

**Thomas Edison Charter Schools  
Governing Board Meeting  
December 3, 2014**

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In attendance: Emma Bullock, Sonny Tuft, Kara Swensen, Tirzah Anderson, Adam Burris, Estee Wilson  
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*Welcome/Conducting: Tirzah Anderson*

*Pledge: Estee Wilson*

**Motion to adopt the agenda: Tirzah Anderson**

**Second: Adam Burris**

**Unanimous**

**Motion to approve the minutes from September: Tirzah Anderson**

**Second: Sonny Tuft**

**Unanimous**

**Motion to approve the minutes from October: Sonny Tuft**

**Second: Adam Burris**

**Unanimous**

**Motion to approve the minutes from November: Tirzah Anderson**

**Second: Adam Burris**

**Unanimous**

*Charter Highlight* included the portion of the charter regarding volunteers.

*Strategic Planning Discussion - Tirzah Anderson:* Tirzah had a SWOT Analysis passed out to all attendees. She reviewed the strengths including the stakeholder comments.

Emma thinks technology will take care of a lot of weakness and threats. There needs to be more labs at both schools. Teachers have let her know that they are using technology and would like to integrate more technology. Tirzah commented that technology was the number one concern of parents and staff.

Both schools have been researching ways to add more computers/electronic devices for student use.

Tirzah wants to change the first long term objective to incorporate more of the mission statement.

Shem stated it is not realistic to think that 90% of all students would have proficiency of 4. About 30% of high school graduates go to college.

Melani felt that improving test scores would mean teaching to the test. The school needs to go back to the philosophy. The schools want to perform well, but don't want to stop teaching curriculum to teach to the test. Some schools stop academics for weeks and months to do practice and talk about ways to beat the test.

Both faculty meetings last week were about SAGE Formative to help the students learn how to manipulate the SAGE test questions.

Scott commented that we want to "test what we teach, not teach what we test".

Below are highlights from the discussion that followed:

- Adam pointed out that all of the funding comes from state revenue sources. If he was a legislator and saw that charters perform lower than district schools it would make him think that they need to improve.
- Melani Kirk - Students test scores would benefit from more keyboarding practice.
- Angela Barton - Some schools stop teaching before state testing to review. Having Saxon at our school is a strength.
- Nikyla has been in almost every school in valley and noticed that they spend hours a week in the lab not learning anything except how to work the test. If you ask them a basic questions they don't know it, they know test taking strategies. Our students know more than the others. The focus needs to be on where they can learn skills, but not take away curriculum.
- Carolyn Larsen - Need to stay student centered and student focused. Thomas Edison has something special to meet the needs of individual students.
- Shem asked, "What does it mean for Edison students to be high academic achievers? If not the state tests, what measures does the school value?"
- Emma also felt that the students need to be taught the mechanics to show what they know. She feels that the goal for now could say that we want to be in the top percentage of schools for state testing. Internal testing should remain high. This can be changed later, if needed. Since SAGE is the only measure for science, Scott and Emma will look for an internal measure based on the state core. Since the core for science did not change and the scores went down, it indicated mechanics issues.
- Every three or four years the state testing changes. There is no continuity.
- Melani Kirk - We teach a broader curriculum instead of just pounding in what will be on the test. The 8th and 9th graders do extremely well on the Explore test because they have the broad picture. Edison Schools perform above average nationally, but do not the information to know the local comparison.
- Adam recommended that the achievement committee look at the student achievement goals and bring them to the next meeting.

Some of the other metrics also need to be amended or changed to include "College and Career Ready" and a measurable goal to improve keyboarding. The achievement committee will address these goals. The financial committee will look at the financial goals.

*Policy Amendments - Tirzah and Adam:* Policies help protect you from liability. The more teeth in your policy the better protected your school.

**Motion to approve the employee acceptable use policy: Tirzah Anderson**

**Second: Estee Wilson**

**Unanimous**

The governing board subcommittee policy was changed to include 3 committees instead of two. Melani asked Jim if he had any philosophical concerns. He stated that the charter was written in such a way to allow flexibility. It says a minimum of two subcommittees. He recognized over time the school or board might see fit to have additional subcommittees as the need arises.

**Motion to approve the amended governing board subcommittee policy: Tirzah Anderson**  
**Second: Adam Burris**  
**Unanimous**

The ad hoc committee was dissolved. The new committees are:

*Achievement - Estee Wilson and Emma Bullock*

*Policy - Tirzah Anderson and Kara Swensen*

*Financial - Adam Burris and Sonny Tuft*

*Personnel Requests:*

Scott moved the Speech and Language position from .5 to .6. The financial implications were e-mailed to the board.

**Motion to approve personnel request for Scott Jackson: Adam Burris**  
**Second: Kara Swensen**  
**Unanimous**

*Financial forecast - Adam Burris, Jim Peterson:*

Jim pointed out that Edison South is still in a growth state so the 5 year forecast good.

At Edison North, as enrollment begins to cap and teachers become more senior, the 5 year forecast presents some challenges, especially with insurance trending upward. Eventually there will be a need to increase revenue or require cost sharing. The forecast takes into account certain pay increases that outpace state funding.

When the schools were in a growth phase, it was a period of time where pay raises and other expenses could grow because enrollment was growing each year. Even though the salary rates were going up at a faster rate than the WPU, it could be managed. Once the enrollment is flat, more attention needs to be paid to the budget. When a loan is paid off, it results in an increase in revenue. The schools have done well in reducing mortgage payments. The next step is paying off the loans.

Adam feels it is in the boards best interest to have a very good program to compete, with things such as retirement and insurance.

Steve pointed out that the biggest expense is salary. This doesn't increase too much over time because of a turnover rate of about 15%. Every eight or nine years the teacher staff is brand new.

Adam suggested that the 5 year forecast is much more fuzzy when you get to 5 years.

*Board Development - Tirzah Anderson:* Tirzah read the three duties of the board. Adam thought there was a lot of auditing of information that could be improved.

**Motion to adjourn: Tirzah Anderson**  
**Second: Emma Bullock**