

Goodwill Arkansas Education Initiatives, Inc.
Board Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2017

Presiding: Margaret Ellibee, Chair

Members Present: Jonathan Crossley, Vice-Chair
Chris Amsler
Margaret Ellibee
Cassandra Green
Denise Luft
Brian Marsh

Members Not Present: Margaret Bates
William Gaddy
Douglas Jackson

Staff: Sylvia Murchison
Cindy Varner
Bob Rourk

Special Guests: Markous Jewett, Goodwill Education Initiatives of Southern and Central Indiana

Call to Order

Chair Margaret Ellibee called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. in the Goodwill Board Room at 7400 Scott Hamilton Road, Little Rock, Arkansas. **Chair Ellibee** called roll and recognized a quorum with six of nine members present.

Item 1: Minutes of the August 23, 2017 Meeting

Denise Luft made a motion to approve the minutes. **Chris Amsler** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 2: Operations Report

Brian Marsh gave a report on the status of facility construction. Construction will be completed by the end of September 2017.

Cindy Varner gave an update to the board regarding the school calendar, which was in the agenda packet. She gave an update on the status of enrollments for the school as follows.

- Total applications received is 311.
- Of the 125 selected during the lottery:
 - 45 students have submitted their paperwork and are set to attend school on

October 16

- 25 confirmed to attend iExcel student orientation on September 22, 2017
- 15 have indicated that they will not be coming to school
- 40 have not responded to repeated contacts or have not submitted their enrollment paperwork
- 89 applicants are on the waiting list

Ms. Varner reported that staff traveled to Indianapolis, Indiana on August 27-31 to visit The Excel Center schools and see the model in action. She reported that an open house for the students and their families would be held on October 4 from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m.

Cindy Varner requested the Board's approval of one professional staff hire for the Excel Center. The recommendation was Robert Roark as Goodwill's Director of Education and Certification and director of The Excel Center. **Chris Amsler** made a motion to approve the staffing recommendations. **Cassandra Green** seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

The board acted on a parent handbook and enrollment procedures for the Childcare Drop In Center that was presented in the agenda packet. **Jonathan Crossley** made a motion to adopt the employee handbook as presented. **Denise Luft** seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

The board reviewed the course progression approved by the Arkansas Department of Education for use by The Excel Center and reviewed a recommendation for mastery level before students were allowed to move from one course to the next level. After much discussion and concern expressed by **Cassandra Green** regarding the impact on special education students, **Jonathan Crossley** made a motion to set a course mastery benchmark of 80 percent with the requirement that students be provided supports that move them to the identified benchmark. **Denise Luft** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The board reviewed a draft student withdrawal policy, which is included in the agenda packet. The draft policy allowed for a student to be withdrawn from the school after 16 days of absence during a term and included several intervention actions for staff during that time period to reengage the student. **Cindy Varner** reported that the policy was developed using a similar policy from the Indianapolis Excel Centers. **Chris Amsler** made a motion to adopt the policy as written. **Cassandra Green** expressed concern that 16 days was too high, and she preferred 10 days. **Chris Amsler** withdrew his motion. **Markous Jewett**, school development director from Indianapolis, answered questions regarding how the policy came to be put in place in Indiana. **Jonathan Crossley** stated that he thought the board should adopt what was proven in Indianapolis and monitor and adjust. After considerable discussion among members, **Jonathan Crossley** made a motion to adopt the policy as written, review any correlation between attendance and achievement, and adjust the policy as necessary in the future. **Chris Amsler** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 3: Financial Report

Sylvia Murchison reported that staff were having difficulty pulling financial data from the eFinance system and a consultant was assisting. She stated that financial information would be reported at

the October meeting.

Item 4: Advisory Council

Chair Ellibee reported that The Excel Center charter application stated that an advisory council would be formed to collect input from community members and students. She asked board members to forward any nominations for consideration to Brian Marsh by October 1 to be considered at the October 19 meeting. She asked that each member submit two or three recommendations from groups such as faith-based organizations, education entities, business leaders, non-profit groups, and political leaders.

Item 5: Student and Families Open House

Cindy Varner reported that an open house would be held for students and their families on October 4 from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m. She welcomed members input on the format of the open house. Members were invited to attend.

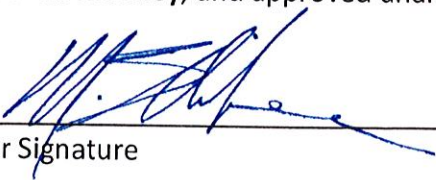
Item 6: Grand Opening

Brian Marsh reported that a grand opening was being planned for The Excel Center and the Governor had been invited to speak. He reported that members would be made aware of the date and time once the Governor's schedule could be confirmed.

Item 7: Adjournment

Chair Ellibee announced that the board would go into executive session to discuss an employment matter. **Chris Amsler** made a motion to adjourn the board meeting and enter executive session. **Denise Luft** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:50 p.m.

The executive session was adjourned at 7:01 p.m. on a motion made by **Denise Luft**, seconded by **Jonathan Crossley**, and approved unanimously.



Chair Signature

1-3-18
Date

Cindy Varner
Board Recorder