



Mission Statement: The mission of The RISE Schools is to provide a rigorous and holistic education that develops the minds and character of scholars to be catalysts for social change

**The RISE Schools**  
**Governance Board Work Session Minutes**  
**January 8, 2025 at 6:00 PM**

*The minutes of Sunshine Law meetings need not be verbatim transcripts of the meeting. These minutes are a brief summary of the events of the meeting.*

Date:	Start	End	Next Meeting:	Next time:	Prepared by:
1/08/25	6:14 PM	8:03 PM	1/15/25	6:00 PM	Lyn Carden
<b>Meeting Location:</b>					
Rise					

<b>Attended by:</b>	
Lara Sterling Desmond Hardy Tanisha Jones	Zedric Cross Ty Harrison Shahnazz Boyd Glen Kyle Terrence Washington Lisa McDonald Dr. Allison Neally Dr. Camelle Simmons Danny Brewington Lyn Carden
<b>Highlights:</b>	

**CALL TO ORDER – 6:14pm**

- 1) **Administrative Functions** – Ms. Sterling welcomed everyone to the work session and reminded all participants of legal requirements during board work sessions versus board meetings.
  - a) Ms. Sterling notified the participants that she was going to rearrange the agenda slightly to allow special guests to present first.
  
- 2) **Website Update**
  - a) Mr. Kyle introduced himself and Forum Communications reported they are here to help get messaging out and support recruitment and imaging.
  - b) He provided a website completion update reporting it is mostly complete and offered a timeline and process.
  - c) Mr. Kyle reviewed the proposed marketing plan.
    - i) He reported that in Forum’s experience it costs a school approximately \$300.00 per student in

- marketing expenses.
- ii) He reviewed Forum’s recommendations and outlined the proposed campaign.
- iii) School Mint, the school’s enrollment platform, was discussed
- d) The board discussed specific narratives for the marketing efforts and Mr. Cross reviewed a marketing strategy target.
- e) The Board discussed using some of the social media budget for a video
  - i) Mr. Cross recommended creating a student focused video.
  - ii) The Board discussed using stock images vs. using school staff and students.
- f) The Board discussed the application window and enrollment deadline. Mr. Brewington recommended that the application window close by March 1 to ensure robust enrollment.
  - i) The Board discussed the SCSC enrollment report deadline by the first of May.
  - ii) Ms. Sterling requested the application window be added to the board meeting agenda.
  - iii) The Board discussed enrollment this year vs. enrollment next year.
  - iv) The Board discussed new challenges for enrollment.
  - v) The Board discussed creation of the messaging.
  - vi) The Board discussed the importance of extra curriculars.
  - vii) The Board discussed additional marketing opportunities.
  - viii) The Board discussed the benefits of RISE transportation.
  - ix) The Board discussed language in the marketing messaging.
  - x) Mr. Harrington recommended the PTA participate in the marketing efforts.
  - xi) The school leadership and Mr. Washington were asked to determine the costs and present to the board meeting.
  - xii) The Board discussed the SEO information and the board requested a weekly report and middle of campaign report.
  - xiii) The Board discussed administrative rights over MailChimp and SchoolMint.

### 3) Academic Discussion

- a) Ms. Sterling requested an update regarding the academic portion of the CAP.
  - i) Dr. Nealy reported she met with school staff and created an action plan to return the school to compliance.
  - ii) Mr. Cross reported the school was losing a special education teacher and shared his plans for replacement including staffing realignment.
  - iii) Mr. Cross reported on a recent review of special population students and their plan to ensure compliance.
    - (1) The Board discussed the school psychologist.
    - (2) The Board discussed the temporary agency the school was working with and a plan to hire additional staff both temporary and permanent to support the students. Dr. Nealy suggested hiring someone rather than bringing in a temporary employee.
    - (3) Dr. Nealy suggested contact Metro RESA for additional help. Dr. Simmons said she would reach out.
  - iv) The Board discussed the cross functional monitoring.
- b) Dr. Simmons discussed strategies for a successful partnerships and common goals.
- c) Mr. Cross reported he was finalizing the lesson plan template and PD as well as reaching out to Savvas for additional support.
- d) Ms. Sterling requested that the academic deliverables for the CAP be presented at the board meeting.
- e) Ms. Boyd provided a data update.
- f) The Board discussed strategies for academic improvement.
- g) Mr. Cross requested that Ms. Boyd and Dr. Simmons partner to manage the academic challenges.

- h) Dr. Simmons discussed her plan for their next meeting.
- i) Ms. Sterling requested an update from Mr. Cross before the CAP deadline on Friday.

**4) Handbook review**

- a) Student Handbook- They discussed which handbook version was distributed for this academic year.
  - i) Mr. Cross discussed his concerns about the uniform policy, the grading policy and procedure, the technology policy, and the MTSS process
  - ii) The Board requested that the student and the employee handbook be updated and ready for approval at the board meeting
- b) Employee Handbook – Ms. Sterling reported on an employee handbook that was completed by Cross & Dot for FY25.
- c) Mr. Harrison reported that Cross & Dot created a salary schedule and should be added to the employee handbook.

**5) Bylaws**

- a) Ms. Sterling reported on changes the school attorney recommended for the bylaws.
- b) Ms. Sterling requested the revised bylaws be added to the board meeting for consideration.
- c) Mr. Cross reported that Mr. Harding was finalizing the federal program manual, and it would be ready for approval at the board meeting.

**6) SCSC Monitoring Results**

- a) Ms. Sterling reported the annual SCSC Monitoring letter had been received by the school earlier in the day and it would be included in the board meeting packet.
- b) Ms. Sterling requested support in creating the monitoring CAP response.

**7) Financial Reports & Policies – Mr. Washington presented**

- a) Update audit completion – He reported that he believes the majority of the items needed by the auditor to complete the FY23 audit have been submitted with the exception of bank documents which will be collected Friday. Once the auditor has all the documents, Mr. Washington thinks the audit will be complete by the end of January.
  - i) He discussed a bank account that was identified by the auditor but did not seem to exist.
- b) Status of 2024 audit – Once the FY23 audit is complete Bambo Sonaike will begin work on the FY24 audit. Mr. Washington feels that will be a much quicker completion.
  - i) He noted that both audits must be complete for the annual and quarterly bond reports.
  - ii) He reported that he anticipates the school will receive findings, but he does expect an unmodified audit.
  - iii) He reported that they will need to submit an extension for the FY24 990.
- c) Financial dashboard – Mr. Washington reported the dashboard is nearly complete and his team is making final changes to it for presentation.
  - i) He reviewed the dashboard benefits and discussed potential uses.
  - ii) He reported it would be ready for the board meeting review.
- d) Budget update
  - i) 4 new staff member’s financial impact – Mr. Washington and Mr. Cross discussed the financial impact of staff changes and determined they were negligible.
- e) Finance Policy Manual
  - i) Mr. Washington reported this was a new policy manual for the school.
  - ii) He noted that new financial policies that had been created had been incorporated into the manual. Ms. Carden pointed out if they were in the manual they would not need to be approved separately and could be approved as a part of the policy manual approval.
  - iii) Mr. Washington suggested the board change its policy to require a 2<sup>nd</sup> signer from \$5,000 to \$10,000

- iv) Ms. Sterling requested the manual be added to the meeting agenda for approval.
  - f) Ms. McDonald requested that the team review the manuals and provide feedback from the monitoring letter compared to the manuals.
  - g) Mr. Washington discussed the closure of the Bank of America accounts. He outlined the plan and timing.
    - (1) The Board discussed the signatory change and plan for closing out the account
      - (a) The Board discussed the process.
      - (b) Ms. Sterling requested this be added to the board meeting agenda.
    - (2) They discussed Mr. Cross being added as a signatory for the Regents account.
      - (a) Ms. Sterling requested this be added to the board meeting agenda.
  - h) Mr. Cross reviewed the adjustment on the allotment sheet. He reported it had not taken place yet and did not have a timeline for completion, but his team was making adjustments in preparation.
  - i) Mr. Harrington? Harrison reported on new employees and noted he would provide a full report at the board meeting.
    - i) He discussed the contract format.
    - ii) The Board discussed staffing.
  - j) Mr. Washington discussed the purchase of a social studies curriculum. He reviewed the line item the expense would fall under. The board requested further explanation at the board meeting.
- 8) Grievance Update**
- a) Ms. Sterling reviewed 3 grievances she had recently received.
- 9) Project Management Services – Ms. Sterling requested this be added to the meeting agenda.**
- 10) Bond Holder Update**
- a) The Board discussed the letter to be sent to the bond holder regarding the latest notification from the SCSC.