SIDE BY SIDE
CHARTER SCHOOL

Board of Directors Meeting
April 22, 2025
Approved Minutes

Present: Matt Nittoly, Anne Dichele, Todd Parkin, Deb Whalen, Amanda Gormley, Stephanie Cecio, Nicole Shagoury, Nell Conroy, Larry Cafero, Kim Grimm, Adam Norris

Absent: Larry Cafero

Meeting called to order at 5:19 PM.

Motion to approve February meeting minutes made by Anne and Deb. Approved by all present members.

Director Update:

I. Teaching & Learning Update:

From Grade 7 Student Artists: : We are excited to announce that on Friday, April 11th our 7th grade class, in collaboration with the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art and sculptor artist Moko Fukuyama, completed their collaborative sculptor for school display, as well as their individual driftwood pieces they designed for home. The work, inspired by Moko's style, explores issues of overconsumption, consumerism and sustainability in her work. Often using the ocean as a backdrop, one of the goals embedded in her work is to foster a dialogue between humans and nature. Using driftwood, wooden balls and inspiration from both Manga and fish bait design students conceptualized their pieces in relation to the 4 basic elements of anicient greek philosophy, fire, water, wind and air. Students used found wood, spraypaint, vinyl, and modegpodge safely to design their pieces and group sculpture. Students shared how fun the project was, and were especially appreciative of the Aldrich team's and Moko's encouragement and support when the project got hard or when they made mistakes. This year, the project overlapped thematically with our students' Soundwaters trip and our Water and Sustainability interdisciplinary unit, which also focuses on issues of overconsumption, sustainability and humans' relationships with our natural environment. We had a blast this year with Common Ground, our enduring Aldrich partnership.

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II. Important Dates:

- Public Lottery- Wed April 30 @ 5pm (BOD rep?)
- Last Day of School- Friday, June 13
- 8th grade commencement- Wed. June 11 (tentative)

III. Nomination for New community Member to the Board at SBS

James Martinez as a prospective Community member to the Side by Side Board of Directors effective July 2025.

IV. **SBS Increasing Educator Diversity plan (IED)- Minority Statement to include (Anne Dichele)**

The Side By Side Charter School was established in 1997 to serve the community of Norwalk and the greater Norwalk area of Connecticut. Our mission has always been to create a multiracial learning environment for urban and suburban children. We currently have around a 60% Hispanic school population, 20% Black/African American and the remaining 20% population White or undeclared. Historically, the development of our curriculum and our climate has always been one that emphasizes excellence and equity, inclusivity and interdisciplinary academics.

While we understand the intent of this request for a plan to increase educator diversity, we are attaching this letter to the required plan submission in the spirit of providing perhaps a minority opinion as to the value of doing so. While the research is compelling as to the influence and importance of children experiencing teachers who look like they do, we do not believe in preferencing ethnicity over other factors. We will continue to hire on the basis of excellence of performance, and rehire on the basis of proven outcomes of student performance.

It is the opinion of the Board of Directors and the administration of Side By Side Charter School that the submission of specific plans to increase educator diversity suggests an inherent bias to promote hiring based on race. Therefore, respectfully, we submit our response with these reservations.

Finance committee:

- Adam presented a review of the financial reporting to date. There are no significant variances from the budget.

Fundraising committee:

- Deb reviewed ideas for fundraising for next year
- Additional suggestions for SBS swag to be available for purchase
- Plan to have a fundraising calendar ready for the start of the school year

Action Items:

- Add to next meeting's agenda to interview candidate for community board member

Meeting adjourned: motion to adjourn at 6:12 PM by Adam. Seconded by Deb. All present members agreed to adjourn.