



Sela PCS Board Meeting Minutes

Date: December 12, 2019, 6:45 pm

Location: Sela Public Charter School

In attendance: Lisa Apple, Heather Capell, Ki'ara Cross, Rebecca Damari, Deena Fox, Bryce Jacobs, Steve Messner, Aster Patel, Michael Walker, Josh Bork*, Camerra Taliaferro*, Markus Townsend*

*non-voting attendee

The meeting started at 6:53 pm

Minutes: Rebecca Damari

Timekeeper: Heather Capell

Agenda (Attached as Appendix A)

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes: Deena moved to approve the meeting minutes from October. Heather seconded. All present voted in favor, except Bryce and Jenifer, who abstained.

Mission moments: Sela performed well in the poetry slam of DC Scores. Josh and Deena represented Sela at the PCSB Tier 1 celebration. K-2 went to the Kennedy Center today to see Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus.

Upcoming school events:

- EdFest December 14. Jenifer will participate.
- Open House/Hebrew Playdate December 15. Bryce will participate and bring other families.
- Winter lights festival December 19. PreK and K in the morning: 9:30-11; grades 1-5 in the afternoon: 1-3:30. All board members are invited.
- DC Jewish Preschool Fair January 5

HOS report (Attached as Appendix B)

Goal 2: Stabilize and grow staff

- Mid-year staff survey is ready to go out. For end-of-year staff survey, Josh will solicit input from the academic committee.
- Arbel is a great partnership. They provide support for us and are happy with what we're doing. They have a steady stream of teachers to place in the US
- Finding a way to help with visas would open up new possibilities; Bryce has some connections with people who have relatives in Israel who would be interested in coming if a visa was available.
- Staff observations and evaluations are ongoing. Leadership evaluations will be coming soon.

Goal 3: Improve student achievement

- OPI assessment is complete; should be available to the academic committee in January and the full board in February.
- Winter MAP data should be available to the academic committee in January and the full board in February. A lot of growth, especially in grades 3-5.

Goal 4: Increase financial stability

- Josh, Camerra, and Geoff did some budget trimming, decreased the deficit from \$145K to \$85K.

Goal 5: Strengthen family engagement

- Midyear family survey going out on Tuesday. Several ideas were proposed for increasing the response rate: send by text message, a separate email from the Tuesday folder, hard copies at the front desk and available at the winter lights festival. Questions about transportation will be included. For recruitment: we will present transportation as a work in progress.

Board Discussion: Maintaining shinshinot program for next year?

- The school leadership would like to see the program continue. It's a question of budget. This year we set aside ~\$40K for this; Josh thinks it has been worth it. January board meeting: Ronit, Gili, Ori to come report on what's gone well, what the program has contributed to the school.

Board Discussion: Staffing for 50/50 immersion program in grade 1

- Josh will present possible staffing scenarios in January.

Positive Behavior and Discipline Discussion – led by Markus Townsend, Director of Culture and Student Support (resources are available in the board drive, in “Board meeting materials and minutes”)

- New this year: Markus has made an effort to tie school rules to the 5 pillars. Teachers can create class rules that reflect the school rules. That piece still needs work. Currently teachers determine class rules (4-5 rules) early in the year with their students.

Positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS)

- Proactive strategies to promote positive behaviors. Tier 1 (universal): positively-worded class rules, incentive programs (used in all grades). Tier 2: additional interventions for students with at-risk behaviors. Tier 3: individualized interventions for students engaging in problem behaviors.
- Some interventions include exercise, mindfulness, frameworks for talking about feelings, tools for self-monitoring of behavior
- Responsive classroom approach: structure within which teachers should create lessons, structure interactions
- Logical consequences: related to the infraction, designed to teach, promote responsibility, and promote reflection

Restorative practices

- Restorative practices: goal is to repair the harm to the community and the person who has been affected. It's usually an apology letter. Circle discussions are designed for the students to feel like they have a voice.

General practices

- Teachers are empowered to deal with behavioral problems in the classroom rather than sending them to the front office.
- Behavior referrals (to the front office) are typically due to behavior that is disruptive to classroom activities. Referrals are rare, but can lead to students receiving Tier 2 interventions.
- Teachers use the Calm app for mindfulness activities in the classroom

Board questions/responses

- Markus thinks of suspension as an option to be used rarely, especially in a case where a student harms or physically threatens a teacher.
- Are parents involved in restorative circles? Not yet. Looking for more ways to involve parents, have teachers be in touch with parents about good behavior as well as bad.
- Why fewer referrals? If teachers can use diverse instructional models and engage the students, we see fewer problems, but we still have room to grow. Most of the problems come in art and upper-grades Hebrew. Teachers are learning how to be more flexible, how to prevent behavior problems from occurring.

- Is behavior and culture more teacher-directed than school-directed now (than it used to be)? Markus likes giving teachers a framework and letting them personalize it for their classes. Some teachers probably need more training and development in how to do it.
- Is this part of teacher observations/evaluations? Markus is working on how to track effectiveness.
- Markus is working on planning for more PD that's trauma-informed, focused on restorative practices, social-emotional learning. It's been rare when a teacher suggests that a student should be suspended.
- Deena: Would like to see Sela as a school that doesn't suspend students.
- Ki'ara: suspension as a step on the way to expulsion. Markus: the law requires steps along the way to expulsion.
- Michael: It's important to have a range of alternatives that staff can use. Part of that is teachers feeling like they have tools to use. Teacher PD is important, and monitoring classroom behavior is also part of it.

Committee Updates

External relations

- Board members are asked to send (a version of) the committee-drafted fundraising letter to their networks by December 15, with a follow up by December 28.
- There will be a Mailchimp mailing to past donors. Board members can forward that to prior donors who are among their contacts (with a personal note at the top) instead of writing a separate email.
- We have a goal to raise \$10K by the end of the calendar year, which would bring us very close to our \$35K goal for the academic year. \$10K for this appeal comes out to \$769 per board member.
- The PTSA did not raise as much for Giving Tuesday as last year. Raised \$1000 to augment the music program. The school will be more proactive next year in supporting the PTSA in its Giving Tuesday fundraising.

Board Discussion: Charter school landscape

From Deena: There was a meeting of parents who are involved in public charter school boards. Interest in the PCSB being more of a bridge of resources across the city, enabling collaboration across schools and with DCPS. PCSB is recruiting a new leader.

Also: there are not a lot of charter elementary schools in DC that end in grade 5. Most either have solved the problem with a feeder relationship, or go past 5th grade. Middle school is a city-wide issue.

Full Board Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm and moved into executive session