



Saturday, July 21, 2018 – 2:30pm-4pm

Planning Committee Meeting and Parent Info Meeting held at temporary office location:

4328 Wade Hampton Blvd Suite G (rear office)

Taylors, SC 29687

Office cell 864-775-1818

Dana Hutto cell 864-775-1733

1. Sign-ins and name tags, **19 parents present, 2 board members present, Dana Hutto (Head of School), and Traci Bryant-Riches (Project Coordinator)**
2. Discussed changes in board members – resignation of Jennifer Kirchner (President) and Cheyenne Willis-Kozaily moving from Vice President to President (see attachment)
3. Discussed facility and church with parents (see attachment – Statement from Board, which was read to all attendees)
4. Discussed developer/remodeling timeline
 - a. Possible delay for school start date - to be determined and relayed to parents asap
 - b. Dana Hutto will take a look at the current school calendar to ensure school ending date will not drastically change
 - c. Dana Hutto will also look at the current school calendar to see if teacher workdays can line up with Greenville County school calendar. We will accommodate as much as possible.
 - d. Allene Wiley suggested that we ask the church to use their gym for a day camp with some of our teachers to accommodate the children until the official first day of school.
 - e. Traci Bryant-Riches will contact the construction company/architect to see if this is a possibility.
5. Discussed church up fit – timeline, cost and construction
6. Discussed current enrollment and number of classrooms for each grade
7. Parent Square (website and/or smart phone app) – this will be the school's main form of communication, parents can communicate with their child's teachers and sign up for school events
 - a. Please download the app and register or just go online to register
8. 4K Tuition is due on August 20th; however if school gets delayed we will work with you if you need to pay it when school starts.
9. Discussed and brain stormed for future recruiting events/ads
 - a. Radio ads – includes an ELA banner on the radio stations social media sites
 - b. Welcome party at the church for the teachers – sponsored by the church
 - c. Have a radio DJ onsite for publicity – 103.7 Jams
 - d. Possibility of Blue Bell ice cream truck being present from 103.7 Jams
 - e. Dana Hutto will contact the church to see if this would be possible
 - f. Several parents have and will continue to contact companies to be a school sponsor
 - g. Direct interested parents to ELA website to enroll

- h. Please share (publically) all social media posts, comment and like (Facebook and Instagram)
10. Discussed possibilities of PTO for ELA (see attachment)
- a. Officers of the PTO were decided – Names recorded by Tami Blumenfield
 - b. Parents will look over the PTO officer duties
 - c. Bonnie Boulton will set up and manage “Box Tops”
11. Upcoming Volunteer opportunities
- a. All furniture and supplies are being stored at the Rutherford Rd facility
 - b. Everything needs to be inventoried and cleaned – prepped to be moved to the church
 - c. Some things may need to be painted
 - d. Avery Holland will be at the building Tuesday, July 31 from 9am until – she will coordinate all inventory/cleaning efforts
 - e. Parents will bring fans, bottled water, snacks to accommodate volunteers
 - f. The next cleaning day is scheduled for Saturday, August 11 at 9am. ~~Connie Tate will be at the building to coordinate all inventory/cleaning efforts~~

ELA has awesome parents!!! The Board, Dana Hutto, and Traci Bryant-Riches want to thank all the parents and families for their recruiting efforts, volunteer hours, community outreach assistance and overall support!! ELA would not be where we are now, without your dedication and support.

Planning Committee Parents – Please send all of your volunteer hours to Shelley Maynard (smaynard@eastlinkacademy.org) to ensure ELA has the correct amount of credits for you. For every 2 hours worked at events = \$60 credit for after care or 4K tuition.

Update to ELA parents from the Board of Directors:

Presented by Shelley Maynard (Recruitment Chair)

We, the Board of Directors, are honored to be working together to do what it takes to make sure East Link Academy becomes the newest charter school in the Upstate. We are a group of volunteer parents and community members whose responsibility is to ensure the school is financially sound and in compliance with state and charter expectations. As the school opens, there will be opportunities for you to get involved in this capacity as well. We have been meeting regularly for the past year to discuss plans for facilities, financing and general governance of the school. It has been a long road with lots of curves, U-turns and a few dead ends, but the destination is just around the corner. We would like to update you on where we are at this time.

For the past year and a half, we were led by Mrs. Jennifer Kirchner as our Board Chair. She led the planning group as the charter was presented, and then approved, by the South Carolina Public Charter School District. Recently, Jennifer submitted her resignation from the board. We are thankful for her leadership during this time and look forward to having her continued support as a parent of an ELA Lion. Thank you, Jennifer!

With the resignation of Mrs. Kirchner, we are pleased to announce that Mrs. Cheyenne Willis-Kozaily, Vice-Chair, will be taking on the responsibilities of Chair. We know you will support Cheyenne as you supported Jennifer.

In South Carolina, charter schools do not receive adequate funding to build or renovate schools. The federal funding that is available has limitations on use and facilities is NOT allowable. Finding adequate funding has not been easy as traditional banks will not lend to start-up schools with no proven track record. Therefore, we have relied on developers and lenders to find a facility that was conducive to our school needs and affordable to our budget, which is based on projected enrollment numbers.

As we began the facility process last Fall, we considered finding a parcel of land and building from the ground up or finding a facility and renovating. Location was important to us even though we knew we could not please every interested family. We were lucky enough to find the building on Rutherford Road. It has everything that we need including space to grow but is very expensive for a new school start-up. As we talked with developers and financiers, we came to realize that we might not be able to afford this facility with our current enrollment. The Planning Committee has worked tirelessly to spread the word and encourage families to take the leap of faith and join the ELA family. However, our numbers remain lower than anticipated which has directly impacted our ability to fund our dream school.

At this time, after proposals and rejections from three developers, we have found a company willing to take the risk on us. This group, Charter Stone Capital, will fund both our temporary facility needs (see below) as well as work with us over the next year to finalize our permanent location. However, we must realize that our dream location on Rutherford Road *may not* be an option now. We will begin looking for the perfect location in the next couple of months in preparation for the 2019-2020 school year.

Based on our conversations with the developers, an architect and contractor and, based on what we need to do to start this year, we will open in the New Education building of Hampton Heights Baptist

Church, 2511 Wade Hampton Blvd. However, to get the church up to the code for the Office of School Facility (OSF), we have several things we need to do including an upgrade for the classroom doors to meet fire code and installing a fire alarm system. This up-fit is estimated to cost around \$300,000. Although the project itself will only take a couple of weeks to complete, because of the cost, finding the funding has taken a little longer. With the delay in securing funding has delayed the contractors from being able to get the needed materials in time. We have been advised that we may need to delay the start of school by about a week.

We will communicate our start date to all parents and staff as soon as we are aware. We know this may not be ideal for some families, but it is what we must do at this time. In addition, while the original plan was to stay here for a few months and move in the middle of the school year, financially it is in the best interest of the school to stay in the temporary facility for a complete school year. The Church has been gracious to let us use their facility, charging us nominal rent and only paying for the utilities that we use each month. They have truly been good neighbors to us and we are grateful.

Now we have a lot to do to get ready for the first day of school! Let's give Dana and the staff our full support and assistance.

Saturday, July 21, 2018



East Link Academy Charter School

Dana M Hutto, Head of School dhutto@eastlinkacademy.org

4328-G Wade Hampton Blvd., Taylors, South Carolina 29687

Phone (864)-775-1733 www.eastlinkacademy.org

Parent Teacher Organization

The mission of East Link Academy is to prepare students to be language and cultural links between the West and the East in order to meet the global challenges of their lifetime by providing a rigorous education in math, science, social studies, and language arts in a bilingual English-Chinese environment.

Organization of Group:

- Parent Group Board
 - President – [Christy Cash](#)
 - Vice-president – [Avery Holland](#)
 - Treasurer – Priscilla [Schwerin](#)
 - Secretary – [Kelli Andrews](#)
 - *Volunteer coordinator* – [Katie Regier](#)
 - *Fundraising coordinator* – [Connie Tate and Brittany Rashad](#)
 - *Teacher appreciation coordinator* – [Bonnie Boulton](#)
 - *Homeroom parent coordinator* – [Stephanie Knight](#)
- Teachers
- Parents and Families
- Businesses and community

Purpose of the Group:

Work with the school leadership, teachers and families to:

- **Raise money** for the school and your purpose (There are many ways to get the funds you need to fulfill your objectives. Do what is right for the group)
- **Support field trips** (Talk with teachers to see if they could use your support and talk with your principal)
- Bring **culture and educational events** to your school. Compliment a current theme.
- Support **school projects** (whether it be a new playground, smartboards, tablets, special events, teachers, etc.)

How do we get started?

- Organize by nominating someone or appointing yourself to commit to the success of the group. *Completed during planning committee meeting on 7/21/18.*
- Write by-laws (or use the resources at www.pto.org).
- Meet with the school leadership to assess needs and offer support.
- Get other parents and families excited about the school and its mission.