

Rochester STEM Academy  
District #4204  
**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

May 20, 5:00 p.m.  
Rochester STEM Academy 415 16<sup>th</sup> St. SW, Rochester, MN

**Call to order:** Jill Leet-Otley called the meeting to order at 4:54 p.m.

**Board Members Present:** Jill Leet-Otley, Abdulkadir Abdalla, Zach Jones, Abdullahi Ali Yare, Mohamoud Hamud (Abdullahi Ali and Mohamoud Hamud arrived 8 minutes into the meeting; Abdulkadir left at 5:41).

**Absent:**

**Others present:** Bryan Rossi, Robert Procaccini, Wendy Swanson-Choi

***Vision***

*Rochester STEM Academy will embed STEM immersion into all aspects of its programming, culture, and operations to support students from lower-income families becoming confident and skilled in STEM-related higher educational and employment opportunities.*

***Mission***

*The mission of Rochester STEM Academy is to provide a highly supportive learning environment for minority, immigrant, and other students currently underserved in traditional area high schools and greatly underrepresented in Rochester's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) industries through a challenging program that emphasizes creativity, accountability, ongoing assessments, college-preparation, and high academic achievement.*

**Roll call and conflict of interest:** No conflicts of interest

**Approval of the agenda:** Motion to approve with the addition of requesting board approval for new graduation requirements and switching the order so that financials come after the director's report-No objections- Unanimously approved.

**Approval of the minutes from March 18, 2015:** Motion to approve – No objections-Unanimously approved.

**Business:**

➤ **Board Motions/Actions**

<b>Motion:</b> To approve new math graduation requirements recommended by faculty and administration and in line with MDE requirements			
<b>Made by:</b> Jill Leet-Otley		<b>Seconded:</b> Zach Jones	
<b>Discussion:</b> Having a score on the ACT or RCTC Accuplacer test will now count as one of the ways to meet the math graduation requirement			
<b>Vote:</b>	<b>Yea:</b> 5	<b>Nay:</b> 0	<b>Abstain:</b> 0
<b>Decision:</b> Motion carries unanimously			

<b>Motion:</b> To increase graduation requirement from 21.5 credits to 24 credits and to re-align grading policy as recommended by faculty and administration			
<b>Made by:</b> Abdalla Abdulakadir		<b>Seconded:</b> Mohamoud Hamud	
<b>Discussion:</b> Modifying the grading policy so that it is comparable to grading policies at Rochester's other high schools			
<b>Vote:</b>	<b>Yea:</b> 5	<b>Nay:</b> 0	<b>Abstain:</b> 0
<b>Decision:</b> Motion carries unanimously			

<b>Motion:</b> To approve financials from March and April 2015			
<b>Made by:</b> Mohamoud Hamud		<b>Seconded by:</b> Abdullahi Ali Yare	
<b>Discussion:</b> We are slightly under-budget at this time and will get the holdback, but are facing the possibility of decreasing our projected fund balance from 12% to 10%. We need to increase enrollment to 100 students to maintain viability.			
<b>Vote:</b>	<b>Yea:</b> 4	<b>Nay:</b> 0	<b>Abstain:</b> 0
<b>Decision:</b> Motion carries unanimously			

<b>Motion:</b> To approve the 2015-16 calendar			
<b>Made by:</b> Zach Jones		<b>Seconded:</b> Abdullahi Ali Yare	
<b>Discussion:</b>			
<b>Vote:</b>	<b>Yea:</b> 4	<b>Nay:</b> 0	<b>Abstain:</b> 0
<b>Decision:</b> Motion carries unanimously			

<b>Motion:</b> To approve the auditor, special education director, pledge of allegiance waiver, and appointing the director as the LEA representative			
<b>Made by:</b> Jill Leet-Otley		<b>Seconded:</b> Zach Jones	
<b>Discussion:</b>			
<b>Vote:</b>	<b>Yea:</b> 4	<b>Nay:</b> 0	<b>Abstain:</b> 0
<b>Decision:</b> Motion carries unanimously			

<b>Motion:</b> To approve the Nurse's contract			
<b>Made by:</b> Jill Leet-Otley		<b>Seconded:</b> Mohamoud Hamud	
<b>Discussion:</b> The nurses from the public health department are doing an excellent job for our students and families			
<b>Vote:</b>	<b>Yea:</b> 4	<b>Nay:</b> 0	<b>Abstain:</b> 0
<b>Decision:</b> Motion carries unanimously			

**Director's Report:**  
**Enrollment:**

We are currently at 81 students. We need to do some active recruitment in order to meet projected enrollment of 100 students (as per our original application). With increasing numbers of students attending PSEO classes we need to increase enrollment to offset the loss of funds that follows the students to PSEO. Bryan and the staff put together 3 recruitment programs (advertised in the Post Bulletin and Rochester Magazine) that were held at the History Center, the Public Library, and RCTC in order to recruit from more diverse communities. Attendance was minimal, however, and a new recruitment strategy was discussed. This discussion will continue at the next board meeting and an enrollment strategy will be enacted.

**Academics:**

We are making AYP. All our seniors have been accepted into college. MCA test results are not yet available for this year. Abdulkadir suggested that we have some incentives in place to motivate our students for MCA testing. Hamud concurred that the parents/families feel that their children could take the MCA's more seriously. A vital part of strategy 2018 is to continue to prepare our students for PSEO classes so that they have at least one PSEO class under their belts by the time they graduate. Currently 12% of students take PSEO classes. All eligible juniors (B or above average) have arranged accuplacer tests at RCTC. Some of our 10<sup>th</sup> graders have all of their PSEO paperwork turned in, but the goal is to have 100% of our 10<sup>th</sup> graders turn in their paperwork.

Mohamoud initiated a discussion on what we can do to provide more support for our ELL students. More students are coming from places like Syria and Saudi Arabia and they have limited English skills.

**Parent involvement:**

20 families attended our last parent meeting. This is almost half of our families.

**Other:** The special education audit went very well although we have a few things to work on. The artist in residence, Frank Sentwali, is having a very positive effect on school climate. Poetry students performed at the Rochester World Festival in March. Many also performed at the public library on May 19th and several groups have been invited to perform at the IMAA Walk Around the World event on June 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Board Development:**

MACS training will take place on May 21. Ali will complete his board training with RM&SA (date TBD). We need to recruit some new members. Jill has accepted a teaching position in Iowa and will submit her resignation from the board at the June meeting. The Vision Committee submitted their suggestion for revising the mission statement to read, "*A community focused school providing a rigorous STEM education.*" No action was taken at this time.

**Budget:**

FY 2016 budget proposal was tabled until the June 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Comments from Community Members:** None.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 6:39 pm

**Next Meeting:** June 17, 2015 at 5:00 pm

Respectfully submitted by Jill Leet-Otley, Rochester STEM Academy, board chair and acting secretary