



Mission Statement: The mission of The RISE Schools is to provide a rigorous and holistic education that develops the minds and character of scholars to be catalysts for social change

The RISE Schools Governing Board Meeting Minutes

The minutes of Sunshine Law meetings need not be verbatim transcripts of the meeting. These minutes are a brief summary of the events of the meeting.

Date:	Start	End	Next Meeting:	Next time:	Prepared by:
6/18/25	6:04pm	7:16pm	N/A	N/A	Lyn Carden
Meeting Location:					
Virtual - See Comments in Administrative Functions					

Attended by:	
Lara Sterling Tanisha Jones Desmond Hardy	Libby Whitaker Terence Washington Victoria Nwandu Heather Woitkovich Leah Rosser Zedric Cross Camelle Simmons Danny Brewington Lyn Carden
Highlights:	

CALL TO ORDER – Ms. Jones made a motion to call the meeting to order, Mr. Harding 2nd, unanimous at 6:04pm

- I. Administrative Functions** – Ms. Sterling noted that due to emergency circumstances surrounding the closure, preservation of property, and unavailability of the school as a meeting location, the meeting was being held virtually.
 - Approval of Agenda – Ms. Jones made a motion to accept the agenda as presented, Mr. Hardy 2nd, unanimous
 - Approval of Minutes for May 14, 2025 – Mr. Hardy made a motion to accept the May 14, 2025 meeting minutes as presented, Ms. Jones 2nd, unanimous.
- II. Board Chair Report**
 - SCSC Deliverables - Status Updates – Ms. Sterling reported that she had invited all vendors involved with closure and post closure to attend to provide a report to the Governing Board.
 - Vendor Updates
 - i. Human Resources – Ms. Rosser presented

1. She has been working with the staff regarding any additional information and outstanding items in paycom. The clearance of signatures, off-boarding and logistics are nearly finalized.
 2. She reported that she began the process by managing all outstanding correspondence in the HR inbox, that process had been completed.
 3. She reported that she is currently working with the school's insurance partners and pay rolls which will be finalized by the end of June.
 4. She had reached out to all staff members to ensure a point of contact for human resources post closure.
- ii. Data Reporting and Records – Ms. Whitaker reported
1. Student class reporting & student records, year-end - complete
 2. She reported that, so far, 52 student records requests have been submitted by parents and have been fulfilled.
 3. She told the board that the CPI Cycle III was due in July, however because of the schools current circumstances GaDOE was opening the portal for Rise's report on June 20th and her team would have it submitted at the beginning of the last week of June.
 4. She discussed sign off and other staff member outstanding obligations.
 5. Ms. Sterling noted that the board was prepared to extend Ms. Whitaker's contract if necessary to ensure completion of all data and student record reporting. The board discussed the need for extended services to support reporting compliance issues that may come up post June 30, 2025.
 6. Ms. Whitaker reported that she felt all the records requirements were being met, but would remain diligent.
- iii. Facilities – Mr. Washington Reported
1. He reported on HVAC issues the school had, but had been repaired. He told the board that the HVAC company was providing a quote for recommended services to keep the system operational during the foreseeable future.
 2. He reported on some security concerns the school was having and safety corrections that had been made to resolve them.
 3. He reported the school's summer security plan as well as conversations had with the city police department regarding school security.
 4. The board discussed potentially extending the school's security officer's contract post June 30 2025.
 5. Mr. Washington told the board that there was a great deal of consumables at the school. The board strategized on plans if they are not collected during the redistribution process.
 6. He reported on the process for remaining items that are not in the redistribution plan.
 7. The board discussed issues with the roof in the administrative house.
 8. Ms. Sterling discussed the plan to extend insurance with the current provider until August, and then shop for a new providers with better rates.
- iv. EIP – Ms. Carden reported
1. She provided an update on the SCSC closure checklist and plans for upcoming required reports.

III. Closing Business

- Amendment to Bylaws – Ms. Sterling reviewed the changes Krevolin|Horst Law Group made to the amended bylaws including the reduced number of required board of directors.
- Inventory Distribution Schedule – Ms. Nwandu reported that it had been completed and a final discrepancy report had been distributed.
 - i. The report includes missing items and assessment forms for technology and equipment deemed obsolete. She told the board that a formal request to eliminate these items from inventory had been provided to Mr. Cross.
 - ii. All the staging is complete and prepared for redistribution. She reported on the team's plans moving forward to support redistribution.
 - iii. She told the board that full inventory of the basement had also been accounted for.
 - iv. She provided an update on items that do not qualify for redistribution including a timeline and plan, noting that once complete the school should be empty.
- Litigation Matters – Krevolin|Horst Law Group previously provided a document which included all current outstanding litigation matters. Ms. Sterling discussed the items and the plan for management of the litigation items post closure. She reported on conversations she had with the legal team as well as the insurance company regarding these suits.
- Insurance on Facilities – Discussed earlier
- 2024 and 2025 Audit – Mr. Washington reported
 - i. He reported the FY24 audit is nearly complete, however it was determined that the school exceeded the 1-million-dollar mark for federal funds which triggers a 'single audit'. Mr. Washington reminded the board that this was true for the FY23 school year as well. He explained that while the SCSC pays for a regular audit, the school would be expected to pay for the single audit. He reviewed costs associated with the single audit and confirmed that Bambo Sonaike would be completing both audits. He noted that Mr. Sonaike was confident in his ability to complete the audits in a timely manner, once engaged.
 - ii. Mr. Washington reported that the FY25 audit will begin as soon as the FY24 is complete and will be due November 1, with a target submission date of October 1, 2025.
 - iii. Mr. Washington recommended that in addition to engaging Mr. Sonaike to complete the audits the board should also sign an agreement for him to complete the DE046 and 990 forms, which are due in the fall, on behalf of the school. The board discussed the costs.

IV. Principal /Federal Programs Report

- Mr. Cross reported on records complete from Ms. Pierre. He told the board that she provided a status of records and had completed everything except 8th grade, which would be complete by the end of the week.
- He reported that the vendor contracted to complete the digitizing of records has told Mr. Cross it will be complete within 3-4 weeks. The board discussed concerns around the timeline.
- The board discussed Mr. Cross' employment timeline and he reported he would be turning in his laptop the following day so it would be prepared for redistribution, however, he will continue his employment with RISE until his last day of contract which is June 30, 2025.

V. Finance Report

- Financial Report as of May 31, 2025 – Mr. Washington presented
 - i. He told the board that the school was over budget for net profit. He noted that

there had been little change since the last report.

- ii. He reported the finance team was reconciling bank accounts and closing.
- iii. He reviewed total income and expenses for FY25 and compared it to prior year.
- iv. He reported that the school was right at budget for expenses.
- v. He presented the CPF measures noting it was at approaches standards.
- vi. He provided days cash on hand.
- vii. He presented bills and credit card expenses as well as reviewing bank account reports.
- viii. He reminded the board that as a part of the closure plan the school paid its employees their final paychecks under their existing contracts for both June & July.
- ix. He discussed the bill.com payments through June 17.

1. Ms. Jones made a motion to accept the May financials as presented, Mr. Hardy 2nd, unanimous.

- FY2025 Amended Budget Hearing – Mr. Washington presented
 - i. He noted that there had been no changes since the last review of the Amended FY25 which was conditionally approved and adopted by the board at the May 14, 2025 board meeting.
 - ii. He provided a comparison to the originally approved budget and the amended budget. Pointed out changes in salary, contracts, prepayments, and pupil services.
 - iii. He discussed the balance reserve.
 - iv. Ms. Sterling asked for public comment regarding the proposed amended FY25 budget – no public comment

1. Ms. Jones made a motion to adopt the amended FY25 budget as presented, Mr. Hardy 2nd, unanimous.

- Proposed FY 26 Budget “The Closure Budget” Hearing – The Closure Budget was prepared to cover post closure expenses from June 30, 2025 through December 31, 2025. The post closure budget was reviewed at the May 14th Board meeting and presented to the SCSC for review and approval. The Board was subsequently asked by investors to forecast the budget through June 30, 2026. The closure budget was adjusted and the adjustments presented to the Board by Mr. Washington:
 - i. He discussed closure reserves, explaining this line item was intended for any items not anticipated that may arise post June 30, 2025 through June 30, 2026.
 - ii. He discussed carryover expenses
 - iii. He presented Federal programs expenses including reimbursements to Title I, Title II and IDEA which arose from cross functional monitoring.
 - iv. He reviewed audit services & closure services from the authorizer
 - v. He outlined post closure services
 - vi. He discussed the facility maintenance and repairs items
 - vii. He reviewed the legal services, cleaning services, equipment disposal services, IT support services, and payroll service fees
 - viii. He reviewed pending litigation settlements and insurance payments
 - ix. He reviewed the budgeted costs for document archiving and digitizing and noted that he would work with the vendor for any possible updated quote
 - x. He reviewed HR Services, financial services, and reporting services
 - xi. He presented the total amount anticipated to cover expenditures from June 30, 2025 through June 30, 2026.
 - xii. The board discussed the closure budget presented by Mr. Washington.

- xiii. Ms. Sterling asked for public comment regarding proposed FY 26 “Closure” Budget – no public comment.
1. **Mr. Hardy made a motion to adopt the proposed FY26 “Closure” budget, Ms. Jones 2nd.**
- xiv. Ms. Sterling as if there was any additional discussion.
1. The board discussed the timing of the budget, the bond holder expectations and insurance requirements.
 2. They discussed the decision making for the budget, any potential future items and the debt service.
 3. **Having no further discussion Ms. Sterling called for the vote, all in favor, unanimous.**

VI. Consent Agenda Items:

- Approval of amendments to Bylaws – Ms. Sterling called for a separate vote on the amendment of the bylaws. **Mr. Hardy made a motion to accept the amended bylaws as presented, Ms. Jones 2nd, unanimous.**
- The reminder of the items were called for a consent agenda vote:
 - i. Approval of execution of the engagement letter prepared by Bambo Sonaike for SY2025 audit and additional required documents by Ms. Sterling in her capacity as Board President
 - ii. Authorize Lara Sterling, in her capacity as Board President, to settle the cases, in consultation with counsel, for up to the amounts indicated on the schedule circulated to and reviewed by the Board.
 1. **Ms. Jones made a motion to consent, Mr. Hardy 2nd, unanimous**

VII. Public Comment – No public comment

VIII. Board Comment – Mr. Hardy and Ms. Jones thanked the school team, the support team and his fellow board members for their work this school year.

IX. Adjournment – Ms. Jones made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Hardy 2nd, unanimous at 7:16pm