Board of Directors Meeting
January 23, 2024
Approved Minutes

Present: Larry Cafero, Stephanie Cecio, Amanda Gormley, Matt Nittoly, Deb Whalen, Chiara Askew-Oliver, Adam Norris, Kim Grimm, Nell Conroy, Sally Davids

Absent: Britnee Henderson

Meeting called to order at 5:20 PM.

November minutes approved by Nell and Sally.

Public Session

No members of the public were in attendance at this meeting.

Director Update:

I. **Hydration Station project:** As approved by the Board, Side by Side has completed a $12K project to add two new hydration stations in the lower school (one on each floor). Students now have all-day access to filtered water that can be consumed via a water fountain or using a bottle filler. The project was completed by AV Tuchy builders during the holiday recess. Completion of the project required extensive snaking of pipes to throughout the Lower School building.

II. **Teaching & Learning Update:**

We are happy to announce that we successfully applied for and received 2 grants totaling $56,000 to enhance our K-3 literacy program. These grants, entitled "Right to Read" and "Small Town Right to Read," will allow us to purchase brand new Expeditionary Learning curriculum materials for grades K-8, including texts, teacher guides, classroom libraries and take home texts. Additionally, a full-scale professional development series provided that includes deep dives into the units, personal coaching, and the creation of a walkthrough culture for teachers. Additionally, the Director of Teaching and Learning for

Newtown Public Schools has agreed to have Side by Side join their Expeditionary Learning leadership PLC (Professional Learning Community) to enable broader collaboration opportunities. We are excited to be a part of this statewide initiative, which promises to have a direct impact on students' reading abilities, not just at Side by Side, but across CT.

III. Side by Side enrollment lottery 2024 (important dates)

- Mon 1/22- online applications available (over 40 received on Monday 1/22)
- Wed 2/28 informational Open House at 10:30am
- Wed 3/20 informational session at 5:00pm
- Mon 4/8 lottery applications due by 4pm
- Wed 4/24 LOTTERY at 5pm

Finance Committee:

The board reviewed the committee's financial report.

Fundraising:

The planned 1420 Distillery fundraising event date has been moved to Friday, May 3rd.

The board discussed the playground refresh project and discussed the best use of funds now that we know the approximate cost of a complete playground rebuild. Chiara suggested to solicit feedback from families about what improvements to the school in general are the most important.

Some discussion items that may be a better value for raised funds:

- A maintenance update for the current playground (Todd to reach out original builders to ask about a refresh quote)
- Addition of a simpler outdoor learning space
- A new soundsystem for the gymnasium
- Stage risers for performances

Action Items:

- 2024-2025 calendar to be posted this month and voted on for approval at the February board meeting

Meeting adjourned: motion to adjourn at 6:28 PM. Sally and Amanda approved the motion.