

MINUTES
Excel Academy Rhode Island Board Meeting
Tuesday, June 27, 2023 – 5:15 pm
270 Elmwood Avenue, Providence, RI 02907

Board Members in Attendance: Mayor Brett Smiley, Channavy Chhay, Gary Goldberg, Liz Giordano, Dr. Liza Cariaga-Lo, Chiv Heng

Board Members Absent: Mayor Maria Rivera, Mayor Charles Lombardi

Staff Attending: Owen Stearns, Andrew Solomon, Arthur Kaynor, Stephanie Patton, Elizabeth Matson

Members of the Public Attending: Kate Ring

1. Call to Order

Smiley called the meeting to order at 5:15 pm and presided over the meeting. Matson and Kaynor kept the minutes of the meeting.

2. Public Comment

None

Note: Agenda Topics 3 and 5 occurred later in the meeting.

4. Board Business

4a - Minutes: Smiley moved to approve the minutes from 4.27.23, and Chhay seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

All those in favor: Mayor Brett Smiley, Channavy Chhay, Gary Goldberg, Liz Giordano, Dr. Liza Cariaga-Lo

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

4b - Academic Committee/SIT membership: Chhay moved to approve the updated Academic Committee/SIT membership including adding parents to the SIT, and Goldberg seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

All those in favor: Mayor Brett Smiley, Channavy Chhay, Gary Goldberg, Liz Giordano, Dr. Liza Cariaga-Lo

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

4c - FY24 Calendar: Chhay moved to approve the enclosed FY24 Board Meeting Calendar, and Giordano seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

All those in favor: Mayor Brett Smiley, Channavy Chhay, Gary Goldberg, Liz Giordano, Dr. Liza Cariaga-Lo

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

4d - FY24 Officers: Chhay moved to approve the following FY24 Board Officers, and Giordano seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

- Chair: Mayor Brett Smiley
- Vice Chair: Channavy Chhay
- Treasurer: Chiv Heng
- Clerk: Mayor Maria Rivera

All those in favor: Mayor Brett Smiley, Channavy Chhay, Gary Goldberg, Liz Giordano, Dr. Liza Cariaga-Lo

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

6. Approve LEA Strategic Plan

Giordano and Kaynor updated the Board on the Academic Committee/School Improvement Team’s process to develop an LEA Strategic Plan, which was provided to the Board in advance of the meeting. Giordano and Heng served on the Committee/SIT, Giordano as Chair of the Committee. The Committee was comprised by a representative group of school and community stakeholders. The Committee/SIT developed the Strategic Plan in accordance with applicable law and RIDE guidelines and set SMART-aligned goals for the School with three main focus areas: social emotional learning, supporting teachers through curriculum, and student attendance. Once we have received data from RICAS and other testing, the Committee/SIT will update the plan to incorporate the latest academic data trending, as well as any RIDE feedback. Once the plan is approved by the Board, it will be submitted to RIDE’s portal by the July 1, 2023 deadline. The Committee/SIT is also pleased to have recruited two dedicated parents who are excited to participate on the Committee moving forward.

Giordano moved to approve the LEA Strategic Plan, and Smiley seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

All those in favor: Mayor Brett Smiley, Channavy Chhay, Gary Goldberg, Liz Giordano, Dr. Liza Cariaga-Lo

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Note: Chiv Heng joined the meeting at 5:30pm.

3. Vote to Approve Head of School Hiring Recommendation

Heng and Patton summarized the hiring process for the new XLRI Head of School and Heng summarized his recommendation to hire Kate Ring. The Board was introduced to Kate Ring and has an opportunity to ask her questions about her background, qualifications, and interest in serving as XLRI’s next Head of School.

Heng moved to approve the Head of School Hiring Recommendation: Kate Ring, and Giordano seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

All those in favor: Mayor Brett Smiley, Channavy Chhay, Gary Goldberg, Liz Giordano, Dr. Liza Cariaga-Lo, Chiv Heng

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

7. State of the School Update

Patton provided an update on the State of the School, including highlights from the last six weeks of the school year, during which school culture was stable and students were held accountable to expectations in the classroom, and the School observed notable improvement in overall school culture. The School is pleased to have hired a strong Dean of Culture from Excel MA. XLRI students and staff had opportunities to meet, learn from, and develop relationships with fellow students and staff from Excel MA, and these were joyful and also very productive for the School community. The School is observing promising trends in staff recruitment and retention. Most core content teachers are returning next school year. 12/15 open positions have been filled. The School community will be participating in an end-of-year potluck celebration to formally meet and welcome their new Head of School Kate Ring. The School has been working deeply to develop clear metrics, define student values and behavior expectations, and implement and hold consistent strong systems for the School that will help to foster and maintain a safe, joyful learning environment. The Academic Oversight Committee/SIT will continue to monitor critical metrics and report on student outcomes to the full Board, in alignment with the goals of the LEA Strategic Plan, roughly once per quarter.

5. FY24 Budget Approval

Solomon presented the FY24 Budget and summary slides. The FY24 Budget and Budget Memo was provided to the Board in advance and was previously reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee is now recommending approval of the FY24 budget by the full Board.

Chhay moved to approve the FY24 Budget, and Heng seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

All those in favor: Mayor Brett Smiley, Channavy Chhay, Gary Goldberg, Liz Giordano, Dr. Liza Cariaga-Lo, Chiv Heng

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

10. Adjourn

Chhay motioned to adjourn. Heng seconded. The meeting closed at 6:14 pm.

List of Documents Presented at the Meeting:

1. Agenda
2. Head of School Hiring Recommendation
3. Minutes from 4.27.23 Board Meeting
4. Updated Academic Committee/SIT Membership
5. FY24 Budget and FY24 Budget Memo and Slides
6. Draft LEA Strategic Plan