

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
SOUTHLAND COLLEGE PREP CHARTER SCHOOL, INC.  
March 18, 2019**

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

**Date:** March 18, 2019

**Time:** 6:31 p.m.

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

**Directors Present:**

Alicia Rodman McCray, Vice President  
Kevin Murphy, Secretary  
Dr. Blondean Y. Davis  
Dr. Vinni Hall  
Dr. Barbara Meyer  
Dr. Barbara Radner

**Directors Absent:**

Ronald Bean, President

**Also Present:**

Robert Hall, attorney  
Craig Englert, chief financial officer  
Zack Zayed  
Robert Lane  
Sherry Grutzius  
Marvin Talley  
Southland staff members  
Monica Fountain  
Denise Faris

Due to the absence of Board President Ron Bean, Director Blondean Y. Davis asked that Director Barbara Radner chair the meeting. This was agreeable to all present.

**I. Audience to Visitors**

No person attending the meeting wished to address the Board.

**II. Motion made by Director Murphy and seconded by Director Davis to approve policy regarding election of Board officers.**

Robert Hall, Board attorney, discussed the proposed policy. He said it had been nine years since an election for Board officers was held. Mr. Hall noted that discussion was held about this matter at the last Board meeting. He has drafted a policy that provides for an election of officers every two years, which brings Southland's Board in line with the procedures in other school districts. If the Board approves the policy, nominations will be accepted at this meeting and the election of officers will occur at the Board's May meeting.

**Upon the motion duly made, seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 6 YEAS, 0 NAYS:**

**RESOLVED, the policy regarding election of Board officers was approved.**

**III. Motion made by Director Davis and seconded by Director Murphy to approve the Sub-Lease Agreement between Southland and Matteson School District No. 162.**

Craig Englert, chief financial officer, directed Board members to the information in their packets regarding the sub-lease agreement. He said the agreement is periodically reviewed to determine that the rate is fair and in line with market lease rates. Mr. Englert said that a lease rate of \$17 per square foot is still appropriate as demonstrated by comparable leases in the area, which were presented to the Board members in the materials provided prior to the meeting of the Board on March 18, 2019. Mr. Englert also noted that the amount of space to be leased by Southland has increased in the lease presented to the Board for approval, due to the addition of the new Performing Arts Center which is now utilized by Southland.

**Upon the motion duly made, seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 6 YEAS, 0 NAYS:**

**RESOLVED, the Sub-Lease Agreement between Southland and Matteson School District No. 162 was approved.**

**IV. Motion made by Director Meyer and seconded by Director Davis to approve the Transportation Contract with Kickert School Bus for the 2019-2020 School Year.**

Mr. Englert said that Southland received a renewal bid from Kickert that included a 3.75 percent increase due to the bus driver shortage experienced locally and across the country, which has required increased compensation in order to ensure that Kickert has a sufficient number of bus drivers to cover Southland's bus routes. Specifically, Kickert plans to increase the drivers' wages by 10 percent in order to attract more drivers. Additionally, there are 12 new buses and fuel costs have increased; however, the anticipated increase in wages for bus drivers is the biggest driver of the contract increase,

Mr. Englert said. In response to a question from a Director, Mr. Englert said that the Kickert drivers are guaranteed at least four hours per day and they do receive health benefits. Regarding the bus contract, Director Davis said that it is the administration's intent to contact surrounding districts in order to determine if any districts are interested in jointly going out for transportation bids. Director Davis said that such a combined bid might require a change in school day start and end times, in order to coordinate student transportation with neighboring districts. Director Davis said that it is worth exploring whether a combined bid is possible, as another bus company might be encouraged to bid, which could result in a more favorable student transportation contract.

**Upon the motion duly made, seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 6 YEAS, 0 NAYS:**

**RESOLVED, the Transportation Contract with Kickert School Bus for the 2019-2020 School Year was approved.**

- V. Motion made by Director Hall and seconded by Director Rodman McCray to approve the engagement for auditing services.**

Mr. Englert said that the proposal letter from RSM is in Board members' packets. He said there is an increase in the fee of \$800 for the end of year audit, which puts the cost at \$23,500. Mr. Englert said this is a competitive rate.

**Upon the motion duly made, seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 6 YEAS, 0 NAYS:**

**RESOLVED, the engagement for auditing services was approved.**

- VI. Motion made by Director Davis and seconded by Director Rodman McCray to approve renewal of membership in the Illinois High School Association for the 2019-2020 school term, and to adopt and abide by the constitution, by-laws, terms and conditions, administrative procedures, guidelines, and policies of the Illinois High School Association for the 2019-2020 school term as required for such membership.**

Director Davis explained that Southland would not be able to compete in athletic events and other activities without membership in the IHSA.

**Upon the motion duly made, seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 6 YEAS, 0 NAYS:**

**RESOLVED, renewal of membership in the Illinois High School Association for the 2019-2020 school term, and to adopt and abide by the constitution, by-laws, terms and conditions, administrative procedures, guidelines, and policies of the Illinois High School Association for the 2019-2020 school term as required for such**

**membership was approved.**

**VII. Motion made by Director Murphy and seconded by Director McCray to approve Southland's School Calendar for the 2019-2020 school year.**

Director Davis said that Southland worked to coordinate its calendar with District 227 and the elementary feeder districts. She said Southland did receive District 227's calendar and Southland is in accord with it. She noted that it appears that Districts 159 and 163 also will have the same calendar. District 160 has not yet finalized its calendar, as additional discussion with its union is still required.

**Upon the motion duly made, seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 6 YEAS, 0 NAYS:**

**RESOLVED, Southland's School Calendar for the 2019-2020 school year was approved.**

**VII. Motion made by Director Murphy and seconded by Director Davis to authorize the District to participate in an E-Rate consortium entitled the "Matteson-Southland Consortium" together with Matteson School District No. 162 and to execute such forms and documents as may be required to permit the Matteson-Southland Consortium to apply for E-Rate funding for Wide Area Network and Internet Access services on behalf of the District for (a) E-Rate Funding Year 2019, which commences on July 1, 2019 and ends on June 30, 2020, and (b) E-Rate Funding Year 2020, which commences on July 1, 2020 and ends on June 30, 2021.**

Mr. Englert explained that E-Rate is a federal program that provides reimbursement for some technology equipment and for internet conductivity. Each year, Southland applies for E-Rate funds with District 162. Annual reimbursements through the program are anticipated to be approximately \$100,000.00 during each of the next two funding years.

**Upon the motion duly made, seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 6 YEAS, 0 NAYS:**

**RESOLVED, Southland's participation in an E-Rate consortium entitled the "Matteson-Southland Consortium" together with Matteson School District No. 162 and to execute such forms and documents as may be required to permit the Matteson-Southland Consortium to apply for E-Rate funding for Wide Area Network and Internet Access services on behalf of the District for (a) E-Rate Funding Year 2019, which commences on July 1, 2019 and ends on June 30, 2020, and (b) E-Rate Funding Year 2020, which commences on July 1, 2020 and ends on June 30, 2021, was authorized.**

**VIII. Motion made by Director Murphy and seconded by Director Davis to approve the following Personnel Matters:**

- a. Approval of at-will employment of Dr. Robyn Jackson as a teacher during the 2018-2019 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 Mr. Connor Johnson as a teacher during the 2018-2019 school year, pursuant to the terms of an employment agreement to be entered on behalf of the parties.
- c. Approval of the resignation of Mr. Brian Davis, teacher, effective February 1, 2019.

Director Davis noted that Dr. Robyn Jackson is a medical doctor who wants to transition to working with children and will be teaching chemistry at Southland. Connor Johnson is just out of college. Dr. Davis said there is a shortage of teachers and there are times when it is difficult to fill positions. She thanked Dr. Doug Hamilton, Mrs. Yvonne Williams, Mrs. Deborah Duskey and Mr. Marvin Talley for seeking out potential personnel resources and attending job fairs.

**Upon the motion duly made, seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 6 YEAS, 0 NAYS:**

**RESOLVED, the Personnel Matters were approved.**

**IX. Motion made by Director Rodman McCray and seconded by Director Murphy to approve the minutes of meeting on February 4, 2019.**

**Upon the motion duly made, seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 6 YEAS, 0 NAYS:**

**RESOLVED, the minutes of the Board's meeting on February 4, 2019, were approved.**

**X. Report from the Chief Executive Officer.**

**New Gymnasium**

Dr. Davis referenced the displays at the front of the Boardroom of the planned gymnasium addition. Dr. Davis said that, with the addition of the gymnasium, the current building would be devoted to all academic classrooms. Dr. Davis said that the Board and the administration have created a competitive high school and developed something that will lead the community forward for the next 20 to 30 years. She commended ARCON for the work it has done for District 162 and Southland over the years and noted how wonderful the Performing Arts Center is.

Mark Walczak, director of building and grounds, said that the addition of the gymnasium would double the size of Southland. Mr. Walczak said the design work has begun and

surveyors will be on site the following day, with an anticipated groundbreaking in August or September. Mr. Walczak said that there should be a shell of a building by the time snow begins to fall next winter.

Steve Hougsted, president/principal of ARCON, and Gaspare P. Pitrello, associate principal of ARCON, discussed the construction project. Mr. Pitrello said that the new structure, to be constructed to the east of the Performing Arts Center, would complement the Center. The addition will include a gymnasium, retractable bleachers with seating for 800, an elevated running track around the perimeter of the gymnasium, a fitness room, two classrooms, a lobby with concession stands, lockers, and offices. The gym will have IHSA volleyball and basketball courts. The ceiling height is 32 feet.

Dr. Davis said that the addition will have space for the Benefactors Wall with a section that commemorates former Southland employees Andrea Kidd and Ron Anderson, whose work contributed so much to Southland. Dr. Davis said that she is grateful to the Village of Richton Park for the use of the Village recreation center for gym classes during the past several years, and noted that the gymnasium addition will enable Southland to have its gym classes on site, and to host its athletic contests on site, without the need to travel to other rented locations, which will allow Southland to avoid the student transportation expense associated with traveling to other facilities for gym class and athletic events. She said that locker rooms will be removed from Southland's main building and relocated to the addition. This will free up space that will be used for a teachers' lunchroom.

Dr. Davis noted that the Southland building has become a hub of activity and welcomes such groups as the South Suburban AKA, South Suburban Police, and South Suburban Cotillion group. Dr. Davis said that in August 2020, Mr. Englert and Mr. Walczak will be planning the ribbon cutting for the new gymnasium and welcoming students.

In response to questions from Directors, Mr. Pitrello said there would be a corridor connecting the Performing Arts Center to the gymnasium and there would be a series of doors for egress to the outside.

Dr. Davis said that District 162 has worked with ARCON for 22 years and she has confidence in the firm, and in Mr. Hougsted and Mr. Pitrello.

Dr. Davis said that Southland received approval to add 20 students to its enrollment effective August, 2019 and an increase of an additional 40 students for August, 2020. Southland will peak at 600 students, she said. Dr. Davis said that the small school atmosphere is beneficial because staff members know the students and the students and staff are comfortable in the building.

### **Enrollment Lottery**

Dr. Davis complimented staff for a job well done on the Southland enrollment lottery, which took place on March 13, 2019. Dr. Davis noted that it was unfortunate, but it was

necessary to turn away more student applicants than the number of students who could be accepted for enrollment at Southland.

Dr. Davis related that Illinois State Representative Emanuel Welch had proposed a bill that would have returned Southland to oversight by District 227, including giving District 227 the authority to determine whether Southland would continue to exist. People familiar with Southland have spoken to Representative Welch and he has now proposed an amendment to his bill, which would eliminate the Illinois State Charter School Commission, but would return Southland to the supervision of the Illinois State Board of Education {"ISBE"}, with ISBE having authority for the renewal of Southland's charter.

### **Speech Team**

Dr. Davis said that each year, under the guidance of Cheryl Frazier, Southland's speech team has qualified for the regional and sectional tournaments and has won three state championships for the Performance in the Round category. Dr. Davis noted that, on March 23, 2018, the State of Illinois would be honoring Mrs. Frazier for a lifetime of achievement in guiding students in the areas of speech, drama and forensics. "Mrs. Frazier has done a magnificent job," she said. Dr. Davis noted that a Southland group will be in Peoria to support Mrs. Frazier when she is honored by the State of Illinois.

### **Mock Trial Class**

Sherry Grutzius, Director of Instructional Support and Academic Advising, related that she designed a trial advisory class that she teaches. It meets during the eighth period and includes five students from each grade level. The students in this class conduct a mock trial and, this year, participated in the South Suburban Regional Mock Trial tournament, where they took third place. Freshman Blaze Atwood won the Outstanding Attorney award. The students will compete at the state level in the spring.

Dr. Davis acknowledged Judge Linzey Jones, who has been very supportive of the Mock Trial class. Mrs. Grutzius noted that Judge Jones invited the mock trial class to his courtroom at the Bridgeview Court House and gave the students the opportunity to view actual trials. He also comes to the Mock Trial Class on Fridays, in order to help the students with their trial skills. Mrs. Grutzius noted that a Loyola University law student and a student's father who is a lawyer also have provided wonderful guidance to the students in the class.

### **Southland Fine Arts and Foreign Language Planning Grant**

Mrs. Grutzius discussed the grant, which was sought to help Southland nurture in its students a love and knowledge of French and Spanish and to provide a language lab that would immerse the students in the languages. Mrs. Grutzius applied for the first phase of the Fine Arts and Foreign Language Planning grant in 2018 and Southland was one of only 13 grant recipients state-wide. Work began on the World Language Program in the summer of 2018, she said, and a comprehensive curriculum guide was established. Southland was accepted for Phase II and was awarded a \$98,940 Illinois Arts Council Implementation Grant. The objective of the next phase of the program is to increase the

speaking and listening skills of the students and to raise their self-confidence in conversing in a foreign language. The grant is renewable for two more calendar years. The total possible grant funds available during this three-year period are \$222,000.

Mrs. Grutzius said that the language lab would be used to record students' French and Spanish conversations, which would be archived for comparison purposes when the students are seniors. A second language lab would be added during the second year of the grant. Mrs. Grutzius said that she hopes to establish a community connection for the program.

Dr. Davis commented that Southland has a larger enrollment of native Spanish speaking students than it has had in the past. Parents have suggested the creation of a "heritage class" that would provide advanced course work. It is possible that this will be created next year as part of Southland's World Language Department curriculum, she said.

Director Meyer said she could put Mrs. Grutzius in contact with schools outside the United States. Director Meyer also suggested that Mrs. Grutzius access the website Illinois Global Scholars.

### **Counseling Department**

Robert Lane updated the Board on "Decision Season" when students are hearing from colleges and juniors are in the midst of SAT and ACT testing. He said that the juniors would take the final practice SAT the following day. The students have finished the sixth week of the Master Class and they will finish the 15<sup>th</sup> week of SAT prep on Saturday. The SAT will be given on April 9<sup>th</sup> and the national ACT examination will be administered on April 13.

### **Class of 2019**

Mr. Lane said that only four students have not yet received college acceptances. He said that there have been 1,100 college acceptances among the 117 seniors. Thus far, the students have received \$24 million in scholarships, which is a record for Southland, he said.

Among the first time college acceptances for the Class of 2019, said Mr. Lane, are MIT, Loyola Marymount, Texas A and M, University of Florida, University of North Carolina, and Macalester College. Acceptances also have been received from Yale, University of Chicago, Vanderbilt, Cornell, Emory (four students), University of Michigan, and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (36 students).

Mr. Lane said that a student was accepted into the University of Illinois engineering program and, due to the university's financial award program, the cost to attend the school for the student is \$0. Another student has received grants and a scholarship for attendance at Washington University in St. Louis so that the cost to the family is \$65.



Dr. Davis noted that a guidance counselor is needed in the counseling department in an effort to build the team. She also said that she would like to promote Mr. Lane to the position of Director of College Admissions.

Director Rodman McCray congratulated Mr. Lane on the “wonderful work” he has done.

**Board Officers’ Nominations**

The Board members provided nominations for the Board officer positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and Assistant Secretary. The nominations were as follows:

For the office of President: Ron Bean, Vinni Hall, and Kevin Murphy.

For the office of Vice President: Vinni Hall, Alicia Rodman McCray, Kevin Murphy and Barbara Radner.


For the office of Secretary: Vinni Hall, Barbara Meyer and Kevin Murphy.

For the Office of Assistant Secretary: Vinni Hall, Barbara Meyer, Kevin Murphy and Barbara Radner.

The Board is expected to elect its officers at its next meeting, pursuant to the above-listed nominations and the policy approved by the Board earlier in the meeting.

**XI. Director Radner adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.**

Dated this 20th day of May 2019.

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