

4/11/2023

## PEAK BOARD MEETING Minutes

Meeting opened at 5:43.

### **Board Members present:**

Dr. Dwight Mullen

Robby Russell

Kerry Friedman

Andy Barnett

Ms. Kathey Avery (arrived 6:15)

David Robinson (arrived 6:35)

### **Staff:**

Ms. Brenda Tipton

Ms. Kidada Wynn

Dr. Gordon Grant

Ms. Jenna Oechsle

Ms. Madison Clark

### **Parents:**

Ms. Tobra Waters

Ms. Leondra McDay

### **Public Comment:**

- 1. Ms. Madison Clark- Here to be an advocate for Spanish Speaking students at PEAK.
  - To close the Achievement Gap, we need to give them the multi lingual information they need as students and as families.
  - Professionalism is needed: Have translations of all communications with families.
  - She says that students sometimes ask her to translate school information sent home for them.
  - Wants to be clear that we should serve ML with “double doses” of instruction from ML instructors: (Note that “ML” means Multi Lingual, and is the newer term for ESL (English as Second Language), or ELL (English Language Learners).
  - Noted: EVEN if those students do not have EC or ML designation, we need to provide them with equalizing instructional services.
- 2. Ms. Jenna Oechsle (K teacher) agrees with these statements.
- 3. Ms. Tobra Waters (parent) -
  - Praises both teachers who had just spoken - both taught her daughter Lauren
  - I have had some ups and downs with PEAK, but love this school and its mission and thinks that it is on the way to greatness.
  - She has believed in PEAK since she came to the first meetings proposing the school.
  - She is a believer in uniforms and recommended black pants and red shirts.

- Mr. Robby Russell thanked all public commenters for their honesty and their work. He praised them all for doing the essential work.

### **Consent Agenda:**

- Quorum members voted for approving 3/14 and 3/27 minutes. Noted that we do not have minutes yet for closed session 3/27. It was a special meeting called before Spring Break.
  - Andy Barnett moved to approve; Kerry Friedman seconded.
  - Members approved.
  - Noted by Acting Board Chair Russel that we will expedite completion of the 3/27 closed session minutes.

### **School Leader's Report: Ms. Wynn**

- Currently 91 scholars
- Lottery submissions at 113, so projected enrollment in 2023- 2024 School Year is, given some attrition of those who choose to go to other schools, 185 - 206. We are going to walk the building to be sure what our capacity is..
- Currently no Wait List
- 21 5th graders registered; will need to utilize current offices (including Ms. Wynn's)
  - Question from Board Member Mullen - "What records follow them?"
  - Ms. Wynn's response: : Students and families coming to us will indeed have IEPs, and it is a fact that many of them are given plans that are not effective. It is not that we are a dumping ground - the people not being served by public schools are the ones who are applying.
  - Dr. Mullen - I just want to be clear that we have testing measures that show growth, not just proficiency score ratings on the EOG tests.
  - Ms. Wynn - We do: we have BOY, MOY, and EOY show growth on other measures.
  - Dr. Mullen - be aware that there can be confidentiality problems in small schools with test reporting since it is so easy to identify test takers' scores.
    - Ms. Wynn: good point; heard.
- Kerry Friedman - So tomorrow is the day we can do a walk around? (Wed, 4/12).
  - Ms. Wynn - Yes, in preliminary walk throughs, it looks as if they all will fit. For ONE more year.
- Ms. Wynn's report on incoming teachers:
  - Six teachers have said they want to come.
  - One teacher has already committed to the school.
  - Noted that Asheville's expensive living costs can be a disincentive.
  - She asked: "Somebody's gotta teach me Asheville."
  - Noted from Andy Barnett: Teachers qualify for Habitat for Humanity homes.
  - Shameless plug, reinforced by Ms. Avery.
- Noted that Ms. Wynn - we have made it to second phase of Strategic Partnership Grant for \$100,000. She admits to being nervous about being up on Zoom going for the grant

this Thursday. Will need to work on the three minute presentations; she is so passionate she fears running on. The grantor is Buncombe County.

- Noted that next year is our third year and an audit year from NC Charter Schools.
- Ms. Wynn and Mr. Russell had 4/10 Meeting with Prestige Solutions - finance, recovery, charter schools. She was impressed with them but still wants to share information with them, rather than just being directed. For this reason, Ms. Wynn is urging we have a financial support person on board at PEAK to assist with this.

Robby Russell concurs with being impressed by Prestige Solutions. We need to be able to provide her with more financial information, more frequently. It made sense for us to start with Acadia, but moving to Prestige would move some of the overwhelming amount of work that Brenda is currently handling to them.

Founder of Prestige, David Rutter, also founded Acadia.

Acadia costs \$1780 a month; Prestige charges \$2020 a month. Robby believes that the small increase will save us money.

Of the three key components of school success: Enrollment; student performances; finances - this is completing that triad. .

- **Moved by Kerry Friedman; accept the offer of Prestige Solutions**

Kathey Avery seconds

Comments:

- Andy Barnett - when checking references make sure to check a charter school who they have served.
- Vote: Unanimous Ayes (6)
- Follow up; we will complete year with Acadia, but begin with them in July 1 of 2023.

- From Ms. Wynn - Reports on Student Engagement Events for PEAK - they were clearly effective, given our increased enrollment applications. Remember for 23-24, we need to be looking for our recruiting spaces in public houses.
- Ms. Wynn - have finalized a Six Month Strategic Plan.
- Ms. Wynn - Plans for Summer Reading "Boot Camp" are being finalized. Three weeks, with a SuperHero Theme. Fun following hard work with first offers going to existing scholars who need extra support.

Numbers will be largely driven by the READ To Achieve test scores at end of 23 School year. Major focus on Reading with Math being done one hour a day

- National Charter School Conference attendance in Cherokee 7/9- 11/2023. Saving money from the TX site instead.
- Ms. Avery commented on some community members who thought that PEAK was a private school. She had to correct that misunderstanding.
- On the Horizon: More from Ms. Wynn  
Wants to have a Donor/Sponsor Newsletter - first one out by August of 2023.  
Wants to enhance our relationship with the public school system; instead of a competitive relationship and collaborative one. She wants to speak to ACS School Board to promote this idea.

- Dwight Mullen - at formal level this may result in an MOU with ACS.

- Ms. Wynn - we do need to have a board member for PEAK who is a Spanish speaker. We have room for up to 11 members on the PEAK Board.
    - Noted that Robby Russell has spoken to a possible Spanish speaking candidate for PEAK Board.
- Budget Planning for 23-2026: Prestige Solutions will help us for here.
- Meal Plan for 23-2024; our current vendor is trying but have limited ingredients. Right now, she is having difficulty finding another vendor with higher quality food.
  - She requests: can we approach the church for office space over in the main church? Checking in with Board Member Andy Barnett on this.
    - Noted that church has an institutional kitchen.
    - Currently we have solved the milk problem by buying in bulk from Sam's. About 3x more expensive.
    - Discussion: What about the charter schools in AVL being a group purchase group?
    - Noted from Ms. Clark: some of our kids are not getting our lunch but are not bringing food from home - they are getting shorted. Can we do more for students.
    - Vendors; Mr. Robinson has strong experience with
      - Performance vendor - can probably beat the Sam's cost.
      - Then eventually go to Sysco
    - Noted from Ms. Waters - Lauren comes from school hungry and it would be great to have more warm meals for.
- Other issue: Conversation with Thrive - an affordable housing group led by Kate Pett, working with Family Self Sufficiency program. Seems like a great opportunity to have Asheville Housing and Thrive - wanted to offer to both.
- EAN - employee assistance network; five free sessions for school employees; good for crisis counseling. It is a resources. Cost of \$4500. Dr. Grant will continue to investigate and make report at next meetings
- Discussion from Robby Russell:
  - We need to discuss Strategic Planning again.
  - Summer School prep
  - Start of 2023-2024 School year with a school doubled in size
  - Kerry Friedman - What about a summer board retreat - sense of the meeting.

- **FINANCE REPORT:**

\* Robby Russell - shout out to Brenda and Kidada. They worked over Spring Break to get the NC ACCESS grant application into DPI by 4/5 in order to get the May reimbursements.

\* Brenda did great work to make this happen. We need to have about 150 K during the summer to handle payroll. We need to have some mechanism of paying full time employees.

Robby also referred to ESSER grants, primarily COVID19 related. ESSER 2 ends this year. ESSER 3 will be end in the 2023-2024 school year.

- Utica Insurance visit; Brian Platz - will conduct a Safe Schools training for us at staff meeting next week.

- Noted that we are meeting with Deputy Meadows of Buncombe Sheriff and are building a Safety plan first draft ready on Monday, 4/17/23.
- Having this plan in place may lower our insurance rates.
- Noted from Dwight Mullen - see if this Buncombe county camera linkage will have any effect on our Utica partnership? Answer: we will certainly report it.
- **Facilities Report:**
  - Andy Barnett - Church may be replacing windows; do we want to help financially? Friendly answer: No, thank you.
  - Discussion:
  - What about use of the church kitchen for PEAK meals?
    - Board interest in this option.
    - Noted by Andy that the cost of the use of this kitchen is built into the use of the kitchen near the fellowship hall.
- **Other notes of business: Dwight Mullen** - shouldn't we be going to black pants?
  - Sense of the meeting: YES - Parents and board members in approval of this.
  - Confirmed by Ms. Waters.
  - Second point for Strategic Plan, Dr. Mullen
    - Wanted to have an emphasis on institutionalizing bi-linguality
    - Spanish and sign language?
    - Noted by Mullen that once we got rid of the resistance to bilinguality, we found that it was an incentive.
  - **David Robinson;**
    - What is the sense of our growth numbers?
    - Noted that we are expecting to grow to between 180- 200.
- Motion to go into Closed Session:
  - Moved by Kerry Friedman, seconded by David Robinson.
  - Moved to go into closed session at 7:34.
  - First, Mr. Russell and Board expressed deep gratitude.
- Closed Session ended.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:18.