

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

**Minutes of SABIS Board of Trustees Meeting – January 18, 2017**

In Attendance: Ellen McDonald, Luis Aponte, Joyce Williams-Gondek, Freddy Lopez, Maria Malmborg, Tracy Whitfield, Patrick White

Guests: Karen Reuter, Steve Bissonnette, Kim Hollenbeck, Gina Martin-Ryan, Xiamara Alban and Antonio Lewis of Alumni Council; George Saad, Mahdi Kansou, Ryan Meek of SABIS (via Skype); Rebecca Larson, Edouard deVarennnes, Carol Szaka, Michael Hill, Tara Asher, Tracy DellaPenna, Danelle Skorka, Nancy Piela, Nancy Rosado, Tina Le, Maria Khoury, Chantal Ayotte, Christopher Ross, Jamil Abdul-Wadud, Elizabeth Montgomery

Not Present: Olivia Kynard, Barbara Lindquist, Sonja Shaw, Richard Griffin

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I. Meeting called to order at 6:07 p.m.

II. **Public Forum**

C. Winston, parent of a 5<sup>th</sup> grader expressed concerns of classrooms being on fast track and students are not passing. Ellen McDonald responded that the Board would look further. Karen Reuter will follow up.

III. **Approval of Minutes**

**Joyce Williams-Gondek moved to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2016 board meeting and the January 11, 2017 finance committee meetings. Seconded by Maria Malmborg and approved, all in favor.**

IV. **Alumni Council**

Xiamara Alban and Antonio Lewis updated the Board on Alumni Council activities to date. The council now has a full board. The purpose of the Council is to foster communication between alumni and on campus. Began with organized games in 2014 and have reached over 160 alum. Winter event popular/good collaboration. Future events planned based on interest/helps to bridge gap between current students and alumni population. Goal is to implement a \$1,200 scholarship for a graduating senior for the class of 2017.

Future event ideas include a dodgeball tournament in order to fundraise for donations for a scholarship in 2018; a softball game and other social events/networking.

Focus in-house on networking events for senior students and alumni; TED-talk type events; college pep talk night; create alumni newsletter, etc.

Council has reached about 320 alumni and connected on Facebook to about 760. They can be contacted at [sabisalumniCouncil@gmail.com](mailto:sabisalumniCouncil@gmail.com) They will utilize funding to boost event promotions.

Joyce Williams-Gondek commented that it is important to try to reach all alum/many are not seeing Facebook or other invitations. Fundraising goal for first year is \$1200.

Maria Malmberg requested more cost detail on cost of events. Review further at March meeting.

V. **SEM/Time Management System**

SABIS representatives Mahdi Kansou, Ryan Meek, and George Saad presented an overview of the human resources program via Skype. Notes:

- New feature added to existing system.
- WFN software was implemented last year. Hardware was an option not included last year.
- ADP software/added features will minimize human error
- Expanded HR/time & attendance
- Summary of internal processes/benefits of WFN (Workforce Now module)
- Comprised of software, time clock, and badge (compared with previous sign-in sheets)

Tracye Whitfield noted that this seems to be a change in procedure.

- Manual process previously/becomes self-serve/automated benefits to simple process/system is "engaging"
- Time & attendance automated. Accessed through time clock, computer login, or through app (but app is not available yet-could log-in outside of school).
- Streamline process/time saver; Minnesota has been using for about two years with a small team.
- Approximately \$2500 per unit plus cost of printer for IDs. Mahdi Kansou will provide costs to Steve Bissonnette to review with finance committee). The school has two units
- Not tracking time after hours/tracks that employees are in or out.

Ellen McDonald pointed out section 7 of management contract/procedure change.

- Other benefits/Employee Assistance Program and employee discount programs/part of expanded package
- Implemented system-wide except in those schools that do not use ADP.
- Basic system won't give you ACA module.

Tracye Whitfield suggested keeping all the modules but not the "clocking in" system. Ellen McDonald asked for a copy of policy that says employees have to fill out a sign-in sheet. SABIS noted it is not a written policy.

- Not to be used as "policing" tool just compliance requirement.
- Costs included in budget except for time clock expense which was approximately \$6K.

VI. **Student Life**

Gina Martin-Ryan updated the Board on Student Life activities.

**Academic Department**

- Power study sessions held for 8<sup>th</sup> grade and other grades. Offering another this mid-term expanded to all middle school and 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Huge turnout of tutors.
- Prep list in operation for 3-8<sup>th</sup> /looking to expand.

- Peer tutoring centers open in middle school and high school daily to any student. Students are using punch cards to earn pizza party.

#### Activities Department

- Winter carnival to have class competition and among staff end of January/early February.

#### Social Responsibility Department

- Held very successful food drive for Gray House with 3,940 pounds of food (plus cash donations). Gray House serves over 300 families because of SABIS donations. Students are becoming adept at setting goals and meeting them. Collected 301 toys and also cash donations for over \$1K to Shriners.
- This month supporting Tapestry Health including substance abuse prevention & education and a non-uniform day.

#### Sports/Health Department

- Camp Beckett to be held from March 31-April 1. 50 students attending. Many students have already raised enough funds to cover half the cost. Some are completely paid.
- Fundraising has reduced the cost to about \$80 per student.
- Held staff vs student basketball game and fundraised over \$300 for camp expenses.

### VII. Director's Report

Karen Reuter reported.

- SABIS spirit committee sent our school 22 \$50 gift cards to share with families in need. Board Secretary, Maria Malmborg will send thank you from the Board for their generosity.
- Enrollment currently at 1571/will meet benchmark.
- Kindergarten registration is going on. Kim Hollenbeck reported that there are 139 applicants to date and 28 siblings. One more night of registration to be held 1/19/17 from 4:30-6:30. Wait list is be open all throughout January.
- Participating in Charter School Showcase on February 4 and also accepting Kindergarten applications there and waitlist.
- Academic updates end-of-term 1 academic results sent to Board. Will review in-depth with the education subcommittee. Schoolwide goal of 80% established due to correlation of AMS scores and standardized tests. Compare year over year in education subcommittee.
- Making adjustments in 5<sup>th</sup> grade class
- Need to do better with climate of the school – empathy – especially with the middle school atmosphere. Harvard program, Making Caring Common will be surveying middle and high school students, as to what the student can do. Need more programs for boys.
- Trustee Freddy Lopez will reach out to the Director with some alternative to violence information.
- STAR and AR reports – additional end of term measures on reading program. Seeing some growth. AR increases engagement with reading. Reading specialist helping to sustain reading levels of students and has been effective. Report broken down by ELL and special ed subgroups.
- Teacher working on a teaching empathy program,
- Report cards to be distributed 1/20/17.
- AQCs providing MN academic analysis

- MCAS 2.0 readiness webinar was held/it is expected to be a complex computer challenge. Resources around testing platform. Grades 4 and 8 will use computer this spring/all others on paper. Had MCAS science summit with program coordinators here/reviewed student performance and for science teachers to prepare. Leading up to MCAS for pancake breakfast pep rallies and raffles. Requesting up to \$3K to support raffle for English math and science at each grade level. **Tracye Whitfield moved to approve up to \$3K for the raffle prizes. Seconded by Luis Aponte and approved by voice vote/ YES: Ellen McDonald, Luis Aponte, Joyce Williams-Gondek, Freddy Lopez, Maria Malmborg, Tracye Whitfield, Patrick White.**
- Coordinated program review process happens every six years – it is a compliance review of how federal funds are used for ELL, special education, and civil rights/how the school is providing full access to programs. Last spring did document submission/ DESE did file review/in December DESE was on-site for interviews etc. No formal report yet.
- Professional learning day, Dr. Ruth Poti presented on understanding the connection between the adolescent brain development, teen risk taking, and addiction.. Staff held workshops on behavior management, math, supporting students with emotional challenges, instruction, learning, etc.
- Model Congress 77<sup>th</sup> team competed best delegation award; a 4<sup>th</sup> place and an honorable mention.
- 20 Students attending inauguration along with four staff (on local news today) will do live feed reporting from inauguration. Students selected to attend had to submit an essay which was read by Senator Lesser.
- FAFSA night being held tonight.

VIII. **Facilities Committee**

Tabled

IX. **Finance Committee**

Ellen McDonald reported.

- Require additional signer to bank account. **Wilfredo Lopez moved to add Sonja Shaw/Vice Chair as a signer on the account. Seconded by Maria Malmborg and approved by voice vote, YES: Ellen McDonald, Luis Aponte, Joyce Williams-Gondek, Freddy Lopez, Maria Malmborg, Tracye Whitfield, Patrick White.**
- Contingent liability line item in budget reviewed. Have accrued 65K per year for a total of \$500K. The finance committee has reviewed and recommends stopping the accrual. Six years' worth has been accrued (proxy). Per the Board Attorney, two conditions required in order for this to happen (1) must deem financial condition of the school has changed since 2009 and (2) no demand notice has been issued. Both requirements are met. Noted that the accrued amount stays on books. Can start removing each year's accrual 20 years after; for example for the accrual made in 2009 it can start being removed in year 2029. **Tracye Whitfield moved to approve the finance committee recommendation to stop accruing the contingent liability effective FY '17 and moving forward. Seconded by Joyce Williams-Gondek and approved by voice vote /YES: Ellen McDonald, Luis Aponte, Joyce Williams-Gondek, Freddy Lopez, Maria Malmborg, Tracye Whitfield, Patrick White.**

Tracye Whitfield reported:

- Management Agreement Section 9 referencing the \$204K to be paid to SEM if DESE conditions were removed. Conditions have not been removed by the Commissioner since demonstration of improvement must be sustained. Commissioner has extended the

condition to 2020, but could remove if sustained improvement is demonstrated. No action is anticipated until at least year 2019. Other factors are the changing of tests and testing landscape in 2017. The finance committee recommends reducing the year 2017 budgeted amount of the Management Fee by \$204K. SABIS wishes to seek clarification from Commissioner. **Maria Malmberg moved to reduce the budget line item for management fee by \$204K to the base amount of \$1,993,000 with the caveat requested by SEM that they are not rescinding their right to collect the funds. Seconded by Luis Aponte. Approved by voice vote (YES): Ellen McDonald, Luis Aponte, Joyce Williams-Gondek, Maria Malmberg, Tracye Whitfield, Patrick White; (NO): Wilfredo Lopez.**

X. **Education Committee**

Ellen McDonald noted that the committee will schedule a meeting soon to review EOT results, DESE report card and site visit.

XI. **Governance**

Joyce Williams-Gondek reported that there are two interviews coming up, Lorna Lewis and Darryl Lovell, and will hold a governance committee meeting soon. Planning to place ad/will bring more information to the Board in March. *Point of View* publication suggested.

XII. **Ad Hoc Retreat Committee**

Maria Malmberg noted that the Executive Committee will meet soon to plan the retreat which is tentatively scheduled for April at Emma's Place. Strategic Planning committee meeting to be scheduled.

XIII. **Chair's Report**

Ellen McDonald reported.

- Read aloud a letter received today from a list of teachers and staff. Areas of concern include:
  - Decline in academic performance – staff is losing faith in current system and ability of current curriculum to help them teach to the 21<sup>st</sup> century student.
  - Professional climate

To be discussed in an Education Committee meeting.

- The Board discussed the time management system presentation. Some notes:
  - More work for supervisors
  - Software already built into budget
  - Some efficiency gained by removing paper process
  - No cost-benefit analysis provided by SEM
  - What are options?
    - (1) suspend swipe/time tracker until cost-benefit analysis received and reviewed. Noted that SEM did not seek BOT approval prior to instituting new procedure. Policy change could be violation of terms of management contract. System not implemented with prior approval.
    - (2) request a “plan B” from SEM.
  - \$6K cost was one-time expense
  - Hourly vs. salaried employees.

**Maria Malmborg moved to have the topic reviewed by Governance Committee to determine whether to remove system or request cost benefit analysis. Seconded by Joyce Williams-Gondek and approved. Governance Committee will set a meeting date and report back to Board at March meeting.**

- Noted that Joyce Williams-Gondek renewed her three-year term to 2019.
- Board members should review the subcommittee list for updates and interests.
- DESE site visit
  - BOT “partially meets” ratings reviewed/room for improvement. Noted that subcommittee minutes need more discussion summary. Other improvement areas noted were and the Boards oversight of the school leader and oversight of management company, and BOT attendance at meetings. BOT self-evaluation is a new requirement.

Luis Aponte moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the Director’s salary recommendation and to not return to regular session. The regular meeting adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Malmborg, Secretary  
SABIS Board of Trustees

List of handouts  
Minutes of previous meetings