

**Thomas Edison Charter Schools**

**Governing Board Meeting**

**September 2, 2015**

5:34

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Holly Gunther, Tirzah Anderson, Emma Bullock, Adam Burris Late: Nick Jackson, Danae Pruden

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*Welcome/Conducting: Tirzah Anderson*

*Pledge: Adam Burris*

*Adoption of Agenda*

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

**Second: Emma Bullock**

**Unanimous**

*Charter Highlight* - Discipline skilled classroom management, training that corrects, GL classroom management.

*Board Development:*

*Policy Highlight:*

*Danae Pruden and Nick Jackson are in attendance.*

Tirzah read the fees policy.

*Training Objectives:*

TECS: TECS Governing Board Handbook, Board Orientation and Training

Adam talked about revisiting the goals of the legislature and what they envision for school education, the purpose of the USOE and the characteristics of the public education system.

*Governance:* The Seven Outs, Board Orientation and Training

*Compliance:* Charter Authorization/USOE/SCSB & General Requirements

*Public Comment:* None

*Approval of Minutes:* Tabled

*School Fees Policy - Tirzah Anderson:*

**Motion to approve policy as currently written: Tirzah Anderson**

**Second: Holly Gunther**

**Unanimous**

*Personnel Requests - Melani/Scott:*

*Melani Kirk:*

Edison South is not doing a traditional school lunch program, but having a "Pizza Wednesday". Marci Brooks has been hired to run it. She is being paid from the funds collected.

*Scott Jackson:*

- Colleen Morrison as an aide to replace Christina Smith
- Maria Valles as an evening custodian.
- Christina Smith, part time (two classes) for college and career readiness, speech and drama
- Christie and Craig Brown, a team to teach 4th and 5th band students
- Susan Ellsworth, as elementary aide

**Motion to approve the personnel requests: Tirzah Anderson**

**Second: Adam Burris**

**Unanimous**

*Vendor/Contractor Approvals -Melani Scott: None*

*Strategic Outcomes Report - Melani/Scott:*

*Scott Jackson:*

- Third grade keyboarding classes are being implemented at both schools in response to SAGE testing. It is an intensive, every day course for 8 to 10 weeks.
- Teachers in both schools have begun working in Utah Compose.
- SAGE was looked at for individual types of things. Initial testing has started with SMI and SRI.
- Edison North has done a lot of technical work to increase the infrastructure. A new server was purchased, wifi improved, a new internet filter installed and laptops purchased. The network is not working correctly with the wireless.
- This year the state requires a composite score for DIBELS. The schools have signed up to use a program purchase this year by the state to calculate the composite score. This year the program is free, but may not be in the future. Three aides are being trained to give the tests to all students at both schools in a particular grade level. They are waiting for the training so they can begin.
- Scott looked at some philosophical things over the summer. As he took a look at different test results it became clear that there were some gaps. As he tried to figure it out he surmised that the textbooks are not the curriculum, they are the tools.

Melani Kirk will tie her strategic outcomes to the information in her principal report.

*Principal Reports - Scott/Melani:*

*Melani Kirk:*

- Scott and Melani are working together on the strategic outcomes. Right now Edison South is focusing on trying to increase the numbers on the waiting list. The DVD is finished and Mr. Schultz is going to meet with the administrators to talk about strategies.
- Another USU group is coming in and could continue the marketing that is being done.
- Carolyn and Jamie have started observations. Melani has been able to observe in several classrooms.
- Brad, Shem and Melani visited each classroom introducing themselves to the students.
- The teacher training was fantastic and teachers are doing great of their 8:1 ratios.

Scott Jackson:

- Scott Jackson also praised the training, saying it was the best ever. It tackled the schools philosophies, classroom management, autism, emotional difficulties and disabilities. Yesterday teachers were asked what they could take away from training. Some of the things they talked about were love and logic, working with students as individuals and appreciating who they are.

*Finance Report - Jim Peterson:* Steve was not able to get to the August expense report. Jim discussed the major cost trends report. The revenue from the state is now back up to what it was in 2008.

Edison North is right on target for enrollment. Edison South is well below their projections. Jim is not concerned since there is a good surplus amount.

Danae and Emma is-are concerned that there are not enough siblings to fill the kindergarten this year. She does not think it is acceptable to say that it is the area population. She would like someone to dig into it and find hard underlying reasons so it can never happen again. She is extremely worried.

**Comment [BB1]:** Both Danae and Emma expressed concern.

**Comment [BB2]:** I never said this

Jim Peterson noted that the number fluctuates from year to year. Some years there are more siblings than in other years. Scott Jackson agreed that it does jump up and down.

Emma wants to know what is in "other" category on the enrollment spreadsheet. She wants others to dig and make the parents who have left without wanting to give a reason, give a reason now. They should all be contacted.

Danae Pruden saw that the trend was for Edison South's enrollment to increase. This may not be bad, just a leveling off. Danae agreed with Emma that we dig into this to know why so it doesn't become a trend. Nick and Emma want to be able to understand what the underlying reasons are.

Adam added that the parent satisfaction rate is in high 90's, so that would seem to contradict that they are leaving for dissatisfaction. Emma asked about the N size contributing to that number. Scott wanted to verify the accuracy on the chart that lists the reasons given for un-enrollment.

*Facilities and Finance Subcommittee Report - Adam Burris:*

The cash surplus at both schools is in good shape, Unless there are needs that supersede paying off the debt, some of it will be paid.

A lot of information needs to be gathered to help the marketing. The long term goal is to have 107% of enrollment on a waiting list at end of FY20. Adam has ideas, but wants to wait until after the meetings with the experts.

He would like the USU group to conduct some sort of scientific survey of the community to determine how the schools are perceived. There are some external factors involved. It would be good to differentiate

between charters, in general, and Edison Schools. Wants to establish a baseline to understand the perception.

Emma wants to know what people's understanding of test results has made in their enrollment decision. Tirzah agreed. She thinks it is crucial to understand that.

Holly mentioned that a lot of schools are doing dual immersion. Spalding and Latham are something Edison Schools do that no one else does.

Emma also asked about special education and English Language Learner services.

Adam stated that once the baselines are established plans can be made to address those items.

Adam received affirmation from Tirzah that a list of potential board members was being formulated.

*Policy and Personnel Subcommittee Report - Tirzah Anderson:* There is not much to report at this time.

*Achievement Subcommittee Report - Emma Bullock:* The committee was not able to meet, but has a meeting scheduled. She wants to express her thoughts alone, not the thoughts of the subcommittee. Emma read the standardized test scores published in the newspaper. She also took time to go to the public Data Gateway. There are some great comparison tools. She has a lot of data, but hasn't taken time to dig into it. She sees some trends, has questions and wants to know the answers. There is value in qualitative data, but also quantitative data. She doesn't want to suggest how to fix it, as a board member. She wants to have the problem defined and have others tell her how they want to fix it.

Emma doesn't perceive an urgency at this point to dig into things and ask hard questions. This is her perception only. The reason she feels that way is because of how long it is taking to even get the achievement committee up and running. It is taking a really long time. Emma is very frustrated about the achievement committee and would like to see the administration actively moving it forward, without her asking. She feels the administration should give her the data and tell her what the data means. She wants them to frame the discussion before she frames the discussion.

With SAGE data Emma feels that the school is hesitant to change their philosophy. She is not talking about changing the curriculum, but about defining a problem, understanding it and coming with a plan to move forward. She doesn't want standardized testing to become the only data point but she believes it has value. Emma remarked that she is afraid that in the hesitancy or fear of changing the school's philosophy, things are not being changed fast enough to help the students.

**Comment [BB3]:** I did not mean that the school should change their philosophy only that we shouldn't hide behind our philosophy as the reason to not look at data.

**Comment [BB4]:** again not talking about changing the philosophy, just using it as an excuse

She again reiterated that she is not speaking for the board.

As a parent and board member, Emma wants to know why things are the way they are and a plan to address them. She does not want to be the one to address them.

Emma asked for others views about data and our philisophy.

Danae Pruden—taught at Cache District for three years. She feels the students are getting a good solid education (Emma agreed), but is concerned about the perception of others when looking at the SAGE scores. She stated that she believed in this philosophy and how good the education is, but is concerned some parents will start pulling their children.

Emma made it clear she does not want to hear that "we don't teach to the test" again. She doesn't want to hear generalizations about other schools. She says she can compare Edison Schools to 20 others in the state with the same demographic. Some are charters and they don't teach to the test. She says that everyone needs to stop saying that and look harder.

**Comment [BB5]:** again, this was a comment meant to use this as an excuse to not even look at the data

Danae agreed with what Scott said regarding textbooks being tools, but not the curriculum. There must be some sort of disconnect in what the state wants students to know and what is being taught. Expressed that we may be more concerned about a program than about what the standards are.

Emma added that this school doesn't exist for a program, but to educate children.

Tirzah said that she worries about the perception of the students themselves. Her children wondered why the scores were so low.

Adam was approached by two parents with concerns about testing. They wanted proof that the school is superior to the other schools. He can provide anecdotal evidence, but can't provide proof. Speaking as a parent, his expectation for his children is that they get the best education they can. He believes they are, but he would like it to show. He believes parents' perception is the most important. He sends his children here because of the philosophy, but thinks changes can be made without changing the philosophy. Board members are all parents who have children at the school and when we have results that are poor, he is dissatisfied. Wants to address the problem without changing who we are.

Jim Petersen, financial consultant and school founder, had great concerns about the discussion. Tirzah passed out conflict of interest forms for board members to fill out as a housekeeping issue.

**Comment [BB6]:** There is no reason for this clarification

Adjourn  
6:44