

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

Minutes of SABIS Board of Trustees Meeting – May 13, 2020
Contract Committee

In Attendance: Atu White, Ellen McDonald, Sonja Shaw, Daryl Johnson, Anne-Marie Nicolai, Paula Meara, Joyce Gondek

Guests: Amy Wesley, Vanessa Pileggi, Maretta Thomsen, Atty. Nicolai

Not Present: Freddy Lopez, Luis Aponte

I. Meeting called to order at 6:06 p.m. via conference call.

II. **Student Outcomes in Contract**

Amy Wesley provided response to the education committee questions about the student outcomes portion of the management agreement (copied and pasted below):

Improve Overall Student Performance

1. Why are we not citing the annual-criterion referenced targets set by DESE?
2. Why aren't we including the comparable schools that DESE compares us with?
3. A target of 50 is based on and signifies typical growth – low. Why not 60% which is the DESE benchmark?
4. Where are the internal benchmarks that were in the previous contract that would support improvement in overall student performance?

Satisfy the Conditions of the Current Charter

1. What are the benchmarks/targets that are going to be used to successfully meet the requirement to demonstrate Overall Progress Toward Improvement to DESE showing a steady improvement year over year by indicator, subgroup, and overall results with the target of 75% or higher – Meeting or Exceeding Targets?
2. Why are we not citing achievement benchmarks in relation to performance targets as identified for the indicators in the Official Accountability Report as published on the DESE website?

Maintain the Success of the High School Students

1. 2019 Official Accountability Report reflects declines in performance (Lowest Performing reflecting a -16.7 change) in all but one subgroup, in relation to the targets for the HS Mathematics achievement. How do the broad benchmarks

proposed for the high school students address the need to demonstrate growth and improvement?

2. Should the current HS MCAS and its target metrics be replaced by the Next-Gen MCAs how will this be measured?

3. 2019 Official Accountability Report reflects a -10.7 change in the 4-year cohort graduation rate – High School from 2017 to 2018 in the white subgroup going from 100% to 89.3%. How does the broad graduation benchmark ensure that there are no declines in the subgroups and reflect a true achievement?

Amy responded, as a broad overview, outcomes were separated into three different categories: to improve overall performance; to satisfy conditions of charter; and to maintain success of high school students. Process of groundwork for cooperation with board moving forward. Item (1) why not citing annual reference targets set by DESE?... targets change on annual basis so not conducive in a five year contract; (2) DESE groups schools into categories and divides each into fours to evaluate performance all schools within the group then they set targets for individual school performance – these are the ones we are committing to meet. So, a comparative process is inherent in these targets. Item (3), why not 60% which is DESE benchmark? See page 16 of school leaders guide, goal for all schools is to achieve SGP of 50. Item (4) about internal benchmarks? Operations rely on data to drive decision making; study it each week to determine progress toward target and recalibrate approach (weekly process). Because AMS are formative assessments they cannot be used weekly as a benchmark for broad improvement; scores reflect students' understanding of specific content taught in week before (snapshot);

The second group of questions about satisfying condition of current charter—student outcomes provided under this category are designed to focus on the conditions that DESE set through 2022 to demonstration significant and sustained improvement so the outcomes in this category are focused on that. Working to meet targets set by DESE each year.

The third category around maintaining success of HS students; accountability report reflecting decline in performance in lowest performing subgroup; look at 2019 references MCAS performance in grade 10 overall and by subgroup, target set was 100%. Students registered at 94 instead of 100 which shows as a “decline”. Took measures this year to address drop. Track student performance every week so we can be sure demonstrating growth and improvement. Question (3) in this category/ CPI scores set performance targets but DESE has discontinued in grade 3-8. Unsure of what DESE will do / how will it be measured and what will it be replaced with? Last question in the category about accountability report reflecting a -10.7 change from 2017 to 2018 in the white subgroup 100% four-year graduation rate to 89.3% in 2018. How does benchmark ensure no declines? The number can reflect some students that left the school. Can't guarantee there won't be a decline; students' needs and challenges are different and they are working hard to minimize factors in students' lives and their

potential for success. For perspective when results are at a high level (surpasses State rate). Committing for grad rate of 90% or higher. Amy Wesley left the meeting.

Ellen McDonald noted if you look at targets we received 0 out of 4 in math and 3 out of 4 for graduation rate. DESE didn't give credit for any improvement. Daryl Johnson suggested send contract in and refer to some sections for DESE review and get feedback on which items align with measurements.

Ellen McDonald also talked about the internal benchmarks; consider that AMS be included, part of accountability plan and student performance. Why were internal benchmarks pulled out – overall performance 85% or higher? Education committee agrees should be included. Noted that DESE wants measurable improvement. If a group gets 0 out of 4 points this does not show improvement. Committee sent document already which should be considered.

Atty. Nicolai noted that student outcome goals are aspirational / no repercussions for not meeting them? How to proceed? Ellen McDonald reviewed the due diligence language from education committee. What would happen in case of a stalemate? Worst case could lead to arbitration and potentially SEM would take position of mediation. Atu White will schedule a call with DESE to determine what benchmarks align best. Daryl Johnson left the meeting. Atu White and Ellen McDonald will draft email to DESE and schedule conversation this week.

Atty. Nicolai can update language around accountability and the effect of non-compliance, decisions board has to make.

Committee will have a call with DESE first and then decide on further language of accountability/repercussions if benchmarks not met.

Renumeration reviewed by the committee. Consider increasing the amount of the management fee based on the 12%, but keeping the annual payment at the current amount of \$1.993 and increasing the holdback commensurately. Plus there is about \$650K per year for textbooks paid to SEM. Wouldn't make good business sense if not meeting benchmarks and we pay more money. Paula Meara is concerned about children and don't want to lose experienced teachers. Ellen McDonald noted the management fee is a line item in budget and doesn't impact salaries and budget. Right now offer is \$2.37M with 16% holdback per year to be paid when conditions are lifted. Ellen McDonald left the meeting.

Atu White will send number and requirements to Atty. Nicolai by tomorrow. Paula Meara said 12% with a 16% holdback concern, does not want to head to arbitration. Current holdback is at 9%. For now, Atu White will place numbers discussed tonight and go from there during negotiations.

Governance discussion:

Updates to bylaws after Atty. Nicolai review are changes to language and not a material effect. Incorporate the updates and resend to DESE. Language from 3.3 bylaws incorporated into contract. Use of the word “appropriate” reviewed and School Director is called different things – suggested to use one word. Use “School Director” as have always used. Paula Meara will amend the draft and forward to DESE.

Paula Meara moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Sonja Shaw and approved; all in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Nicolai, Secretary
SICS Board of Trustees

Attachments