

# Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Riverview Charter School

October 1, 2020, 5:30pm, Riverview/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, Arthur O'Kelley, Mindy Farris, Scott Lee, Joey Grice, Julia Wittchen-Price

## **Leadership Team Present:**

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

## **Public Present:**

60 participants via Zoom.

## **Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 5:40pm.

## **Executive Session**

Personnel Discussion

Exited at 6:52.

## **Public Session**

Meeting called to order at 6:55pm.

- (I) Agenda approved.
- (II) We are in compliance with Freedom of Information Act.
- (III) Public Comments: Cathy Sanders, Elizabeth Hargrove

## **People & Programs Committee**

Nominations for Board of Directors (5) seats for the 2021-2023 term are being accepted October 9 - November 9. Applications can be mailed hard-copy to the school, emailed to Nicole Johansen, or completed electronically via the link sent to the RCS community in the weekly emails.

## **Director's Report**

- (I) Hybrid Report
  - (i) 416 in-person students, 271 full-virtual students.
  - (ii) 104 extended day was offered to all staff and any kids with IEPs and their siblings. 120 next week.
  - (iii) Kids are great at wearing masks and airplane arms and other Covid strategies.
  - (iv) We appreciate staff and parents who have worked so hard.
  - (v) 1174 meals served in September (less than past trends).
  - (vi) New number pickup system is working well. Thanks to technology staff!

(vii) 382 applied for extended day, 120 starting next week. Will continue to add more kids weekly as possible.

(viii) USDA is paying for breakfast and lunch to every single child through Dec 31, 2020.

(II) Questions

(i) First improvement to be made: ease midday drop-off/pickup for families with a child in K-5 and 6-8. Second: working on smaller zoom classes in middle school. Third: improvements to drop off and pickup.

(ii) How is staffing? Almost all teachers have returned to work in the building. Medical accommodations have been made for a few.

(iii) Of the 275 virtual students, how many are staying home for Covid or is it some other reason? RCS hasn't asked. Discussion regarding surveying such families.

(iv) Will RCS be able to provide buses in a full-day face-to-face platform? BCSD has said they will have a couple of buses for RCS. They quoted a very high rate for a hybrid schedule, with less capacity.

(v) Medical exemptions in a non-pandemic year are about 3 students/year.

(vi) During a low-index, distance learning will be discontinued.

(vii) If students leave RCS, would there be a financial impact? Potentially, yes. RCS receives student-based funding, which averages to about \$10,000/child/year. Per RCS Charter, RCS can only continue to fill seats through December 31, so if students leave after the end of the calendar year, their seats will remain vacant until the following school year.

(viii) What are the obstacles to keep RCS from going full on-site besides the incidence rate? Space to meet social distancing requirements, risk for and confidence of families, monetary concerns for outfitting classrooms, staff opting out.

(ix) What can RCS do to help the 275 students' families (who opted for full-virtual during hybrid) feel more safe to attend in full onsite? Temperature checks? Latest science says fevers are a later-onset symptom for children, which makes is a less-effective measure. Hand sanitizing can sure can be part of this.

(i) Perhaps we need to know exactly why they opted for full-virtual. Again, discussion of a survey of families.

(ii) Leadership will send such a survey soon.

(x) If the Board were to vote to move to full-time onsite learning, would RCS be able to staff the school fully? We would need a few long-term subs, at least for the end of the calendar year.

**Board Discussion**

(I) We need not use CDC in exclusion of other medical organizations. The American Academy of Pediatrics supports children physically in school. When PPE is worn, teachers and students are safe. Everyone agrees is it is best educational for students to be in school, so we need to do that for them.

(II) Recognition that this situation is challenging and there are no perfect solutions.

(III) Motion to go back to school in-person on October 19, 2020 full-time 5 days/week.

(i) Director Thomas says if the directive is to return 100% to pre-March lockdown protocols, RCS is prepared and able to do that. However, if the directive has any stipulations or covid-modifications (eg cameras in the classrooms or buses from a private vendor), the school needs more time to prepare. RCS cannot be ready in time for Oct 19.

- (ii) Discussion regarding medical home bound procedures. It is usually exceptionally unique. It is case by case. If we suddenly had 170, facilitating this would be wildly different than the past.
- (iii) DHEC does contact tracing, and decides who will be required to quarantine and how long.
- (iv) When students have to quarantine, would they receive instruction at home? We would try, but there is a chance that they would not receive instruction for 14 days.
- (v) Comment that the Board only has one chance to do this right.
- (IV) Amend motion: Full-day, in school Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, with deep cleaning and virtual learning on Wednesday. Also include a stop-gap that if the DHEC Two Week Cumulative Incidence Rate goes back to High Index (anything over 201), then this change would not take place. School would then remain in Hybrid or return to All-Virtual.
  - (i) Concern over relying on just one number.
  - (ii) Desire to give parents and students something to look forward to, and a firm date for which teachers and staff to plan.
- (V) New amendment: Full-day, in school Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, with deep cleaning and virtual learning on Wednesday. Amendment passes.
- (VI) Still advocating for both virtual and in-person option available to families. Is this possible? It would have to be different for various grades and depending on the numbers.
- (VII) Amend motion: Change start date to October 26, 2020. Also add a full-virtual option to continue to be a choice for 60 days starting October 26.
  - (i) Does the date need to be lined up with the trimester? No.
  - (ii) This offers for families choice between in-person and full-virtual.
  - (iii) This amendment passes unanimously.
- (VIII) Are there staff concerns with this motion?
  - (i) Live-streaming has equity problems. Other options are: concurrent model or high-flex model. In these platforms teachers manage onsite and virtual at the same time. They work best when no more than 5-8 students are virtual, and even better with less virtual. Teachers need an assistant.
  - (ii) If moving to full-time in-person, rather than offering more assurances, we would have actually offer less assurances and be open with families that attending school would pose more risk.
  - (iii) Concern for enough time to implement this motion.
- (IX) Vote on Motion: Riverview Charter School will return to on-site learning on October 26, 2020, on a schedule of on-site Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, with virtual learning on Wednesday so that the school can be deep cleaned. Additionally, Riverview Charter School will continue to offer a virtual learning platform for 60 days. Motion passes unanimously.

**Next Board Meeting Date:**

October 15, 2020, 5:30pm, Riverview and Zoom.

Remove summaries of public comments. Motion passes.

Otherwise Minutes approved unanimously.

**Adjourn:**

Meeting adjourns at 9:20.