

Lake Oconee Academy Board of Governors
Regular Monthly Meeting
5:30 P.M., June 3rd, 2019

- A. **Call to Order:** Mark Lipscomb called the regular monthly meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. on June 3rd, 2019.
- B. **Establishment of Quorum/Roll Call:** Governors Richard Schmidt, Byron Lombard, Mark Lipscomb, Freddie Evans, Fatima Fields, Connie Hoyle, and Kim Larkin were in attendance. David Mapp was absent. Also present were CEO Dr. Otho Tucker, GCSB Chairman Mike Lynch and board member Steve Kilgore.
- C. **Approval of Minutes:** Byron Lombard made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 1, 2019, regular monthly meeting. Motion seconded by Kim Larkin. The motion carried unanimously.
- D. **Finance Report:** Dr. Tucker, gave the financial report. A motion was made by Byron Lombard to approve the report as information only. Seconded by Kim Larkin. The motion carried unanimously.
- E. **Presentation of budget for FY/20:** Dr. Tucker presented a proposed budget for FY/20 for review.
- F. **Public Comment:** There was no public comment.
- G. **CEO Report and Action Taken:**
1. Dr. Tucker gave an update on construction for the new Student Activity Center which is which is currently 85% complete and expected to be completed by July 1. The baseball field is complete except for a requirement to add an elevator on the press box in case a handicapped person needed to access the upper level. Parking lots are being paved.
 2. Dr. Tucker reported that the learning cottage expansion unit is due to arrive this week and that all crews are scheduled and standing by to complete construction.
 3. Dr. Tucker reported that House Bill 59 had been passed by the Georgia legislature and signed into law by the governor. House Bill 59 changes current regulations by putting charter schools on the same footing with all other public schools in Georgia with regards to attendance and residency issues. Previously, the Georgia charter school division of the state department of education had interpreted and subsequently passed a regulation that required students to reside in the county in order to be eligible to participate in the lottery. This had a hugely detrimental effect on low income and at risk students, rural students and others not capable of obtaining temporary residency the County of choice just to see if they were obtained a seat in the school through the lottery. HB 59 provides that any person can now make an application, go through the lottery and if they are selected, will be required to acquire residency by the time of

matriculation, that is, when school starts. This is largely consistent with rules for other public schools. Because the bill was passed and signed after the lottery process had begun, it will have no effect on the lottery process for the FY/20 school year.

4. Dr. Tucker reported that there are 280 children on the waiting list. 36 of those students are priority students which will not currently be able to matriculate due to charter and funding limits.
5. Richard Schmidt presented a proposal to initiate the Lake Oconee Academy Education Advancement Initiative (EAI). A copy of the proposal is attached to these minutes. After discussion, Freddie Evans made a motion to pass a resolution establishing the initiative. Seconded by Kim Larkin. After further discussion the motion carried unanimously.
6. Richard Schmidt presented a proposal to establish the Lake Oconee School, Phase One of the EAI. After discussion, Richard Schmidt made a motion to move forward with the establishment of Lake Oconee School, Inc., a Georgia nonprofit corporation. The motion was seconded by Connie Hoyle.
7. Dr. Tucker presented Connie Hoyle, a founding member of the Board of Governors of Lake Oconee Academy. Connie Hoyle is retiring and leaving the board after 13 years. Connie has been actively involved in the field of education for 40 years. She has held a variety of school-related positions: classroom teacher, Instructional Lead Teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, Staff Development Coordinator (county level) and Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction (county level). She has also played an active role in numerous educational-related professional organizations throughout her career. Connie is currently the Supervisor of Student Teachers for Western Governor's University and Metro RESA. She served many years in Gwinnett County Public Schools and at Union Point Elementary in Greene County. Connie was the President of Georgia Association of Curriculum Development from 1999 – 2000, a Member of the Georgia Board of Examiners to Review Teacher Education Programs at Georgia Colleges and Universities for the Professional Standards Commission from 1995 – 2000, a Member of State Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Review Teams from 1995 – present, and a Distinguished Staff Developer for the State of Georgia Award in 1992 (Presented by the Georgia State Staff Development Council) Connie has an Ed. S. in Educational Administration from Georgia State University, a M. Ed. in Elementary Education from Georgia State University, and a B. S. in Elementary Education from Baker University.

Connie has been the education liaison member of the Board. With significant education and training, as well as long experience, she has brought a wealth of information, reference, and perspective to the Board as it charted the course and success of Lake Oconee Academy. Best wishes and heartfelt thanks for the time and selfless effort in bringing a world-class education experience to the children of Greene County.

H. Adjournment: There being no further business, Freddie Evans made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Kim Larkin. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL OF LAKE OCONEE PROPOSAL

May 31, 2019

Lake Oconee Academy seeks to equip each of its students as they leave high school with the skills necessary to effectively take advantage of and capitalize on their opportunities as they move through life and career.

Throughout its entire existence, the rigorous and successful educational program and environment afforded at Lake Oconee Academy has been sought by far more students than the number funded under the approved Charter. In any given year, there is a waiting list of at least 250 students.

Lake Oconee Academy has worked consistently throughout its history to expand the school in an effort to give access to as many students as possible seeking its educational program. Growth is essential to LOA's ability to fund local families' ever-increasing demands for facilities and educational programs. While the school is fiscally sound (LOA has a top financial rating from the Georgia State Department of Education), without growth, LOA has no way to continue to build facilities, to innovate, to get the best teachers, and to provide the best possible education for those families desiring its particular educational program.

Lake Oconee Academy, Inc., (LOA) has been dependent upon the Greene County School District (GCSD) for 100% of its funding; it has no legal ability to independently raise taxes to meet the demands of Greene County's families. The challenge of meeting the demands of the students desiring to attend the school and how to raise the requisite funding to cover costs will continue in the foreseeable future for a number of valid reasons.

Therefore, the Board of Governors of Lake Oconee Academy, Inc., announces its intention to work to remedy these long standing issues that hold back Greene County and its citizens.

Program of Growth

LOA strives to be innovative in its approach to everything it does. The LOA Board of Governors is leveraging that spirit of innovation to deal with this perennial issue of unsatisfied demand and has determined to establish a long-range program of growth called Lake Oconee Academy's Education Advancement Initiative (EAI) based on the following:

1. The EAI will grow the quality of LOA's educational program, grow the course of offerings to meet every student's individual needs and grow the program design to meet the demands of our children's future;
2. The EAI will give access to the greatest number of students possible seeking LOA's program;
3. The EAI will be respectful of the taxpayers of Greene County;
4. The EAI will, to the extent possible, work collaboratively with the GCSD;
5. The EAI will seek, to the extent possible, to limit competition with the GCSD for students;
6. The EAI will seek to leverage cutting-edge educational theory, technology, and practices consistent with our goal of educating children to be successful in an increasingly dynamic and interconnected world;
7. The EAI will work to leverage access to the school in a way which complements and enhances Greene Counties economic development environment initiatives;

8. The EAI will be a multi-year, multi-phase project, with full specific plans to be determined. Currently, the EAI has two phases.

Phase 1

The first phase in the EAI will be to establish an independent school that is to be known as The Lake Oconee School. LOS will be a State-permitted, nonprofit, tuition-based school which is run parallel with and in conjunction with Lake Oconee Academy, Inc. The school will be open for the FY19/20 school year for students taking high school classes.

LOS Funding

Funding received through tuition will be paid to Lake Oconee Academy, Inc. or the Lake Oconee Academy Foundation, as appropriate, for the use of their facilities and personnel. The cost of tuition will equal or exceed the amount paid by the GCSD to LOA. No publicly funded personnel, facilities, or services will be provided to LOS at a cost below that funded by the GCSD to LOA.

LOS will help the GCSD and respect the taxpayers of Greene County because there will be no tax burden associated with LOS.

Enrollment is currently expected to be limited to open classroom spaces not currently authorized and funded under the LOA Charter and not otherwise utilized. Therefore there should be little or no impact on the GCSD population. It is expected that LOS students will be both nonresidents, and residents of Greene County. These students may or may not be students attending the Greene County School System.

The LOS Will Create an Immediate and Positive Influence on the Current Educational Program.

LOS will provide funding for facilities, innovative programs, teachers, and other staff.

LOS funding will increase the ability to offer options for international students to become a part of the school and the larger community of Greene County, bringing a new and diverse perspectives to our current school population.

It will allow eligible students to have a more flexible school/work schedule.

LOS funding will help expedite the expansion to flexible scheduling, virtual classes, and distance learning programs and initiatives which are currently planned but unfunded.

No State testing will be utilized for LOS students. It will instead use national and international testing, giving families a better idea of how their students are competing on a national and international basis.

The LOS Is Good for Greene County's Economic Development

It is a proven fact that high quality schools drive development. Greater access to high quality educational options will help bring families to Greene County to support our tax base that would not otherwise come, all without an offsetting cost for education.

The availability of seats at the school could help attract new industry and businesses.

The LOS Will Not Discriminate or Deny Access to Charter Lottery Winners

The LOA Charter has specific limits on how many students are to be funded by the GCSD. Access to the school facilities by LOS students will not deny a seat to charter students since the only seats expected to be filled are those seats not utilized because they are not authorized under the charter, and they are not otherwise funded by the GCSD.

LOS students will receive no priority to matriculate. To become a charter student at Lake Oconee Academy, they will have to go through the lottery and meet residence requirements like anyone else.

Phase 2

Currently, Phase 2 of the EAI is focused on creating spaces for other students not able to afford tuition. Phase 2 requires a longer lead time and is anticipated to be available for students in the FY 20/21 school year.

Options for Phase 2 are not yet finally determined. The LOA Board is moving towards partnering with a state charter authorizer which will provide free public education consistent with what is now provided at LOA. There are a number of options, which the Board is currently evaluating, which focus on state and local cost-sharing and ad valorem tax relief for local taxpayers.

LOA will communicate those advances in planning as Phase 2 is more fully developed.

LOA will continue to investigate any and all options to serve those families seeking our education program.