



## **Minutes**

Santa Fe College Academy of Science and Technology  
Governing Board Meeting of September 19, 2023, at 3 p.m.  
3000 NW 83<sup>rd</sup> Street, G Building  
Gainesville, Florida 32606

### **1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Emery A. Gainey called the regular meeting of the Governing Board to order at 2:59 p.m. in classroom G-17 at the Santa Fe College Academy of Science and Technology and welcomed everyone to the very first Governing Board meeting. The group recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Members present:** G.W. Blake Fletcher, Emery A. Gainey, Caridad E. Lee, Robert L. Woody, Michael M. Goldwire (via telephone), and Jeffrey L. Oody (via Zoom and in person)

**Members absent:** None

### **2. Agenda**

The meeting agenda was approved.

Action: Motion to approve--Woody

Second: Lee

Vote: Unanimous

### **3. Board Minutes**

With no minutes to present as this is the first meeting of the Governing Board, the group moved on to agenda Item 4.

### **4. Special Recognition**

Ninth Grade Academy student Isona Wolfe and her mother were recognized by President Broadie and the Governing Board for placing third place in the End Gun Violence Oratorical Competition.

### **5. Information Items**

Executive Director Jen Homard discussed the Information Items with the Board.

#### **a. Academy Opening Requirements**

Dr. Homard thanked the Board for completing their required training, noting that there is an ongoing requirement for training every three years. She thanked the Facilities and ITS teams for getting the Certificate of Occupancy approved before the opening. Staff and students are thrilled to be in the newly renovated building, which will have continued improvements as the year goes on. Breakfast and lunch for students is being picked up

from Meadowbrook Elementary School and stored in food warmers and chillers in the common area. The Academy also underwent an inspection to ensure compliance with state K-12 requirements and passed with flying colors. Students are currently taking state mandated FAST testing, a progressive exam given three times per year to monitor academic progress.

**b. Virtual Learning Lab Agreement with Florida Virtual School, and**

**c. Blended Learning Community Agreement with Florida Virtual School**

Dr. Homard explained that the agreements the Academy will enter into with Florida Virtual School (FLVS) will allow students to take FLVS courses on their own time or on campus during school hours. The virtual curriculum will allow students to take classes, such as Driver's Ed, that the Academy does not offer at this time. The goal is to implement this program in Spring 2024. Classes taken through FLVS earn standard Florida credits and will be incorporated into students' high school transcripts.

**6. Principal's Report**

Bill McElroy, Principal, shared that the school had a great opening with a smooth transition for the first class of 75 students. Students have reported that they feel comfortable and safe in the environment. In addition to teachers' own progress monitoring systems, the Academy is currently administering the State's FAST test. Results of classroom grades and FAST scores will give teachers information with which to pivot and meet student's individual needs. Initial results appear to be very positive with Academy students generally starting out academically strong compared to other students in Alachua County and the state of Florida.

After some initial staffing turnover, the Academy expects to have a full staff next week. Principal McElroy and existing teachers and paraprofessionals have stepped up to fill gaps in the meantime and have already formed strong relationships with the students. Students are also welcome to participate in sports at their regularly zoned Alachua County district schools.

Forming clubs and organizations has been requested by students, and a PTSA and volunteer opportunities have been requested by parents. Staff are thrilled that parents and students are looking for additional ways to be involved with the school, for which there continues to be a healthy waitlist.

Design for phase two of the school should be completed in the Spring, with construction planned to occur next summer while school is out. The Florida legislature has allocated \$5.8 million for this project.

**7. Finance Report**

Andy Barnes, Vice President for Administrative Affairs and Chief Financial Officer, presented the Board with financial updates for the Academy.

**a. Budget**

The budget cycle for the Academy will begin on September 30, 2023, once existing funding from the startup grant is complete. He reviewed the proposed budget and pointed out differences from the Santa Fe College budget report. After September 30, the Academy will receive FEFP funds from the State, coming from the School Board of

Alachua County at a 95% rate. The Academy plans to run the year with a fund balance at 4% with growth to 10-11% once the school has a full population of 300 students (in year 4).

Action: Motion to approve proposed budget—Fletcher  
Second: Lee  
Vote: Unanimous

**b. Startup Grant Expenditures and Encumbrances**

Of the \$2 million awarded for the startup grant in December 2021, much has already been spent or encumbered, and staff are working to fully utilize the funds prior to the September 30, 2023, deadline. Most expenditures were right at the opening of the school on personnel and equipment. \$144,000 is still encumbered while awaiting delivery of items.

**c. Report of Purchases**

There are no purchases from the Academy's budget yet, as all purchases have been with grant funds. A list of items purchased with grant funds was provided to Governing Board members in their packets.

**8. Comments from Parents/Students**

Chair Gainey asked if there were any comments from Academy students or their parents, and in hearing none, moved to the next item.

**9. Action Items**

**a. Policy Updates**

Patti Locascio, Senior Vice President, Chief of Staff, and General Counsel, reviewed Santa Fe College Academy of Science and Technology Policies with the Board. She explained each policy and summarized how they each apply to students and staff. Many of the Academy policies mirror Santa Fe College policies. President Broadie thanked Chief of Staff Locascio for her intimate involvement in the development of the Academy and the policy manual.

Action: Motion to approve—Woody  
Second: Fletcher  
Vote: Unanimous

**b. Memorandum of Understanding with Shands Teaching Hospital and Clinics, Inc. d/b/a UF Health**

Dr. Homard explained that the MOU with UF Health represents the first, and largest, partner with the Academy. UF Health will help teach students the soft skills needed for employment and provide opportunities for students to intern and shadow UF Health staff, giving Shands a pool of skilled staff upon graduation to hopefully employ.

**c. Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools State-Approved Evaluation Systems for School-Based Administrators and Classroom Teachers and Other Instructional**

**Personnel**

The Academy is required to submit annual evaluations to the Sponsor (School Board of Alachua County), and is adopting the evaluation method from the Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools. Principal Bill McElroy will evaluate teachers and staff, and Executive Director Jen Homard will evaluate Principal McElroy.

**d. 2023-2026 Public Charter Schools Program (CSP) Grant**

Dr. Homard thanked everyone who helped with the initial application and interviews for the grant, including Chair Gainey and Trustee Fletcher. The Academy made it to the second round of approvals, and Dr. Homard is optimistic that the amount requested, \$503,000, will be awarded.

**e. Academy Calendar 2023-2024**

To ensure that all requirements for instructional days and minutes are met, the Academy will follow the School Board of Alachua County calendar. This will differ from the Santa Fe College calendar, particularly with differences on winter break and with hurricane flex days.

Action: Motion to approve Items 9b-9e —Lee

Second: Fletcher

Vote: Unanimous

**f. Academy of Science and Technology Personnel**

Lela Frye, Director of Human Resources, discussed Academy staffing with the Board. She thanked Dr. Homard and Principal McElroy for their efforts to staff K-12 teachers as it is very challenging. As of next week, the Academy will be fully staffed again after losing a teacher and paraprofessional early on.

The salary schedule will be under ongoing review as it is being built from scratch and is being adjusted as the year progresses to satisfy requirements as they arise. Consideration is being made for compensation beyond the base instructional days and substitute teacher pay.

Action: Motion to approve Item 9f—Woody

Second: Fletcher

Vote: Unanimous

**10. Adjournment**

With no additional comments, the meeting was adjourned at 3:38 p.m.