

**MINUTES**  
**RISE Southeast Raleigh Charter School, Inc.**

The Board of Directors of RISE Southeast Raleigh Charter School, Inc. met on Monday, August 25, 2025. The meeting was held in-person at RISE SE Raleigh Charter School and by Google Meet.

**ATTENDEES:**

**Board Members:**

NAME OF DIRECTOR	TITLE (IF ANY)	PRESENT IN PERSON	PRESENT BY TELEPHONE/VIDEO	UNABLE TO ATTEND
Kwan Graham*	Board Chair	X		
Crawford Crenshaw*	Board Vice-Chair	X		
Annette Corona*	Board Secretary	X		
Willette Morman*	Trustee	X		
Lauren Vance*	Trustee	X		
Andrew Lakis	Trustee	X		
Dexter Herbert	Trustee			X
Lynette Aytch	Trustee		X	
Spencer Robertson	Trustee		X	
Taylor Dewberry	Trustee		X	
Craig Herb	Trustee		X	

\*Indicates members of the Executive Committee

Please note: Other Board Trustees are welcome to attend all Executive Committee meetings but not required to.

**Staff and Other Attendees Present:**

NAME	TITLE (IF ANY)	PRESENT IN PERSON	PRESENT BY TELEPHONE/VIDEO	UNABLE TO ATTEND
Dawn Arthur	Executive Director	X		
Jason Jowers	Principal	X		
Mary Sparks	Assistant Principal	X		
Kristen Blackwell	Dir of Operations			X
Martin Aurelian	Dir of Finance			X

**MEETING ITEMS:**

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Kwan Graham determined that the meeting was duly noticed and called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

## **2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no one present or who signed up for public comment.

## **3. APPROVAL OF PRIOR BOARD MEETING MINUTES & CONSENT AGENDA**

Policies and Minutes for Approval

- Employee Handbook PDF
  - *Includes Grievance, COI, Nepotism*
- Scholar Handbook PDF
- Calendar
- Financial Policies PDF
- 2025-26 Amended Budget
- Family Engagement Policy
- Title I Consolidated App (CNA, Survey, Prayer...)
- Federal Approvers: Arthur/Aurelien-Childress
- June Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Kwan Graham to approve the policies outlined above along with the June board meeting minutes. The motioned was seconded by Craig Herb and passed unanimously.

## **4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Ms. Arthur updated the board on the following topics:

### **State of the School**

School Mission: Empower our scholars to thrive academically, strengthen their community and discover their voice.

There was a focus on norm setting during the 10-day professional development leading up to the school start.

Ms. Arthur shared some school data from the EOGs.

- Up to 72% proficiency in Math in grade 3
- Up to 63% proficiency in ELA in 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- The school exceeded growth again this past year.

Insights:

- As more of our scholars become proficient, we have to keep pushing them to even higher levels
- Our work must sharpen to push scholars further every year

### **Culture is Growing**

- 100% leader retentions
- 85% staff retention

- Predicted Attrition < 15%
- Great Schools NC Wake Living #2 Charter

**School Sustainability is Within Reach**

- \$120K in 24-25 from private donations
- Secured \$300K in 2025-2026 grants
- 7-year charter renewal
- Predicted enrollment > 500

**Priorities were Named for Teachers**

Priority 1: Rigor

Priority 2: Culture

**Discussion was had on the role of the Finance Committee**

To ensure the school’s financial health, transparency, and sustainability by aligning budgeting, resource management, and fundraising strategy in support of the mission and students.

Role of Finance

**1. Financial Oversight & Compliance**

- Monitor budgets, cash flow, fin. statements.
- Ensure compliance with state, federal, and charter authorizer requirements.
- Oversee annual audits and IRS filings.

**2. Budgeting & Resource Allocation**

- Collaborate with school leadership to develop mission-aligned budgets.
- Recommend budget approval to the full board.
- Monitor spending against plan and recommend adjustments.

**3. Fundraising Partnership**

- Coordinate with Fundraising Chair / Committee efforts to align revenue targets with needs.
- Track progress toward fundraising goals.
- Ensure that fundraising revenue and grants are properly budgeted, recorded, and reported.

**4. Strategic Financial Planning**

- Build multi-year forecasts to support long-term stability.
- Advise on capital projects, debt, and major investments.
- Ensure financial planning supports enrollment and academic goals.

Financial Overview

**2024-25 - Awaiting final end of year results from Prestige: School + Foundation**

**Fundraising Overview**

- Private donations are up \$120K in large measure due to the Challenge Grant and the contributions and networking of Board Members.
- Grants were down in light of the shift in GSNC granting.
- PRIs are being reduced due to risk of non-renewal and short-term repayments

**RISE’s Current Need**

- 500 - 550 Scholar Enrollment & K-1 Waitlists
- Staff and budget against public funding
  - \$6,431 State funding PP in Wake
  - \$3,912 County funding PP in Wake
  - \$10.3K in State-County Funding PP
  - Annual Governmental Budget: 6.5M
- \$2-300K Annual Fundraising Supports
  - Operations
  - Teachers & Staff
  - Curriculum & Technology
  - Field Trips & Programs
- Meet Debt Covenants
- Build Cash Reserves and Plan Capital Improvements

**A discussion was held around the role of a Governance Committee**

Purpose: To ensure the board itself is high-functioning, legally compliant, strategically effective, and composed of the right people with the right skills — so the board can fulfill its duties to the school’s mission, students, and stakeholders.

Role of Governance

**1. Board Composition & Recruitment**

- Identify skill gaps and needs on the board.
- Recruit, vet, and recommend new members.
- Manage nominations, onboarding, and orientation.

**2. Board Effectiveness & Accountability**

- Develop clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations for members.
- Lead annual board self-evaluations and individual member assessments
- Address underperformance or disengagement.

**3. Policy & Compliance**

- Maintain and update bylaws and policies.
- Ensure compliance with state charter law, open meetings laws, and IRS nonprofit requirements.
- Oversee ethics and training compliance.

**4. Board Development & Succession Planning**

- Create ongoing training plans for board members.
- Plan leadership transitions (officers, committee chairs).
- Support succession planning for the Executive Director/Head of School in coordination with the full.

An official vote for officers and committee chairs to take place during the September board meeting.

**4. Committee Updates**

No committee updates.

**5. New Business**

No new business.

Respectfully submitted:

*Annette Corona*

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Approved on September 22, 2025  
Kwan Graham, President