

## MEETING MINUTES

**Board:** Scintilla Charter Academy  
**Board Meeting:** March 24, 2016

**School(s):** Scintilla Charter Academy

*The minutes of Sunshine Law meetings need not be verbatim transcripts of the meeting. These minutes are a brief summary of the events of the meeting.*

Date:	Start	End	Next Meeting:	Next time:	Prepared by:
March 24, 2016	6:05	7:25	April 28, 2016	6:00 PM	J. Denham
<b>Meeting Location:</b>					
2171 East Park Ave., Valdosta, GA 31602					

<b>Attended by:</b>	
Eric Tillman Enid Santana Zachary Cowart Garrett Copeland Jeremy Baker Jerry Jennett	Danny Brewington, Ed Innovation Partners, LLC Mandy Avera, Dean of Students & School Support Catherine McGahee, Assistant Dean Jennifer Denham, Communications Manager Sharon Galloway, Consultant Cathie Felix, Consultant Amanda Miller, Special Programs Director Stephanie Mullis, Systems Administrator Ann Lukens Jason Seacrist Johnathon Hill Julie Griffin Creation Divine Michlene Lee Richard Baker Amy Baker Charmane Thomas Janice Hamel Kyle Brock Michelle Bradford Morgan Thomas Kori Smith Cynthia McKee Brooke Knight Debbie Santana Mary Clare Tarpley Brandy King Kathryn Welch Jessica Moore Dawn Eiduk Beth Prince Anita Russell Eric Simmons Tara Simmons Kaneisha Small Brooke Starr Kristin Bembry Clara Nixon John Nixon Jacob Jones Mark Starr

	Nikki Stewart Shantell Lambert Misty Dearth
<b>Highlights:</b>	

**CALL TO ORDER**

Pursuant to public notice, the meeting commenced at 6:05 P.M.

**I. Administrative Functions**

Approve Minutes from February 25, 2016 meeting  
Motion was made by, second by, the motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Approve Agenda for March 24, 2016 meeting  
Motion was made by, second by, the motion passed with a unanimous vote.

**II. SCHOOL RELATED REPORT**

Amanda Miller stated that the school wide improvement plan for next year is in progress. The school will continue to reach out to staff, parents, stakeholders and community members for input during this process.

SCA was accepted to be part of the GADOE Cohort III Academic Parent-Teacher Team Training for implementation in the 2016-2017 school year.

The Parent Involvement Team for 2016-2017 school year is being developed. Information was sent home, emailed out and will be available on our website. She thanked the parents who have already contacted her to be part of the process.

**III. FINANCIAL REPORT**

Eric Tillman sent February financial statements to the finance committee. He stated that the schools finances are in great shape. He mentioned that the State will provide our audit this summer and that the budget and per student allotments would be approved during the summer.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**  
**None**

**V. NEW BUSINESS –**  
**Conflict of Interest Policy and Form:** A motion was made by Jeremy Baker to approve the Conflict of Interest Policy and Form. Garrett Copeland seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**VI. OPEN FORUM**  
Zachary Cowart addressed some issues with the room prior to open forum.

He assured parents that no financial penalty will be incurred if a family doesn't fulfill the volunteer hours stated in the family contract. He encouraged parents to be involved and stated that parents/students will not be penalized if these hours are not completed.

He explained that there is no option to opt-out of the Georgia Milestones Tests.

Mr. Cowart explained that regarding the third grade self-contained classroom: after evaluating the MAP scores and classroom performance of our third grade scholars, the decision was made to create a self-contained intervention class in this grade. It was clear that the consistency of one teacher, combined with uninterrupted instructional time would help move these students in the right direction. The smaller class size allows for increased individualized small group instruction and provides flexibility to concentrate on reading and math deficits.

The self-contained schedule was set up to be flexible throughout the school day. With regards to recess, a scheduled time was assigned to provide the appropriate break from academic instruction. This schedule included some room for adjustment based on the day. Feedback on this schedule was requested from the teacher and none was received. The student's race was in no way taken into account when they were selected for the self-contained class. The decision was made solely to improve their academic achievement and with their best interest in mind.

Mr. Cowart covered the Open Forum procedures by explaining that speakers must have signed in prior to the meeting to address the Board. He stated that he would call speakers in the order they signed up and asked that they stand and state first and last name and relationship to the school. Speakers will be granted no more than two minutes to address the Board. The Board will not entertain discussions involving specific personnel or students during a public meeting.

He informed attendees that members of the Board may not respond to during the Open Forum but that concerns would be recorded and referred to the proper school staff or Board member for follow-up. The Board is informed of the outcomes of these efforts by the school staff or Board member responding your concern.

He continued by stating that the vision and mission of the school has not changed but how the school reaches these will continuously evolve.

Parent Jason Seacrist addressed the Board. He stated that his two daughter attend SCA and are doing very well. He stated that he and his family followed Mrs. Hiers to SCA and understood her vision and followed that. He requested that there be better follow up on short and long term goals of the school.

The Board responded by assuring Mr. Seacrist that the mission and vision is not changing and that the process will continue to evolve. Mr. Seacrist requested better communication and understanding of how and why things are changing. Mr. Cowart assured him that if any changes to the mission or vision of the school or changes to the petition were to occur that parents would be informed of those and the reasoning behind them.

Enid Santana clarified that there is a difference between the petition and the charter and that not all things that were stated in the petition were actually approved in the charter.

Charmane Thomas, an SCA parent, asked what methods are used to gain input into school level decisions. For example, length of the school day, mandatory early release and requiring scholars to sign up for Friday enrichment activities. Mr. Cowart directed her to address these concerns at the school level with administration.

Cynthia McKee, parent of a fourth grade scholar, also followed Mrs. Hiers here and she feels that when Mrs. Hiers left, the dream left too. She stated that she was taken aback by the change that parents and students were upset that she was no longer at the school. She stated that prior to Mrs. Hiers leaving, parents were allowed full access to the school without having to go through the front office. She said she felt a lot was not being done that had been before. She said she understood that this was a choice and people could choose to leave the school but that without students you have nothing but an empty building. She requested that staff communicate with parents about changes large and small.

Jeremy Baker responded to Ms. McKee by stating that the dream of SCA belonged to far more than one person. That the Board members and founding teachers also shared in the dream of creating SCA and that one person did not create the mission and vision of the school. The Board and current staff and administration still share that dream and it will remain intact.

Enid Santana stated that for clarification, not one teacher or administrator has been terminated. Anyone who has left this year has chosen to submit their resignation and the Board and administration have accepted those resignations. She stated that the Board has hired an administrative staff that is competent and able to run the school. The Board lets the administration make the school-level decisions that are best for the students.

Mary Clare Tarpley, an SCA parents, said that she had read the charter and understood the mission and vision. She addressed the Board with her credentials as an educator with over 18 years of experience. She requested that she be considered as Board member. She stated that she is in the school quite a bit and feels she could be an asset to the Board. She stated that she would submit a resume via email to the Board.

Michlene Lee's niece is a student at SCA. She stated that she wanted her niece to attend SCA for something different and new and they were excited to be a part of the school. She said that the changes in third grade have been disruptive. She has an issue with the self-contained class and those students not switching classes. She said she wants to see the class be able to interact with the other third grade students.

Beth Prince, former SCA parent and advocate for educational reform. She said she felt that charter schools were the first step in educational reform. She stated that she spent a lot of time with the founding visionary of the school and asked many

questions including, how would a classroom work, what educational models would be used? She decided to send her children here based on the use of project based learning. She stated that her child is highly gifted but also learning delayed she was convince that SCA would be a good fit. She stated that her son was denied the IEP and 504 process so she returned to homeschooling. It is her opinion that the current administration has stepped away from the petition and the charter. She feels the petition should be upheld. She said that her son was given a lot of worksheets and that he was missing the hands on component. She stated that she knows this is the first year and understands that students and teachers came from many different places. She thinks the teachers are great. She felt the philosophy needs to be put back on track.

Karen Knoll, community member, she has been watching to see how we have grown and thinks the building is great. She stated that she was concerned about the Board meeting agendas and minutes not being posted on the website. Mrs. Denham assured her that they are posted and have been and offered to assist her in locating them. She said that personnel decisions are not shown in the minutes as being voted on. She stated that she was concerned about how the charter is being followed. She said that we are not providing the special instruction the charter calls for. She also said she was concerned about the formation of the third grade self-contained class.

Jeremy Baker stated that we serve all students that apply and enroll at SCA—all demographics and all needs. We are a public school and are required to make accommodations for all students. All kids are welcome in the public school.

Enid Santana said that as a minority on the Board, she will assure that the Board will make sure the school remains diverse. We are a public school and must accommodate the needs of whatever students come to the school.

Tara Simmons, SCA parent, stated that her child was no longer in the third grade self-contained class because she did not feel that it benefited her. She said that the blame game was put on the prior teacher. She stated that when the school made the decision, they should have been notified. She said that she is disappointed in the school.

Jeff Zager, has two kids at SCA and is the volunteer basketball coach. He thanked the Board for their service and stated that his children love SCA and are very happy at the school. He stated that he felt that the Board needed to be made aware that many rumors were being spread about parental concerns and that parents seemed unhappy or concerned about where the school is headed. He stated that it was clear that the Board is aware and appreciated them address concerns

Brooke Starr, a SCA parent, stated that she has picked up on the negativity and wanted to make sure her child had not also felt it. She thanked her child's teachers for the fact that her child had not picked up on the negativity. She would like her child to have her same teachers again—wanted to request that looping take place in that grade. She also stated that she is very concerned about social media and the embarrassment it causes the school. She said that she knows that Board cannot control that but that the rumors cause misinformation and negativity. Jeff Zager

stated that some parents are not considering the consequences of posting on social media.

Enid Santana stated that she agreed that the unaffiliated SCA Facebook page has caused many rumors and issues. She stated that there was one authorized page for the school and that the Board and school has no control over the other sites.

Shantell Lambert, an SCA parent, said that she has to change kid's clothes when she goes out in public because people see the uniform and always have something to say. She stated that she didn't bring her kids here for the drama. She stated several times that she wanted to understand what is going on. She said she communicates with teachers regularly and that she wants to know what the real issues are. She asked if the drama was because the initial person left, or because the curriculum is not there?

Jeremy Baker said that the mission and vision is still the same and will not change. The way we get there will continue to evolve. The main reason we are here is because we have a passion for providing a quality education for young kids. There will always be rumors. The main objective of all involved is to educate the children.

Ms. Lambert then stated that her niece also attends and that a faculty member admitted to not reading the child's IEP. She said she felt the faculty may not have the same vision and that her niece had been paraded around like a clown and had a bad experience.

Enid Santana reminded the room that anyone with a school level issue needed to follow the chain of communication that is included in the school handbook. After all other areas have been addressed, if there is no resolution, then the complaint should be submitted to the Board in writing.

Beth Prince stated that she has a safety concern regarding pictures and videos on social media. She stated that kids' pictures and names had been posted and that it could be dangerous to kids. Mrs. Denham assured her that she has media releases for all students that have photos posted and that names are not associated with photos on Facebook or other social media posts.

**VII. NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting will be on April 28, 2016 at 6pm in the SCA Media Center.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Eric Tillman to adjourn the March meeting. The motion was seconded by Jerry Jennett and passed unanimously.

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Zachary Cowart, Board Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_