

YLA Board Meeting Minutes

December 14, 2022

Board Members Present (highlighted): Betsy Anthony, Nick McClellan, Cathy Moore, Tenley Murphy, Cynthia Deaton, Chris Elrod, Matthew Kutilek, Craig Trainer, Rebecca Willis, Kenna Dillard, Christie Dunson

Others Present: Sandee Blankenship, Principal; Nathan Swords, Special Projects Coordinator for YLA

Public Input: N/A

Call to Order: YLA held a special called meeting on Wednesday, December 14th at 4:00pm in YLA classroom building D. Betsy Anthony called the meeting to order. Motion by Rebecca Willis, second by Nick McClellan.

Previous Month Minutes Approved: Motion by Kenna Dillard, second by Nick McClellan to approve November minutes. Passed with no opposition.

Financial Statement: Financial motion by Rebecca Willis to approve financial statement, second by Christie Dunson. Passed with no opposition.

Old Business:

New Business:

- **Possible New Digital Charter School**

Was going to write a new charter for the digital school. When charter is written, is it owned by the board. Did not think Planning and Implementation was available for replication. We can do that. This board would preside over two schools, YLA and new virtual/hybrid charter called Zenith Academy.

New name recommendation came from YLI CEO. Did not want name associated with anything that was previously there. No SC virtuals meet state minimum. Zenith means apex, reaching for the top.

ASU has successful charter middle virtual hybrid. Referred by NIET. Will send a team to Arizona if charter is approved for training with accountability.

Plan is to have 6th/7th grade, 100 students in each. 50 in upstate, 50 in Aiken region. Within driving distance of current sites. Lots of gaps/breaks in sites that the students would attend in person while YLA/TPSA students are out. On campus, one to two times per month focusing on leadership, not content. Do not want to buy boxed curriculum, want teachers to have autonomy in classes in virtual school.

Mrs. Blankenship would like to vote to govern over both schools and replicate instead of starting a new charter school with a new board. There is connection with the current board. Feel this will be helpful. Board members will have to go to Columbia to defend charter.

Timeline: Sandee and Susan will write charter by Feb. 1, 2023. Two-week review period. March defense to district board. April- a recommendation to district board whether or not we are recommended for approval. Board will vote in April. Year 0 planning= 2023-2024. School would open 24-25.

Questions from Board:

- What is target audience ? students already in virtual without a good option. Lots of students in our lottery system who are in virtual option before. Potential spread to high school with virtual. Lots of students involved in extra curriculars already doing it. Also targeting people who may not get in YLA/TPSA
- Where are teachers pulled from? Recruitment list. Two prior teachers who left YLA but are teaching virtual options. Could potentially staff this school tomorrow. Staff can be anywhere in state of SC as long as they're willing to travel once per month to meet with students. Lots of flexibility with virtual school option. Would be considered full time teachers. Different set of challenges for virtual More planning, etc.
- Delivery option? Google Classroom paid version. We have never used paid version through covid, but we would pay for the upgraded option to use. Google is very user friendly.
- Grades starting? 6th and 7th. Same as YLA. Want to start small and add incrementally. 100 students per grade level and increase the second year, just see how it is after the third year in regards to high school. Some kids struggle with the transition back to traditional high school. Virtual high school creates another school choice for students. Thousands of students already in virtual schools. Ran by for profit companies...test scores are not very successful. Out of area to expand physically. Over 200 applications currently for 96 spots. This is just creating an option for a successful virtual school. A
- How many teachers? 4 content per grade. 4-6, 4-7, 2-related arts, special events, and sped.
- When does funding come? After charter approval. Similar to how YLA gets funding currently. Per pupil is a tiny bit different. A touch more program money because of no utilities. MONEY would not bleed over between schools. Funding is per pupil from the state from governor's budget.
- Where will teachers be located? Mixed model from ASU. Recorded lesson and live office hours as well. Current sc virtual schools require teachers to be in the same setting daily to teach students. Virtual should offer flexibility. Teachers would make a little less in salary, but get the flexibility

- Do we provide tech? To teachers, yes, but not to students. If you give device, you have to offer support, which is tough with students all over. Will provide a link to purchase technology.
- Any negative impact on YLA campus? Worried about two things...1. The name. Decided once we could replicate didn't want the name, and 2. Sandee's time in general as principal. Worked it out where there would be a principal/asst. principal here. Already pulled in many directions.
- When virtual is here, students here? No, doesn't necessarily have to be at school campus. YLI has many sites available to use. YLA/TPSA classrooms if needed.
- IT/Connectivity concerns? Joel has connected with ASU technology coordinator to figure out logistics with technology. Classes would be staggered. Schedule set up similar to traditional school.
- Schedule? M-Th: regular school days. Friday is an office hour, catch up day, etc. Core is delivered four days, Friday is a work day or experience day.
- Lottery? Yes if we had more than 100 applicants for the first year per grade. Would use Lotterease .
- Can student come in mid year? As long as there's a spot available. Preferentials would work the same way as they do at YLA. Preferentials do not criss cross.
- Students can't switch, right? Correct...students cannot switch schools mid year.
- Contract with ASU? Yes, one year contract. \$7000, does not include trip out there. No monies out of YLA budget to fund new school.
- What added requirements for the board? Cover both schools at meeting. Half of the board members be willing to go to Columbia to defend the charter. A lot less questions with a replication instead of a new charter. That would be in April.
- Who would this be before? The board of the SCPCSD.
- What problems possibly? Diversity would be the main issue. No transportation needed.
- Sped services? Yes, required. Two SPED teachers.
- Under diversity umbrella, concern would be socio economic problems. Would it be looked upon like there's favor? No, they just want to know you aren't targeting specific groups. You have to show you are recruiting all people.
- How will teachers hold students accountable? Not sure yet...meeting with ASU on Thursday. They are successful, so leaning on them for advice. We feel confidence in curriculum, etc.
- How will being on board as officers affect? Just double.
- Is this temporary or long term? Long term. Replicate is tied together. Replicate= we have to focus on leadership at virtual.
- Idea to start virtual? Where from? Someone contacted Sandee about a virtual. Schools ranked in state, yla #1. They wanted to start a virtual. Sandee started thinking about some of the students who may not get in, there isn't another option for them if they

don't want a traditional school. Finances are often a problem for brick and mortar charters, so some have closed in the area.

- Q about name. Zenith- you have to continue to grow to the highest point. You have to send a letter to legislation and school districts. Some districts are limiting virtual school options and they have not been successful to this point. This is not just focused on one county.
- Lose funding if a minimum is not met? Yes. Funding is lost if you lost authorizer (scpcsd).
- World is changing to a more virtual option.
- Staffing would not be an issue if someone wanted to go to virtual option.
- Standardized? Yes, can measure with same tests. Another offer, only one teachers per grade level in brick and mortar. Can have multiple teachers per grade and subject to bounce ideas off of. Happens a lot in traditional.
- Charter with sports? Same law as regular charter law. Must play for home zoned public school.
- Health and Wellness piece? Don't know yet. Can't do virtual crossfit, etc. can't do apples to apples fitness wise, but can do lifetime fitness, etc. Don't want to encourage lying on physical activities. One of the activities could be hiking...they don't know hiking, etc can keep them healthy. They're focused on sports. Have to find something that's a lifetime fitness activity. Will not be the same as in school, but they could go hike, do crossfit seminars, canoeing on the lake, etc. Lots of opportunity.

Thursday meeting with ASU for all information. Monthly updates. New bullet point on each agenda. 23/24 start, 24/25 opening. Susan Finley will pour into the new school as her role changes from primarily at YLA to new virtual charter.

Motion made by Rebecca Willis for the board to govern both schools. Second by Betsy Anthony. Passes with NO opposition.

Principal's Report: None this meeting.

Questions, Comments, Concerns:

Executive Session: N/A

Adjournment: Motion by Nick McClellan, second by Kenna Dillard to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted by

Nathan Swords, YLA Special Projects

On Behalf of

Catchy Moore, Secretary