



**PALMETTO EXCEL BOARD RETREAT SUMMARY
And BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Palmetto Excel Center

February 19, 2024

ROLL CALL

Board Members present: Michael Saboe, Lee Deas, Kellye Whitaker, Diana Saillant, Fran Welch, Amy Mims, Herbert Drayton III, Chris Harvey, Kelley Jarrett, Erica Wright, Brian Itzkowitz

Staff & Consultants present: Jackie Draws, Elliot Smalley, Dr. Ruth Turner, Tina Marshall, Jo Vasile, Andrew Shelton, Katie Bustamante, Allison Mahoney (Halligan, Mahoney & Williams, PA

CALL TO ORDER

L. Deas called the meeting to order at 11:58am.

CONSENT AGENDA

L. Deas asked if there were any corrections or concerns with the December 19, 2023, meeting minutes. Hearing none, she requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda and meeting minutes.

MOTION TO APPROVE

K. Whitaker made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. M. Saboe seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT

L. Deas turned the floor over to Andrew Shelton who reported on behalf of the Finance Committee Chair that the Finance Committee met last week and reviewed the financials. He then provided a report for the month ending December 31, 2023. See highlights of Andrew's report noted below:

- Cash Accounts total at month end totaled \$415K.
- Fund Balance is \$436K.
- Total December Revenue is \$108K and expenses are \$145K resulting in a net loss of \$37K.
- The forecast projects an ending fund balance of \$272K; NOTE: the balance is very close to the recommended minimum fund balance level.
- L. Deas asked if there were any questions for Andrew regarding the Financial Report, hearing none, she then passed the floor to F. Welch from the Finance Committee.
- F. Welch stated the Finance Committee met on February 12, as A. Shelton mentioned, and recommended approval of the financials. F. Welch further stated that the Finance Committee also recommended the approval of the two positions presented. F. Welch then continued and reviewed the specific job descriptions for two new positions that will be needed to support Excel growth: Enrollment & Outreach Specialist (N. Charleston), School Director (Sumter). F. Welch reiterated that the finance committee recommended approval of these positions.
- H. Drayton asked whether the funding from Palmetto Goodwill referenced as going toward Sumter Director position was approved as part of the Palmetto Goodwill 2024 budget for 2024. J. Draws confirmed \$192K was budgeted for



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Excel in 2024.

MOTION TO APPROVE F. Welch made a motion to approve the financials, and the two new hire positions as presented. M. Saboe seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**GOVERNANCE
COMMITTEE REPORT**

K. Jarrett stated that the Governance Committee is focused on the following:

- Clearly define Board Roles & Responsibilities
- Board makeup/matrix
- Bylaws review and interpretation
- Board recruitment summer of 2024

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Ruth Chambers reported:

- Palmetto Excel had a Term 2 95% pass rate on the English II EOC: 70% pass rate on the Algebra EOC.
 - State English pass rates of 84%; CCSD pass rates of 85%. Algebra State pass rate of 68%; CCSD Algebra pass rate of 77%.
 - Notably, the primary demographic of Palmetto Excel is African American, and the Algebra pass rate by African Demographic for CCSD was 72% in English II and 56% in Algebra. Therefore, Palmetto Excel is closing achievement gaps in accordance with our charter in Algebra and English II EOC scores.
- Across the country, Excel Centers experience a drop in retention of Term 2 students reenrolling in T3. Palmetto Excel also experienced this drop. Attributed to students taking on seasonal employment.
- Palmetto Excel has initiated a multi-tiered marketing campaign to recruit new and returning students for the start of Term 4, 3/6/2024. Enrollment goal for T4 is 200+ students.
- Palmetto Excel will host a small in-house graduation ceremony for our first three graduates who will have completed all graduation requirements by 2/28/24, on April 5th; will hold a larger, more publicized graduation in July for all first-year graduates.

NEW BUSINESS

L. Deas proposed a shift to quarterly meetings for 2024 as stated below. All expressed consensus for the change in cadence.

- May 21, August 20, and November 19

ADJOURNMENT

L. Deas adjourned the board meeting at 12:35pm and entered the afternoon session.



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CONSULTANT’S RETREAT SUMMARY

Palmetto Excel Board Retreat Summary

The Palmetto Excel Board of Directors held an all-day retreat on February 19, 2024, at Trident Technical College. This was the first in-person meeting since the COVID 19 Pandemic ended. The Retreat Agenda was facilitated by Stan Davis and produced the following highlights:

Student Panel

Four Palmetto Excel students, Yalonda Patrick, Kim Wine, Dazia Gambirazio, and Megan Rosenberg shared their individual life-experiences and how they were so grateful that this school gave them a second chance to earn a high-school diploma that could lead to a more secure future.

Slide Presentation

SC Charter School District structure and operational practices were shared to highlight how SCPCSD met the spirit of the SC Charter Law. The presentation segued into how school governance worked to govern a school that had been granted a state charter.

Follow-up Action: The Consultant will work with the Governance Committee Chair to share best practices from Board Source to update the board governance policies for Palmetto Excel.

After a short break, the presentation covered best practices for the following:

- Board responsibilities as a whole
- Individual Board Member responsibilities

These guidelines will be used by the Palmetto Excel Governance Committee to update policies and procedures moving forward.

Organizations and Partnerships

Palmetto Excel partners shared the nature of their relationship with the school and their level of engagement from the beginning. The following organizations shared their interest and level of engagement with the school:

- Palmetto Goodwill
- Goodwill Educational Initiatives (GEI)
- Palmetto Excel, Inc.

This information combined with the earlier description of the Public Charter School District clarified the current framework of how Palmetto Excel was formed.

Expansion Opportunities Exercise

This session took the previously shared information and divided the participants into three teams to respond to two strategic questions. Listed below are the team responses that were presented afterwards:

Strategic Questions – Team Exercise Responses



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- I. What are the roles and responsibilities in each of the overlapping areas?
- II. How can we clarify these relationships to leverage expansion opportunities?

Team 1

- **School District to Palmetto Excel** – Accountability through the expectations of the Charter Contract.
- **GEI to Palmetto Excel** – Accountability on core model elements/membership agreement. GEI provides support.
- **GEI to Palmetto Goodwill** – Accountability on Goodwill level plus membership agreement.
- **Palmetto Goodwill to Excel** – Shared responsibilities for operations and expansion.

Expansion – Excel Expansion Committee

- 1+ members from executive committee board from Excel Board.
- 1+ member executive committee Goodwill Board.
- 1 member from GEI national office.
- Goodwill/Palmetto Excel Leadership (TBD) – Determine where criteria will be developed.

Team 2

- **Palmetto Goodwill** – Synergy, training & development, SOP, communications, and infrastructure.
- **GEI** – Best practices, sustainable model, data, and advisory.
- **SCPCSD** – Authorization, accountability, and advocacy.
- **Palmetto Excel – Expansion Committee**
 - Define success criteria.
 - Decision matrix
 - Voice with Goodwill reps
 - Prioritize 16
 - Statewide board with advisory teams

Team 3

- **District** – Approve/deny, school accountability, and budget request.
- **Excel** – Responsible for Charter, budget and expansion, and hiring & managing performance of the Director.
- **Palmetto Goodwill** – Seed funding, territory management/MOU, Goodwill compliance, and 25% of Board.
- **GEI** – Support training, brand management, and fidelity to the model.



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Next Steps

After the presentations from the teams, the following next steps were recommended and shared:

1. Update Palmetto Excel documentation to clarify the roles and responsibilities of partnership relationships.
2. Update Governance Policies and Procedures to reflect the collaborative model.
3. Consider creating a small committee of stakeholder representatives to function as a liaison to address day-to-day challenges as the expansion model is being created.
4. Initiate a strategic planning process for 2025 – 2030.

The retreat was adjourned at 3:10pm.