

Meeting Minutes for the Board of Directors
The Experiential School of Greensboro
Tuesday, July 7th, 2020
5:30pm
Virtual/Zoom

Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 863 4394 7086

Password: 1xABDa

Present: Leila Villaverde, Joanna Lower, Yacine Kout, Roy Carter, Travis Laughlin, Jay Hawkins, Greg Bush, Fred Adams, Jeannette Alarcon.

Guests: 36 guests were present via zoom or phone.

Leila Villaverde called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

Leila Villaverde called for a motion to approve the agenda. Yacine Kout motioned to approve the agenda, Greg Bush seconded, all were in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of June Meeting Minutes

Leila Villaverde called for a motion to approve the minutes from June meetings. Travis Laughlin motioned, Jeannette Alarcon seconded, all were in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Leila Villaverde explained that Mr. Carter volunteered to keep time for each speaker and that he would provide a signal when time was up.

The first speaker was Jennifer Rogers. This is a summary of her statement: Jennifer Rogers spoke to her position at Wake Forest University and having a rising 4th grader at TEGS. She shared that she addressed the board at the last board meeting. With the email regarding restructuring, she indicated that there was fear and believed comments were not well funneled. She shared reluctance/judgement from others when deciding to pull her child from the neighborhood school but, she believed in the school mission. She stated that in her research Heather Moore had been a part of TEGS for over 10 years, that there were 3 founders and Leila Villaverde is serving as a founder on the board but, there were no protections for Heather Moore or Melissa Bocci to be on the board because they left the board to become staff. She shared that board members and the co-directors had been colleagues and mentors and she gathered friends. She said that Heather Moore and Melissa Bocci and TEGS teachers earned her trust with multiple interactions with family, ideals and mission of the school. She stated in the last month there have been four closed sessions and a pattern of policies and bylaws, a frame of structural changes, to plan to remove the founding directors, acted quickly and executed during the pandemic. She spoke to any

internal candidates that were in the meeting to think carefully by the means of which openings came available. She said individuals could email her and thanked everyone for showing up.

Leila Villaverde turned to Mary Kristen Clark. Dr. Clark was experiencing some technical difficulties. Joanna Lower shared that she was the secretary of the board and was taking notes. She indicated that the individuals who were providing public comment could e-mail their statements to her to include exact words.

Mary Kristen Clark proceeded. This is a summary of her statement: Mary Kristen Clark shared that she wanted to comment on two separate issues. Schooling in a pandemic and restructuring. She shared that she received separate emails about these. She discussed the remote plan during the pandemic as a way to reimagine education, imagine new ways for families. She expressed concern related to acts of the board and shared information about state requirements pertaining to 5 remote days but, that schools could add additional days. She asked why haven't TESG parents been informed about this? She shared the composition of the TESG covid-19 task force and while half of the individuals on the task force are parents, there was not a parent-only representative. She mentioned the distance learning surveys that were sent out and asked about response rates. She noted the DPI guidance and asked how feedback will be used in the future. She stated there are several concerns in the plans but, time did not allow her to share all. She mentioned that the state released a tool kit, asked for 3 plans, and DPI had a guidebook "lighting our way forward." She shared that TESG has given no details and she had a long list of questions. She mentioned that TESG is uniquely situated to rise to the call...that it can do this... humility to express known and unknown and instead got a vague email about restructuring plan and asking parents to give input. She mentioned that many of us have done so...and instead of remote plan there is discussion on restructuring. She mentioned that there is a lot of turnover among Executive Directors now...[cut short due to time limit].

Leila Villaverde transitioned to Sara Heredia.

Sara Heredia shared the following words:

My name is Sara Heredia, I have four children at TESG and they have been at the school since the beginning. I have had a child in each of the houses except the K house. I appreciate the opportunity to share with you our experiences with leadership at TESG and our hopes for restructuring this summer.

In my work as an educational researcher at UNCG, I have found that a leader that works toward building coherence within and across grade bands, as well as with external partners is key to teacher learning and growth. Coherence (or lack thereof) in education can be experienced by students as they move between classrooms (how consistent are messages related to learning and being a TESG community member across classrooms?) or between grade levels (how has what I've learned in previous grades connected or expanded on as I move up within a school) or between home and school (how does the school community recognize and value my lived experiences outside of school walls). System coherence is not achieved through individual people, rather the messages, practices, and processes of the system is where coherence is experienced and crafted. As TESG restructures its leadership, how will we work toward crafting a coherent vision for teaching and learning at the school. In my experience, this system

coherence is lacking in the current leadership model. For example, it is my understanding that the curricular model for teachers at TESH is based in the experiential learning cycle that allows for content integration as students engage with locally meaningful experiences. However, math has remained disconnected from the more in-depth and enriching experiential learning offered at the school. My children in the upper grades especially have been working on math through drill and kill activities, which is representative of traditional forms of math instruction.

Which leads me to my next point, there needs to be a focus on how to integrate math or more broadly quantitative reasoning and data science at TESH. Quantitative reasoning is a powerful tool used by nearly all organizations and institutions world-wide to make decisions. An understanding of what those numbers represent, how they are collected, analyzed and in turn represented to the public are consequential for our lives. Our students need access to this content and it is my hope that our future leader(s) will have an understanding of the importance of this content and will work with teachers, families, and community members to more authentically integrate math into the social justice curriculum.

Teachers and school leaders are lifelong learners who recognize that they are always learning and growing. My hope is that our future school leader will elicit feedback from teachers, families, and community members about the school; listen and digest that feedback in ways that reflect the larger school community; and take action based on that feedback. I think it's important for our school leaders to model that social justice and critical analysis is a lifelong commitment to learning and growth. How are they continually examining and working on their practice and growing in their leadership capacity?

We are a racially and ethnically diverse family with a non-traditional family structure. It is important for our family that the school leadership reflects the diversity of the students at TESH. A background in critical pedagogy, community engagement, and experience with school leadership at a school with a diverse student population will be key.

So what are we looking for in school leadership?

kindness, calm, and funny

problem solver - listens to students and provides strategies for resolution

has a coherent vision for the school that integrates content and community experiences and builds between grade levels; is transparent about that vision and creates space and resources for teachers to craft coherence with them.

has ideas about how to integrate math/quantitative reasoning into the experiential/social justice curriculum

sees themselves as lifelong learners; elicit community feedback and takes action based on that feedback and their understanding of the whole TESH community.

Leila Villaverde transitioned to Kian Heredia.

Kian Heredia shared the following words:

Hi my name is Kian and I wrote about what I want to see in principal.

What I want to see in a principal

- A respectful person
- Someone who is aware of problems
- A kind person
- Someone who does their job correctly

My experiences in seventh grade were not the greatest to be completely honest. The year was very chaotic and our learning was interrupted weekly because of the death threats and hateful notes to teachers and students in the 7th grade house. One of the teachers there which was most often a target was Mr. Francisco. He was constantly attacked with death threats, hateful notes, even carving on walls and the only thing we did to fix it was restorative circles. And most of the time the directors wouldn't even attend. They always told us we have a voice at the school, but then when we would speak up, nothing was done. I didn't feel heard, we had the same restorative circle over and over again, but then the problems kept happening. Last year, we felt very isolated on the 7th grade floor and separate from the rest of the school. For me, I would like to have a principal that is more involved in the upper grades. I feel if the principal was more active in the situation, 1 it wouldn't be as much of a problem in the first place and 2 If it still is they could do something about it.

I am starting the 8th grade next year and my last year at TESH. I want to make sure that I am prepared for high school and need a principal that will help my teachers and my family make decisions about where I can go for high school and what I need to do to prepare.

Here is what my siblings have to say about what they want in a school leader

School principal

- Friendly but has to be a little strict
- Funny
- Calm and kind
- Solve problems – can figure out how to solve the problem; listens to kids; talk to you when I'm sad and helps me with my problems. A good principal talks to people that are fighting and finds a better way for them to get along; In my sister's class there is a lot of fighting on the playground, she would like a leader that helps her friends get along.

From these responses, my siblings are really looking for someone to develop a culture of kindness, joy, discipline, and collaboration. They are looking for a leader that will listen to them and will help them to solve problems.

Report from School Directors

The report was previously submitted to the board of directors.

Standing Committee Reports

There were no standing committee reports.

New Business

1. Restructuring discussion and vote.

A PowerPoint presentation was presented (see below for images) by Leila Villaverde, Yacine Kout, and Joanna Lower, including information on the context of restructuring, steps taken to date, and

goals and initiatives including school leadership, teacher agency and support services, and parent/family and community outreach.



Restructuring Plans

Context



As of March, school leaders proposed the need to restructure and the board took this seriously. We engaged conversations about restructuring both at the school leadership and board level. At the board level, bylaws, committee structures, and policies need revising. At the administrative level, a functional analysis prepared for the board is being considered. All of these discussions are also financially based. Restructuring is a necessary part of many organizations. The board has decided to engage this process for the sustainability/stability of the school through leadership consolidation and streamlining accountability.

Steps taken by Board to date

The Board supports a model with one school director and support in instructional leadership. We also recognize the need for greater wrap around services for TESS students.

The Board asked staff and families for their ideas. We received 22 emails from families (out of 227) and 4 emails from staff (out of 33). We gathered ideas about priorities, what worked, and where we need improvement as a school.

The Board is already revising policies and bylaws. We have reached out to experts in educational leadership and researched different school leadership models.

We posted general leadership positions to attend to leadership needs in a timely fashion. Current school leadership have been informed they are free to apply for any open position.

Goals and Initiatives

School Leadership:	Teacher Agency and Support Services:	Parent/Family and Community Outreach:
• Executive Director • Part-time curriculum facilitator for k-4 and 5-8, an opportunity for teacher leadership or outside hire. • An EC teacher per house and EC teacher coordinator	• PT School Social Worker • A second pt custodian w/facilities experience • Contract services for IT support • Whole school Inclusion/UDL PD • Whole school Anti-racist/equity PD	• Continued support and engagement with C4/Community Collaborative • Continued outreach to community partners

Leila Villaverde asked if there was any other discussion necessary from the board? There was none. She then asked for a motion to approve the three areas outlined (school leadership, teacher agency and support services, and parent/family and community outreach). Jeannette Alarcon motioned, Fred Adams seconded, all were in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Remote Plan discussion and vote.

Leila Villaverde asked if there was any discussion on the remote plan. Joanna Lower indicated that she had reviewed the plan and had minor edits that she would email. She gave the example of changing 5-7 grades to 5-8 grades. Leila Villaverde asked if there was any other discussion. There was none at this time. While asking for a motion Leila Villaverde was interrupted by a guest on a phone asking what this was. Leila Villaverde explained that the we were voting on the remote plan should the governor say we need to provide remote education. She indicated that the task force had written the plan to be approved by the board and it had been emailed out in the last newsletter. Leila Villaverde shared that the plan included the use of Seesaw or Google platforms. We would continue to do live sessions. Leila Villaverde explained plan C is entirely remote, plan B is a hybrid, and plan A is business as usual. She explained that plan C is similar to what was implemented in the spring with increased rigor and follow through. She gave the example that attendance would be required. She shared that the remote plan was developed by the covid-19 task force and that it was submitted to the board for approval. The guest on the phone said, "thank you." Leila Villaverde asked for a motion to approve the remote plan. Jeannette Alarcon motioned to approve the remote plan, Jay Hawkins seconded, all were in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

Old Business and Announcements

Leila Villaverde shared that the first-floor renovations passed the first level of inspections. Dry wall and second phase of renovations will continue. Leila Villaverde also shared that she has been considering different contracts for IT services. It looks like our best option in terms of cost and services is to go with a monthly contract. She indicated that she will present more information at our next regularly scheduled board meeting.

Lela Villaverde asked if there was anything else from other board members. Nothing was noted.

Leila Villaverde asked for a motion to adjourn. Jeannette Alarcon motioned, Fred Adams seconded, all were in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Leila Villaverde thanked everyone for being at the meeting and that we appreciated of the comments.