of focus for our school.
  + We are researching design ideas to have the floor mats replaced here at school with mats with the school logo.
  + March 18th Mr. Floyd, Ms. Blathers, Mr. Vasiu, and Mr. Armstrong will be taking 20 students to Gulfstream for an hour and a half tour of the facility.
  + The Science Fair is March 16th; many students eagerly finishing up research.
  + Athletics: Track and Field ran the first scrimmage the week of March 1st.
  + Math and Reading enrichment continues for 7th grade.
  + The March focus is on increasing the rigor of classroom instruction.
  + Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will continue to focus on pacing and assessment. A number of teachers are struggling with keeping appropriate pacing (and assessing for mastery) in the content. Nevertheless, it is still early enough to correct this problem.
  + Blitz: Special thanks to Mr. Floyd and Ms. Blathers who will be going into Science 7 and 8 to provide focused instruction, modeling, and coaching for teacher and students in preparation for PASS and End of Course tests.

* **Literacy:** 
  + Journeys Online Assessments (Focus 3-5): Prizes were awarded to grade 3B the week of February 29th. At that time, we had the highest reported average in Journeys Online Assessments, which was for a comprehension test: 80%.
  + Pearson Realize (Focus 6-8): 6th grade ELA-Social Studies began Realize testing, but no testing cycle has been completed. Classroom management has gotten in the way of success; more focused coaching on varying student engagement will be provided to re-establish connection to the students. Thanks to Ms. Ager who provided some project support in literacy/social studies. ELA in 7th and 8th grades continued the focus on text-dependent writing, and it shows in TE21 assessment benchmark essays. After this writing focus, students will move into building stamina through reading longer passages. More Realize online testing results will come then.
  + Imagine Learning: Students did not have Chromebooks for several days because a router and the firewall died. A replacement was purchased and installed on Marth 7th.
  + ELA/Math MAP Prep: K-2 asked a brilliant question about MAP testing for students in non-testable grades. Since they don’t have PASS, SC Ready, they asked and we agreed to administer their MAP tests the first week of May to provide more time to prepare.
  + Dr. Seuss Day (Read Across America, K-4): What great team members we had! The children seemed genuinely excited about having readers in their classrooms, and we all had oodles of fun. Special thanks to RLOA board members Sheree Darien and Pershawn Patterson, who joined in on the fun to fill out the schedule. Special thanks to Mrs. Moss, Ms. Jones, and Ms. Ager, who helped make Dr. Seuss’s birthday memorable by organizing the entertaining readings across K-4.
  + English I/English I Honors/Journalism: Mr. Morse, Mrs. Moss, and Ms. Ager are working hard to bring the students up to the necessary levels in preparation for spring testing.
* **English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL)/Young Scholars**: ESOL ACCESS testing was completed the week of March 7th. Middle School Young Scholars participated on March 3 in the Model United Nations Conference in Savannah, Georgia. It was a perfect simulation of empathy, respect in the midst of different opinions, and friendly and “unfriendly” (official terminology) amendments toward resolutions. Our students again continue to impress the judges. Receiving Honorable Mention were the following: Isabella Couch-Egypt-Human Rights Council and Brianna Buchanan and Ava Hodge-Poland-General Assembly.
* **FACES Agreement** – The State Department has changed the regulations regarding international teachers sponsored by the FACES organization. Effective July 1, 2016, FACES teachers must become an employee of the host school. FACES will remain as sponsor and will be ultimately responsible for the exchange visitor while a guest in the U.S. Among other regulations impacting the visitor teacher, the regulation emphasizes that as a school employee, the teacher’s salary must be commensurate with that of other American teachers according to verifiable teaching experience and degree. FACES teachers do not participate in insurance and retirement benefits, so RLOA would not bear these expenses. One aspect of this change is that FACES teachers are paid by FACES only through June 30, 2016; therefore, the teachers we wish to hire for the 2016-17 SY need to be paid from July 1st so that they have an income during this month. Their employment would be July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017. In addition, FACES will invoice the school monthly based on a $3,000 annual fee per teacher. Thus, these changes will increase our budget for teachers, as we anticipate hiring 5 FACES teachers for the 2016-17 SY: a $15,000 FACES annual fee plus salaries that in some cases will exceed the $44,000 we currently pay FACES annually for each teacher. The increase will be $20,000-22,000 of anticipated expenses for classroom teaching salaries. The new agreement between RLOA and FACES is attached for your review.
* **Spring Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Testing:** The following incentives are in place to encourage students to reach their growth goals. The school goal is that all students will achieve at least 1.5 year’s growth. Teacher bonuses will be tied to student growth goals. MAP testing grades 3-8 will begin the second week of April; for high school grades the end of April, and for grades K-2 the first week of May. State testing in math and English Language Arts for grades 3-8 begins April 19. End of Course tests for high school students begins May 9th. PASS tests for science and social studies begins May 17th.

**Grades K-6:**

Students who meet MAP projected growth goal in **both** reading and math from Fall 2015 to Spring 2016 MAP will participate in a drawing for an X Box 1 or Playstation 4--1 for Grades K-4 and 1 for Grades 5-8, *plus*participate in a cookout at Tuten Park, Ridgeland, featuring bounce houses, snow cone machine, popcorn machine, tennis, volleyball, hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, juices on dates to be determined in the latter part of May.

All K-6 students who meet MAP projected growth goal in **either** reading or math from Fall 2015 to Spring 2016 MAP will participate in a cookout at Tuten Park, Ridgeland, featuring bounce houses, snow cone machine, popcorn machine, tennis, volleyball, hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, juices on dates to be determined in the latter part of May.

**Grades 7-11:**

Students who meet MAP projected growth goal in **both** reading and math from Fall 2015 to Spring 2016 MAP participate in a drawing for an X Box 1 or Playstation 4 and 1 in Grades 5-8--1 in Grades 9-11, *plus* will participate in a field day with dunking booths, bungie challenge jump castles, music, and water balloons.

All 7-11 students who meet MAP projected growth goal in **either** reading or math from Fall 2015 to Spring 2016 MAP will participate in a field day with dunking booths, bungie challenge jump castles, music, and water balloons.

* **ORGANIZATIONAL CHART –** The Organizational Chart for the 2016-17 SY is attached for the Board’s review. The Board discussed with Dr. Wicks at the meeting changes made to the current Organizational Chart. Amleht Alston made a motion, seconded by Sergio Nuno, to approve the 2016-17 Organizational Chart, and the motion carried.
* **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK:** The handbook is attached for the Board’s review. The Board discussed with Dr. Wicks the changes made to the current Employee Handbook. Eunice Spilliards made a motion, seconded by Greg Chambers, to approve the 2016-17 Employee Handbook, and the motion carried.
* **Principal Evaluation** – Dr. Wicks reminded the Board that the Principal Evaluation must be completed by the April Board meeting. Amleht Alston volunteered to compile results if the members send her their handwritten remarks on the evaluation instrument by April 8th at her fax number: 803-738-7900.
* **Other News** –
  + Ms. Moore showed the RLOA commercial that highlights the different appealing aspects of our school and the kinds of programs we offer.
  + Dr. Wicks called the Board’s attention to the *La Isla* article on our high school student, Roy Lora Mara.
  + Dr. Wicks pointed to the high school course offerings in the packet.
  + Mr. Morse mentioned that SAT sign-ups will occur on March 16th and Dr. Wicks will teach an intensive SAT prep course on Saturdays in April and the first week of June.
  + Mr. Morse passed out the newly revised student newsletter and the process he is using in the Journalism class to help students learn how to act as news reporters.
  + Ms. Moore mentioned that this is the first year we are having a prom.
  + Ms. Moore invited Board members to the National Art Honor Society Induction Ceremony on March 18th, 5:00pm, at which we will hold a silent auction of student art work.
  + Ms. Moore noted that she received a grant for digital drawing tablets for her digital media classes and that students raised over $2,000 in the Jump Rope for Heart contest.
  + Mr. Floyd noted that engineering students are going to Gulfstream on March 18th for a first-hand look at how planes are designed and built.
* **Public Comment** – No public comment.
* **Executive Session**- None
* **Motion to Adjourn** – With no further business to discuss, at 7:50pm Greg Chambers made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Sergio Nuno. The motion carried.