

## Meeting Agenda and Minutes for MONDAY, November 18th, 2019

Renaissance Collegiate Academy-Board Meeting Monday, November 18th, 2019

7:00pm

**Location:** 425 Summit Terrace Court, Building 2, Columbia SC 29229 (Multi-Purpose Room)

**Commencement Time:** 7pm

### 1.Meeting Opening

#### 1.1 Welcome-

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Stephen Gilchrist.

He read the following into the record, " In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act a copy of the agenda was posted in the media, it was also posted on our website, and posted on our building, and for those who were requesting notification and sent to those persons regarding our meeting tonight."

We thank all of the board members for being here and for roll call vote for purposes of presence let us acknowledge who we have in our board meeting tonight.

#### 1.2 Roll Call-

Stephen Gilchrist, Chairman  
LaShandra Hubbard, Board Member  
Angelena McFadden, Board Member  
Laura Declouetsmith, Board Member  
Veronica Reynolds, Board Member/Treasurer

#### 1.3 Approval of Previous Minutes for the September 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting

A motion was made to approve the previous meetings minutes. Ms. Hubbard made a motion that we approve the minutes from the previous board meeting. Ms. Reynolds seconded the motion to approve the minutes from the previous board meeting.

It was moved and properly seconded that the Board approve the minutes from the September 24<sup>th</sup> meeting and the Board voted to accept the meeting minutes as presented. The Board voted unanimously to accept the meeting minutes as presented.

A motion was made that we amend the agenda to add the discussion of adding additional board members. This motion was made by Ms. Hubbard. Mr. Gilchrist asked if it was okay to place that request directly after "public comments." Ms. Hubbard agreed. Ms. McFadden seconded that motion to add the discussion of adding additional board members subsequent to public comments. It was moved and properly seconded that the agenda will be amended to discuss adding additional board members to the Renaissance Collegiate Academy Board.

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

##### **Mission Statement**

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 Statement**

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.

#### 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.

Chairman Gilchrist took the next few minutes to reiterate the importance of revisiting our school mission and vision, and especially highlighting what we said were our school goals. He made special mention of the goal of assisting SC in reaching academic excellence.
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#### 1.6 PUBLIC COMMENTS

The official meeting of the board is by law a public meeting and the Board values citizen input; however, in order to protect the integrity of the adopted agenda, public dialogue will be restricted to the “PUBLIC COMMENTS” section of the agenda or as directed by the Board chairman.

- Each speaker as two minutes.
- Speakers may not ask questions of Board Members.
- Board Members may not engage speakers in discussion.

- Disruptive behavior is not permitted.
- Personal attacks aimed at students and staff are not permitted.
- Scurrilous, obscene, or recklessly defamatory language aimed at any Board Member is not permitted.

The Public Comments portion of the meeting was opened up after Chairman Gilchrist read aloud the above statement about the official meeting being by law a public meeting. Audience members were invited to share their thoughts with the Board or their comments. There was no one that had signed up for "Public Comments" so the meeting continued to the next agenda item.

## **2. Matters of Decision/Discussion**

### **2.1 Facilities Update**

Chairman Gilchrist directed Dr. Harmon, Executive Director and School Leader to share on the Facility update. Prior to Dr. Harmon commencing with his report, Chairman Gilchrist commented on the facility saying that it was a beautiful place and that he was gracious towards Agape Worship Center for their hospitality in having us house the school there in our opening days. He continued to voice thanks for Agape and their graciousness and their participation with even helping us transition to new facilities.

Dr. Harmon then proceeded with his report by first agreeing and concurring with Mr. Gilchrist about how grateful the school was toward Agape Worship Center International. He then shared the following....

- You are currently sitting in a 4,430 Square foot facility
- It is composed of 5 classrooms-3 Kindergarten, 1 First Grade Pod, 1 Second Grade Class; a multipurpose room (Media Center, Computer Lab, Small-Group Flex Space), 3 Bathrooms, a Reception desk, 4 offices, a technology warehouse space, a copy/workroom and a kitchen.
- Occupancy capacity is currently 123 as per the Fire Marshall's report.
- Space has been upfitted and renovated to reflect the Renaissance school colors, and to reflect our college prep theme with banners adorning our walls.
- We have Spectrum WI-FI that offers a log-in for Teachers, Students and Guests.

Chairman Gilchrist then continued with the discussion about the facility relocation and to share about the last SCPCSD board meeting and about what was discussed there and how we should proceed going forward regarding the amendment request made to relocate the school. He expressed the fact that one of the things that the Board of Renaissance was unaware of, was that when they took their vote to relocate was that we had to have that approved by the SCPCSD. Chairman Gilchrist expressed that he thought it was his understanding that they would take a vote as Renaissance and then inform the office of School Facilities of the school's intent to relocate and move and continue the process that way. He explained that the SCPCSD process however dictated that we apply for a charter amendment, get the permission and then begin the process of moving. However, given that we have already moved, the first priority of the SCPCSD is to make sure that students are safe, and that the facility is up to code to house students.

He continued to explain that the building had already been inspected and confirmed by the Fire Marshall, and by the county that it was zoned appropriately, and it was also outfitted to the necessary codes. The only outstanding issue is the issue of obtaining the thumbs up from OSF and they came out to do a walk-through just last week. We also need to have DOT back out to do a study on the traffic patterns to ensure that where we are located meets the necessary traffic codes to operate a school.

The SCPCSD Board voted to give us until Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> to get all of those issues fixed and in place so that we can continue to operate the school in compliance.

## 2.2 Authorizer Transfer Update

Chairman Gilchrist explained that the Board at the last meeting discussed the issue of considering another authorizer. This board gave Dr. Harmon the authority to pursue a transfer to the Charter Institute of Erskine and he did. Dr. Harmon, along with Chairman Gilchrist and Ms. Boyd, Director of Operations went before the Board at the Charter Institute of Erskine and explained not in any nefarious way why Renaissance wanted to transfer but simply why we thought Erskine may be a better fit for the school. Erskine voted to accept our charter. What happens after that process is that the SCPCSD Board has to vote to release Renaissance from its charter. That vote has not taken place yet. It is scheduled to take place some time in December, and until that time it is deemed a provisional acceptance into the Charter Institute of Erskine. The SCPCSD has been helpful to us over the last month as we discuss this issue of transfer. We will continue to discuss with Erskine and SCPCSD about what is the best circumstance with regard to authorizers and what is best for Renaissance as we grow.

## 2.3 Report on School Enrollment

Mr. Harmon then proceeded to update the Board on the enrollment situation of the school by sharing...

- 63 total scholars enrolled.
- 32 Kindergarteners
- 20 First Graders
- 11 Second Graders
- We continue to do our mass media campaign, and we have a new slot that just started playing on WLTX for the winter season, as well as continual Social Media boost and posts to keep the narrative about the school going in the public square.
- The new ad for Renaissance was shared with the Board members via a projector and computer setup in the Board meeting.

Comments were made about enrollment...

1. Clearly the new location has raised the visibility of the school being now based a few yards away from a multi-family community.
2. The Board was encouraged to continue sharing and going grassroots marketing about the school.

## 2.4 Review of End of Calendar Year Schedule

-Thanksgiving Break-Nov. 27<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>

-Winter MAP Testing-Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>-Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>

-Mid-Year Teacher Evaluations-Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>-Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>

-Winter Break-Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup>-Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup>

Dr. Harmon discussed the important end of calendar year dates that were shared with staff, faculty and parents and that are important to ensure that we close out the year smoothly.

#### 2.4 First Quarter Budget Report

Chairman Gilchrist began with sharing some basic background information as the Board went over the prepared First Quarter Financial Report

- Main sources of income for this first quarter have been SCPCSD Per Pupil Allocation funding and CSP Grant Implementation Year One funding.
- For the first quarter we received a total of \$46,555.42 in reimbursed CSP Grant Funds
- We also received \$144,066.97 in SCPCSD Per Pupil Allocation funds (inclusive of IDEA funds)
- Vast majority of funds in the first quarter were spent on salaries, operational costs (copies and prints, academic materials, food supplies), and facilities.
- With 6 teachers and 3 assistants and 2 administrators and the facility costs alone we are operating on a shoestring budget.
- Our allocation to date has been based on about 50 scholars and with our bump in numbers our hope is that we begin to see an increase in per pupil revenue.
- A quarterly report was shared in the Board Members packet.

#### 2.5 Additional Board Members (Amended Section to Meeting)

Three candidates have expressed interest in joining our board...

**Nikki Trawick**-Community Activist, School Choice Supporter, Renaissance Community Supporter

**Dr. Walter Curry**-Claflin University Professor of Education, Appointed by Dean of Education  
-Dr. Harmon, expressed that he had spoken to Dr. Curry about the possibilities of bringing Claflin University education students to our campus in a mentoring, tutoring and just as instructional aides to on their behalf help them to gain experience in an actual school setting and also to employ their experiences to inform our scholars about the idea of attending college.

**Dr. Viriva Harris**-Associate Vice President at Benedict College-Brings a wealth of Higher Education experience and eagerness to help school choice efforts.

Chairman Gilchrist would like to invite these people to come and share at our next board meeting their interests in being on the Board of Renaissance.

#### 2.5 School Leader Evaluation

Chairman Gilchrist explained that it is a good time to begin the process of evaluating the school leader just as he is in the process of evaluating his instructional team. He requested board members to get together and form a committee that would review the necessary tools to evaluate the school leader. The Chairman asked for volunteers, and he began to draft board members like Ms. McFadden, Ms. Hubbard, Ms. DeClouetsmith, and myself, Mr. Gilchrist just to determine the tool that would be used for the evaluation, and the Board will make a full evaluation of the school leader.

### 3. Meeting Resolution

Dr. Harmon shared about the SC Public Charter School Alliance conference that will be coming up this week beginning on Tuesday and concluding on Thursday downtown Columbia.

2019 Annual South Carolina Charter Schools Conference

Columbia Marriott

1200 Hampton Street

Columbia SC 29201

5pm Tuesday to 1pm Thursday

He encouraged Board members to attend and to see all of the different vendors and information being presented. We also discussed the possibility of the Alliance coming and doing a board training specific to Renaissance Collegiate Academy.

Chairman Gilchrist also added that he felt that it was necessary that a Legislative Report section should be added to the Board meetings agendas going forward. Much of what the legislature is doing relative to education is significant to charter schools and Board members should be getting a legislative update on what is happening with education.