

**STEM Magnet Academy
Local School Council
Special Meeting Minutes**

May 20, 2015

I. Call to order

Mrs. Langston called to order the special meeting of the Local School Council for the STEM Magnet Academy at 5:33pm on May 20, 2015, in the STEM Magnet Academy gymnasium.

II. Roll call/Establish Quorum

Mrs. Langston conducted a roll call. The following persons were present:

Jeremiah Abiade
Maria Amoruso
Deborah Bonner
Deana Caccavale
Deidra Harper
Sadika Langston
Jeff McCarter
William O'Neill
Gretchen Brinza
Lindsay McGrane
Zakiya Libby-Williams
Maria McManus

Quorum was established.

III. Review and Approval of Agenda

Mrs. Harper suggested that announcements be made before the LSC moves into closed session. Mrs. McGrane stated that the closed session minutes needed to be approved in closed session to preserve confidentiality. Mrs. Harper made a motion to approve the agenda with the noted amendments. Dr. O'Neill seconded the motion.

Vote: 12 in favor

IV. Approve meeting minutes from 3/18 and 4/22

Mrs. McGrane presented LSC members with minutes from the March 18, 2015 and April 22, 2015 LSC meetings. Mrs. Brinza moved to approve the minutes. Mrs. Amoruso seconded the motion.

Vote: 12 in favor

V. Principal Selection

-- Candidate resumes – Mrs. Harper stated that the LSC had posted the advertisement for the principal position at STEM Magnet Academy and collected resumes from the CPS Talent Office. Mrs. Harper stated that the resumes had been reviewed using a rubric created by the LSC. Mrs. Langston clarified that all votes taken by the LSC need to take place in an open meeting and stated that a motion made in closed session and voted on needed to be made again to allow for the vote to take place in an open meeting. Mr. Abiade stated that the LSC had not done all of the steps described by Mrs. Langston during the review of candidate resumes. LSC members discussed a discrepancy in the way that different members of the LSC used the rubric. Dr. O’Neil made a motion that we end the discussion of the rubric. Dr. Bonner seconded the motion. Mr. Abiade stated that he felt like ethically it is the responsibility of the LSC to go back and make sure that we use the rubric in the way that it was intended. Mr. McCarter asked whether we should continue to discuss the use of the rubric or whether we should call for a vote.

Vote: 6 in favor; 4 against; 1 abstention.

-- Mrs. Langston clarified we are still on agenda item 5, principal selection. Mrs. Langston restated that we have to make the motion from closed session in open session. Dr. O’Neil stated that he would like to make a motion based on an evaluation of resumes and a discussion in closed session. Dr. O’Neil stated that, based on an evaluation of candidate resumes, the current principal by far outscored other candidates. Dr. O’Neil made a motion that the LSC not interview any additional candidates. Dr. Bonner seconded the motion. Mr. Abiade stated that he felt that the motion on the floor did not accurately reflect what occurred in closed session. Mr. Abiade stated that we did not discuss all candidates. Mr. Abiade asked Mr. Villasenor (from the office of LSC relations) for clarification on the principal selection process and how candidates are reviewed. Mr. Villasenor stated that the LSC makes the decision on how candidates are reviewed after submitting resumes. Mr. Villasenor stated that there are few legal requirements, but that the Office of LSC Relations does make recommendations to LSCs that include a “best possible principal selection process.” Mr. Villasenor stated that there are broad parameters, but that there is a hope that an LSC would employ many, if not all, of the procedures shared by the Office of LSC Relations when selecting a contract principal. Mr. Villasenor stated that it is up to the council to decide how the candidate resume review process is to be conducted. Mr. Villasenor stated that he would have advised the STEM LSC to not create a committee if the committee was to be made up entirely of LSC members. Mr. Villasenor stated

that a minimum of 6 LSC members need to vote to proceed with any given process in the Principal Selection process. Mr. Villasenor stated that we could do all of the resume review in closed session or could do it individually and come together to discuss. Mr. Abiade made an appeal to the professional and ethical integrity of the LSC body. Mr. Abiade stated that his objective is to get the strongest possible candidate for STEM and that requires the LSC to be thorough. Mr. McCarter stated that he felt that there is a lot of potential in this school and that Ms. McManus is a strong candidate to become the contract principal of STEM. Mr. McCarter stated that he felt like the vote being discussed was premature, as the LSC had not discussed half of the candidates that submitted resumes. Mr. McCarter also stated that he felt this vote was being called prematurely, as the LSC has not yet received results from a parent survey. Mr. McCarter stated that he did not feel that it was ethical or appropriate to vote on whether to interview candidates at this point. Mrs. Langston stated that she disagrees with the statement that the rubric was not used and that the LSC went through the democratic process. Mrs. Langston stated that she resents the implication that there is something unethical being done. Mrs. Langston stated that she used the rubrics and scored resumes and that she felt that Ms. McManus was the strongest candidate in the candidate pool. Dr. Bonner stated that LSC members were all asked to use the rubric created by the LSC to review resumes in advance and that members came prepared to discuss candidates. Dr. Bonner stated that at a certain point, some LSC members realized that there were members who wanted to stop the principal selection process and not proceed with candidate interviews. Dr. Bonner stated that the current principal at STEM has received no feedback on her performance and that more should be requested of the current principal. Mr. Villasenor stated that the council has to be careful to not treat one candidate differently (e.g., a current interim principal). Mr. Abiade stated that he felt that there was a middle approach that was not partisan. Mrs. Brinza stated that she wanted to be fair and go through the process. Mrs. Harper stated that there was such a huge disparity between the resumes the LSC received that it seemed like a waste of time to bring candidates in to interview. Mrs. Amoruso stated her objection to voting on this motion prior to data from a parent survey being reviewed. Mrs. Langston clarified that there had been technical issues that had caused a delay in the distribution of the parent survey.

Mr. Villasenor stated that there was a difference between suspending the process and voting to not move forward with interviews. Dr. O'Neil made a motion to not interview any candidates aside from Ms. McManus. Dr. Bonner stated that the motion is to stop the process and not conduct any interviews. Mr. Villasenor clarified that the intent for this vote is to offer a contract to one of our candidates. Mr. Villasenor stated that an LSC is required to advertise the position and to select a contract principal with at least 7 votes of members eligible to vote. LSCs are also required to review candidate

resumes. Mr. Villasenor stated that it is strongly, strongly suggested that an LSC conduct at least one round of interviews. Two rounds of interviews are included in the LSC training module for Principal Selection, but interviewing is not a legal requirement of the process.

Vote: 6 in favor; 3 against; 2 abstentions.

Mr. McCarter stated that when he requested that Mr. Villasenor and Mr. Pittman be present at this meeting, his intention was to have guidance from the Office of LSC Relations in closed session. Mr. Villasenor asked about the purpose of the closed session for this current meeting and stated that the LSC needed to make a motion to include Mr. Villasenor and Mr. Pittman in the closed meeting. Mrs. Harper made a motion to invite Mr. Villasenor and Mr. Pittman to attend the closed meeting. Mr. Abiade seconded the motion.

Vote: 11 in favor.

VI. Guest Speakers from the Office of LSC Relations

- Marcus Pittman – Senior Compliance Officer
- Jose Villasenor – Deputy Director

VII. Public Participation

-- Mr. Langston spoke in support of STEM's current principal. Mr. Langston stated that he had looked over STEM's performance on state tests and considered STEM's ranking as a level 1+ school. Mr. Langston stated that Ms. McManus was selected to be the principal at STEM by the CPS Board of Education and that he feels that the LSC is moving in right direction by not interviewing any candidates. Mr. Langston stated that he thought it would be profoundly unjust not to offer Ms. McManus contract and offered his kudos to Ms. McManus.

-- Mr. Abel stated that he is disappointed to hear that the STEM LSC has gone against the recommendation of the school board in interviewing candidates and getting feedback from parents. Mr. Abel stated that he felt that the feedback from parents would offer positive areas as well as areas of challenge. Mr. Abel stated that he felt it would behoove the LSC to hear from more than one candidate.

-- Ms. McDonald read an email from Ms. Taylor. Ms. Taylor's email stated that Ms. McManus had fully supported Ms. Taylor, who is currently attending a professional development related to 3-D printing. Ms. Taylor's email stated that Ms. McManus has fully supported science and engineering enrichment. Ms. Taylor's email stated that her students competed in both a science bowl competition and the citywide Invention Convention, where STEM students took 3rd place. Ms. Taylor stated that she is able to work with Ms. McManus as a team to support students. Ms. McDonald stated that she

completely agrees with Ms. Taylor's comments and supports Ms. McManus 100%.

-- Mrs. Marolda shared that she does respect the work of the LSC and understands how many hours it has taken to be a member of the LSC. Mrs. Marolda reminded LSC members that they volunteered to run for these positions and that it is important that the LSC not waste time. Mrs. Marolda stated that she felt that parent feedback to Ms. McManus would have been very helpful. Mrs. Marolda stated that she was disappointed in the parent survey and said that it was her understanding that parents could provide feedback about the school specifically. Mrs. Marolda shared that she was surprised that the survey did not ask parents to rank what was important to them and only allowed for feedback specific to the school in the "Additional Comments" section. Mrs. Marolda shared that she knew of families who did not receive the survey. Mrs. Langston stated that legally, the parent survey could not seek feedback about a specific individual. Mrs. Marolda stated that the LSC did not do what they said they would do because a vote was taken prior to reviewing parent surveys. Mrs. Marolda stated that parents wanted representatives that represented their feedback.

-- Mr. Harper stated that he is not opposed to the LSC choosing to not interview candidates if it was determined that the best candidate had been identified. Mr. Harper shared that Ms. McManus has been doing a great job and has a record of effectiveness by all objective standards. Mr. Harper shared that he is troubled by the possibility of having a new principal at STEM because you do not know what you are going to get with a new person. Mr. Abiade stated that no one has said that Ms. McManus is not worthy of a contract. Mr. Abiade stated he would like to conduct the principal selection process in a professional manner. Mr. Abiade stated that he will abstain from voting until the LSC conducts the business of principal selection in a professional manner. Mrs. Langston stated that she would like to see the LSC come together and move forward on this process. Dr. O'Neil stated that in his experience as a community representative on the LSC at Andrew Jackson Language Academy for two years, he witnessed the parent community question the leadership of the AJLA principal even though the school had recently been awarded the National Blue Ribbon Award for academic excellence. Dr. O'Neil stated that he believes that Ms. McManus is a better principal than Mr. Ditto and that she is at least twice as good as any other candidate who submitted a resume.

-- Mrs. Lomax stated that she is happy to see the decision that has been made here, but is disappointed to see the division of the LSC. Mrs. Lomax stated that this was one of the most disrespectful meetings that she has seen. Mrs. Lomax stated that it is clear that some people on LSC have a personal agenda and that she hopes that LSC can move forward, come together, and do what's best for students. Mrs. Brinza stated that she wants to go through the process fairly.

-- Mrs. Brantley stated that if the situation is not broken, the LSC should not try to fix it. Mrs. Brantley shared that Ms. McManus has engaged with her. Mrs. Brantley stated

that she has not heard complaints from staff and wondered if LSC members were seeking a new candidate because they were rubbed the wrong way by Ms. McManus's strong leadership.

-- Mrs. Haviland questioned why parent surveys were not considered prior to a vote being taken to not interview candidates. Mrs. Haviland asked if parent surveys would be passed along to the district if the LSC does not receive 7 affirmative votes to offer Ms. McManus a contract. Mrs. Langston stated that she doesn't think that the parent surveys will go to waste and that the goal of the LSC is to get a contract principal.

VIII. Announcements

- STEM LSC Voting District Boundaries Meeting – May 26th at 5:00pm in the STEM gymnasium.
- Next regular LSC Meeting – June 2, 2015 at 5:30pm in the STEM gymnasium.
- STEM Walk-a-Thon – June 6th

Mrs. Langston moved that we go into closed session. Mr. McCarter wanted to thank the community for coming out tonight. Cultivate a healthy school community.

Vote: 12 in favor.

IX. Closed Session

- Continue Principal Selection Process
- Review parent surveys
- Review teacher survey

X. Adjournment

Mrs. Langston moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:12pm. Mrs. Harper seconded the motion.

Vote: 11 in favor.

Minutes submitted by: Lindsay McGrane