

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

September 10th, 2020

**Call to order**

The meeting was called to order by Board of Directors Chair, Shennice Cleckley at 9:02 am.

**Attendance via Google Hangouts**

Shennice Cleckley, Board Chair; Roger Sears, Secretary; Nancy Mandlove, Board Member; Elizabeth Vice, Board Member; Jim Rund, Treasurer; John Loveday, Executive Director; Ebone Adams, Director of Student Services; Annette Havens, Director of Teacher Quality and Support; Susan Herring, Director of Human Resources; Amie Schlichtig, Administrative Assistant; Michelle Bishop, Director of Compliance; Andrew Cilone, Prestige School Solutions; Brannon Carter, Data Scientist; Leah Jones, Counselor Intern; Robin Carter, Teacher.

**Public comments**

None, no public comments that were signed up for.

**Approval of minutes - 6.11.20 Board Meeting**

Roger called for a motion to approve the June 11th 2020 board meeting minutes. Jim Rund made a motion to approve the June 11th, 2020 board meeting minutes, Shennice 2nd the motion. Board voted unanimously to approve the September Board Meeting Minutes.

**Oath of Office**

Rogers Sears administered the oath of office to Shennice Cleckley and Elizabeth Vice. Shennice and Elizabeth affirmed their oaths.

Jim Rund's board member term (treasurer) expires at the end of today's meeting, therefore Jim administered the Oath of Office: Treasurer to Elizabeth Vice, Board Chair to Shennice Cleckley and Secretary to Roger Sears.

**Annual review of bylaws**

No new changes to the bylaws this year.

**Financial update (Prestige School Solutions)**

Andrew Cilone, with Prestige School Solutions, started by giving a quick overview of the reports presented. He explained the percent remaining should decrease about eight percent each month and be around zero at the end of the year. Supply purchases may be heavy in the beginning of the school year but this is typically what is expected to see in this line item. The expenditures are on point this year with eighty-three percent remaining in the budget. The investment income had

some accrued interest while the brokerage account had a small loss for the year. The revenue is being received sporadically and looks to be about where it should be in this fiscal year. Some fringe benefits and budget items have been received so far. Andrew pointed out the EIA section which pertains to the schools CSI Funds.

John Loveday explained the school is still awaiting instructions from the Small Business Association on the forgiveness of the PPE funds. The PPE funds paid for salaries, utilities and allowable expenses. The money went into a separate banking account and the money was only moved for the exact amount used for salaries, utilities, etc. Should be an easy process when instruction is provided.

Audit is going along smoothly and additional updates will come later. Auditors will be at the December board meeting to present the report.

\*Andrew left the meeting

### **Data Scientist report**

John introduced Brannon Carter as our new Data Scientist. The school needed to enter into the process of moving to a new LMS. This past spring, Brannon came to the school leadership and explained our current data deficit and wanted to use a third party platform. Brannon is compiling data from our current LMS that allows us to pull raw data, track students and help teachers. Brannon used the platform to compile the raw data into a usable format. This will be the new norm for this year and in the future.

Brannon explained the data will have actionable information and provide insights. Current LMS is very hard to read the raw data and be used quickly to influence decisions. Brannon presented a snapshot of current LMS student population data containing 275 data points which means spending hours looking at the report to decipher the data and influence decision making. Brannon used the raw data from current LMS and created a report in Power BI to help the school visualize and interpret the data. The snapshot of information is updated weekly on Monday evening. This data is being used to create testing regions for this year by knowing the size of the testing group and finding available testing locations. Another report shows teacher work loads and class sizes which Annette uses to support the teachers. PowerBI compiles data from 10 different spreadsheets in LMS to compile the data needed. The report is color coded and easy to infer data for attendance, teachers, counselors, progress information, which students need help. Teachers use this information to see which students are falling behind and need to be contacted. This data is going to be live and in real time (within 15 minutes or so) using a more modern LMS.

\*\*Roger gave his voting proxy to Shennice Cleckley and left meeting. (9:45 am)

### **Executive Director's report**

John Loveday brought to the board's attention, at the December 2019 board meeting, the school was looking at purchasing a new LMS. SCWS analyzed new options, involved faculty and staff

and participated in live webinars. A poll was taken in May 2020, and Edgenuity won the vote by teachers and staff at SCWS. Edgenuity offers many positive options such as being international, significantly more course options, considerably more sophisticated system with everything being customizable. Edgenuity already works with many charter schools within our state, integrates with PowerSchool, and has the ability to split courses allowing different levels of the same course (content recovery, Honors, AP). SCWS spends a considerable amount for the current LMS, curriculum and technology per year. The school has outgrown the current LMS. Changing to a more modern LMS will save money and provide a better curriculum to all the students at the school.

The savings will allow the school to hire more teachers, enroll more students and maximize output. The risk of switching curriculum providers to a new system is very low. John proposed for SCWS to engage in a one year agreement with Edgenuity as our curriculum provider for the 2021-2022 school year. SCWS will have the new LMS/Curriculum set up and running in January 2020 and faculty and staff will start training and customizing courses. Edgenuity will become our one and only system in August 2021. The school staff may ask some stellar students to start in the new system to give us feedback. It will cost a few thousand dollars to have a sandbox up and running from January through August. John will work with our current LMS provider to make sure we get all our archived data. Therefore, the recommendation to the Board is to engage in a one year contract with Edgenuity for the 2021-2022 school year. The Board engaged in discussion about the proposal and change in LMS/Curriculum providers. One of the questions centered around if Edgenuity provides content for lower grade levels. Edgenuity provides curriculum for K-12th grades.

Jim made a motion for SC Whitmore School to engage in a one year contract with Edgenuity for the 2021-2022 school year. Elizabeth 2nd the motion. The vote was unanimous.

### **Academic report**

Eboné Adams presented the Academic report. The 2019-20 school year ended with 136 graduates, this included winter, spring and summer graduates. An increase in summer graduates because of the early May 15th deadline from the Department of Education, due to the pandemic. This graduating class included 26 three-year graduates and 1 two-year graduate. The three-year graduates will count towards the 2020-21 year's graduation rate. With a graduation rate of 53.8%, means the school increased 1.4% in the rate from last year. The Class of 2019-200 produced a total of \$747,000 in scholarship awards and 12 Blue Diamond scholarship (merit based) recipients at \$1000 a piece. The class also includes 3 Palmetto Fellow Scholarship recipients and 4 students who received full scholarships to a college or university. A small decrease due to Covid, 34% of this class will attend a 2 or 4 year college and 66% entered the workforce for the College and Career Readiness report. Of the 5th, 6th and 7th year graduates, about half come from another school and were already under credited and SCWS helps them cross the finish line.

### **Updated Title IX regulations and procedures**

Michelle Bishop presented the recent TitleIX and had to update our grievance/ compliant procedures. Title IX/SCWS doesn't accept any type of sexual harassment whether it happens in the school environment or on school property. An entire appendix is dedicated to Title IX in both the Policy Manual and student handbook. These updates were placed on the school website to include the Title IX and Michelle's name and contact information. Michelle Bishop is the Coordinator, Susan Herring is the investigator and John Loveday is the final decision maker. Any appeals will be handled at the district level. All related Title IX information will be brought to the attention of the Board. All documented forms will be kept at the school office.

Jim made a motion to approve the publication of statute in the school handbook. Nancy and Elizabeth 2nd the motion. The board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

### **Executive Director presentation continued**

John stated Eboné already touched on the record of 136 school graduates for the Class of 2020, with 26 early one and two year graduates. SCWS is the only public school to claim the bragging rights. Only 21 students needed extra time and support to complete the requirements. To date, SCWS has issued 674 diplomas since the school opened, many of these students were not on pace when they enrolled. Just for reference, in 2012 SCWS had only 8 graduates. The pandemic has shown a light on virtual education and many students have been introduced to the concept for the first time back in March, when everything shut down and every school went online. An increase in the number of Honors and Gifted and Talented students, requests for student government, National Honor Society and Beta Club have been requested by the students. We are excited to tell the board that Ashley Cannon, a social studies teacher, is taking on student government and the school will hold school elections soon. Hopefully this will help retain some of the more advanced students and may help engage and motivate some of the other students. The school was also accepted into the NHS and Lakesha Mitchell, an English teacher will be sponsoring the society.

Current student enrollment is at 420, with over 400 enrolled by August 31 which is a school record. Therefore, a need for a few more contract teachers is needed to support the students. Annette and I have been interviewing and we have hired an Electives teacher who will start training today. As more students enroll, we hope to hire one to two more contract teachers. I believe that 500 students will be our capacity for this year. In the past we have had a lot of vocational students which are weighted heavier for funding. We now have more 4 year college bound students that do not have as much weight for funding. This will hopefully bring a higher graduation rate in future years but we are working on how to best serve everyone. In the past the focus has been on at risk students, now we have roughly  $\frac{1}{3}$  of our students as gifted and talented or honors and  $\frac{1}{2}$ -  $\frac{2}{3}$  at risk.

We have had a 81% retention rate from last year and a 75% retention rate in a virtual school is considered excellent. In early years of VS's, a 20-30% retention was great. We have roughly 200 new students since June. Graduation rate has gone up 88% since 2015 and our goal for 2021 is a 60% graduation rate. We are evaluated every year from our district for a federal program. We are a tier one school, no risk category, there are only 5 schools in our district at that level.

College freshman report: we are at a 98.14%, district average is 93%, we were second highest in the district. Dr Josie White was our District Teacher of the year and will be competing this winter for the State Teacher of the Year. This is the second time we have had a teacher from our school to win the Teacher of The district award.

We were awarded 2020 "Best Charter School" by the Post & Courier's Free Times.

This is our Charter renewal year, it officially expires June 30, 2021. We need to submit a letter of intent for the renewal process by November 15, 2020 and the application is due January 15, 2021. SCPCSD will conduct a site visit where we will be allowed to present data in support of charter renewal. Next the district staff will do a review of the schools performance and make recommendations to the district board. The district board tentatively plans on reviewing and voting on the renewal Feb 11, 2021.

Shennice: I will open the floor now for a motion to send a letter of intent. By November 15. Vote needed as a precaution for a letter of intent to renew with the SCPCSD

Jim makes Motion for the letter of intent to renew with the SCPCSD by November 15, 2020, Elizabeth 2nd. Vote was anonymous for approval.

John: By December board meeting we will have completed and submitted the renewal application, it will include Edgenuity as our LMS provider. You are welcome to join us for our site visit. When district staff makes a recommendation it is almost always followed by the district board. New superintendent, Chris Neely, veteran, lobbyist, school leader for a charter school in our district. This will hopefully help the relationship between SCPCSD and Erskine. The two districts entered into formal agreement and signed a document to do certain things together. This hopefully will improve the relationship between the alliance and Erskine. Our impact, starting in 2021 a two year moratorium on transfers between districts.

### **Other Business**

The Board thanked Jim for his service to SC Whitmore School. Jim stated he will always be an advocate for the school. Need another board member in either Education or Business. To be filled in the next month. May need a special meeting to appoint new board members.

### **New Business**

NONE

### **Adjournment**

Jim Rund presented the motion for the SCWS September board meeting to adjourn, Elizabeth Vice 2nd the motion. Meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote.

**Next SCWS board meeting - December 10th, 2020 at 9:00 AM (location TBD).**