



BOARD MEETING MINUTES
THE SEED School of Washington, D.C.
September 30, 2021
9:00 A.M. EST

Attendance:

Directors

Angelita Buckman
Vasco Fernandes
Huck O'Connor
Lesley Poole
Desa Sealy
Raj Vinnakota

Absent

David Steinberg
Eric Vinson

Staff

Vincena Allen
Ken Arndt
Beverly Badley
Keniq Coney
Brendan Dowd
Curtis Durham
Rashida Holman-Jones
Kendra Johnson-Tesch
Jubria Lewis
Chloe Marshall
Hopi Moodie
Brian Rahaman
Christopher Rooks
Sherita Wallace

Secretary of the Meeting

Marjorie Howard

Call to Order

Ms. Desa Sealy, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. Ms. Sealy welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Consent Agenda

A motion was made to approve the Minutes from May 27, 2021; the board minutes were passed unanimously.



Head of School Update

Before providing an update Dr. Brian Rahaman reminded the board that this meeting is an open meeting in accordance with the Open Meetings Act and that this meeting is also being recorded.

Dr. Rahaman shared the following objectives of the meeting.

- Review current academic performance and next steps
- Review school improvement plan goals
- Provide updates on enrollment, student life, and finance
- Review concept designs for special project and determine next steps

COVID Health Protocols

Dr. Rahaman provided an update on the health protocols put in place in compliance with CDC guidance, and what seems to be working well and where we need to improve. He reported in detail, all of the successful mitigation processes that are in place to keep our SEED community safe which include; daily health screenings using the MyMedBot App, Cohorting of students, Grab and Go breakfast where students eat breakfast in the classroom, students lunch periods by grade level to maintain cohorts, isolation spaces for students not feeling well, and onsite weekly COVID testing. The areas of improvement include enforcing social distancing among students and complying with our universal masking policy.

Staffing Updates

Dr. Rahaman gave an update on staffing vacancies. To date, the academic department has filled two of the four teacher vacancies and the student life department has filled one of their four vacancies. Recruitment and interviews are ongoing to fill these positions and we have executed a contract with Align Staffing for substitute teachers to help with teacher vacancies especially with staff who are out due to COVID protocols.

Virtual Learning

Dr. Rahaman first explained the guidance set by OSSE and DC Health that a student must have a medical consent and certification form signed by their doctor and that the period of validity for this medical certification form shall be for one academic semester in the 2021-22 school year. We currently have two students who are medically certified to learn from home as well as some students who are quarantined due to COVID protocols. Virtual learning is done via Zoom and the same Google classroom that we are using for in-person students. We are currently working on an asynchronous option to completing assignments for students who are too ill to log onto the regular 8 hours of learning that would include instructional video component that students can log into so that they don't fall behind in their classwork.

Ms. Lesley Poole asked the following question about options for non-medical virtual learning: Are OSSE and the PCSB allowing for non-medical students to learn virtually? Dr. Rahaman



responded they didn't provide much guidance on what to do when students are quarantining due to close contact or have COVID, different schools are doing different things some are providing physical work packets for students to complete, others are doing what we are doing Zoom. What we learned is that when students don't feel well they miss out on learning and this is why we are creating an asynchronous option.

Ms. Angelita Buckman ask the following question about students who are sent home to quarantine: What do we have in place to keep families safe from the spread of the virus when we are sending home their student to quarantine because they have either tested positive for COVID or because they were identified as being in close contact with a student who tested positive? Dr. Rahaman responded once we have contacted the family about their students' status we provide the family with information from the CDC guidance on how to quarantine safely. Dr. Rahaman concluded that these are the tools that we have to share and if anyone has any other ideas we are open for any other suggestions.

Dr. Rahaman went on to report on our first year of block scheduling and the challenges of 80-minutes of instruction each day with having English and Math every day. Students are not accustomed to spending that much time in class and some teachers are struggling with keeping students engaged. The teachers who are struggling will receive professional development and instructional coaching to help them adjust to a longer class period and to build the tools needed to provide successful student engagement within the classroom.

Mr. Raj Vinnakota asked the following question about the double blocking scheduling: What is the problem we are trying to address by going to a block schedule? Dr. Rahaman responded that we are trying to increase the amount of instructional time for English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Mr. Vinnakota asked that Dr. Rahaman stay on top of this process to ensure that the block schedule is doing what we want it to do. Dr. Rahaman concurred.

Student Performance

Mr. Curtis Durham shared four data slides that showed course performance data. Mr. Durham shared the following student performance metrics:

- 67% of students are either passing all of their courses or are only failing one course through the fifth week of the school year.
- 65% of students who are passing all their courses are girls even though they only comprise 52% of the total student population.
- More than 95% of students passed their ELA and Math courses last school year.

Current priorities:

- Continue to fill vacancies with high quality teachers that are a good fit for SEED.
- Increase instructional coaching for the existing teachers.



- Identify students with multiple course failures and create student intervention and support plans.
- Continue to review student learning data using curriculum assessments and adjust instruction accordingly.
- Implement first PARCC benchmark exams this first quarter to ensure student are successful on the PARCC assessments in the spring.
- Create a behavior transformation program to teach students the skill of conflict resolution and positive communication with their peers.

Mr. Vinnakota ask the following question about filling teacher vacancies: What are we doing differently than other schools who are trying to hire teachers in a difficult labor market? And what is plan B if we cannot fill the vacancies? Dr. Rahaman responded that we haven't changed the candidate pool as of yet; we are utilizing the job sites such as LinkedIn and Indeed. What we have changed is the speed in which we process candidates once their resume enters the portal, resumes are assessed right away, it is important not only that SEED is a good fit for them but more importantly is that the candidate is a good fit for SEED. Our plan B is to adjust the master schedule to eliminate some of the vacancies.

Mr. Vinnakota asked what we do to differentiate ourselves from other schools to attract great teachers. Is there a different value proposition? Is there something we can do around salaries? Is there something we can do with a one year or two year starting pay? Is there a value proposition for financial support for continued education?

Dr. Rahaman responded that he has been completely transparent regarding salaries and that the differentiators for SEED are that the number of students per classrooms are considerably smaller than other schools, we have apartments on property for staff, staff receive free meals, and that we've built in additional planning time and that once we are fully staffed teachers will have an entire day of planning time. Mr. Vinnakota responded that we should find a way to lead with our differentiators as part of our job announcement and not wait for a candidate to learn about them after they have submitted their resume.

School Improvement Plan(SIP)

Dr. Rahaman gave a brief overview of the goals outlined in the SIP

Academics

- Increase ELA PARCC proficiency rate by 20% or more from last test administration.
- Increase Math PARCC proficiency rate by 20% or more from last test administration
- At least 90% of students will pass all of their courses and before any questions and answers began Ms. Poole ask that a special time be set aside to have a deeper drill down of the SIP.



Social Emotional Learning

- Reduce fights by 50% using the average of the previous four in-person years (SY16-17 to SY19-20) as a baseline
 - Average number of fights per year = 61
 - 50% reduction = 31 or fewer

Culture and Climate

- Achieve 92% average daily attendance rate by the end of the school year [this goal has since changed]

College Readiness

- 90% of students will complete the FAFSA by the end of February 2022
- 90% of seniors will apply to 10 or more “right-fit” colleges by the end of the school year.

Student Life

Mr. Rooks the Director of Student Life presented the board with an array of videos depicting students actively participating in sparks programming, the videos included Math Lab which purpose is to provide students with additional time each evening to strengthen math skills where students have the option of working on independent practice problems and receive support when needed, and/or take part in math competitions. The next was Arts Integration in which students exercised self-expression through creative writing and public speaking, painting, mural making, college cooking, and physical fitness. Mr. Rooks concluded with Circle Up a weekly restorative justice programming initiative designed to support self and community care, relationship-building, student engagement, life skills, character development, and restorative processes.

Mr. Vinnakota asked the following questions: Is there a way to measure engagement to truly capture that the students are engaged in the SEED way? Mr. Vinnakota made a statement that: As he observed the Math lab video he saw a number of students engaged and wondered what number of students were not engaged and what the bell curve would look like if it were a way to measure engagement. Ms. Lesley Poole stated that it would be interesting to explore beyond the campus. What are some of the exposure opportunities available to student’s afterschool. Mr. O’Connor stated one way to measure engagement is to track how active a student is in extracurricular activities. However, he would be interested in finding out if there is an actual way to measure engagement.

Enrollment

Ms. Rashida Holman-Jones reported that SEED DC has a current enrollment of 241. The budgeted enrollment for SY21-22 was set at 230. A couple of important dates are roster set date Tuesday, October 5, 2021 OSSE will lock our roster and compare our locked roster to our enrollment documents for residency verification. The enrollment count date has not been set; however, we do know that it will take place virtually this year.



The residential count date is on Tuesday, October 19, 2021. OSSE will be onsite to count the students after 6 pm.

Ms. Sealy, congratulated the enrollment team in over exceeding their goal for enrollment and asked the following question: Why do you think we were able to exceed our goal by such a large margin and use that as a base for further work moving forward? Ms. Holman-Jones responded that our social media outlets played a large part, along with word of mouth from our existing families and the fact that we had student orientation with students in the month of June, July, and August and students had lots of fun and shared their enthusiasm with other students who then enrolled at SEED.

Dr. Rahaman reported on special education enrollment. He stated that we have a total of 50 students receiving special education services, 6 of them are nonpublic placements and 13 have 504 plans. These numbers are not much different from where we were last year.

Finance Update

Mr. O'Connor reported the school continues to be on very solid financial footing both on an income statement basis and balance sheet basis. We came in ahead of budget in both respects. Mr. Arndt added with this year's enrollment numbers coming in October we will have a good idea of what this year's revenue is if we have to reforecast in the positive we can do that the next 30 to 60 days.

Ms. Poole said she would like to "Parking Lot" for the next board meeting a discussion about our current debt, which is under \$2M and what it would look like to pay it off.

Special Projects

Mr. Brendan Dowd the Campus Operations Manager reported he and Dr. Rahaman dusted off a concept design for the Annex that was done back in 2017 by Gabriel Romero of GBR Architects, LLC and they reached out to Mr. Romero to update the rendering to include a couple of additions to the project. Mr. Dowd shared a 3D rendering of two options for this project that would have educational space with a focus on multi-media. This project assumes the existing two-story annex building will be renovated and a two-story addition will be created.

Mr. Vinnakota asked the following questions: Does the management team think that either option meets the needs of the school and are there functional tradeoffs? Dr. Rahaman responded that the advantage of both is that we expand our outdoor space. Mr. Dowd added the major differences are the aesthetics, the covered outdoor space and the open-air atrium space, verses the wood and stone with the open-air atrium.

Ms. Sealy congratulated the team for pulling the presentation together. She asked the following questions: Are the skins of the buildings interchangeable? What is the flexibility of use overtime? Will there be space for performances? How many students can this property hold?



Ms. Poole asked the management team to look into whether we would cause any line of sight issue for neighbors. Will the project include another layer of security cameras?

Mr. O'Connor asked what exactly is going to be in the new building? Dr. Rahaman stated equipment to do multi-media equipment and podcast equipment.

Mr. O'Connor stated this is very excited about the project, he didn't know that we were building a new structure around an existing building. It is ambitious and it will dramatically change the school.

Ms. Sealy asked another question: Did you look at any models of what other folks have done? Have other schools done a multi-media center? If so, it would be interesting to see it and learn from those other schools.

Mr. O'Connor stated that with all of the focusing on the in-door space we have an opportunity think about updating the out-door spaces that are not built up.

Mr. Vinnakota asked whether we have thought about the holistic impact of what we are building and how it could change the vision of the SEED school. Dr. Rahaman responded that yes, we have thought about it and yes it will change the vision of the school with this new building. Our vision is to equip students with the skills to help shape the world that we live in. They can be creators in this world, and not just consumers.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 A.M.