

## Meeting Agenda for April 9th, 2019

Renaissance Collegiate Academy-Board Meeting Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019

7:00pm

Location: Agape Worship Center International, 424 Lee Road, Columbia SC 29229

Commencement Time: 7pm

### 1.Meeting Opening

#### 1.1 Welcome

**Meeting was called to order by Chairman Stephen Gilchrist. Attendees were welcomed.**

#### 1.2 Roll Call

**Stephen Gilchrist, Hugh Harmon, Angelena McFadden, Veronica Reynolds, Arthar Bush, Bishop Vincent Collins, Peter Oraekweotu, Lashandra Hubbard, Tracey Tucker, Chanda Robinson, L. Declouetsmith.**

#### 1.3 Previous Minutes

**Previous minutes were reviewed and ratified.**

#### 1.4 Review of the School's Mission and Vision

##### **Mission**

The mission of Renaissance Collegiate Academy is to provide ALL children regardless of their backgrounds, or socio-economic status with the academic foundation and ambition to earn a college degree and pursue a career. Through the transformation of students into scholars, we intend to produce critical thinkers, innovators, life-long learners and thought leaders of the next generation for whom college is a next step.

Consistent with the purpose of charter schools in South Carolina, Renaissance Collegiate Academy intends to employ flexible and innovative ways of educating children within the public school system to close the achievement gaps between traditionally low performing student groups and high performing student groups. Through providing increased learning opportunities for traditionally underserved students, Renaissance Collegiate Academy will assist South Carolina in reaching academic excellence for all children.

##### **Vision**

The reason why we exist is to ensure that matriculating eighth grade students are fully prepared for the demands and opportunities of a rigorous secondary school of their choice. The preparation that scholars will receive at RCA will greatly increase their academic and career aspirations, and positively affect the social, cultural and economic trajectory of families in the midlands, and ultimately the communities in the Northeast Columbia areas that we serve. Scholars will graduate with the academic skills, social-emotional skills and character strengths that rival the outcomes of the best schools in the country. Thus, Renaissance Collegiate Academy ensures that – at each grade level prior to the eighth grade year – all scholars are firmly and measurably on the path to success in high school and ultimately college.

**Hugh Harmon, lead founder and school leader led the discussion on the importance of us being reminded of the mission and vision of the school every time that we meet. He**

reiterated that this sentiment, practice and idea came out of a board training that he received through the SC Public Charter School Alliance that felt that it was just good practice for school boards to regularly revisit the why behind their work especially as those that have local oversight and fiduciary responsibility with regard to the governance of the school.

He expressed the need for us to be mindful that as a school we will be held to this mission and vision and primarily to the attached goals that we have chosen as the indicators of us meeting this mission and vision.

### 1.5 Review of the School's Goals

**Goal #1-**Renaissance Collegiate Academy will assist South Carolina in reaching academic excellence.

**Goal #2-**Renaissance Collegiate Academy will improve student learning as evidenced by individual student learning gains on a school administered nationally normed assessment. (MAP/NWEA)

**Goal #3-**Renaissance Collegiate Academy will increase learning opportunities for students as evidenced by the results from annual student and parent climate surveys.

**Goals #4-**Renaissance Collegiate Academy will establish new forms of accountability for schools, as evidenced by the school's sound financial management practices and results.

**Mr. Harmon's presentation continued with a further examination of the specific goals and of us adopting an attitude where we actually sought to over-reach our goals and in so doing will ultimately meet our goals. This raised the discussion of accountability measures that would be adopted and Mr. Harmon talked about the accountability measures that he had seen used in other high performing charter schools around the country and the need for us as a school to develop the frameworks for those systems before students arrive.**

## 2. Matters of Decision

2.1 Enrollment Goals-Grades to be accepted in Year One

2.2 Hiring and Staffing-Numbers of teachers and other staff members needed.

2.3 Negotiated services from Richland School District 2

### **Enrollment Goals:**

**Mr. Gilchrist then redirected the discussion to Matters of Decision and we talked about the Enrollment goals—Some committee members expressed their concerns that we may be limiting our ability to serve families by just doing grades K and 1. They expressed that some of their own children are in grades 2 and 3 and that they were hoping that their children would be able to be served by Renaissance. Mr. Harmon explained that the model that would get us the greatest bang for our proverbial buck would be to start with the fewest grades possible perfect the systems, keep a lean staff and organizational chart and practice slow growth so as to allow students to grow with the school as well as staff members. The discussion was not resolved as it went back and forth between understanding that some charters do start with a full complement of grades but those charters have traditionally struggled to really develop the kind of excellent teaching and learning culture that we are attempting to create. The argument was**

raised that as a new charter we should avoid the testing grades in our first year, and committee members were encouraged to go home and consider and reach back out with Mr. Harmon with their opinions on the decision before the next board meeting. We concluded with expressing that we have a limit of 100 seats to consider filling in year one.

#### **Hiring and Staffing Numbers:**

Mr. Harmon then shifted the conversation to the understanding that staffing numbers and the effectiveness of our instructional and coaching model was directly tied to the number of grades and scholars that we would be accepting in year one. To adequately address the learning curve for both instructors in getting them up to speed with the TLAC (Teach Like a Champion) strategies as well as the Core Knowledge Curriculum and making sure that the instruction is in alignment with SC Ready standards would require that we have the correct ratio of instructional coaches to teachers and teachers to students. We discussed that 5 Lead Teachers with a combination of at least 3 teaching assistants, and a few specialist teachers or 5 Lead Teachers with 5 Teaching Assistants and a few specialist teachers would be the best-case scenarios to meet our goals. We talked about the budget capacity to have two instructors in each class.

#### **Negotiated Services:**

Stephen Gilchrist then took the conversation to the realm of us getting clear on the negotiated services that we were willing to approach the local school district about partnering with us on. Some immediate suggestions that were mentioned were on areas like Special Needs services providers, school meals services, transportation and even nursing services. Mr. Gilchrist expressed that he had seen documentation of the kinds of services that Richland Two was willing to partner with local charters on. We agreed as a committee to reach out informally to the Districts lead Administrator on Negotiated Services, and to the Superintendent of Richland 2 to express our interest in inquiring about negotiated services.

### **3. Matters for Discussion**

3.1 Update on School Facilities

3.2 Report on CSP Grant Implementation Phase

3.3 Key developments toward opening...

- a. Curriculum Scope and Sequence Development-K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade is almost complete
- b. Facilities and DOT final approval is still pending.
- c. Registration numbers

3.5 Fundraising Plan

- **We discussed where the church was on progress with the architects getting their amended documentation into OSF. We discussed the preliminary instructions that were received from Ms. Jenny Rooney from her visit in the Fall, as well as the preliminary findings of DOT.**

Some discussions were had between us and both parties and we are still awaiting their initial findings and next steps.

- Board was given an update on the CSP Grant implementation phase on the changes that were put in place by the state with regard to the new budgeting calendar going from Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. We discussed the budget categories and the areas of reimbursement that were currently being engaged on behalf of the charter relative to pre-opening requirements relative to marketing, possible facilities upfittings and contracted board and curriculum trainings.
- Mr. Harmon shared information on the progress towards completion of the development of the scope and sequence document and tool by Shermco. Inc. a company hired to create an RCA scope and sequence for Grades K to 2, that covers all subject areas with a guide as to the resources and lesson planning tools that teachers would need to do individual and unit planning work. We found out that the document is essentially complete and they are just developing a how-to guide on how to effectively use it to prepare students.
- We reviewed registration numbers and found that we had a total of approximately 65 applicants, but they were concentrated across a number of grades some of which we were not prepared to serve in year one. We discussed whether it would be feasible to immediately inform families that we would only be serving K thru 1 and a possible single 2<sup>nd</sup> grade in year one or just continue to take applicants for all of our advertised school grades. This spurred a debated over how we would have to then share with families that we are only serving the early childhood grades. The majority of the board felt that as a board we should give ourselves the freedom to explore the possibility of added grades if the interests is there in the public.
- Mr. Gilchrist then shifted the conversation to a discussion on the need for the board to think about ways to shore up the budget with a robust fundraising approach. Mr. Harmon was tasked with developing a fundraising packet that could be shared with possible corporate partners to solicit donations to the school.

#### **4. Matters for Noting**

4.1 District Two Letter asking about negotiated services has not yet received a response.

4.2 Business cards for Board Members are available/Tri-Fold Pamphlets as well as a Fundraising Letter has been drafted.

**Mr. Harmon was tasked by the Founding Committee to draft a letter to District Two concerning inquiring about negotiated services and addressed to the School Board, Superintendent and their Administrative staff lead.**

**In addition, he was asked to order business cards for Board Members and Tri-Fold Pamphlet that can be included in the Fundraising Packet.**

#### **5. Meeting Finalization**

5.1 Review actions to be taken

5.2 Next meeting

### 5.3 Meeting close