Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting

EDUPRIZE SCHOOLS
4567 W. Roberts Road
Queen Creek, AZ 85142

November 7, 2024

Members in attendance:	Seth Klempner Carrie Larson (virtual) Monika Calamita (virtual)
Non-Members present:	Michael Gordon-Smith Jennifer Murphy Robin Yeargain Bryce Solberg Maria Rosetti Amanda Kirkland Christine Hansen Rylan Cluff Dixie Marshall

The meeting was held per posted agenda on our webpage and as posted in the foyer at 4567 W. Roberts Road, Queen Creek, AZ and 580 W. Melody Lane, Gilbert, AZ.

1. **Call to Order**
   The meeting was called to order by Board President Seth Klempner at 1:06 pm.

2. **Approval of Minutes**
   The minutes from the prior Board of Directors meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Seth Klempner to approve the minutes as presented, and Carrie Larson seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved with Seth Klempner in favor, Monika Calamita in favor, and Carrie Larson in favor. None opposed.

3. **Consideration of PTO Report**
   a. Gilbert: R. Yeargain shared that the Fall Festival netted $16,000 profit with over 1500 people in attendance. She met several guest families and visited with them. 950 presale tickets were sold the Friday before, which is the largest amount yet. Upcoming PTO activities include the annual Thanksgiving Food Drive for Step Up, JH/HS Winter Dances, a Scholastic Book Fair, and a Boosterthon Holiday Shopping fundraiser in which the school earns 40% of the profits. The PTO hopes to make $4000 and will use that money to pay off the Boosterthon debt. The PTO General Board will be meeting next week.

b. Queen Creek: B. Solberg shared that they were holding their Fun Run and Color Run this week, which is the end of the boosterthon fundraiser. The goal was to raise $30,000, which they have exceeded by earning over $40,000. Bryce and Dawn race in funny outfits to reward the students. Boosterthon has already been booked for next fall. The Spring Spectacular will allow for more community outreach.

4. **Consideration of Principals' Reports**
   a. J. Murphy shared that the PSAT was held on Oct 28, 2024, and 100% of Juniors tested. The Fall Festival was a great activity, including the basketball team's two haunted houses. The State Championship Basketball and Cornhole Teams are starting their seasons with a lot of student participation. Seniors visited NAU and Juniors visited GCU on fieldtrips. A representative from AVID visited the school and conducted walkthroughs. They witnessed a lot of great engagement in the classrooms. MGS participated for part of it. (MGS shared that AVID is a great program for teaching students to be accountable for their own learning, and he saw students engaged, with great skill sets.) 4 AVID students spoke with the representative and everyone was blown away by what the kids shared. The big takeaways from the visit were the need to work with staff to define rigor, understand what collaboration looks like, and tie up loopholes. The next Eagle Expo will be held in December, it will be electives focused, and will be held concurrently with a school tour that night, which is another marketing avenue. Enrollment went up by 2 students this week.

   b. R. Yeargain shared that the Fall Festival was a great community event. There are several upcoming events which look at boosting enrollment. The Gilbert Days parade will be held on Nov 23, 2024, EDUPRIZE will be representing the 1910s/1920s (when Gilbert was founded). They will have a float, and are hoping to have 100 people participating. They won best of show 2 out of the 3 years they participated. EDUPRIZE will be announced 9 times throughout the parade route. In December the PreK-1 space will host "Books before Bedtime" where teachers will be reading to children. Students are being asked to bring one friend with them. "Leap into Kinder" is the theme for this year's kinder roundup. Other upcoming activities include the Friendship Feast, where Admin provides lunch to the staff, the Gobbler Gallop, and the Thanksgiving Food Drive. Project X applications were just submitted and are going through the selection process. The Spelling Bee was a success and 8th grader Dylan Ramos won. The Gifted classes adopted 3 Black Footed Ferrets. Boys Zone and Girl Power programs are now up and running. Teacher of the Month is Brandi Galloway. Many field trips are coming up. There is not much turnover with staff, and student turnover is more from 6th to 7th grade. Most kids re-enroll. A couple of families left the school and then came back. Enrollment went up by 5 students this week.

   c. B. Solberg shared that QC is currently observing Epilepsy Awareness Month by wearing purple. They are also observing American Indian Heritage Month. There is a student MLK Jr poster contest underway. Staff are also honoring veterans in observance of Veterans Day. Softball is going well. Family surveys went out this month, they are pushing to get as many to fill out as possible, they are hoping for half the families to participate. QC and Gilbert both received an "A" rating, so they are celebrating, but they recognize there is a lot of room to grow. A+ is coming up next year.

5. **Consideration of SPED Reports**
    a. M. Rosetti shared that numbers are pretty consistent, one resource intensive student left. The State came out and added 8 additional files to the Corrective Action Plan (CAP). Most items are in compliance. They will be coming back in December. SSIP did an observation with a specific tool they wanted us to use, and trained us on that tool. They want our focus to be on reading and confirmed reading was being addressed.
    Board members asked about possible grants and the processes it would take if EDUPRIZE were to change to non-profit. M.R. shared she is in contact with Chris Brown at the Dept of Ed regarding the possibilities and processes. The Dept of Ed is doing MTSS grants.

    b. A. Kirkland shared that the school psychologist attended NASP, where they get information on updated laws and regulations.

6. **Consideration of Superintendent Report**
Michael Gordon-Smith presented his suggested Strategic Plan for EDUPRIZE. He is using his interaction with a student to focus on what is allowing kids to have the "best days ever". There are a lot of things happening that are engaging for the outside community, but there is no structure or framework for advertising or increasing enrollment. Need to really share what is special about EDUPRIZE and market it.
    a. Executive Summary: Real obstacles include serious competition in close proximity, and low enrollment, which is creating about a $3 million shortfall. We are losing students in the middle school realm and in early primary grades. Demographic shifts are going to be hard to navigate.
    b. Vision and Strategic Goals: include Expanding Access and Enrollment, Transition to Non-Profit Status, Academic Excellence, and Community and Stakeholder Engagement, Sustainable Infrastructure and Financial Planning, and Long-Term Impact and Growth Strategy
    c. Conclusion: EDUPRIZE is a great product. It is important to engage in an intense marketing campaign and hire someone who is an expert in charter school marketing.
    d. Mission and Vision: The vision and mission statements are not marketable, they're too long. MGS proposed a change in articulation of our mission so we can frame marketing and academic excellence goals around it.
        i. An example of a mission statement would be "In partnership with families, to foster a personalized learning environment where all students are known, valued and thrive."
        ii. An example of thrive values would be "Trust, Heart, Respect, Inquiry, Virtue, Excellence"
    These send the message "We want to work with you in the success of your child." SK suggested holding a focus group on the new ideas.
    e. SWOT Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

In an effort to streamline board meetings, MGS presented the following items to remove from the Board's plate and put back on Superintendent:
    a. Emergency situations/decisions
    b. Prescribing coursework and certifications for teachers *(principals will make a plan to be approved by MGS)*
    c. Copy and Riso limits

d. Changes to Cottage Fair logistics
e. Approval of long term contracts with the school *(SK would like to place a dollar amount for minor expenses)*
f. Expulsion decisions *(appeals will remain with the Board)*
g. Hiring of part-time positions
h. Use of ECA Money tax money *(it needs to be allocated where donors designate)*
i. Emergency plans and drills *(if significant change is made, board needs to know/ratify, otherwise they will review and approve existing plans)*
j. Medical benefits taking effect *(tabled)*
k. Changes to Teacher Addendum
l. Liquidated damages to be enforced *(tabled - MGS will work on a solution to streamline this - need to put processes in place)*
m. Absences during Black Out dates *(to be handled by principals and superintendent)*
n. Field trips *(board will approve)*
o. Scholastic points *(sites to decide)*
p. Pre-approval and reimbursement for travel for staff *(superintendent can approve)*
q. Changes to the website *(district will maintain without board approval)*

Discussion point: PTO doesn't need to make presentations to the Board monthly, principals should present needed info. Structures need to be put in place for PTO.

MGS proposed a bonus to employees who receive the $2000 addendum. He would like to take $500 of that and distribute it over the winter holiday. The remaining $1500 would be paid out at the end of the school year. He recommended paying 30% of admin bonus over the winter holiday as well. MGS pointed out that as the new superintendent, he should probably be approved as a charter representative. MGS also presented the proposed MERP Health Plan by EPIC. The earliest implementation of MERP would be February 1, 2025.

a. A motion was made by Monika Calamita to approve the changes to pay out the addendums and bonuses to teachers and admins as Michael Gordon-Smith proposed, with a second by Seth Klempner. The Board unanimously approved with Seth Klempner in favor, Monika Calamita in favor, and Carrie Larson in favor. None opposed.
b. A motion was made by Monika Calamita to add Michael Gordon-Smith as a charter representative, with a second by Seth Klempner. The Board unanimously approved with Seth Klempner in favor, Monika Calamita in favor, and Carrie Larson in favor. None opposed.
***c.** A motion was made by Monika Calamita to approve the MERP plan, including the zero cost to employee plan, as presented to the board by Michael Gordon-Smith, with a second by Carrie Larson. The Board unanimously approved with Seth Klempner in favor, Monika Calamita in favor, and Carrie Larson in favor. None opposed.*

Discussion points:

a. MGS has a goal to get the principals a clear budget, where they can understand the overview, and give them some autonomy to make decisions for their campus. SK would like the principals to be able to make some financial decisions when it comes to matching funds (ex: all get $5000 to fulfill things that benefit students)

b. MGS will create a board policy book and put together a focus group on the new proposed mission and vision.

7. **Review of Financial Reports**

SK noted that he had signed the financial reports and expenditures and disbursement reports and that he would leave those with MGS for the virtual Board members to sign at their convenience. MGS noted that he would communicate with virtual Board members to set up a time to sign.

Discussion point: SK shared that the 2024 audit is done. The approved audit is due Friday, November 15, 2024. There were no findings. A special Board Meeting has been scheduled to approve the audit on Tuesday, November 12, 2024 at 9:00 am. MGS will post an agenda and send out invitations.

8. Approval of Expenditures and Disbursements

SK noted that he had signed the financial reports and expenditures and disbursement reports and that he would leave those with MGS for the virtual Board members to sign at their convenience. MGS noted that he would communicate with virtual Board members to set up a time to sign.

Call to Public: None

SK discussed adding 2 members to the Corporate Board. Todd Noelle is interested in joining. He has been through the state approval process. This item will be added to the agenda for the November 12th Board Meeting for approval. It was suggested that the Board find another community-based person for the last spot.

Meeting adjourned at 3:20 pm by Seth Klempner.