



RISING LEADERS ACADEMY

Governing Board Minutes – February 20, 2013

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

A public meeting of the Governing Board was called to order by Dr. Eren Ozgen, President, at 12:35 p.m.

Other Board members present included: Mr. Tarone Watley (Vice-President), Mr. Osama Albibi (Treasurer), Dr. Ahmed Baker (Secretary), and Dr. Hatem Murad.

Administrative staff present: Mrs. Suha Jaber, Principal

School Financial Advisor: Mr. Gary Scott, School Financial Services

Guest: Mrs. Janis Barton from School Financial Service

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Gary Scott presented a financial report with all the revenue and expenses of Rising Leaders Academy thus far. Mr. Scott went over the revenue and expenses and stated that the revenue is projected to exceed the expenses for the year. The school is projected to have excess revenue of over 70 thousand dollars at the end of the school year in June, which is more than enough to meet the obligation. Mr. Scott stated that the school is in good fiscal health.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Mrs. Suha Jaber suggested changes to the vision and mission based on the school operations. The Board approved the changes. The new vision and mission of the school are as follows:

Vision

Our VISION is to be recognized as one of the best schools in the state that empowers students to become Rising Leaders, who are lifelong learners with excellent character.

Mission

Rising Leaders Academy (RLA) is dedicated to preparing students in Bay County for outstanding academic achievement, interpersonal skills, elevated ethical character, and a firm command of foreign languages. Students will achieve academic excellence through a developmentally rigorous, innovative, challenging, college preparatory curriculum in a warm, nurturing environment with outstanding teachers.

RLA will prepare students to have a sincere responsibility to give back to the community, with a focus on strong leadership skills. This mission will be achieved through sound financial management practices.

Mrs. Jaber went over the Long-Term Goals and how RLA is currently working towards each goal. The 10 goals are as follows:

- **Goal 1: Demonstrate a high level of academic performance.**
- **Goal 2: Develop clear and effective oral and written communication skills in each student.**
- **Goal 3: Develop strong foreign language skills in each student.**
- **Goal 4: Enhance students' ethical character development.**
- **Goal 5: Develop an environmental consciousness in students.**
- **Goal 6: Empower students to pursue excellence.**
- **Goal 7: Encourage civic responsibility.**
- **Goal 8: Create an environment where parents and family members are actively engaged in students' education.**
- **Goal 9: Develop outstanding teachers.**
- **Goal 10: Establish sound and accurate financial management practices in all areas of the school's business operations.**

Mrs. Jaber gave the following examples for each goal of what RLA is currently doing:

Goal 1: Common Core, Expeditionary Learning, STEM, Pearson, Digital Curriculum

Goal 2: Crew time, reflection in class, school writing assignments, public speaking

Goal 3: Arabic, Chinese, Spanish

Goal 4: Expeditionary Learning, STRIVE

Goal 5: Community Service and Expeditions. 4th graders wrote the Mayor about recycling

Goal 6: Students of the Month, Leaders of the Month, Meaningful competitions (Spelling, Math, Essay)

Goal 7: Participated in the largest civic project during elections. Bring speakers such as Superintendent. Leaders of

the Month. Community Service.

Goal 8: Parents have started STRIVE, STEM, and collaborated with Navy STEM. There are activities that parents are invited to, which include Community Circles and Gallery Nights. There are parents coming to school daily to volunteer in the classrooms and assist teachers in students' education. There are emails that go out often with information for parents, as well as a monthly Newsletter to keep parents informed.

Goal 9: Expeditionary Learning, PD time every Friday 12:45 – 2:45, National Conferences

Goal 10: School Financial Services

Mrs. Jaber presented the ESE/ELL Resources at RLA. Bay District Schools assigned Ms. Monique Hooks to assist RLA with ESE students. RLA contracted with SpeechCare to provide speech for students with speech. A Speech Therapist comes twice a week. Mrs. Jaber added that RLA has two ESE Endorsed teachers: Mrs. Nelson for k-12 ESE and Autism and Mrs. Arafa for Gifted. RLA also has three teachers who are ELL Endorsed: Mrs. Nancy, Mrs. Nelson, and Ms. Linvill. The Pearson curriculum RLA is using contains ESE/ELL resources for further support. RLA is also using SuccessMaker, which is an online intervention tool that further supports ESE/ELL students.

Mrs. Jaber spoke about the school's effort to create a Reading Culture. RLA has two Reading Endorsed teachers: Mrs. Nancy and Mrs. Linvill. There are awards presented to the students who read 100 books called, "Readers are Leaders". RLA is participating in the "Reach for the Stars" Reading Program. The parents, and Mrs. Nancy who has a Masters Degree in Library and Media, started a Media and Library Center. RLA has Accelerated Reader (AR) as well as SuccessMaker that help students become better readers.

Mrs. Jaber presented the Legal Team for RLA that will represent RLA and complete the legal documentation: Peters & Scoon for legal action and Adhal Law Firm for legal documentation. RLA also gets charter school support from the Charter Support Unit (SCU), which is part of Florida Department of Education, as well as the Florida Charter School Alliance.

Mrs. Jaber provided the following suggestions for action for 2013 – 2014 school year:

- **Current School Enrollment: 90 (k – 4)**
- **Projected Enrollment for 2013 – 2014 = 125 (k – 5)**
- **Foreign Languages**
 - **Currently 5 days a week, 45 minutes a day, TOTAL = 225**
 - **Next year: 4 days a week, 45 minutes a day, TOTAL = 180**
- **STEM**
 - **Currently once week, 30 minutes a week**
 - **Increase to twice a week, 60 minutes a week**

- **Art**
 - **Available when parents volunteers come**
 - **Incorporate into curriculum with 30 minutes a week**

Mrs. Jaber presented issues to work on, which are the following:

- Computer lab only has 7 computers with 4 working
- Parking is a problem on Fridays during the community circle
- Security needs to be increased. Suggestion: Add second door before the cafeteria.

Mrs. Jaber provided a School Improvement Plan, which includes:

- Increase partnerships. Our current Outreach Coordinator is Sarah Woods.
- Increase volunteering. Our Volunteer Coordinator is Maureen Fitsch.
- Increase fundraising activities. Our Fundraising Coordinator is Jody Meinel.
- Develop School Advisory Council (SAC). Mrs. Jaber requested to start a SAC (School Advisory Council), which will further increase parental involvement. The Board members approved the request. Mrs. Jaber said she will provide the SAC Bylaws, as well as all the information regarding the RLA SAC, during the next Board meeting.
- Develop policies to improve school functions
- Professional Development for staff, which the Administrator and Expeditionary Learning are currently doing. Mrs. Jaber stated that she's also doing professional development on leading successful schools and has completed 40 hours in the past three months.

NEW POLICIES

The Board approved two new RLA policies:

RLA Field Trip Policy #1

EL differentiates between traditional field trips, in which students are often spectators, and fieldwork, in which students are active investigators, applying the research tools, techniques of inquiry, and standards of presentation used by professionals in the field." (Core Practice 6)

As an Expeditionary Learning School, students must to go to trip with clip boards and be ready to do research, not just spectators. The teachers must provide students with a guide on what to research and how. According to EL Core

Practice 6, "*Fieldwork is structured so that it is safe and productive. Teachers preview sites to shape the field experience effectively.*" For the safety of our elementary school students, the field trips must be within one hour drive one-way from Rising Leaders Academy. If there is a location longer than one hour that is necessary for an expedition and unique, with no similar venue within one hour of RLA, the teacher must provide convincing evidence, and it must be approved by the administrator.

Students are prepared to be ambassadors for their school when on fieldwork. They are courteous, articulate, organized, and helpful." (Core Practice 6)

RLA Gift Policy #1: Gifts to Teachers, Administrators, Staff

In general, RLA employees may not accept any gift worth \$50 or more that is given because of the position he or she holds. School employees may accept gifts that are worth less than \$50, but they have to disclose in writing that they have done so if, based on the specific circumstances, a reasonable person would think that the public employee might unduly show favor to the giver or the giver's child, or be influenced by the giver.

The law prohibits gifts to school employees, not gifts to the school. You may give gifts to a public school, or a particular classroom, and the \$50 limit does not apply.

BYLAWS

The Board voted on the new Bylaws. The Bylaws were approved.

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM BOARD

The Board approved suggestions for action for 2013 – 2014 school year and the school improvement plan. The Board suggested the administrator to contact the media more often to report on the community service projects and community circles at RLA. They also suggested RLA contact the fire and police departments and ask if they can provide advice on how to increase security at the school. The President of the Board, Dr. Eren Ozgen, requested specific, measurable and quantifiable objectives for the long-term goals to be presented during the next meeting. The President called for nominations for two Board Members to join the Board.

PUBLIC QUESTION/COMMENTS

An opportunity was provided for parents to ask questions and make comments and suggestions. No comments required any action.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 pm.