

Linden STEAM Academy Governing Board Agenda  
May 8<sup>th</sup> 2019 @ 5:45pm  
Linden STEAM Academy Library

**1. Call-to-Order 5:52 pm**

Callie Walsh, John Murray,, Ray Garcia, Elaine Rittershaus, Deb Gesualdo, Rachana Gray, Eden Garhart-Smith, Jessica Leggett, Kenya Avant, Scott Marino, John Oteri, John Froio, Justin Umlah, Kathleen Christensen

**2. Approval of Minutes from April**

- Motion to approve by Deb Gesualdo, seconded by Elaine Rittershaus
- NO discussion, Motion passes

Motion made by Deb Gesualdo to amenda agenda striking agenda item 4.a. dress code because it was discussed last time, seconded by Elaine Rittershaus. Motion passes.

**3. Ongoing Business**

a. Governing Board Representation (Legal Update)

- MTA attorneys and School committee attorney met Monday May 6
- GB acts as an advisory board to superintendent, no say in contractually bargained items like PD, length of school day, personnel hiring, evaluations, if changes in Governing Board-it's through what by laws state-not viewed as policy-making board
- Kenya contacted Department of Education innovation office and requested legal opinion, see docs from Kenya-email chain and -based on this, LSA never received waiver so Governing Board serves as school council, we're subject to law of school councils bc innovation school must have both, school council and Governing Board or Governing Board needs to serve as School Council.
- Kenya states Alison from DESE feels Governing Board does not have to dissolve, and we don't have to create school council as long as we are carrying out regulations
- Staff expressed the need to be more innovative on Governing Board because we haven't been, task forces may help but our agenda is filled with items that are not innovative
- How would this be decided? Does Governing Board vote? Staff vote? School committee to decide?
- Kenya wants this decided to help understand how to run elections/how many spaces to fill?
- What are we not doing but should be as board?
- Kenya makes motion to vote on whether or not we should have parity between school staff and parents on Governing Board with consideration that DESE requires that each school follow the regulations in 71.59 (school site council per mass general law)

- Motion is withdrawn by Kenya
- Motion made by Kenya Avant, seconded by Rachana Gray: that the Governing Board accept responsibilities of a school council as outlined by general law and ensure that within the next election cycle, we follow the rules that school council composition and parity.
- Discussion:
  - Scott Marino: Why the need for parity?
  - Kenya: spirit is no one group of stakeholders can make a decision, to ensure cooperation around the table, in an effort to be fair.
  - Do you feel teachers run the board and parents don't have a say?
  - Yes
- Vote occurs: 5, opposed.
- Motion is off the floor
- Deb Gesualdo makes a motion, seconded by Kathleen Christensen that LSA has both an advisory board of trustees and a school site council.
- Discussion
  - School improvement plan to be covered by school site council and innovation plan to be handled by advisory board of trustees
  - Advisory Board overseen by School Committee and Superintendent
  - School Council overseen by Principal
  - Some feel we can handle all of it as Governing Board
  - Others feel if we could handle that then we would be doing it well by now and we aren't
  - Deb-we need to determine what we are voting as:SC or advisory board
  - Jo Oteri-We need a retreat to map out everything such as what is innovation/ what isn't/what do we need
  - Motion withdrawn until we can further figure this out
- Kenya Avant-we are in violation of law because voted against parity though we only have one board

Then we can't meet or we cant vote

- Would it make sense to leave this decision to be made by the school committee as we legally cannot vote?
- Would school committee decide this because we fall under them ..."I recommend that the board agrees to function defacto as a school site council because it is required by mass general law"
- Options: remain 1, parity or not  
Become 2
- Motion made by Deb Gesualdo, seconded by Elaine Rittershaus: "Motion that LSA is to have two committees: advisory board and school council"
- Discussion:
  - still have elections for advisory board, shouldn't meet until there's a school site council...have it be made by the way every other school does it

- Kenya Avant-" Having the vote to form 2 governing bodies at the LSA occurs on the very same eve upon which we get a definitive answer that we ask for parity between parents and LSA staff members. It's disheartening and extremely segregationist. I'm concerned that we are creating a climate amongst the Governing Board that is not conducive to effective school governance and that we are not supporting our students."
  - Eden Garhart Smith-"Noted as a parent of how many months went by from 2 lawyers, MEA and the district, that I feel betrayed that nobody could come to a conclusion, I feel deceived."
  - Deb Gesualdo-"I take great umbrage at the character assassination that has occurred to me today, also, as I said, the rights of over 100 staff members that have been trampled on for years. Prohibitive labor practices occurred, denied votes under mass general law 150e, it's not right and public character assassination is not ok."
  - Kenya to address Deb Gesualdo's comment that it was not meant as character assassination. The work of the board is not seen on one person, I share in decisions that we make and that we have.
  - Justin Umlah to John Oteri-can school committee make the decision for us? Recommend that School Committee has some sort of hearing, talk to chair and Mr. Froio to get this to committee.
  - Impasse here because the intention to try to take care: increasing parity, maintain Governing Board to implement and oversee innovation program, through some technicalities-put ourselves in position that is impalpable. The intention was to delineate responsibilities and increase roles. Due to the vote or procedural technicality, this is not where we are at now. We need to seek opinion from committee
  - John Froio-From the beginning, this should have been caught 5-7 years ago, it might be hard to get 2 different boards together.
  - Thought to modify by-laws so we have a provisional parent election
- b. Task Force Update
    - i. AEAP
    - ii. Family Involvement
  - c. Uniform Policy (Uniform Swap)
    - Skipped topic

#### **4. New Business**

- a. Dress Code
  - Topic removed by motion made and passed
- b. Next Innovation Plan (vote on items)
  - Skipped topic
- c. Teacher Elections
  - Skipped topic
- d. Exhibition Night
  - We scrambled last year
  - We need a map, invitations, materials ordered, get a list to Ray Garcia which will go to John Oteri.

- Can we make an Amazon wishlist? Too murky...an email from admin should go out about it (last email was January from Ms. Seyller), spots to be reserved in the building
- Deb Gesualdo is happy to help with anything: she will organize the auditorium, Elaine Rittershaus to organize timing of the library usage. We also need oversight of the cafeteria and lobby.

e. Starbase Field Trip

- skipped topic

**5. Administrator's Report**

- Great band concert last night, Mr. DeFransisco did a great job.
- Finishing up MCAS next week
- Exhibition Night coming up
- Field Day, June 7-Jess Leggett will reach out for parents
- K celeb is coming up
- 8th grade celebration on 6/13 followed by dance
- shortened version of greek olympics...due to no snow days and assessments schedule, the year is ending sooner than usual

**Public Comment**

n/a

**6. Personal Privilege (quick statement)**

- High school seniors future teacher signing day was impactful on staff
- Deb echoed, great to see
- Callie-thank PTO for a great week, making days brighter and sweeter

**7. Adjournment- Recess at 7:25pm**