

SOAR ACADEMY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

1301 East 34th Street
Tacoma, Washington 98404
Wednesday, January 16, 2019

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

5:09pm

Present in Person: Dr. Thelma Jackson, Sam Dinning, and Andy Ferrera
Present by Phone: Beverly Grant and George Meng (both joined at 6:35pm)

II. Agenda Approval

5:10pm

Agenda approved as printed. Moved by Andy Ferrera and Seconded by Sam Dinning. Passed 3-0

III. Approval of December Meeting Minutes

5:11pm

Approval of minutes moved by Andy Ferrera and seconded by Sam Dinning. Passed 3-0.

IV. Correspondence

5:12pm

- a. Green Dot Grade expansion proposal
 - i. Worked with Green Dot to complete the proposal over winter break but they have since chosen to rescind the application.
- b. Second WA Charters grant installment
 - i. Received, deposited, and notes were updated.
- c. Non SOAR specific correspondence was also discussed. Two reports have recently been released regarding WA charter schools:
 - i. The Washington State Board of Education Annual Charter Schools Report
 - ii. CREDO Report – Just released by Stanford University
- d. CRPE Visit – This was previously scheduled to be discussed under Agenda Item IX. CRPE is the Center for Reinventing Public Education, a national research entity affiliated with UW studying education reform and has a focus on charter schools.
 - ii. 2 researchers spent 2 days at SOAR this week.
 - iii. Strengths that were identified by the visitors included:
 1. Staffing model strength – mutual respect between teachers and auxiliary staff; Staff diversity; Emphasis on mental health; School of continuous mindset – focus on data; Caring and individualized approach to students; Higher level of teacher satisfaction in comparison to other schools; Systems in place; Collaboration time; Empowerment of staff; On-task students; Reflected on how each staff could identify the vision and values of the school but in unique ways
 - iv. Suggestions they made for SOAR to think about: better utilizing technology and use of aides in academic support; lots of questions about sustainability in finance and staff retention

V.Public Comment

5:27pm

Welcomes and Introductions.

In attendance were: Kate Walker with Seneca; Amber Fretwell with Seneca; Joshua Halsey, Executive Director of Commission; Sasha Tyshler, Interim Principal of SOAR; Natalie Salo, STEAM Teacher at SOAR and her husband Brian

- a) Natalie Salo, STEAM Teacher at SOAR shared a story about a student returning to SOAR.
- b) Joshua Halsey, ED of Commission acknowledged the Commission meeting in Bremerton tomorrow. He said the commission stands in solidarity with hope for way forward to SOAR. He emphasized the continued need to put students and staff first and that he awaits the decision that the Board will be making about the future of SOAR.

VI.Closed Session: Executive Session to discuss contracting

5:32pm

Board members exited the room along with Executive Director Lihi Rosenthal and Interim Principal Sasha Tyshler to begin the closed session. The closed session was announced to conclude at 6:20pm.

At 6:20pm, Lihi Rosenthal appeared and announced an extension of the closed session for an addition 12 minutes.

At 6:33pm, Lihi Rosenthal appeared again and announced an additional five-minute extension for the closed session.

Closed session officially adjourned at 6:37pm. Beverly Grant left the call at 6:37pm.

Reconvened in Public Session at 6:41pm

VII.Executive Reports

6:41pm

- a. Board Chair Report
Met for the interview with CRPE.
- b. School Leader Report
Enrollment – current and future forecast at 190
Enrollment Coordinator has given notice and SOAR transitioned Seneca counselor into this roll for a net saving of \$5k. Made the offer of Dean of Students to Tori Weisel, a Seneca counselor with a revised title, Restoration and Engagement Coordinator. As a result, there is a reduction of two counselor positions that will not be filled given the decrease in student enrollment. Given the open teacher position and the current enrollment, SOAR has also chosen to transition from 9 classrooms to 8 classrooms. In addition, the nurse is on maternity leave; her replacement will be providing 6 hours per week instead of 12 given the amount of frontloading the Nurse had done in setting up appropriate systems.

VIII. Committee Updates

6:48pm

- a. Finance, George Meng. Lihi Rosenthal spoke on behalf of the Finance Committee. Submitted 2nd Quarter Finance Report to Commission. New revenue sources have also been identified. PSESD had not drawn down Title IV funds and SOAR received an honorary payment from the CRPE visit.
- b. Governance, Lihi Rosenthal. No Report
- c. Development, Bev Grant. Not Report. Lihi Rosenthal noted that the budget still shows a placeholder for Board contribution.

IX. Items for Board Discussion

6:52pm

- a. OSPI Report Card overview – Reviewed SOAR’s data, as well as comparative data at McCarver Elementary (the nearest elementary school in Tacoma) and Destiny Middle School (co-located with SOAR).
- b. Commission presentation tomorrow -Thelma Jackson directed questions at Joshua Halsey since Joshua had stated during Public Comment that he hopes SOAR will still be present even though Green Dot rescinded their application. Joshua Halsey reiterated that he is hoping SOAR will be present.
- c. CRPE visit this week - Reviewed earlier in the meeting.

X. Items for Board Review and Approval

6:55pm

- a. Check Register for December 2018
Move to approve by Sam Dinning and seconded by Andy Ferrera. Passed 4-0.
- b. Resolution to define next steps - In the executive session, the Board discussed future of SOAR. Move to motion by Sam Dinning to set a special meeting next Wednesday to further the discussion of the future of SOAR. This motion was seconded by Andy Ferrera. Thelma Jackson explained that additional time is sought to explore the events of the past week and to gain a deeper understanding of the options available, noting the need to take all information into consideration when deciding best course of action for the students, families and staff of SOAR. The lack of time to fully vet options following the withdrawal of Green Dot’s proposal prevents the Board from making a decision this evening. Board recognizes the limited time in order to provide clarity of the students and families of staff. The motion was for an additional meeting on Wednesday January 23rd to take definitive action to decide on the future of SOAR and therefore tabling potential resolution until next week.

This motion was passed 4-0.

Thelma Jackson addressed Joshua Halsey again and he recommended that this was best messaged directly to the Commission by Thelma Jackson.



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XI.Adjournment

7:04pm

Next Regular Board Meeting: February 20, 2019 from 5:00-7:00pm at SOAR Academy, 1301 E 34th Street, Tacoma, WA 98404; to join by phone, Dial-In: 1-888-204-5987; Passcode: 9220108