**Tall Pines STEM Academy Board Meeting Agenda**

**Meeting March 16, 2023**

Location:  Tall Pines STEM Academy, Aiken, South Carolina

Commencement Time:  5:00 P.M.   Presiding:  Michelle Lorio, Chair

# Meeting Opening:

* Call to Order
* Welcome and Mission Statement

*“The mission of Tall Pines STEM Academy is to provide an option for families where STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) is intertwined in the school’s culture and prepares middle school students to become the next generation of ethical leaders. Tall Pines STEM Academy will provide a combination of classroom and outdoor learning experiences to engage students, promote wellness and physical fitness, inspire creativity, foster critical thinking and problem solving skills, and cultivate citizenship and leadership skills through rigorous and relevant content and projects in a natural setting.”*

* Call Roll and Establish Quorum(Michelle Lorio, Mandy Sims, Alisa Perry, Jennifer Minolfo, Phillip Dersham, Reggie Rearden, Kelly Schepens, David Tamburello, Melissa McKnight)
* Public Comments

*Please note that the official meeting of the board is by law a public meeting and the board values citizen input; however, in order to protect the integrity of the agenda, public dialogue will be restricted to the “Public Comments” section of the agenda or as directed by the board chair. Each speaker has 2 minutes and speakers may not ask questions of the Board Members. Board members may not engage speakers in discussion. Disruptive behavior and personal attacks aimed at students, staff or board members are not permitted.*

# Old Business:

* Updated the Memorandum of Understanding with Clemson YLI to allow for the added position of a TPSA guidance counselor

# Matters for Decision:

* Approve meeting minutes from February 2023
* Approve monthly financials from February 2023
* Revised Attendance Policy
* Adjourn to Executive discussion (as necessary for Legal, Personnel, or Contract matters)

# Matters for Discussion:

* Fundraising Committee Update
* Updating Behavioral Policy

# Matters for Noting:

* School/Principal’s Update

# Meeting Finalization:

* Review actions to be taken
* Next Meeting – April 20, 2023 at 5:00 pm

Tall Pines STEM Academy Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is necessary if students are to make the desired and expected academic and social progress. Charter Schools, including Tall Pines STEM Academy, are bound by the South Carolina Department of Education’s attendance policy.  State law requires students to miss no more than ten days per year.  According to the South Carolina State Board of Education, “a child ages 6 to 17 years meets the definition of truant when the child has three consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences.”

It is the mission of TPSA to provide engaging learning experiences that are not easily made up individually or at home. Absences with no documentation are automatically considered unlawful. The TPSA Board recognizes that some absences are unavoidable.

* Lawful absences include:
	1. The student is ill and has a written medical excuse provided by a medical professional submitted within five days from the date the student returns from the absence.
	2. Recognized religious holiday of the student’s faith.
	3. Emergencies and/or extreme hardships; to include a death or serious illness in the student’s immediate family at the discretion of the principal.
	4. An immediate family member is defined as the parents, stepparents, foster parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and first cousins.
* Unlawful absences include:
	1. Vacations even if you notify TPSA ahead of time.
	2. Parent notes for illnesses that do not require medical attention.
* At **five unlawful or three consecutive unlawful absences**, the student and parent will be sent an attendance contract from the principal with a written Attendance Intervention Plan. Failure to participate and/or adhere to the plan will result in notice to appear before the TPSA Board.  At this point, medical excuses should be provided for any further absences. Excused absences with a doctor’s note do not affect truancy.
* At **ten unlawful absences**, students will be considered truant and receive a letter from the board stating that a board hearing will be held if the student is unlawfully absent three more times.
* If**three additional unlawful absences**occur after the board letter was issued, the parent will state the defense of the unlawful absences at a board hearing. A board vote will determine whether the student will be allowed to continue enrollment at TPSA or be required to enroll at his/her home zoned school. A majority vote will be the final decision.  The student will be given until the end of that week to register their child at his/her home zoned school and disenrolled from TPSA.
* **Three unlawful school tardies** will result in one absence toward this policy.  An unlawful school tardy occurs when a student arrives to school after 8:00 a.m. without a written medical excuse.