SBS Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, January 25, 2022
Minutes

Roll Call: Members of the board in attendance: Larry Cafero, Sally Davids, Matthew Nittoly, Nell Conroy, Jessica Garnett, Adam Norris, Kim Grimm, Stephanie Palmer, Kim Mendola, Nicole Shagoury, Anthony Pavia, Ewa Derlukiewicz

Call to Order: Larry called the meeting to order at 5:17PM
Public Session: No comments

Review & Approval of November 23, 2021, minutes. Motion to approve minutes made by Nell, seconded by Adam- November Minutes Approved. Later in the meeting a request was made by Nicole Shagoury to amend
the minutes to reflect that she was in attendance on Nov 23rd. Motion to amend the minutes was made by Kim Mendola and seconded by Kim Grimm. Jessica Garnett to amend the minutes and re-send to the group.

Contract Update:
3 year contracts were presented and accepted by Matthew Nittoly and Mary Newbery. The non-parent/non-staff members of the Board voted to authorize Larry to sign the accepted contracts. The motion was put forth by Adam Norris and seconded by Kim Mendola.

Director Update:

I. **COVID-19 update:**

Effective January 17, the SBS COVID protocols were updated to reflect changes implemented by the CDC.

No matter the vaccination status of a student, if a child tests positive for COVID via a PCR, rapid antigen, or a rapid home test, they must remain out of school and in isolation for **at least 5 days**. Students may then return to school as long as symptoms have improved. In alignment with the State, City and Norwalk Health Department, **the isolation period has been decreased from 10 days to 5 if no symptoms are present**. There is no testing out of an isolation for a positive COVID case.

Covid Testing & Return To School: If a student has symptoms or tests positive for COVID, they will need to isolate for at least 5 days. Day 0 is the first day of symptoms or the date that the positive test was taken. The student will need to isolate for days 1-5

and may return to school on day six if they have no symptoms. Student must also be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines.

II. Staffing update:

(1) MUSIC:

Mr. David Whitwell (a current parent at SBS) has joined Side by Side as a substitute 0.6 Music teacher effective January 10. David is a Musician/Teaching Artist with a strong passion for the trombone. He has experience as a teaching-musician around the world, including high schools in Brooklyn and Queens, NY. David has a Bachelor's in Music Education from Brooklyn College of the City University of New York and a Master's of Music and Trombone Performance from the Manhattan School of Music. Mr. Whitwell will be working with all grade levels for a portion of their scheduled general-music courses at Side by Side. In addition, we are also hoping to get our instrumental/band program started back up as soon as possible.

For Grades PK-4 (music class 2x per week) Teaching Assistants and Interns will continue to sub-teach 1x music class per week. A temporary new system requiring lesson planning and instruction is now in place. This will require those covering to provide lesson plans to administration in advance of their instruction. In addition, a stipend compensation of $50/hour will be provided for any time spent planning (outside of school hours) and substitute-teaching these Music classes.

(2) **PARAPROFESSIONAL:** an additional paraprofessional for the Upper School has been hired (former SBS student)

(3) **FACILITIES COORDINATOR** has returned from medical leave. She will be working on a hybrid schedule in-person and remote.

III. Side by Side Charter renewal:

In follow-up to the December 1 site visit, the CSDE renewal team has provided documented observations and recommendations in the areas of Classroom Observations, Special Education, English Learners, Governance & Financial Management, Teacher Certification, Teacher Education and Mentoring, and Education Evaluation and Support Plans

The Executive Director has reviewed the findings and submitted a required written response on January 18, 2022, indicating how the school will address the issues noted.

Overall, the state renewal team "Observations, Findings and Issues Noted" were minimal and will not require excessive resources to address. Each of the State appointed renewal members went out of their way to express how impressed they were and that they all agree that the SBS' program continues to be regarded as one of the top charters in CT.

Side by Side Responses to Renewal Feedback summary (submitted to CSDE on 1.18.22)

Teacher Certification:

Issues to address: Current Art teacher is a long term sub and has gone beyond 40 days which requires certification endorsement in subject area taught; There is no person on staff certified in the area of Health; Music Teachers certification has expired

SBS RESPONSE:

- ✓ Art teacher is a CT certified elementary Ed teacher and has many years' experience as an Art teacher at a CT private school. Most importantly, my initial evaluation of her work so far at SBS is well-above average. She is a phenomenal teacher and we are happy to have her. She has the children producing some amazing works of art. At this time she is in the process of completing her CT Art certification and only has Praxis remaining. In the meantime, I will make sure that she contacts the Dept of Certification to find out about getting a temporary Charter certificate or any other possible temporary endorsement that exists.

- ✓ **Health:** The SBS Phys ed teacher teachers Health using the same curricular materials that we have always used. However, he is not cross endorsed for Health. I will meet with him and discuss the possibility of looking into getting cross-endorsed and will encourage him to do this as it will make him more marketable for the remainder of his career. In addition, I will contact other Charters to see if they have any personnel who are Health certified. If necessary, we can also consider having our PE teacher look into getting the temporary Charter Permit as well.

- ✓ **Music:** The teacher referenced is no longer employed by SBS

Special Education:

Issues to Address (A) : Pre-K Special Education should be treated like any other grade regarding special education and students should not have transitions between programs to receive special education and related services. Norwalk Public Schools has been contacted and should address this issue by January. Staff at the CT State Department of Education will follow up on this issue to ensure that it is addressed.

SBS RESPONSE:

- ✓ Side by Side's Assistant Director and Norwalk Public School's Education Administrator of Specialized Instruction, Fatima Susana-Tejada met via a zoom conference call to problem solve this area of concern. Both districts agreed that

this is a feasible request, and Norwalk Public Schools will assign an available, certified, early childhood special education teacher to service current students, and assign a teacher annually moving forward as part of the teacher's regular teaching assignment. Due to severe teacher shortages at both district and state levels at this time, until a teacher can be assigned, the one student that transitions across sites this year will continue to receive services under the current model in order to not interrupt her services. Due to the high level of quality collaboration between our two districts, we believe this issue will be quickly rectified.

Issue to Address (B): LRE should be planned individually by the Planning Placement Team (PPT) for each student. It is not appropriate to have a model that is based on a general service provision approach. The PPT should always consider what supports and services a student requires to access the general education curriculum and these services should be provided in the regular education classroom whenever appropriate for the individual child. Adult scheduling issues should not drive the model of service provision. This pertains to both special education and related services. Consideration of paraeducators as providers of specialized instruction that has been planned by the special education teacher is something that can be considered.

SBS RESPONSE:

- ✓ The needs of the individual student are always at center of the planning and placement team process, and we are looking creatively at ways to expand the schedule to further accommodate these needs. In particular, we have hired a paraeducator to begin Monday, January 10t.h. This individual will be trained for the primary role of supporting students on iep's, including, but not limited to, goals, accommodations, organization skills and social-emotional needs and supports. Moving forward, this person will help implement the individualized education plans of our students under the guidance and direction of the special education teacher. All teaching materials, plans and directives will also be provided by the certified special education teacher.

English Language Learners:

While there were no specific issues to address, all recommendations for program improvement are greatly appreciated. Having a new TESOL teacher and bilingual program places in a fledgling program development phase in response to recent increases in ELL population. It will be crucial for our teacher to become part of the wider network of education that support multilingual learners across the state-both to have a collegial peer group and to engage in best practices. Forging these connections are part of our immediate plans, along with refreshing our general education teacher

professional development around the CELP standards and best practices for supporting ELL's in the classroom.

Governance and Management:

Issue to address: Website needs to include Board Meeting schedule in a month, day, year format.

- ✓ The website has been updated to include a list of all meeting dates in a month, day, and year format.

Financial Management:

Issue to Address: The school must formalize an agreement with the contractor, detailing the length and cost of the contract, and the services that are to be provided.

- ✓ The financial Contractor (Linda Simmons) will provide an updated annual written agreement and summary of services to be reviewed and signed-off by the Board of Directors.

Issue to Address: All staff responsible for collecting cash and checks must be trained on the school's cash collecting policies and procedures.

- ✓ A staff meeting will take place for the purposed of reviewing and training all staff on the specific policies and procedures related to receipt of funds collected in the classroom.

Issue to Address: The APPM must be revised to require collected cash and checks to be submitted to the business office by the end of the day and stored in the school safe if unable to be deposited.

- ✓ The APPM will be revised to include the requirement for any cash or check payments collected to be submitted to the business office within 24 hours and stored in the school safe for deposit.

IV. Teaching & Learning Update:

Students at Side by Side are deeply immersed in their mid-year benchmark assessments and progress monitoring screenings. K-8 teachers are also implementing their mid-year Social Emotional well-being screenings in order to identify areas where students need support as we pass the mid-year point of the school year. 6th and 7th graders are preparing for their Nature's Classroom trip, and 8th graders have almost completed their high school applications and are anxiously awaiting decision letters.

New Business:

Finance Update: January Financial reports reviewed by Adam Norris. Covid funds have helped to offset expenses. No outstanding issues noted.

Larry asked if any member of the public had joined and if they wanted to address the board. No new business to discuss.

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Nell and seconded Sally.

Meeting adjourned at 5:58pm.

Agenda for 5:15pm February 22, 2022:

Roll Call

Public Session

Call to Order

Review/Approval of January meeting Minutes

New Business

Mask Mandate Policy Review and vote to continue or change current policy

Director's Update

Finance Committee:

Board to review 990 Tax Return for 2020

*New action items will be posted within a week of the board meeting