SBS Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, February 22, 2022
APPROVED 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 5:16PM

Review & Approval of January 25, 2022, minutes. Motion to approve minutes made by Nell, seconded by Stephanie.

Public Session: Members of the public joined to speak on behalf of keeping/ending the mask mandate and moving to mask choice. Speaking on behalf of moving to mask choice: Chris Berich, John Seferian, Judie Goldstein, Melanie McGowan, Valerie Lindsay and Yamine Berrabeh. Speaking in favor of continuing the mask mandate: Esther Shatavsky

A motion was made by Ewa to move to mask choice on Monday, February 28th. Staff and students will have the option to choose if they want to wear a mask during the school day. Masks will still be required on all buses, under federal guidelines. Side by Side will distribute Covid test kits (one per student) the week of February 21st. Students will be urged to test prior to coming to school (masked or unmasked) on Monday, February 28th and continue reporting any positive Covid results to the school nurse. The motion was seconded by Stephanie. It was noted that Nicole was opposed to this motion. The board moved this motion to a vote.

Voting to move to a mask optional policy: Larry Cafero, Sally Davids, Matthew Nittoly, Nell Conroy, Jessica Garnett, Adam Norris, Kim Grimm, Stephanie Palmer, Kim Mendola, Anthony Pavia, Ewa Derlukiewicz
Voting to maintain the mandated masking policy: Nicole Shagoury,

Director Update:

I. **COVID-19 update**: Side by Side has had no new cases of COVID-19 since 2/10/22. The vaccination requirement for staff members, including required proof of negative test results for non-vaccinated staff members has been lifted effective 2/16/22. The CT State

Depts. of Education and Public Health will be providing additional at-home COVID tests and masks to all public school districts this week (including SBS). They are recommending that all staff and students take an at-home test just prior to lifting the universal indoor mask requirement. *see below for recommendation from Executive Director regarding the end of the CT indoor mask mandate

II. Side by Side Charter renewal: The renewal of Side by Side Charter School is on the agenda for the March 2nd CT State Board of Education meeting. Matt (Executive Director) and Larry (Board Chair) will be attending the meeting. In addition, both will attend a virtual preparation meeting on 2/25 to discuss the structure of the SBE meeting, the renewal terms and to answer any additional questions that we may have.

III. Teaching & Learning Update: English Language Learners at Side by Side are currently taking their annual English proficiency assessments. The results from these assessments help teachers support our multilingual learners learning in our full-inclusion classrooms. On Friday 2/25, the Assistant Director and our 4th and 5th grade teachers will be participating in a CSDE's professional learning series NetStat. This year, the focus is on using the "hexagon tool" to determine the fit of science curricula with overall school programs. The focus of this tool is to determine equity of access, cultural responsiveness, and likelihood of high performance outcomes for all learners. Lastly, middle-schoolers in grades 6 and 7 have begun packing their bags for the biennial Nature's Classroom trip in Ivoryton, CT to take place 3/9-3/11. We are excited to be able to offer this trip after two long years of no trips!

Recommendation from Executive Director Regarding the end of the Indoor Mask mandate: Earlier this week, the Connecticut General Assembly voted to uphold the expiration of the mask mandate for all public schools effective February 28, 2022. This means that the authority to make decisions on masking requirements in schools will now independently come from each local school district. As the Executive Director at Side by Side, in collaboration with our school Nurse, Maria Restrepo, it is our recommendation that effective Monday, February 28 wearing masks at Side by Side should no longer be required and should instead be an optional choice for parents and staff. (Please note that due to a still existing federal order which covers public transportation, masks will continue to be required on our school buses) The recommendation for this change is based on the same indicators that have been used since the start of the pandemic nearly two years ago (most importantly the health and safety of staff and students). Rapidly declining metrics and hospitalization rates in our surrounding communities support this change, as the do the drastically low positivity rates amongst our own school community (only 1 reported case in the past 4 weeks and 0 in the past 2 weeks). We are all greatly encouraged by the downward trends that we are experiencing and are confident that things will continue in this direction.

As encouraged by the CT State Departments of Public Health and Education, our response to COVID-19 should now begin to transition to a routine disease prevention model as opposed to an emergency pandemic response.
This will continue to require that the Side by Side community:

-Engages in daily screenings and self-monitoring for contagious symptoms
-Encouragement of vaccinations for all eligible students, staff and families of our school community
-Support for those staff or children who continue to choose to wear a mask in school
-Continued protocols for isolation requirements for any symptoms associated with COVID-19
-Preparedness to quickly and effectively respond to any rapid cases or outbreaks of COVID-19 in school

New Business:

Finance Update: Board reviewed, no questions or comments on the 990 Tax Return for 2020

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Stephanie and seconded by Adam

Meeting adjourned at 6:37pm.

Agenda for 5:15pm March 22, 2022:

Roll Call

Public Session

Call to Order

Review/Approval of February meeting Minutes

New Business

Boosterthon Fun Run Fundraiser – May 10-19th

Vote to approve the 2022/2023 School Calendar

Director's Update

Finance Committee

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