

Tall Pines STEM Academy Board Meeting Agenda

Meeting October 19, 2023

Location: Tall Pines STEM Academy, Aiken, South Carolina

Commencement Time: 5:00 P.M. Presiding: Michelle Lorio

1. Meeting Opening:

- Welcome and Mission Statement
"The mission of Tall Pines STEM Academy is to provide an option for families where STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) is intertwined in the school's culture and prepares middle school students to become the next generation of ethical leaders. Tall Pines STEM Academy will provide a combination of classroom and outdoor learning experiences to engage students, promote wellness and physical fitness, inspire creativity, foster critical thinking and problem solving skills, and cultivate citizenship and leadership skills through rigorous and relevant content and projects in a natural setting."
- Call Roll and Establish Quorum (Michelle Lorio, Mandy Sims, Alisa Perry, Jennifer Minolfo, Phillip Dersham, Kelly Schepens, David Tamburello, Melissa McKnight)
- Public Comments
Please note that 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 agenda, public dialogue will be restricted to the "Public Comments" section of the agenda or as directed by the board chair. Each speaker has 2 minutes and speakers may not ask questions of the Board Members. Board members may not engage speakers in discussion. Disruptive behavior and personal attacks aimed at students, staff or board members are not permitted.

2. Old Business:

- Discuss existing policy and potential revision to bullying in response to incident.
 - Definition of bullying, harassment, and hazing stated in Law 59-63-120 - "Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" means a gesture, an electronic communication, or a written, verbal, physical, or sexual act that is reasonably perceived to have the effect of: (a) harming a student physically or emotionally or damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of personal harm or property damage; or (b) insulting or demeaning a student or group of students causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.
- Current TSPA Packs Behavior Plan is:

Consequences, including a school strike, due to an office referral are left to the discretion of the administrator.

- **3 STRIKES = Possible Expulsion**
- Reasons for a strike include, but are not limited to...
 - -Possessing banned items such as vapes, alcohol, or tobacco
 - -Bullying
 - -Fighting
 - -Intentional Damage to School Property
 - -Demeaning others based on individual uniqueness such as race, ability, or size
 - -Making/sharing unauthorized social media from campus
- ***The TSPA administrators may refer any major violation of school safety directly to the school board for review.***

3. Matters for Decision:

- Need to approve meeting minutes from July, August & September 2023
- Need to approve monthly financials from July, August & September 2023
- Adjourn to Executive discussion (as necessary for Legal, Personnel, or Contract matters)

4. Matters for Discussion:

- Fundraising Committee Update

5. Matters for Noting:

- School/Principal's Update
- Need to send out Board Member election information
 - Board election is 10/30

6. Meeting Finalization:

- Review actions to be taken
- Next Meeting – November 16, 2023 at 5:00 pm

For informational purposes only: Aiken County Public Schools Code of Conduct Bullying Policy

Bullying as defined by the National Centre Against Bullying is detailed in our student code of conduct. Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behavior that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

WHAT BULLYING IS NOT

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- single episode acts of nastiness or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- mutual arguments, disagreements or fights.

These actions can cause great distress. However, they do not fit the definition of bullying and they're not examples of bullying unless someone is deliberately and repeatedly doing them.

REPORTING BULLYING

Students, bystanders, parents/guardians, teachers, staff and others should report bullying behavior without delay to a school counselor or school administrator.

The Board's Policy for Bullying is Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (Policy JICFAA) *Issued 9/11:*

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for promoting the health and welfare of the district's students by maintaining a safe, positive learning environment for students and teaching environment for staff that is free from harassment, intimidation or bullying.

The board prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying of a student by another student or students, staff or third parties that interfere with or disrupt a student's ability to learn and the school's responsibility to educate its students in a safe and orderly environment whether in a classroom, on school premises, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, at an official school bus stop, at a school-sponsored activity or event, whether or not it is held on school premises, or at another program or function where the school is responsible for the student.

For purposes of this policy, harassment, intimidation or bullying is defined as a gesture, electronic communication or a written, verbal, physical or sexual act reasonably perceived to have the effect of either of the following.

- harming a student physically or emotionally or damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of personal harm or property damage
- insulting or demeaning a student or group of students in such a manner as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school

Any student who feels he/she has been subjected to harassment, intimidation or bullying is encouraged to file a complaint with the principal or his/her designee in accordance with procedures established by the superintendent. Complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and confidentially. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal or his/her designee. Reports by students or employees may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action must not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The district prohibits retaliation or reprisal in any form against a student or employee who has filed a complaint or report of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The district also prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying, and any student or staff member knowingly violating this prohibition will be subject to disciplinary action as described in this policy.

The board expects students to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified and respectful manner. Students and employees have a responsibility to know and respect the policies, rules and regulations of the school and district. Any student or employee who is found to have engaged in the prohibited actions as outlined in this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion in the case of a student. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials. The district will take all other appropriate measures reasonably calculated to correct or rectify the situation. (Employees engaged in harassment, intimidation or bullying may be disciplined or recommended for termination, as provided elsewhere in district policy, for unprofessional or unlawful conduct.)

Students, parents/legal guardians, teachers and staff members should be aware that the district may take disciplinary actions for conduct initiated and/or created off-campus involving the inappropriate use of the Internet or web-based resources if such conduct poses a threat or substantially interferes with or disrupts the environment, work and/or discipline of the schools, including discipline for student harassment and bullying.

The superintendent will be responsible for ensuring notice of this policy is provided to students, staff, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and members of the community including its applicability to all areas of the school environment as outlined in this policy.

The superintendent will also ensure that an age-appropriate process is established for discussing the district policy with students, as with other aspects of the code of conduct currently utilized during the beginning of each school year. The superintendent will ensure that information regarding this policy is incorporated into the school district's training program and that volunteers who have frequent contact with students are likewise informed of the policy. Information concerning this policy, upon adoption, will be included in the district's code of student conduct for the next year and will be circulated to all administrators. Immediate information will be provided to students by building administrators and to parent groups through reasonable communication methods currently utilized by the various schools.