

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Riverview Charter School
August 20, 2020, 5:00pm, Zoom

Mission: *Riverview Charter School's mission is to create a small, diverse learning community that actively engages students in meaningful and innovative learning experiences. Emphasizing "learning by doing," family and community involvement, and engaged citizenship, Riverview is committed to nurturing the whole child and preparing each student for a global society.*

Members Present:

Mary Jordan Lempesis, Katherine Ferguson, Nicole Johansen, Vincent Brennan, Lamarr Cooler, Reece Bertholf, Joey Grice, Julia Wittchen-Price, Arthur O'Kelley, Mindy Farris, Scott Lee

Leadership Team Present:

Alison Thomas, Liz O'Brien, AK Harper, Donna Haram, AnnMarie Bowden

Public Present:

100 participants via Zoom.

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 5:07pm.

Executive Session

Personnel Discussion

Exited at 6:39pm.

Public Session

(I) Agenda approved.

(II) We are in compliance with Freedom of Information Act.

(III) Public Comments:

- (I) Amanda Patel: Need to offer both virtual and in-person options for students. Expect rigor and advanced planning in full virtual. Want more transparency.
- (II) Jeff Failing: Feels like the preparation for this school year is lacking and there's been a lack of communication about a plan. We would be happy with in-person or full virtual, but are disappointed there isn't a plan.
- (III) Liz Mitchum: Please give parents a choice between in-person and virtual. I believe teachers are essential. Virtual learning is not our ideal. Local pediatric doctors say the benefits outweigh the risks. Our children deserve to go to school.
- (IV) Cathy Bridgers: Nurse of RCS. Nothing has scared me like this pandemic. Students are only one part of a school. Faculty and staff have to be considered. Must follow DHEC guidelines. One death from covid-19 is too many. Follow the science.
- (V) Michael Heath: Wants follow DHEC guidelines. Wait until index is lowered to go back face to face.
- (VI) Willard Fosberry: Have watched wife work in health care, and his private school re-open. Students should come first. Please evaluate how other schools are opening. Remember the kids have an almost zero fatality rate. Please communicate more.

- (VII) Nikima Caruso: I understand fear, but parents need a choice. Lots of kids will not be able to administer distance learning. Flu season is deadly too, but the kids have to keep learning.
- (VIII) Brittany Hamm: I have a two children at RCS. One has an auto-immune disease. RCS cleaning supplies used to be green cleaning products. Are they still now? Why didn't the school participate in the PEBT program?
- (IX) Cydnee Wardle: Parents survey said 70% of parents want to go to back. DHEC says our recovery rate is 91% in Beaufort County and it says our state is green. What does in-class look like for in-class? Our kids need to go back to school in person.
- (X) Shannon Duffy: Teachers prefer to be in the classroom teaching kids. It's true that the kids aren't getting sick, but if the teachers are all sick, then who will teach them? Hard to find subs and they are unqualified babysitters. We will be thrilled to go back as soon as it is safe.
- (XI) Susan Brown: Don't think there is a simple solution for everyone. The Leadership Team is bright and trying to do what is best for everyone. I understand it's hard for everyone, but I trust the Leadership Team.
- (XII) Eliza O'Connell: 100% support the Leadership Team's decision. I long to be in-classroom with students, but not if their lives are threatened. CDC's guidelines for in-person learning are so extreme that it will not offer more to students than distance learning.
- (XIII) Jeff Feus: I really want our kids to go back to school in-person. What was the purpose of delaying school? Would like some more transparency about PPE line item in our budget.
- (XIV) Katie Godowns: My kids are begging to go back to school. I want to keep my children safe. Choice needs to be offered for students and teachers.
- (XV) Andrea Sadler: I am a healthcare worker. Safety is important, but there is no definition is true safety. We will never be able to ensure full safety. We have to take precautions and move forward. It could take years. We can't wait until we are completely safe.
- (XVI) Dr. Martin: The majority of kids do very well with this virus. If we can protect the staff and the kids who are at risk, then we need to meet the social and educational needs of the students. As a pediatrician, kids get sicker with the flu than covid in my experience, so decisions to limit their ability to attend school is frustrating.
- (XVII) Lindsay Verny: As a new student to RCS, my child will have a very hard time starting at a new school if it is done virtually. New families need more information about how school will look, including virtually.
- (XVIII) Laurie Cooler: I want to go back to school. I believe RCS is capable of doing all things necessary to keep kids safe.
- (XIX) Faranica Reynolds-Morgan: Managing distance learning for my four kids was challenging. But I want to keep them safe.
- (XX) Ty Reichel: The most important thing is here is the education of our students.

- (IV) Board Discussion about resuming on-site learning for 2020-2021 school year.
 - (I) Plans for re-opening on September 8. Presented by Director Thomas.
 - (II) SCDE guidelines direct all public schools to make 3 separate plans. Choose plan based on SCDHEC numbers of low, medium, high index.
 - (I) Full distance learning.
 - (II) Hybrid plan. This does offer parents a choice between some on-site and full-distance. K-5 attend in morning. 6-8 attend in the afternoon. Monday thru Thursday. Based on snap code registration, 50-60% of students would choose to come to school.
 - (III) Full in-person with safety protocols. Exceptions for pre-existing conditions and quarantine, and they will still have distance learning options.
 - (III) Concern was expressed that we cannot continue to delay.
 - (IV) School will communicate these plans by email, website, and via teachers. Will field phone calls.
 - (V) Negotiations are happening with BCSD regarding busing options during the hybrid and in-person plans.
 - (VI) BCSD is opening September 8 fully virtual.
 - (VII) Transitions between plans would occur after 2 weeks in the newly achieved index category, and start the following Monday.
 - (VIII) SCDHEC and CDC have rigorous guidelines on close contact and exposure. A classmate would almost always be considered close contact and would require a 14-day isolation at home.
 - (IX) In-Person Protocols:
 - (I) Daily home screening by parents, as per recommended by the CDC. Regular medication at home.
 - (II) 6' between all people at all times.
 - (III) No large in-person gatherings.
 - (IV) Recess outside daily.
 - (V) Students and staff wear masks at all times.
 - (VI) Meals in classroom, or outside.
 - (VII) Plexiglass in office. Only one visiting person allowed in the lobby at one time.
 - (VIII) Breakfast and lunch offered.
 - (IX) Additional custodian for high-touch surfaces. Every classroom cleaned nightly. RCS uses Virex products.
 - (X) Hand-sanitizer in every classroom.
 - (XI) Signage with reminders.
 - (XII) Removal of unnecessary furniture.
 - (XIII) Parents and faculty must obtain covid tests themselves.
 - (X) Meeting IEP requirements virtually: Some needs can be met virtually. IEP kids would have preference for all-day access during Hybrid.
 - (XI) What platforms are going to be used virtually? K-3 Seesaw, 4-8 Google Classroom. All students will used synchronous and asynchronous learning. Much of the asynchronous learning would be individually, or in small groups.
 - (XII) 7 families total said they do not have Wifi. SCDE is offering hot spots. RCS students can borrow devices from RCS.

- (XIII) Are teachers trained on online platforms? Teachers will participate in 4 days of training in Responsive Classroom. This is a emotion connection and classroom environment training that focuses on creating and maintaining relationships virtually.
- (XIV) Concern that the index will remain in the high and/or medium categories for a long time. What will RCS do to create equal access to education for kids who won't be supported at home for distance learning? We don't know the magnitude of how or why they wouldn't fully participate. 97% of students participated in distance learning at least once during the spring.
- (XV) 36% of snap code registrations said they would choose full virtual. The rest prefer in-person.
- (XVI) Do younger students have a harder time with virtual learning? No, it depends on the child. We chose interfaces that we think will be accessible to students and parents.
- (XVII) How are other schools in our area able to open for in-person learning? Local and private schools that are opening are much smaller than RCS. There are 703 students and 83 staff. Leadership Team appreciates that SCDE gave us a plan to use.
- (XVIII) RCS does not have the essential staff necessary to open their doors to in-person learning, other than as guidelines state.
- (XIX) Why wouldn't you have essential staff necessary to resume on-site in hybrid or full? Because we can't staff fully during a medium or high index.
- (XX) Is RCS providing devices for all learners? No, as needed.
- (XXI) Are the Leadership Teams's opening recommendations in keeping with the school's attorney's legal advice? Yes.
- (XXII) Results of this meeting will be published to staff on Friday, and to parents on Monday.
- (XXIII) Teachers will be able to teach from homes or classrooms during virtual.
- (XXIV) If the next two indexes are medium or low, is the school ready to implement a hybrid the following Monday? That would take a Herculean effort, but it could be done.
- (XXV) Motion to open school on September 8 with a hybrid model. Alison: we will not have the essential staff necessary to open with the Hybrid model during a high index.
- (I) Does the essential staff mean the leadership team will not be there to welcome the kids in Hybrid model on September 8? Yes.
 - (II) Scott Lee would like to abstain from vote for reasons revealed in executive session.
 - (III) Motion fails 3/7. One abstains.
- (XXVI) Motion for RCS Board to accept the Leadership guidelines in keeping with the plans presented to the Board on Aug 17, for processes and procedures for re-opening the school on September 8.
- (I) Amendment to give board ability to reconsider these guidelines, regardless of what the two-week incidence rate DHEC guidelines is, at any time, at subsequent regular or especially called board meetings. Amendment passes 10/0. One abstaining vote.
 - (II) Motion for the Board to accept Leadership's recommendations that were presented to them on August 17 for the policies and procedures for starting school September 8, to follow the guidelines and matrixes they have established, and implement the three plans according to Leadership's Aug 17

recommendations. Board holds the right to revisit the guidelines and the platform of school at any time, at subsequent regular or especially called board meetings, regardless of the SCDHEC Two-Week Incidence Rate Index.
(III) Motion passes 7/3 with one abstaining vote.

Set Next Board Meeting Date:

September 17, 6:00pm, RCS.

Review & Approval of Minutes:

Minutes from 7/16/2020 Board Meeting presented. Approved unanimously.

Adjourn:

Meeting adjourned at 9:50pm.