

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

**Minutes of SABIS Board of Trustees Meeting – February 24, 2020**  
**Education Committee**

In Attendance: Ellen McDonald, Patrick White, Sonja Shaw

Guests: Amy Wesley, Maretta Thomsen, Joanne LaFlamme, Jean Reardon,  
Vanessa Pileggi, DJ Conway, Justin Baker

Not Present: Atu White, Joyce Gondek, Anne-Marie Nicolai

I. **Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m.**

II. **Substitute Teachers/Help Wanted**

Ellen McDonald asked about the posting of ads for substitute teachers that were seen at Sophia's. Ads were designed by SABIS creative services and posted in many locations. Committee didn't feel the flyer was a professional image to be portrayed. Targeted all areas around colleges including gyms, restaurants. All individuals are thoroughly vetted. School is in contact directly with local colleges/these are additional postings.

Ellen McDonald asked how many subs are in the building currently for positions that haven't been filled and how many days have subs been in those positions? There are two. One was due to illness/lengthy period of time. An ad has gone out. LT subs (over 90 days) must license or pass MTEL. The position in Science began in October for example – haven't received applicants. Maretta Thomsen has called DESE but has not had a return call. Ellen will forward to Maretta the information about subs from Lee Dilorenzo for follow-up.

The only open positions are for 7<sup>th</sup> grade science and HS biology teacher along with one para. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade position was filled with a certified teacher on 2/7/2020. HS biology sub started in October. 7<sup>th</sup> grade science sub in place since September is now open to be filled since teacher was released.

Openings are placed on School Spring and if others are seen on other on-line locations, they could be out-of-date. Current postings are online are for the following year.

III. **Enrollment**

Enrollment count date the number was exactly at 1,574. Waitlist is at 857. Kindergarten lottery went well. Had added additional registration day in January. The waitlist number includes kindergarten. For next meeting, how many were siblings for kindergarten? How many projected to be retained in kindergarten?

IV. **Discipline**

DJ Conway presented referrals report with comparison by grade and by referral numbers. For comparative chart, can committee see numbers for September-November? There were 42 out-of-school suspensions in January. January of last year to this year decreased by 28%.

Made strong emphasis returning to school in January and admin team met with all to be sure teachers are always in doorways during transitions; hold students accountable for uniforms, electronics etc. Proactive to start term on right foot.

Report reviewed. Example of a suspension was a teacher hit by a student. This example was a short-term suspension which was for nine days pending a long-term suspension evaluation and student received another 45 days. A student that is suspended is not allowed on campus during an out-of-school suspension. Amy Wesley refused to participate in any further in conversation and left the meeting requesting that Justin Baker, DJ Conway, Vanessa Pileggi, and Maretta Thomsen leave as well. All exited meeting at 6:35 p.m.

V. **Charter Renewal Decision**

Ellen McDonald discussed the charter renewal approval dated 2/13/2020 by Commissioner Reilly; charter renewed with two conditions:

*“Condition 1: By December 31, 2022, SABIS International Charter School must demonstrate that it is an academic success by providing evidence that the school has demonstrated significant and sustained academic improvement in mathematics, English language arts, and science for students in grades 3 through 8.*

*Condition 2: By May 1, 2020, the board of trustees of SABIS International Charter School must submit to the Department for review a final draft of the board’s bylaws and its proposed contract with Springfield Education Management for FY2021-2025. All proposed changes must align with published Department guidance and ensure the autonomy and authority of the school’s board of trustees.”*

Also noted areas of concern (translations, quantity and scope of dissemination activities, and Board needs approved bylaws and adequate oversight of management company). Have until May 1<sup>st</sup> to update bylaws and provide draft of the contract. Bylaws became issue because contract must follow along with bylaws. Must abide by DESE requirements as a governance board. What about previous conditions? Were they even addressed?

VI. **Student Opportunity Act**

April 1 is the deadline for proposals with Board approval; is this completed yet? The SOA addresses gaps within subgroups.

VII. **SEM Performance Evaluation**

Reviewed document. Appears very similar to previous year's report. Example of math department adjustments—what were the adjustments, and were they successful? Under 80% mastery English, math, science – indicates “not met”, percentages reviewed. Number of retakes reviewed and results reviewed/shows increase, but not by a lot. What can a governance board do? Consider fidelity of the curriculum? Set benchmarks in contract? Grades 3-8 is a problem. Prior history does not dictate future results. You don't hear about issues parents are having.

Page 15/3<sup>rd</sup> grade was at 35% for scoring 85 or above and number dropped to 21%. 5<sup>th</sup> grade went from 30% to 12%. Is there a plan for the 88% of the students in that group? 7<sup>th</sup> grade went from 6 to 10%. 9<sup>th</sup> grade went from 28% to 40%. Ellen McDonald will pull together some notes and send the evaluation back to SEM.

How to work together/ looked at transition / next is addressing behavior / what's next? Question is how to work with mutual respect if management company will not work together?

If behavior improved, did grades go up? 7<sup>th</sup> grade last year average was 70 is now 74. Grade 1 had a one-point improvement; grade 2 had three-point drop, for example. Overall grades 9, 10, and 11 dropped as well. Grade 5 had a two-point gain. Grade 6 had five-point; and grade 7 had four. Grade 8 had eight points.

General question/how does it work when a suspended student returns?

Topics are reported to the Board after the fact. If the Board had some understanding of what is happening, it could help to calm situations with members of public. Can help and work together.

Ellen McDonald mentioned that the Board received a letter from a teacher. Will be reviewed at a later meeting.

Question about number of counselors in school/noted there is one within each level of school.

Unprofessional for Board to receive data which is to be evaluated and discussed on same day as meeting. Board members are volunteers to work for students; place request to have at least two business days prior to meeting to have time to review information provided.

Are teachers afraid of repercussions if speaking up?

Ellen McDonald moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Patrick White. The meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Nicolai, Secretary  
SICS Board of Trustees

Attachments  
SEM self-evaluation  
Referral report 1819-1920