

MINUTES

TENNESSEE STUDENT ASSISTANCE CORPORATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2020

2:00 PM CST

The special called board meeting was called to order by Chairman Tony Niknejad at 2 pm.

Board members present:

Chairman Tony Niknejad	Joe Myers (telephone)
Mike Krause	Penny Schwinn (telephone)
Claude Pressnell	Linda Martin (telephone, for Pres. Boyd)
Kristina Podesta (for Comptroller Wilson)	Cyrus Vatandoost
Treasurer David Lillard (telephone)	John Smarrelli (telephone)
Greg Turner (for Commissioner McWhorter)	Sharon Hayes (telephone)
Heidi Leming (for Chancellor Tydings)	Sabrina Washington

Motion to adoption of agenda

Chairman Niknejad then asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. A motion was made by Dr. Martin and seconded by Dr. Pressnell. A roll call was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Tony Niknejad - aye	Joe Myers
Mike Krause	Penny Schwinn
Claude Pressnell - aye	Linda Martin - aye
Kristina Podesta - aye	Cyrus Vatandoost - aye
Treasurer David Lillard - aye	John Smarrelli - aye
Greg Turner - aye	Sharon Hayes - aye
Heidi Leming - aye	Sabrina Washington - aye

Approval of minutes

Chairman Niknejad asked for a motion to approve the June 5, 2019 board minutes. The motion to approve was made by Dr. Pressnell and seconded by Mrs. Hayes, and the minutes were passed unanimously.

Chairman Tony Niknejad - aye	Joe Myers
Mike Krause	Penny Schwinn
Claude Pressnell - aye	Linda Martin - aye
Kristina Podesta - aye	Cyrus Vatandoost - aye
Treasurer David Lillard - aye	John Smarrelli - aye
Greg Turner - aye	Sharon Hayes - aye
Heidi Leming - aye	Sabrina Washington - aye

Chairman's Report

Chairman Nicknejad welcomed everyone and recognized a new member of the board, Mr. Joe Meyers (Motlow State Community College), TASFAA President.

Executive Director's Report

Chairman Nicknejad introduced Director Mike Krause for his report. Director Krause stated the meeting would likely be the TSAC Board's last meeting in the Parkway Towers and the agency was expected to move to the Tennessee Tower in April. Director Krause stated that the TSAC Board would have the opportunity to adopt the administrative rules for the GIVE Act and will need to meet in the spring to adopt the high-need fields for the program. He briefly discussed the FAST Act providing a high-level description of the legislation. Mr. Abernathy mentioned the program of study component of the FAST Act which Director Krause further discussed. Finally, he introduced James Snider to provide an update on TN Promise and TN Reconnect.

Mr. Snider updated the board on the first five Tennessee Promise cohorts and the recipients and dollars associated with each cohort. He then discussed the cost for cohorts 3-6 along with the waterfall for the Class of 2019.

Next, he discussed the first year of the Tennessee Reconnect and provided highlights. For the second year of the program, he provided estimates of applicants, enrolled students, and expenditures.

I. DECISION ITEMS

A. TENNESSEE EDUCATION LOTTERY SCHOLARSHIP (TELS) RULES

Chairman Niknejad introduced Peter Abernathy to discuss the adoption of the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship rules. Mr. Abernathy explained that the substantive changes to the rules included the following:

1. The addition of “unofficial withdrawal” to term definitions.
2. Addition of a hold-harmless provision for dual enrollment students receiving a higher award amount under GIVE.
3. Authorization for the Board to utilize specified job/labor reports to annually determine high-need courses and programs eligible for award amount under GIVE.
4. Clarification that general education courses will not be considered high-need under GIVE.
5. Clarification that the calculation of a postsecondary grade point average is to utilize an “A-F” grading scale, including grades associated with an unofficial withdrawal.
6. Modifications to clarify the appeals process.

Mr. Abernathy then explained that a rulemaking hearing was held on January 9, 2020. No members of the public attended and no comments were submitted. Finally these rules will be implemented following approval by the Tennessee Attorney General and subsequent filing with the Secretary of State.

After discussion related to the GIVE Act language, Dr. Pressnell made a motion to make subsection 5 of Section .11 related to the GIVE Act and to move current subsections 6 and 7 under subsection 5, the motion was made and approved unanimously.

Mr. Abernathy explained the remaining substantive changes and the rules were recommended to the TSAC Board for passage. A motion to approve the TELS Rules for the timeline of appeals was made by Chairman Niknejad and was passed unanimously. Lastly, a motion was made by Dr. Pressnell and seconded by Mr. Vatandoost to approve the TELS Rules, as amended. They were unanimously approved.

Chairman Tony Niknejad - aye	Joe Myers - aye
Mike Krause	Penny Schwinn - aye
Claude Pressnell - aye	Linda Martin - aye
Kristina Podesta - aye	Cyrus Vatandoost - aye
Treasurer David Lillard - aye	John Smarrelli
Greg Turner - aye	Sharon Hayes - aye
Heidi Leming - aye	Sabrina Washington - aye

Dr. Emily House answered a question regarding regional differences in the GIVE Act award amounts stating that there is further discussion that needs to be had. However, there is no current intent to differentiate programs between regions of the state. Dr. House agreed to send the current high-need programs to the TSAC Board.

II. Other Business

Chairman Niknejad introduced Peter Abernathy to discuss the conflict of interest statements that must be completed each year to serve on the TSAC Board. He asked for all to complete and return to our office as soon as possible.

With no further business, the Board meeting was then adjourned.