

MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Trustees of The SEED School of Washington, D.C.

September 12, 2019
9:00 A.M. EST

Attendance

Present:

Henry O'Connor
Lesley Poole
Desa Sealy
David Steinberg

By Phone

Vasco Fernandes
Ken Slaughter

Absent

Dennis Chestnut
Rajiv Vinnakota

SEED DC Staff

Ken Arndt
LaMar Bagley
Mecha Inman
Vita Makle
Stacey Pearl
Quinhon Scott
Nat Wyeth

Guests

Vincena Allen
Keniq Coney
Kendra Johnson
Hopi Moodie
Brian Rahaman

Call to Order

Ms. Desa Sealy, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:15 A.M. Ms. Sealy welcomed everyone to the meeting. Ms. Sealy remarked on the upcoming event at the THEARC to be held on December 12th.

Consent Agenda

A motion to approve the May 16, 2019, board minutes passed unanimously.

Head of School Update

Ms. Mecha Inman welcomed the board members and attendees to the start of the 2019-2020 school year and stated she's excited to begin her 3rd academic year as the head of school. Ms. Inman is also proud to say that all members of the leadership team are now veterans as 100% of the leadership team are returning employees. Ms. Inman stated SEED DC is now able to build with consistency and continuity on the work they have forged together over the last couple of years.

Ms. Inman reported SEED DC has gone through their forming, and storming stages and is now in the norming and performing stages. For that, she is grateful! Ms. Inman noted that SEED DC

has had its fair share of challenges and opportunities but she is honored to work with the resilient leaders who are unapologetically passionate about serving scholars in the spirit of equity.

Ms. Inman reported that the leadership team began the School Improvement Plan 2.0 (SIP 2.0) planning process in July. She believes going through all the stages the school will be able to deliver better results in the areas of academics, social-emotional development and culture, and climate. Those are the areas in which the SIP is rooted. Ms. Inman noted that the target date to finalize the SIP 2.0 is September 30th.

Ms. Inman added that since the last board meeting SEED DC is excited to share their experiential learning opportunities for scholars. This past summer, scholars traveled to Belize, Greece, Jamaica, Wyoming, Japan, New Jersey, University of MD, Costa Rico, Alabama, and Brazil. Ms. Inman showed a two-minute video clip of the scholars' experience in Brazil. The testimony is that most of SEED's scholars had not been on an airplane before.

Ms. Desa Sealy shared after reviewing the video SEED DC will be piloting a Development Committee meeting soon to motivate and inspire new donors.

Staff Updates

Ms. Inman reported in August 2019, Ms. Elizabeth Ochsendorf resigned as the Director of Student Life, Brown Hall after sharing her gifts and talents with the community over the last thirteen years. Dr. LaMar Bagley has transitioned into the role of Interim Director of Student Life for both Brown and Marshall Halls for the 2019-2020 school year.

Ms. Liping Sun, Data Analyst resigned and transitioned to Chicago, IL. Ms. Sun was an integral part of the team ensuring the school stayed on track with data. Ms. Inman shared this is the validation season for SEED DC's Performance Management Framework (PMF) School Quality Report and the Star Framework. Ms. Inman stated that until we fill Ms. Sun's position, Ms. Stacey Pearl, Mr. Dayvon Harrod, Ms. Vita Makle and Ms. Inman will all manage the tasks for the validation processes.

Ms. Inman reported that Mr. Nat Wyeth, Director of Development, transitioned from a part-time SEED DC/Foundation employee to now being a full-time employee of SEED DC.

Ms. Inman shared that Ms. Stacey Pearl, Assistant Head of School is spreading her wings in her second school year. Not only is she providing oversight of our Student Support Services, managing systems, and processes, Ms. Pearl is now providing oversight of SEED DC's deans which is strategic due to the new District discipline laws. Ms. Inman noted that Ms. Pearl's position continues to have a lens on compliance and ensuring our systems and decisions aligned with the law.

Ms. Inman shared that she wanted to round out the full scope of the summer work so the board could have a comprehensive understanding of the team's efforts before discussing PARCC results. Ms. Inman stated that it is important to understand what it takes to engage and run a program so that our scholars can truly receive instruction without distraction as well as ensuring

systems and processes are aligned with SEED DC's mission. Ms. Inman added that she does not like only defining scholars or the work by test scores alone.

Suspensions

Ms. Inman shared SEED DC had to focus on the new discipline law changes taking effect the 2019-2020 school year. Ms. Inman shared that it is not enough to say we have new discipline laws but SEED DC also now has to think about other consequences to behavior outside of suspensions and dismissals. Ms. Inman noted in addition to the new discipline laws, if we cannot suspend or cannot expel how do we equip ourselves over the summer and still have a positive culture and climate in the building?

Ms. Pearl reported that SEED DC redesigned its in-school suspension process to address Level 1-3 discipline infractions with scholars called The Restore and Reflect Center (The R&R Center). In that space, SEED DC has signed on to a program called Suite 360 which is caseload aligned and students have direct access to online assignments and teachings that directly align to the behavior exhibited that led to a referral that helps to identify steps to redirect their inappropriate behaviors.

Restorative Justice

Ms. Pearl reported that internal staff members have been trained to support instruction around Restorative Justice Practices. This helps with class management to allow teachers to deliver effective practices. As a continuum of professional development, academic staff members participated in a two-day training on restorative mediation and practices and Student Life staff members participated in a refresher training on proactive and responsive circles hosted by Restore DC.

Student Life

Dr. Bagley reported that all Student Life faculty (if hired before August 16, 2019) was trained and nationally certified in Advance Youth Development by nationally recognized facilitators Thandor Miller and Syretta Evans. Below are three categories of the certification program.

- Certification focused on youth development competencies.
- Youth developmental needs and indicators.
- Design of programming focused on meeting specific developmental needs and outcomes.

Ms. Inman shared the following activities with the group that took place over the summer:

- Advanced Placement teachers attended a conference in July;
- Over the summer, SEED DC ran a credit recovery program and held summer school;
- Held a two-week ninth grade experience whereas new and returning 9th grade scholars were invited to participate to get to know each other;
- SEED DC implemented a dedicated 9th grade team which is important as 9th scholar's transition into high school. Staff members believe it was a game-changer as they began the 2019 – 2020 school year;
- The college counselor met with senior families this summer to address any questions to ensure they had a clear plan as they entered into the 2019 – 2020 school year;
- SEED DC's library has been remodeled as another instructional and learning space;

- The Director of Experiential Learning & External Opportunities worked on SEED DC's dual enrollment partnerships. Four scholars are attending UDC and earning college credits. In addition, UDC is facilitating a Finance course for thirteen scholars during the Student Life program where scholars will also receive college credits. Their grades will directly impact SEED's School Quality Report;
- Staff engaged in twelve hours of professional development with the School Support Team at the Foundation;
- Two Student life staff members engaged in yoga and mindfulness. Ms. Inman shared that she is proud to say Ms. Grant is a Certified Yoga Instructor and is facilitating a yoga class prior to transition to the academic building for scholars each morning with mindfulness to allow scholars to enter the day more peacefully.

Ms. Inman reported from a Network standpoint; the Network has birthed seven new core values out of the SEED 20/20 Committee Meeting. The seven SEED Core Values are; *Respect, Responsibility, Perseverance, Integrity, Compassion, Gratitude and Growth*. Ms. Inman shared she is most thankful for the core value of Gratitude.

Assistant Head of School Update

Ms. Stacey Pearl reported that SEED DC is excited to partner with the District's Mental Health Expansion in schools with the community-based organization, One Common Unity. Through One Common Unity, SEED DC has a full-time social worker for the 2019-2020 school year working Monday through Thursday from 12 pm to 8 pm and on Fridays from 8 am to 4 pm. In this role the social worker will be supporting general education students and providing Tier 1 Interventions. His schedule is designed so that he can spend time in both the Academic and Student Life programs. Through this partnership with One Common Unity, SEED DC will also be bringing one of their programs to Student Life called "*Fly by Light*."

Ms. Pearl shared that in addition to a full continuum of services for special education and to support SEED DC's transition to high school, a resource room has been established as a part of the model to deliver targeted specialized instruction for the 2019-2020 school year.

Ms. Pearl announced that SEED DC has also partnered with Education Modified. Ms. Pearl noted that it is a highly regarded platform within the special education community. The belief is that this partnership will improve academic outcomes for scholars with disabilities together with new research-based interventions and strategies readily available. It also links teachers to research-based strategies and workload tools to monitor progress.

Ms. Pearl reported The Excellence by Design is 90% complete and will be submitted to the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (Middle States Accreditation) by the September 22nd deadline date. On October 3rd, the Chair of the Middle States visiting team will be visiting SEED DC to prepare for the team visit on October 22 – 25, 2019. Ms. Pearl noted that the school is counting on Board support during the Middle States visit by attending a scheduled lunch with the Middle States team on Thursday, October 24, 2019, at 12 pm located at the school in the 4th floor large conference room.

Ms. Pearl reported that SEED DC has finalized and implemented its handheld metal detector search policy, Wand Policy, for scholars.

Board Queries

Mr. Ken Slaughter asked does SEED DC require background checks for all partners and/or volunteers that have direct access to scholars? Can SEED DC put their hands on the background checks immediately? Ms. Inman's responded "Yes." Mr. Slaughter asked if the Director of Student Life is working side-by-side with the Principal as an integrated effort to build up test results? Ms. Inman's responded "Yes." Mr. Slaughter requested that the board have an executive session to discuss the performance of SEED DC's staff and leadership.

Academics Update

Dr. Quinhon Scott highlighted some events that happened over the summer for SEED DC scholars. Please see the list below.

- Hosted a two-week meet and greet for new and incoming 9th graders. All teachers participated with the exception of the physics teacher. The focus was on project-based learning (roller coaster activity), outbound course work;
- Scholars visited Howard University and participated in a scavenger hunt;
- Scholars participated in an Empathy Project. Incoming scholars had to answer questions such as "How could you survive at SEED DC?" or "If something happens at SEED who do you go to?"; and
- 5th period now includes a 30 minutes intervention block on a daily basis for additional scholar support.

Dr. Scott reported that to frame the work around the 2018-2019 Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), based on the School Improvement Plan (SIP) goal SEED DC expected that 50% or more of scholars would increase a level. SEED DC did not meet that goal.

Dr. Scott shared a presentation with the board highlighting the 2018-2019 PARCC score results. Dr. Scott noted that the 2018-2019 (PARCC) scores were publicly released in August. SEED DC had strong gains in grade 7 & 8 ELA scores and grade 7 math scores in both Level 3+ and Level 4+ categories. Dr. Scott shared despite the increase in proficiency rates in middle school and high school math, SEED DC experienced a decrease in high school ELA scores.

Dr. Scott explained that the 2018-2019 school year was the first year a group of middle school scholars in Grade 8 took Algebra I. Compared to the PARCC scores 8th grade scholars received the previous year; SEED DC did not fare well. Dr. Scott reported that Ms. Bennaugh, 8th grade math teacher had a successful two years based on teaching 8th grade math but did not successfully prepare scholars for the Algebra I test.

Ms. Keniq Coney chimed in and reported to the board that the correlation of our scholars with disabilities for grade levels 8 & 10 in ELA and math in comparison with the State assessments the data tells a story of opportunity. Ms. Coney noted that there is an opportunity for SEED DC to improve the growth mark in middle school for scholars who are the lowest performing to

achieve significant gains and outcomes on PMF scores and to tell SEED DC's story of the work we do with and for children who are most disadvantaged. Ms. Coney recommended that the next steps for SEED DC be to figure out what is its growth strategy and specific targets for scholars with disabilities to achieve positive outcomes on PARCC coupled with implementing Improvement Science for ELA to understand and evaluate the problem to get to the root cause.

Ms. Inman shared the SIP is SEED DC's beacon in which the board can hold both her and her leadership team accountable. Ms. Inman noted that the dates of accountability in a six-week cycle aligned with the SIP starting in October 2019 are as follows.

- October 4, 2019
- November 15, 2019
- January 17, 2020
- March 6, 2020
- April 24, 2020
- June 5, 2020

Development Update

Mr. Nat Wyeth thanked the board members who agreed to attend the upcoming Development Committee meeting to be held on September 27. His focus has been working on SEED DC's prospect list, opportunities and what the pitch is. Mr. Wyeth believes SEED DC has excellence in the school and the opportunities in the Arts. Mr. Wyeth shared that SEED DC will be celebrating over 20 years of excellence during the opening night of Falcon Theatre on December 12th at the THEARC. All members of the board were sent an invitation to attend.

Finance Update

Mr. Ken Arndt reported the Year-End as of June 30 SEED DC are within budget. The debt covenant requirement 1.2 and liquidity requirement of \$1M have been met. Mr. Arndt also reported that new roofs, new HVAC systems, and lockers on the 4th floor in Marshall Hall were installed. The library renovation is 95% complete.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.

Executive Session

The Board moved to executive session from 11:30 AM to 12:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vita Makle

Executive Assistant to the Head of School