Tall Pines STEM Academy Board Meeting Minutes
Meeting Date: Feb 21, 2023
Location: Tall Pines Campus – Camp Long, Aiken South Carolina
Commencement Time: 5 pm

Presiding: Michelle Lorio

1. **Meeting Opening:**
    a. Michelle Lorio called the meeting to order at 5:08pm. Jennifer Minolfo read the mission. Mandy Sims called roll and a quorum was established.
    b. Meeting Attendance:
        i. Present:
            Lori Mastromonico, Michelle Lorio, Mandy Sims, Kelly Schepens, David Tamburello, Melissa McKnight, Phillip Dersham, Jennifer Minolfo, Sandy Blankenship
        ii. Absent:
            Alisa Perry, Reggie Rearden,
        iii. Public members:
            Kevin Vincent, Tiffany Stewart
2. **Old Business:**
    a. None

3. **Matters for Decision:**
    a. Approval of January Meeting Minutes:
        i. The minutes were approved with amendments. David Tamburello motioned for approval. Phillip Dersham. Vote was unanimous.
    b. Approval of November Financials:
        i. Phillip Dersham reviewed slides regarding financial updates. Slides showed trends of income, expenses, and bank balances.
        ii. Jennifer Minolfo motioned to approve November financials. David Tamburello seconded. Vote was unanimous.
    c. 2023/2024 TPSA School Calendar
        i. Motion was made by Jennifer Minolfo to add "2023/2024 TPSA School Calendar" to the agenda for tonight's meeting. Phillip Dershamseconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.
        ii. Mandy Sims motioned to approve the 2023/2024 PSA School Calendar. Jennifer Minolfo seconded. Vote was unanimous.
    d. Executive Session
        i. None

4. **Matters for Discussion**
    a. Fundraising Committee Update
        i. Fan Store will be opening soon as a direct link from the TPSA Website
        ii. No final date was available for when this will be an active link on the website.
    b. New Guidance Counselor for TPSA
        i. Motion was made by Michelle Lorio to add "New Guidance Counselor for TPSA'' to the agenda for tonight's meeting. DAvid Tamburelo seconded. Vote was unanimous.
        ii. TPSA administration is requesting for the Memorandum of Understanding with Clemson YLI to be amended to allow for additional funds to be paid to Clemson. This will allocate additional funding for Clemson YLI to hire a GUidance Counselor.
        iii. TPSA administration will be requesting an updated MOU which will be reviewed and voted on in the March 2023 Board meeting.
    c. Attendance Policy
        i. Due to edits that were made to the policy based on feedback from TPSA stakeholders, the first reading of the proposed Attendance Policy addressing chronic absenteeism was read for record.

ii. Proposed new policy is attached at the end of these meeting notes.

d. TPSA Lottery
   i. Lottery will be held on Feb 21, 2023 at 6:00 pm.
   ii. Assignments for responsibilities during the lottery are as follows:
      1. Numbers will be selected by David Tamburello
      2. Numbers will be verbally identified by Phillip Dersham
      3. Numbers will be documented by two individuals, Lori Mastromonico and Mandy Sims
      4. Numbers will be written on the display board by Melissa McKnight.

5. Matters of Noting:

a. School/Principal's Update (Lori Mastromonico)
   i. Principals Update
      1. No updates provided.

6. Meeting Finalization:

a. Review actions to be taken:
   i. None
b. Comments:
   i. None
c. Meeting close:
   i. It was motioned by David Tamburello to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Kelly Schepens and approved. Meeting was adjourned at 5:54 pm.

Tall Pines STEM Academy Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is necessary if students are to make the desired and expected academic and social progress. Charter Schools, including Tall Pines STEM Academy, are bound by the South Carolina Department of Education's attendance policy. State law requires students to miss no more than ten days per year. According to the South Carolina State Board of Education, "a child ages 6 to 17 years meets the definition of truant when the child has three consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences."

It is the mission of TPSA to provide engaging learning experiences that are not easily made up individually or at home. Absences with no documentation are automatically considered unlawful. The TPSA Board recognizes that some absences are unavoidable.

- Lawful absences include:
  I. The student is ill and has a written medical excuse provided by a medical professional submitted within five days from the date the student returns from the absence.
  II. Recognized religious holiday of the student's faith.
  III. Emergencies and/or extreme hardships; to include a death or serious illness in the student's immediate family at the discretion of the principal.
  IV. An immediate family member is defined as the parents, stepparents, foster parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and first cousins.
- Unlawful absences include:
  I. Vacations even if you notify TPSA ahead of time.
  II. Parent notes for illnesses that do not require medical attention.
- At **five unlawful or three consecutive unlawful absences**, the student and parent will be sent an attendance contract from the principal with a written Attendance Intervention Plan. Failure to participate and/or adhere to the plan will result in notice to appear before the TPSA Board. At this point, medical excuses should be provided for any further absences. Excused absences with a doctor's note do not affect truancy.
- At **ten unlawful absences**, students will be considered truant and receive a letter from the board stating that a board hearing will be held if the student is unlawfully absent three more times.
- If **three additional unlawful absences** occur after the board letter was issued, the parent will state the defense of the unlawful absences at a board hearing. A board vote will determine whether the student will be allowed to continue enrollment at TPSA or be required to enroll at his/her home zoned school. A majority vote will be the final decision. The student will be given until the end of that week to register their child at his/her home zoned school and disenrolled from TPSA.
- **Three unlawful school tardies** will result in one absence toward this policy. An unlawful school tardy occurs when a student arrives to school after 8:00 a.m. without a written medical excuse.