

Tall Pines STEM Academy Board Meeting Minutes
Meeting Date: Mar 16, 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 5:07pm. Mandy Sims read the mission. Mandy Sims called roll and a quorum was established.
- b. Meeting Attendance:
 - i. Present:
Lori Mastromonico, Michelle Lorio, Mandy Sims, Phillip Dersham, Jennifer Minolfo, Sandy Blankenship, Stephen Lance, [Alisa Perry](#)
 - ii. Absent:
Reggie Rearden, Kelly Schepens, [David Tamburello](#), [Melissa McKnight](#)
 - iii. Public members:
No public members

2. Old Business:

- a. Updated the Memorandum of Understanding with Clemson YLI to allow for the added position of a TPSA guidance counselor
 - i. Lori Mastromonico indicated an increase of 1.5% is needed.

3. Matters for Decision:

- a. Approval of February 2023 Meeting Minutes:
 - i. The minutes were approved as written. Jennifer Minolfo motioned for approval. Phillip Dersham seconded. Vote was unanimous.
- b. Approval of February Financials:
 - i. [Phillip Dersham](#) reviewed slides regarding financial updates. Slides showed trends of income, expenses, and bank balances.
 - ii. Mandy Sims motioned to approve February financials. Alisa Perry seconded. Vote was unanimous.
- c. Revised Attendance Policy
 - i. The revised attendance policy was read by Michelle Lorio. Phillip Dersham motioned to approve the attendance policy. Alisa Perry seconded. Vote was unanimous.
- d. Memorandum of Understanding amendment
 - i. [Michelle Lorio](#) made a motion to add this item to the agenda. It was seconded by [Alisa Perry](#).
 - ii. In order to add a TPSA guidance counselor to the staff, a 1.5% increase is needed to cover salary costs of this position. This will require that the MOU between YLI/TPSA and Clemson University be amended to reflect this change.
 - iii. [Michelle Lorio](#) motioned for a 1.5% increase in the funds transferred to Clemson University. [Phillip Dersham](#) seconded. Vote was unanimous.
- e. Executive Session
 - i. None

4. Matters for Discussion

- a. Fundraising Committee Update
 - i. No updates from Phillip Dersham.
 - ii. Lori Mastromonico stated the Fan Store was still being worked on will be active Apr 1, 2023 for 2 weeks.
- b. Updating Behavior Plan

- i. Jennifer Minolfo brought some concerns to the board regarding the use of vapes on school grounds, particularly in restrooms, and the use of group punishment when individual punishment may be more appropriate.
- ii. The TPSA administrative team will review the current Behavior Plan to look for improvements that can be made. They will then work with the teachers to ensure it is administered consistently.

5. Matters of Noting:

- a. School/Principal's Update (Lori Mastromonico)
 - i. Principals Update
 - 1. 280 students on the waitlist
 - 2. Golf Tournament is planned for May 8, 2023
 - 3. Colorectal Cancer month is March. TPSA will be having a "Blue Out" day on March 31, 2023.
 - 4. An upgrade to the library is in process.
 - 5. Building 10 will be converted to storage.
 - 6. Recent field trips all went great and had positive feedback
 - 7. Job Shadow Day was a success

6. Meeting Finalization:

- a. Review actions to be taken:
 - i. Lori Mastromonico will provide signed MOU and updated amendment
- b. Comments:
 - i. None
- c. Meeting close:
 - i. It was motioned by Alisa Perry to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Jennifer Minolfo and approved. Meeting was adjourned at 6:08 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.