

LIONSGATE ACADEMY  
 District #4183  
**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
 February 17, 2015 6:00 p.m.  
 Lionsgate Academy 3420 Nevada Avenue N. Crystal, MN 55427

**TO:** Ryan Weber, Sara Bydzovsky, Malory Kosher (ab), Christine Peper, John Barker, Ali Thorstad, Darren Johnson (ab), Chris Kenealy, and Kurt Nisi (ab).  
 Others: Diane Halpin, Executive Director; Brandy Dougherty, Assistant Director, Emily Kafle, Special Education Supervisor; Ron Berger, Director of Finance  
**FROM:** Ali Thorstad, Chair

**Call to order:** Ali Thorstad, Chair 6:03 p.m.

**School Mission Statement:**

*The mission of Lionsgate Academy is to provide a transition-focused, personalized learning program focused for students with autism spectrum disorders that supports their full potential, participation, and self-determination within their school, family, and community.*

*To this end, Lionsgate Academy will create an educational environment that will model best instructional practice and research-based techniques so that the graduates will--to the fullest extent possible--live independently, be involved in further education or gainful employment and develop meaningful relationships with others.*

**Comments from Community Members:** Public Comment is an open forum portion of the meeting and is an opportunity to present an issue, concern, or other statement to the Board of Directors. Individuals wishing to address the Board must sign up prior to the Call to Order and will be allotted three (3) minutes. Total public comment will be limited to twenty one (21) minutes.

- No public comments made

**Conflict of Interest Declaration**

- Ali Thorstad announced conflict of interest regarding policy 618 Animals in Schools
  - Ryan Weber directed to lead discussion over that policy if discussed

**Approval of the agenda:**

1. Approval of Agenda, including the consent agenda.

**Model:**

**1. Consent Agenda**

- a. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes
- b. Governance Committee Report
- c. Approval of Policies
  - i. 618 Animals in Schools

<b>Motion:</b> Move to approve consent agenda.			
<b>Made by:</b> Ryan Weber		<b>Seconded by:</b> Christine Peper	
<b>Discussion:</b> None.			
<b>Vote:</b>	<b>Yea:</b> 6	<b>Nay:</b> 0	<b>Abstain:</b>
<b>Decision:</b> Unanimously Approved			

**2. NEO Update (Wendy Swanson-Choi)**

- Announced they were present for two purposes

- Status of contract renewal
- Answer any questions
- Visited both campuses (met w/ leadership, students (broad representation of our student body), staff)
- Observed classes
- Two Themes Were Highlighted
  - #1 Theme: Conditions were “so-right” for learning.
    - Students report feeling safe in their school environment.
  - #2 Theme: Students know they are improving.
    - Students are able to self -monitor and be self -reflective.
      - Parents also see significant improvements in behavior.
    - Independence was talked about a lot in AIM.
    - Students also saw LGA as resourceful
- Academic Performance Indicator
  - Keep in mind, this is one component they look at; attendance is looked at; student & staff perception as well.
  - Strengths- LGA is outperforming other MN schools in reading for special education populations; regularly outperforming resident district in math as well.
- Governance & Climate Indicators- found no concerns
- Plan on offering 5 year contract
  - Want administration, governance committee and school board to think about and answer the following questions.
    - What does LGA anticipate needs for support?
    - How are you building leadership in the school (so you can sustain growth)?
    - Who do you see yourself serving?
    - Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
  - NEO is all in and wants to provide feedback and resources. NEO will meet with Ali & Diane again to go over details
    - Have until May since the contract doesn’t have to be signed until June

### 3. Special Education Update (Kafle)

- Christine Peper has given good material for reading for AIM staff
- 2 special education positions open
- Lynx (Setting IV) update
  - Met w/ potential mental health provider (plans for meeting more).
    - The contract would be a year and then evaluate
  - Job Descriptions are in the works for Lynx staff positions
  - Diane is working on a communication plan for how to reach out to the stakeholders
  - Pulled the lottery Feb. 1 (4 meetings so far, 3 planned for the end of the week)
    - Project 5 openings for students who require resource room support

### 4. Strategic Planning Update (Dougherty)

- World’s Best Workforce
  - Found under documents on LGA homepage
  - MDE trainings have made it clear to not rush plans and to stay in “Exploration” stage as long as needed
    - Personal Learning Plan (state requirement) is being developed to meet LGA student needs
      - Focus on career readiness
- Teacher evaluation, curriculum review, best practices and resources being worked on
- Students are taking the ACTs and the MCAs

### 5. Business

1. Director’s Report-Diane

**Lionsgate Academy’s Authorizer is:**

- i. Student Achievement
  - Number of students taking the grad re-test
  - Up to 37% passing
  - MCA will start mid-March
- ii. Staffing Changes/Updates
  - 3 personnel changes
    - Licensed Teacher Postings for Transitions and Success have been opened and should be able to fill in 1-2 weeks.
    - Tech Director Position
      - A pro-bono person coming in and completing a risk assessment to help identify needs.
        - This will help admin identify what the job description will be for the tech director posting.
- iii. 2015-2016 School Year Calendar
  - Discussion over two vs three week training for licensed staff
    - Benefits include allowing staff to work longer in other jobs, help admin prepare for any surprise staffing changes, keeps balance, not over-loaded staff w/ info.
    - Try and combine “must have” trainings (HR, NCI, etc) into blocks at the beginning
    - Discussion around creating more training opportunities throughout the school year instead of jamming all trainings in at the beginning of the year
    - Need to look at new employee orientation
  - Proposal-EAs will not come in the June 6<sup>th</sup> (Monday after last of school when licensed staff would report)
  - LGA staff were notified that it would be brought to the Board tonight, but it wouldn't be voted on until March Board Meeting ;
- iv. Play is Thurs-Sat in Fridley
  - First year we had it in the middle of the year
- v. Car crashed into Cornerstone Building over weekend
  - Room 22 impacted
    - Insurance adjuster has come by: room is safe and it is being cleaned, functional by the end of the week
- vi. Snowball Dance
  - Diane will send out a correction to the parent/guardian cover letter regarding modifying the language around guests
  - Kosher has done a wonderful job with dances-very organized
- vii. PAC/SEAC meeting Feb. 27th

## 2. Foundation Update

- i. Foundation did not meet in February

## 3. Committee Reports

- i. Governance

### **Lionsgate Academy's Authorizer is:**

- 7 School Board nominations have been received
  - 1 Parent, 4 Community Members, 2 Staff have been nominated so far

ii. Finance

1. Committee Update

- IRS Form 990 Draft
  - Pg. 1- We have 65 words to tell our mission, our accountants put in a description, we may scrap what they say.
    - It is a marketing piece so if anyone has any changes, please share with Ron Berger.
    - Many spelling errors are included, but that is being looked at.
  - Pg. 2 was discussed of various wording choices.
  - Pg. 8 of the return/part 7 will add in the word “Sped” before transportation. Pgs. 9 & 10 has a lot of accounting questions. Where is says Lionsgate or Academy, they put both.
  - Pg. 25- we need to understand why the accountants think there is a related organization.

2. Financial

- MDE money meeting should result in a larger payment which will give us more breathing room. Cash will be good until June 15<sup>th</sup>. Max out our line of credit around then.
- 162 students to date; off on revenue because of state-they haven’t paid us aid.
- A little over on budget on cash flow basis. Need to negotiate a bigger line.

<b>Motion:</b> Move to approve financials ending 1/31/2014.			
<b>Made by:</b> John Barker		<b>Seconded by:</b> Ryan Weber	
<b>Discussion:</b> None.			
<b>Vote:</b>	<b>Yea:</b> 5	<b>Nay:</b> 0	<b>Abstain:</b>
<b>Decision:</b> Unanimously Approved			

iii. Building Committee

- NSP Site: Need architectural designs ASAP. Construction would be good to start June 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>. Adding classroom space & shared space between Linx (7<sup>th</sup> thru age 18) and AIM. This will be about 6500 sq ft. Thomas’s asking good questions about design. Made sure enough bathrooms for students and staff. Created key locks. Will need sound-proof technology. Setting up space for mental health.

<b>Motion:</b> To amend the lease of NSP space to add 8,000 sq ft including a seclusion room, harden walls.			
<b>Made by:</b> Ryan Weber		<b>Seconded by:</b> Christine Peper	
<b>Discussion:</b> None.			
<b>Vote:</b>	<b>Yea:</b> 5	<b>Nay:</b> 0	<b>Abstain:</b>
<b>Decision:</b> Unanimously Approved			

**Lionsgate Academy’s Authorizer is:**

- Main Site: looking at building options

iv. Executive Director Evaluation

- Met prior to this meeting and we continue to make progress.
- Have narrowed down the competency areas of what they are looking at for Dr. Halpin's evaluation.
- Working on defining each component and make it more objective instead of subjective.

**6. Review: March Board Meeting agenda**

- Pass 990
- Look at # of days for staff next year
- Suggested revision of handbook

**Motion to Adjourn: 8:03 p.m.**

<b>Motion:</b> To Adjourn			
<b>Made by:</b> Sara Bydzovsky		<b>Seconded by:</b> Christine Peper	
<b>Discussion:</b> None.			
<b>Vote:</b>	<b>Yea:</b> 5	<b>Nay:</b> 0	<b>Abstain:</b>
<b>Decision:</b> Unanimously Approved			

**Next Meeting:** March 17, 2015, 6:00 p.m.

**Lionsgate Academy's Authorizer is:**

Novation Education Opportunities, 3432 Denmark Avenue Suite 103, Eagan, Minnesota 55123  
 Phone 612-889-2103 Fax 612-870-1200 email executive.director.neo@gmail.com http://www.neoauthorizer.org