

MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SOUTH CAROLINA WHITMORE SCHOOL
501 Commerce Drive NE
Columbia, SC 29223

September 12, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Board of Directors Chair, Terry Hitch at 9:04 am.

ATTENDANCE

Terry Hitch, Board Chair (via phone); Shennice Cleckley, Board Member; Christopher McClure, Treasurer; Ebone Adams, Assistant Principal; John Loveday, Principal; Michelle Bishop, Director of Compliance; Summer Yon, Office Manager; Susan Herring, Director of Human Resources; Annette Havens, Testing Coordinator; Ashten Latta, Public Relations Manager; Kim Dunbar, Lead School Counselor; Roger Sears, Secretary; Jim Rund, Board Member; Andrew Cilone, Prestige School Solutions (via phone), Ashley Wheeling-Goodson, Board Member (via phone)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of June 13, 2019 were presented for approval by Jim Rund and 2nd by Shennice Cleckley.

There was a correction to the June 13, 2019 Minutes. Jim and Roger attended the meeting in person, not via the phone as stated in the Minutes.

FINANCIAL UPDATE AND FINAL READING OF FY-20 BUDGET

Andrew Cilone with Prestige School Solutions presented the statement for revenues and expenses. As of August 31st, the school had 83.3% in revenue remaining. Some CSI funds were received late in the year and could not be used in FY19 so the funds carried over to FY20. The Contracted for Services line is low at this point of the year, but it will be monitored. Not Only a small amount has been spent on Psychological Services expenditures however, this usually increases as school starts. Staff training and School Administration expenses are as expected at this point. Much of the Marketing budget is spent in the summer months. The State decided not to pull vocation funding, but we were not aware of that until after budget was sent to the auditor. John stated the vocational operations funds should be reflected in the September financials. Andrew explained that we should have the adjustments in the next couple of weeks. There is nothing to be concerned about at this point. John explained the audit is due to the district November 1st. John will share it with the board and district when the audit is completed.

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ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE SCWS BY-LAWS

Ashley joined the call.

Roger stated that the Board is supposed to review by-laws annually during the first Board Meeting of every school year. The by-laws have not been updated since 2010, so they were looked at in depth. A vote needed to be taken to accept the by-laws. Shennice made motion to accept by-laws, Chris seconded the motion. Approved by unanimous vote.

ACADEMIC UPDATE

Ebone presented the Academic Update. SCWS ended the 18-19 school year with 133 graduates, the largest class ever and most of the graduates graduated on time. This was a 12% increase from the previous year. The school goal is a 60% graduation rate for 2020. Kim, counselors, and graduation coaches are working with students to ensure students graduate. We have a better system of tracking members of the 16-17 cohort that have withdrawn. The College Freshman Report compares students across the state. Ninety eight percent of SCWS Class of 2018 passed all of their courses their first semester of college, 39% started at two or four year college, and 56% entered the workforce. Many students were already employed and working as high school students. Shennice asked if there is a state goal for percentage of students that go into college after high school. Michelle explained there isn't. The category is college *or* career ready. The goal is to see 70-80% be ready for college or a career. The state measures if a student is ready by testing results, if they took dual enrollment courses, etc. Roger asked how this information is tracked. Ebone explained that all high schools have to track their graduates' freshman year in college; just the first semester of their freshman year. This will happen every year. Jim asked about the state average for graduation. John stated that he believes it is 81%. Jim asked of the students that are five years or more behind, are we looking at why and how we can help. Ebone explained that in many instances they were just that far behind when they came to SCWS. John explained that the students that graduate early don't count for us until their cohort graduates. Michelle stated that we don't have a five-year-graduate or more statistic because the state doesn't collect that information. John stated that that's the point of our school; to help those students that are far behind.

Ebone went over scholarships were awarded last year. Jim asked if any went to online colleges. Ebone said that most went to a technical school. Ebone also stated there were 12 recipients of the Blue Diamond Scholarship and three Palmetto Fellow Scholarship recipients.

Roger mentioned that the graduation numbers show a great upward trend. If we reach our goal of a 60% graduation rate for the 19-20 school year that will be the last graduation date the district will see before we go into charter renewal. The graduation rate goal was set at the Teacher In-Service in August. Chris asked if there is a way to account for the students that aren't counting toward the graduation rate, but are graduating. John explained that the state had the option to include a five year graduation rate, but chose not to.

STANDARDIZED TESTING PROCEDURES (BOARD APPROVAL NEEDED)

Annette presents the Standardized Testing Procedures that needs the approval of the Board. Two years ago the state mandated that all students be tested online, and that all schools have

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security procedures in place. The only tests not completed online are college board exams. Test tickets will be locked in a file cabinet located in a file room; only Annette and Michelle have the keys. Shennice asked where students go to take the EOCs. Anette explained that SCWS utilizes separate locations across the state such as the District Office, libraries, hotels, coworking spaces, etc. It depends on needs such as size of group and the fact that we need to work within a testing window. The locations have to meet our needs; ethernet ports for Cantey, size and number of rooms, etc. Shennice asked if students ever have trouble getting to the testing location? Annette answered that sometimes they do, but we try to work with them. Students know they have to test. We give a few weeks notice about the test and location. Chris asked about how many students do you think have hardships getting to testing? Annette answered that it is usually less than ten, and they usually reach out to a teacher, counselor, or testing coordinator. College readiness exams are no longer required so if a student can't make the SCWS place, date, and time of test we can give them information to register on their own through the College Board website. We have to explain that they have to pay for that exam if they do not take it with SCWS. Chris asked about the cost of the exams. Kim answered that the ACT is about \$68, but some students qualify for fee waivers. The goal is for students to drive no more than an hour to a testing location. Virtual schools need to receive extra funds just for testing. The testing budget has increased by about 10% a year. Chris asked if testing is offered locally, can we take advantage of those sources? Annette explained that the state requires every school to offer the test on a school day to their students. Just the third year students have to make a college exam choice. SCWS sends a form to returning students and gives it to new students. The form states that the ACT will be closer if they do not live in Columbia. The SAT is paper based and only offered in Columbia. The form also has the option to not take either. Roger makes a motion to approve the Standardized Testing Procedures. Jim - 2nd the motion. Unanimous vote.

PUBLIC RELATIONS UPDATE

Ashten introduces herself and presents the Public Relations Update. Ashten asked for everyone to follow SCWS on social media, and explained she is working with many TV stations. SCWS has display ads, social ads, etc. The Board watched a few commercials being shown across the state. The Lexington Ledger ad is still running. There are print ads with newspapers across the state and radio ads also. Ashten has also been making Chamber visits (Columbia, Lexington, Chapin). The promotion has paid off well. Open House was a success. There were record numbers of attendees, great interaction, and one student enrolled while he was here.

Ashten will begin to send newsletters to the Board Members.

The future plans include: using the camera to travel across the state and meet students, create a virtual map of students. A virtual map is needed to give students a visual of our student body population and their locations. The school can possibly use Google maps, and link it to LMS and the website. Chris asked if there is a way to get a background story on some of the students. Ashten showed the film that the August Student of the Month, Brittany Hinson, made. Jim stated that there are many personal stories in little communities, and Ashten could possibly let small town newspapers know of these students so they may feature them and their success with SCWS.

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Michelle stated that SCWS received a grant last year. Ashten has done a great job using that resource. Roger explained a year or two ago the district stated the minority population of our school wasn't what it should be, and asked if we were continuing to reach out to that demographic. John explained that many students in rural areas don't have access to high speed internet. We have shown them that our school has become more diverse. The legislature doesn't think that charter schools reflect the demographics of SC, but charter schools don't always open in diverse areas.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

John stated as of today, enrollment is 339. SchoolMint is the new enrollment platform with 165 students accepted through SchoolMint. One hundred and fifty two students attended orientation over the summer. The 45-day-count will be on October 23rd and a 415 ADM is our budget projection. SCWS is currently enrolling 20-25 kids a week with a high retention rate. The budget can be adjusted if necessary.

John stated that Connections Academy submitted a transfer request to go with Erskine. If it is accepted, which it most probably will be, SCWS will be the only virtual school in the district. Shennice asked why the virtual schools left the district? John said that they don't feel like they were getting the support from the SCPCSD, but are getting it from Erskine. Smalley asked if SCWS wanted to transfer as well. Board has not discussed transferring and is focused on renewal and graduation rate. The Board wants to invite Smalley and the Charter Institute at Erskine to present to the Board why they would be the best choice for SCWS. The board wants to give Smalley and Erskine about one hour each to present to the board and answer questions, on separate board meeting dates. Michelle stated that there has been more district training this year, but it has been required by state. SCPCSD is under fiscal watch by the state. They were audited last year and will be this year and every year until they are off. John explained that 2% of revenue goes to the authorizer. The Board would like to see positions at the districts, what are their titles, what do they do, etc. Do they have positions in place to support growth? John will draft questions and send out to the Board to add what they would like. Michelle stated the application for charter renewal is due 180 calendar days before it's expiration - charter renewal is due. The application needs to be submitted in early 2021. It needs to be ready by the Board Meeting of December 2020.

All teachers were given a Google Voice number as another way for them to contact their students. Michelle explained CSI funds the school received are going towards graduation coaches and Better Lessons. A budget is being prepared for this year with funds for Better Lessons to come back in January, add some teachers, professional development - teachers to conferences, graduation coaches to state conference with counselors, paying for Google Voice, add a "credit recovery coach". Chris asked how many students right now need someone in that position? They would be there for all of the students for encouragement or support. John said that Ebone will be moving back in June, and Dr Hitch will be leaving in December. He asked for Board Member suggestions. Ashten asked for pictures of the Board Members for the website.

ADJOURNMENT

Jim motions to adjourn. Shennice 2nd the motion. Approved by unanimously.

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