

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
SOUTHLAND COLLEGE PREP CHARTER SCHOOL, INC.  
September 18, 2017**

The meeting of the Board of Directors of Southland College Prep Charter School, Inc. (the "Corporation") was held pursuant to notice as required by the Illinois Open Meetings Act, and said meeting was held as follows:

**Date:** September 18, 2017

**Time:** 6:30 p.m.

**Place:** Matteson School District 162  
4601 Sauk Trail  
Richton Park, IL 60471

**Directors Present:**

Ronald Bean, President  
Alicia Rodman McCray, Vice President  
Dr. Deborah Bordelon, Assistant Secretary  
Dr. Blondean Y. Davis  
Dr. Barbara Radner (left the meeting at 7:29 p.m.)

**Directors Absent:**

Dr. Vinni Hall  
Kevin Murphy, Secretary

**Also Present:**

Robert Hall, attorney  
Craig Englert, chief financial officer  
Zack Zayed  
Dr. Bryan Hale  
Ron Anderson  
Robert Lane  
Monica Fountain  
Sherry Grutzius  
Meghan Michals  
Lynne Panozzo  
James Kowalsky  
Brian Wales  
Sarah Weidinger  
Yvonne Williams  
Linda Disney  
Denise Faris

**I. Audience to Visitors**

No person attending the meeting wished to address the Board.

**II. Motion made by Director Radner and seconded by Director Bordelon to approve a banking relationship with Wintrust Bank including a line of credit in the amount of \$1,000,000.00, with Southland's Chief Executive Officer hereby granted authority to sign the documents required for this line of credit on behalf of Southland, and the creation of Southland depository accounts at Wintrust Bank.**

Craig Englert, Southland's Chief Financial Officer, referred to the memorandum in the directors' packets regarding this agenda item. Mr. Englert explained that when there was an impasse regarding state funding, Southland approached First Midwest Bank, the bank with which Southland currently does business, about additional borrowing options if the impasse went on for an extended period of time. Mr. Englert stated that First Midwest Bank currently provides Southland with an ongoing \$750,000 open line of credit and a \$500,000 credit line for any equipment purchase needs. Southland has never had to access these lines of credit. Southland's administration did not find First Midwest Bank to be willing to provide any meaningful assistance if Southland's funding had been delayed for an extended period. Mr. Englert stated that he therefore approached other banks regarding a larger line of credit, and found Wintrust to be the most responsive. Specifically, Wintrust has proposed a \$1 million revolving line of credit that can be accessed if it is ever needed by Southland. Also, Wintrust committed that it is willing to increase the line of credit to \$2.25 million if there were significant payment delays from the state in the future. Mr. Englert said the administration is seeking the Board's approval to authorize the line of credit and a new banking relationship with Wintrust.

**Upon the motion duly made, seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 5 YEAS, 0 NAYS:**

**RESOLVED, a banking relationship with Wintrust Bank including a line of credit in the amount of \$1,000,000.00, with Southland's Chief Executive Officer hereby granted authority to sign the documents required for this line of credit on behalf of Southland, and the creation of Southland depository accounts at Wintrust Bank were approved.**

**III. Motion made by Director Bordelon and seconded by Director Rodman McCray to approve the following personnel matters:**

- a. Approval of part time, at-will employment of Dr. Latunja Williams to serve as Southland's Coordinator of Middle School/High School Math during the 2017-2018 school year, pursuant to the terms of an employment agreement to be entered on behalf of the parties.
- b. Approval of at-will employment of Ms. Gloria Chatman as Southland's Coordinator of Dance during the 2017-2018 school year, pursuant to the

terms of an employment agreement to be entered on behalf of the Parties.

- c. Approval of at-will employment of Ms. Kristen Cornell as a teacher during the 2017-2018 school year, pursuant to the terms of an employment agreement to be entered on behalf of the Parties.
- d. Approval of part time, at-will employment of Ms. CoMakiya Baskin-Smith to serve as 2017-2018 varsity co-cheerleading coach, pursuant to the terms of an employment agreement to be entered on behalf of the parties.
- e. Approval of part time, at-will employment of Mr. Lloyd Batts as boys head basketball coach during the 2017-2018 school year, pursuant to the terms of an employment agreement to be entered on behalf of the parties.
- f. Approval of part time, at-will employment of Ms. Bridget Lowery to serve as 2017-2018 faculty sponsor of student council, pursuant to the terms of an employment agreement to be entered on behalf of the parties.
- g. Approval of part time, at-will employment of Mr. Ambrose Panico to provide services regarding Character Education during the 2017-2018 school year, pursuant to the terms of an employment agreement to be entered on behalf of the parties.
- h. Approval of part time, at-will employment of Mr. Andre Wakefield as boys assistant basketball coach during the 2017-2018 school year, pursuant to the terms of an employment agreement to be entered on behalf of the parties.
- i. Approval of part time, at-will employment of Mr. Kenneth Wilcoxon to serve as 2017-2018 girls golf coach, pursuant to the terms of an employment agreement to be entered on behalf of the parties.
- j. Approval of part time, at-will employment of Mr. Arthur Wilson as boys assistant basketball coach during the 2017-2018 school year, pursuant to the terms of an employment agreement to be entered on behalf of the parties.
- k. Approval of part time, at-will employment of Ms. Deshonda Wright as varsity cheerleading coach during the 2017-2018 school year, pursuant to the terms of an employment agreement to be entered on behalf of the parties.
- l. Approval of part time, at-will employment of Ms. Deshonda Wright to serve as 2017-2018 faculty co-sponsor for Southland Model United Nations, pursuant to the terms of an employment agreement to be entered on behalf of the parties.

- m. Rescind approval of part time, at-will employment of Ms. CoMakiya Baskin-Smith to serve as a 2017-2018 head cheerleader coach, pursuant to the terms of an employment agreement to be entered on behalf of the parties.
- n. Rescind approval of part time, at-will employment of Ms. Danielle Van Vliet to serve as a 2017-2018 girls' golf coach, pursuant to the terms of an employment agreement to be entered on behalf of the parties.
- o. Rescind approval of part time, at-will employment of Ms. Erica Bartley to serve as moderator of the yearbook, pursuant to the terms of an employment agreement to be entered on behalf of the parties.
- p. Approval of the termination of the employment of Employee B effective August 28, 2017.

Dr. Davis commented that many of the personnel items under consideration would authorize coaches for the second semester sports.

**Upon the motion duly made, seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 5 YEAS, 0 NAYS:**

**RESOLVED, the personnel matters were approved.**

- IV. Motion made by Director Rodman McCray and seconded by Director Bordelon to approve the minutes of the open session portion of the meeting on July 17, 2017, and the minutes of the executive session portion of meeting on July 17, 2017, and to declare them closed.**

**Upon the motion duly made, seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 5 YEAS, 0 NAYS:**

**RESOLVED, the open session minutes were approved and the executive session minutes were approved and declared closed.**

- V. Report from the Chief Executive Officer**

Dr. Davis observed that the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year was one of Southland's smoothest openings, stating that there had been no major discipline problems, the staff is strong, and one special education position is the only one that is open at this time.

At Dr. Davis' direction, Robert Lane, administrative assistant to the CEO, reviewed the 2016-2017 year and shared 2017-2018 initiatives and goals.

Mr. Lane noted that the past school year was unique because the state established the SAT as the required standardized test for Illinois public high schools; however, Southland worked on the SAT and ACT with students so that they were prepared for both assessments. Mr. Lane stated that it was a good strategy to support the students in taking both standardized tests, as, last year, half of Southland's 11<sup>th</sup> grade students did better on the ACT and the other half did better on the SAT; accordingly, each student was able to provide colleges and universities with their best scores in seeking admission.

Mr. Lane also noted that the SAT, which provides college readiness benchmarks, allows Southland to track students from the ninth grade through their final SAT test. Mr. Lane stated that this data confirms what Southland's administration has identified regarding its student achievement: Southland students are excelling in Evidenced Based Reading and Writing ("EBRW"), with additional support needed to increase their achievement in Mathematics. Mr. Lane discussed the fact that Southland students make remarkable gains in both EBRW and Mathematics during their time at Southland, but such gains do not allow the students to catch-up to national achievement averages in Mathematics, as the students generally enter Southland with significant deficiencies regarding mastery of math concepts that are measured on the standardized tests. Thus, the standardized tests confirm that Southland must provide additional strategies to assist students in the area of mathematics.

Mr. Lane went on to report that Southland's Class of 2017 achieved an average ACT score of 20.2. Regarding the Class of 2018, preliminary SAT results for the assessment taken last year show a Southland score of 1,011 (an ACT equivalent of 20). The state average is 1022, with an ACT equivalent of 20, and the national average is 998, an ACT equivalent of 19.

In further discussion, Mr. Lane provided the specific growth achieved by Southland students in the Class of 2018 between taking the PSAT and taking the SAT exam in 11<sup>th</sup> grade:

**EBRW**

Typical Growth	20 points
Southland	33 points

**Math**

Typical Growth	20 points
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Southland 39 points

**Composite**

Typical Growth 40 points

Southland 72 points

Linda Disney, Southland’s Director of Special Education, then addressed the performance of Southland’s 11th grade students (Class of 2018) with accommodations based upon the requirements of applicable IEPs and 504 Plans. Ms. Disney stated that, comparing the PSAT to the SAT, these students had an average improvement of 80.63 points on their composite scores; an average improvement in math of 56.25 points; and an average EBRW improvement of 24.38 points. Thus, Ms. Disney noted that, in some instances, the special education students outpaced the regular education students regarding their growth.

Dr. Davis noted that Southland participates in a college fair that focuses on special education students. She said that Southland has had an enrollment of special education students in the range of 11 percent to 15 percent of its student population. Yvonne Williams, Southland’s Chief Special Education Officer, provided details regarding the college fair that specializes in students with disabilities. She said that a wide range of choices are offered. Plans are underway to attend this conference again this year on October 25, and parents and students will attend along with Southland administrators. Ms. Williams added, “We need to teach our students and parents how to advocate for themselves in college. They have to be willing to express their needs. Ms. Kidd helps them to make connections with the disabilities coordinators of the colleges and universities attended by our students, and these coordinators assist in identifying available resources.”

Ron Anderson, Southland’s College Counselor, said that he works to identify colleges and universities that are good fits for our students with disabilities. In particular, Mr. Anderson said that he has identified ten schools that do an excellent, holistic job in meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

**2017-18 Execution**

It was noted that improvement in students’ achievement in the area of mathematics is a major focus at Southland this year, and James Kowalsky, Chair of Southland’s math department and a Southland math teacher, identified the following initiatives that will make Southland’s mathematics program more effective:

- Increased teachers from 4.5 to 6.
- Reduced class size.
- Enrolled 90 students in Summer Bridge program intended to improve math skills.
- Implemented Homework Club and Enigma Club.
- Added additional observations and more department collaboration time, to facilitate use of best practices in the math classes.

Sarah Weidinger, representative of Southland consultant Academic Approach, described Southland's Master Class, an initiative implemented by Dr. Davis. Ms. Weidinger said that data accumulated from ACT and SAT scores indicate the students whose math scores need a boost and what skills need strengthening. These students are identified for one-on-one tutoring and assigned to an 11<sup>th</sup> grade math teacher. Ms. Weidinger said they have seen great results in improving skills and scores. Mr. Lane said that the growth that students achieved last year after eight weeks in the Master Class rivaled their growth for an entire year.

Dr. Davis said that the low class size is a factor in the success of the Master Class. Dr. Davis noted that many students enter high school with a sixth grade math ability. "Southland's job is to bring them up to college readiness. We need to strengthen our base," she said.

Mathematics teacher Brian Wales stated that he offered a pre-calculus class during the summer, at the request of his students. Mr. Wales stated that the vast majority of the students who qualified for the class by taking a test and achieving the required grade actively participated in the class throughout the summer. Mr. Wales stated that he was impressed and gratified by the students' passion to improve their math proficiency.

Director Rodman McCray said she was impressed by the ways in which Southland addresses students' needs and the strategies that have been initiated. Dr. Davis said that Southland has engagement from the majority of the parents, but more could be done to engage additional parents. Dr. Davis said that Southland's summer programs should be expanded, so that there is not regression during the summer months due to the absence of structured learning opportunities.

President Bean commented, "The discussion is fascinating and it is encouraging. The dedication of Southland's faculty is wonderful."

Director Bordelon noted her view that the focus on strength-based small groups and team building is an excellent approach.

## **Literacy/Writing**

Sherry Grutzius, Southland's Director of Instructional Support for English, Global Language and Humanities, and Meghan Michals, English teacher, discussed the 6 + 1 Writing Traits grant which they authored and received on behalf of Southland. Through the grant, Southland will partner with Matteson District 162 schools in sharing best practices in English/Language Arts and writing methods which have resulted in high student achievement. The program will cover grades six through 12 the first year. Mrs. Grutzius, who will serve as the coordinator of the grant, noted that the grant originators hope to extend the program to include first through fifth grade during the second year.

Ms. Grutzius said the program has more than 20 years of research data to support the strategies recommended and the program allows:

- unlimited access to tools such as rubrics, templates, model texts, and online lessons;
- the rolling out of writing assignments at each grade level;
- evaluation of each student's individual strengths and areas of focus for improvement; and
- the tracking of students and the ability to speak specifically to parents during conferences about where students need support.

Ms. Grutzius said that by the end of the second year, a district manual will be completed. She said that students will have traveling portfolios that will hold model papers and will accompany them to the next grade level so that the teachers know what writing areas to target.

Ms. Michaels said the 6 + 1 Writing Traits program is aligned with Common Core, SAT and ACT standards, noting that students would learn about rhetorical writing before they take the SAT.

Ms. Grutzius related that the program has vertical alignment; for required research papers, ninth through 12<sup>th</sup> grades are writing papers and working on research across the curriculum. She said that the goal is for student to be well-prepared for college and research paper assignments. Ms. Grutzius added that the research project also was rolled out to middle school students. She said the research topics would be age appropriate. Ms. Michals noted that the program assists students to learn the importance of revising their writing.

## **Advance Placement Performance**

Mr. Lane reported that there was an 82.4 percent success rate in Advanced Placement English and impressive growth in other curricular areas:

- U.S. history – 70 percent success rate in 2016-17, a growth rate of 23 percent
- Calculus – 66.7 percent success rate in 2016-17, up from 0 the previous year



Mr. Lane noted that students are saving money when they participate and succeed in the AP classes because they receive college credit.

### **College Acceptances and Retention**

Mr. Lane said that Southland's college acceptance rate is 100 percent. Additionally, the class of 2017 received \$25 million in merit based scholarships.

President Bean asked about the rate of Southland students remaining in college. Mr. Lane responded that the college retention rate of the three graduating classes exceeds the national average. Mr. Lane also stated that 95 percent of Southland's students return to college for the second year.

Dr. Davis noted that Southland students are getting into college and are staying. She noted that Southland's graduates are competitive at the college level and believe that they can do the work required to succeed in college, which is a great asset regarding college success.

Dr. Davis asked Mr. Lane to email his presentation to the Board members who were not present at the Board meeting.

### **VI. President Bean adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.**

Dated this 20th day of November 2017.



Secretary/Assistant Secretary  
Southland College Prep Charter School, Inc.