

**The SABIS International Charter School
160 Joan Street
Springfield, MA 01129
Board of Trustees**

Minutes of SABIS Board of Trustees Meeting – May 20, 2020

In Attendance: Sonja Shaw, Ellen McDonald, Freddy Lopez, Luis Aponte, Atu White, Dena Facchini, Anne-Marie Nicolai, Paula Meara, Joyce Gondek, Patrick White, Daryl Johnson

Guests: Maretta Thomsen, Amy Wesley, Vanessa Pileggi, Steve Bissonnette, Laura Domash, Jean Reardon, Lisa Elkhay, Ryan Gable, Christie Semple Cole, JoAnne Laflamme, Tim Tynan, Mark Blaubach

Not Present: Joh Delaney, James Hollins, Derryl Gibbs

Meeting held via conference call.

I. **Meeting called to order at 6:08 p.m.**

II. **Public Forum**

Jean Reardon addressed the Board. First grade teachers are making progress and working with families. All first grade students are attending Teams live lessons; not always able to attend every live lesson daily due to parent schedules and sharing computers but are providing recorded lessons as many times as they need to. Teachers are also using Seesaw and SABIS digital platform for children to access four assignments daily. Teachers and parents are happy with progress of students. Access to library of elementary school content so teachers can assign readings as class and to individual level. It also reads to them and has quizzes. Seesaw allows children to record themselves reading out loud, teaches can record comments back to them. More access daily with families with recorded comments and through email and phone calls and feeling closer to families. Would like to continue positive movement and technology being left “on a shelf” would be waste of money. Consider giving chromebooks to the first grade families that need them most.

III. **Contract Committee**

Atu White updated; been in communication with Amy Wesley and SEM since January and the committee has been working to make sure we can deliver a contract by June 1 deadline. Seven key areas addressed: (1) School Director; DESE made it clear that “buck stops” with Board. (2) Business Manager; took off the table having this role report to the Board. (3) 48-hour reporting period; agreed upon. (4) Straight five year contract; agreed. (5) Evaluation; agreed. (6) student outcomes – have been working with SEM to close gaps between SEM and committee. Met with DESE two weeks ago; had modified to match with conditions. Meeting scheduled for this Friday with DESE. and Item (7)

renumeration; not agreed upon at the moment. Reviewed at May 19, 2020 contract committee meeting. Current SEM contract has 12% compensation and 9% holdback for not meeting benchmarks. They presented 14% which would come to 2.77M. Committee the returned with 12% for \$2.374M and SEM returned with \$2.4M+. Current consideration is \$2.374M with a 16% holdback, tied to conditions being lifted by DESE. Committee and/or Atu White has met with Amy Wesley weekly and by email. Patrick White asked if there are any stipulations in reference to class size, per “wish list” items. Anne-Marie Nicolai noted that, for example in K-3, no more than 22 students per class recommended. Amy Wesley noted the school is currently in compliance per State regulations. Discuss further in education committee.

IV. **Approval of minutes**

Luis Aponte moved to accept the following meeting minutes: Regular meeting of 4/15/2020, Contract committees of 4/21, 4/28, and 5/19/2020, Finance/facilities committees of 5/13/2020, Education committees of 5/4 & 5/11/2020, Governance committees of 4/16 & 4/27/2020. Seconded by Ellen McDonald and approved by voice vote all in favor, YES: Freddy Lopez, Joyce Gondek, Paula Meara, Anne-Marie Nicolai, Atu White, Luis Aponte, Ellen McDonald, Dena Facchini, Sonja Shaw, Daryl Johnson. ABSTAINED: Patrick White.

V. **Director’s Report**

Maretta Thomsen reported.

- 2020/2021 school calendar submitted for review per SPS schedule. Students would start August 31 and go through June 17 with graduation on June 4 and vacations in February and April.
- On-line learning/have gone up by 7.3% in participation since last meeting report. Some students are just receiving Chromebooks. Grades K-5 70.4%; grades 6-8 at 74%; grades 9-12 at 75%. Still providing 125 paper packets by request (not due to lack of internet). Remote learning feedback positive so far. Grade 2 parents and students were very happy to receive. Grade 2 has 115 distributed at this point (more tonight).
- Last month’s meeting the Board had voted to distribute to grades 3-12. Would like to get more in-depth with numbers. Joyce Gondek asked if Chair is receiving updates weekly or monthly? Not receiving weekly updates, but getting updates in education committee meetings. Grade 2-115; grade 3-94; grade 4-93; grade 5-103; grade 6-76; grade 7-62; grade 8-79; grade 9-52; grade 10-70; grade 11-56; and grade 12-42 for a total distributed of 844. Additional 2nd graders are receiving them tonight. There are 219 students in grades K and 1st for reference. Number of units currently in-house is 365 and 42 will come back from 12th grade. Even if they are distributed to younger grades, there would still be enough to service. Up for discussion and based on info from commissioner is talk of use of Chromebooks over summer; consider summer school and SOA funds and graduation. Plan on how to collect from seniors/expected to bring them back on June 1. Mark Blaubach noted Chromebooks can be disabled through Google Admin and/or tracked if there is concern. Ellen asked, what is plan for collecting end of term from the students? Maretta Thomsen would like to present at education subcommittee and are currently in middle of writing procedure. Any

benefit to distributing to 1st graders now even though end of year is only few weeks away? Jean Reardon feels they should be used for summer reading program. Chromebooks can allow to teach to more children such as child home with illness or suspension or student that needs to hear lesson repeated. Aligns with schools globally. Board asked if students receive lessons over the summer? What would benefit be over summer if not attending summer school? Wait for commissioner's guidance. Discussion about benefit of students having them long-term will have huge impact and benefit even if only for a few weeks. Dena Facchini noted concern if they are not distributed that they are not giving students the same opportunity as other students. Freddy Lopez asked if students can have for multiple years such as three-year chromebook lifespan? Luis Aponte reminded that if kids keep over summer, consider how to handle costs if they are not returned? Chromebooks don't have "theft" coverage. Ellen McDonald suggested consider State concerns with summer plans. **Luis Aponte moved to allow grade 2 to be issued Chromebooks. Seconded by Daryl Johnson and approved by voice vote, YES: Freddy Lopez, Joyce Gondek, Patrick White, Paula Meara, Anne-Marie Nicolai, Daryl Johnson, Ellen McDonald, Dena Facchini, Luis Aponte, Sonja Shaw.** (Atu White had stepped out of meeting). **Paula Meara moved to issue Chromebooks to Kindergarten and first grade. Seconded by Joyce Gondek and approved by voice vote, YES: Daryl Johnson, Joyce Gondek, Patrick White, Paula Meara, Anne-Marie Nicolai, Dena Facchini, Sonja Shaw. ABSTAINED: Freddy Lopez, Ellen McDonald, Luis Aponte.**

- Graduation plans reviewed. Note, 75% of 91 graduates are first time high school graduates in their families. Originally set up for June 6 virtual event. Commissioner's webinar as of yesterday, view is that graduation should be virtual unless there are exceedingly extensive safeguard plans. Heard from 90% of students and parents about holding an event and possibility of delaying graduation to a time when it is hopefully safe, walk at school. Choice is to remain virtual on June 6 or agree to remain safe and hold off til August 8 in hopes that restrictions allow it. If it is not possible in August, would then follow through with virtual plan. Next Thursday, May 28 will still take place even if event is put off until August. Students on May 28 will receive gifts and yearbook, cap and gown, picture of class, all while remaining in cars. Prizes for best decorated car. (Atu White returned to the meeting). Cap and gown expense is covered by the school.

VI. **Student Life**

Laura Domash reported.

- During teacher appreciation week, the deputy head prefects sent messages to staff members. Received positive remarks from teachers. Continue to have open communication to discuss future goals and activities and events for next year. Continuing to be support system to peers.
- Preparing to develop next year's team.

VII. **Finance/Facilities Committee**

Freddy Lopez reported. The committee met on May 13.

- Athletic fields project, Tim Tynan has been working with Weston & Sampson. As project manager looking to break ground in July. \$2M contract for the work. No need to go out to bid for project management because Weston & Sampson is already on board as consulting engineer. **Freddy Lopez moved to proceed with contract amendment and allow Steve Bissonnette to sign the contract Seconded by Luis Aponte and approved by voice vote, YES: Freddy Lopez, Luis Aponte, Daryl Johnson, Joyce Gondek, Patrick White, Paula Meara, Anne-Marie Nicolai, Atu White, Ellen McDonald, Sonja Shaw.** (Dena Facchini had left the meeting).
- On the solar project, now is not right time to move forward with RFP issuance but will have it created so it is ready for later date. SMART program qualification confirmed.
- FY21 budget review. State may have revised projections in June/July for per-pupil funding numbers; will revisit and adjust budget. Spanish teacher and a full-time marketing position was added to budget by SEM. IT budgeted for an additional 400 Chromebooks. HVAC work needs to be done \$103K expense. Steve Bissonnette reviewed the favorable variances as discussed in finance/facilities committee of May 13. FY21 had put budget together but substantial changes due to COVID such as tuition revenue--had budgeted 8% year over year increase and Student Opportunity Act would have instilled \$1.6M additional revenue but it doesn't look like it will be received due to negative economic impact of COVID. Therefore, budgeting on a level basis at approximately \$12570 per student and will budget that for next year. Attended webinar today with MCPSCA and majority of charter schools in the State are level funding at this time. Some of the other highlights for next year for staffing – assuming 3% year over year merit increase; two additional new positions, a K-5 Spanish teacher and the marketing position. Maretta Thomsen noted middle school will be losing a Spanish teacher. Sonja Shaw asked about marketing position and Maretta Thomsen will send job description. Vote on budget next meeting and ask questions at that time. Chromebooks were added into budget just in case not enough return to restock the supply at school. Steve Bissonnette also noted that if SOA funds should become available, there are contingent positions identified for them including a health teacher, lower school DMC, interventionist and guidance counselor. CARES Act relief fund grant reviewed. Line item for management contract to be finalized. Capital improvement \$2.2M for athletic fields. Consider approval of supplemental budget for FY20 to add HVAC project about \$103K for HVAC control system and HVAC rooftop unit. **Ellen McDonald moved to approve supplemental budget in amount of 103K for the HVAC items discussed. Seconded by Luis Aponte and approved by voice vote, YES: Ellen McDonald, Daryl Johnson, Freddy Lopez, Joyce Gondek, Patrick White, Paula Meara, Anne-Marie Nicolai, Atu White, Luis Aponte, Sonja Shaw.**
- Freddy Lopez noted on the employee agreement, the SEM response was forwarded to attorney.

VIII. Education Committee

Ellen McDonald reported, committee has met a couple times with focus on student outcomes. Drafted per DESE guidance to mirror accountability plan. Submitted to SEM

and waiting for response. Will participate on call with Atu White and DESE for direction. Will hold a meeting next week, waiting for accountability plan which will run for term of charter, and will be approved by board. Should receive that by end of the week.

IX. **Governance Committee**

Joyce Gondek reported, bylaws submitted to attorney. Few edits to language not content. Changes being incorporated and will return right back to them. DESE will review before being brought to vote. Ellen McDonald said that Joyce and committee did a great job on the new draft. Joyce Gondek thanked Paula Meara.

X. **Chair's Report**

- Sonja Shaw commended all committees for all the work lately, governance, contract, education, finance/facilities.
- Update on board secretary position/will reach out to three candidates for interviews and bring recommendations to the board.
- On attendance, noted that John Delaney could not attend due to loss in family.

Daryl Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Anne-Marie Nicolai. The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Nicolai, Secretary
SICS Board of Trustees

Attachments

Minutes for approval