

Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School

AGENDA

January 9, 2021

Trustees Participating: Carlos Bonner, Crystal Goliday, Tracey Friedlander, Heather Harding, Hoyt King, Erica McGrady, Verleria King-Jones, Ami Richardson, Rodney Rice, Jenice View

Staff Participating: Erika Bryant, Bill Moczydlowski, Linda Moore

Board Chair, Heather Harding called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

Minutes Review and Approval

Minutes of the November board meeting were reviewed. Ami Richardson made a motion to approve the minutes with the corrected typographical errors as noted by Ms. Golliday. The motion was seconded by Tracey Friedlander and was approved unanimously.

Executive Committee Report

Heather Harding presented a report of the Executive Committee. The school will engage Education Board Partners for board training, coaching and support for recruiting new board members. These services have begun with a survey of trustees.

Finance Report

Bill Moczydlowski presented the financial report for the period ending November 30, 2020. Income is less than budget by \$281K because enrollment was less than what was budgeted. Spending is also less than budgeted. Cash position is more than \$5M. The application for forgiveness of the PPP loan is under preparation. Ms. Golliday asked why facilities expenses for the East End community exceed those of the Brookland campus which enrolls more students. Mr. Moczydlowski explained that the school is purchasing the Brookland campus and thus the facilities expenses reflect the monthly mortgage payment for that campus. In contrast, the school rents the space for the East End campus. By contract, the East End campus rent is based on the facilities allotment and is paid quarterly. She

also questioned the reason for the decline in grants revenue and deferred revenue. Mr. Moczydlowski replied that the grants revenue from previous year reflects a grant that was not renewed and the deferred revenue reflects revenue that was not recognized in the previous year. Hoyt King clarified that the SY2019-2020 numbers were included in the SY2019-2020 financial audit.

Academic Committee Report

Julia Senerchia, Stokes School Director of Data, Planning and Assessment, presented a report of student academic performance data for SY 2020-21. During fall 2020, Kindergarten through fifth grade students were tested in mathematics and reading on the NWEA MAP, an adaptive computer supported assessment that was administered remotely. Staff found that the results were unreliable, especially for K-2nd grade students who have special needs. Consistent with schools' experiences nationally, it is felt that Stokes' results probably reflect testing environments (home) that are inconsistent with testing environments in schools. The school usually administers NWEA three times each year for early identification of students who need extra support. There are no plans to administer large scale remote standardized testing again during the current school year. However, there are plans to administer tests in small group settings on campus as soon as possible, perhaps as early as early third trimester. OSSE has mandated PARCC testing for this spring and the U.S. Department of Education is not currently granting waivers to states for accountability plans that do not include standardized testing. The instructional leadership team has concerns with administering the PARCC this spring, especially if some tests will have to be administered remotely. Neither OSSE or DCPCSB will offer tiered ratings of schools based on test scores this year but may possibly use current school year data to measure student academic growth in 2021-2022.

The Instructional Leadership Team has developed an instructional recovery plan, focusing on re-entry into school buildings, that includes:

- Reading intervention groups that will launch in January 2021;
- Intentional social skills remediation and relationship building;
- Summer Foundations Program focused on students with academic needs;
- Academic services during out of school time;
- Realignment of curricular scope and sequence.

Staff has identified lessons learned, to date, about the school's SY 2020 and 2021 distance learning experiences:

- Increased use of technology for instruction, communications with parents, cross-campus collaboration
- Increased self-management and research skills by students
- Increased differentiation through small group instruction
- Increased support for families as educational partners
- Refocus on social justice and community support
- Individualized learning plans and analysis for all students
- Improved LEA cross-campus alignment
- Two-way stakeholder communication.

Discussion:

- Ms. Golliday asked how students are being identified for participation in the reading intervention groups. Ms. Senerchia responded that eligibility for participation will be based primarily on teachers' assessment and recommendations.
- Jenice View asked how the Academic Excellence Committee can support the instructional recovery plan. Ms. Senerchia responded that committee members are welcome to work with the instructional team as thought partners.
- Rodney Rice asked about plans for increased use of technology once school buildings are open. Ms. Senerchia gave examples of how the platforms that the school has been using offer additional opportunities for teaching and learning.

Executive Director's Report

Erika Bryant presented the Executive Director's Report.

- Stokes School staff sincerely appreciate the care packages they received in December. She thanked board members for their contributions that supported the care packages.
- Stokes will continue to address and support staff wellness throughout the pandemic.

- Based on feedback from the November board meeting, there are proposed amendments to the Preventing Student Sexual Abuse: Amended Policies that were approved in the November 2020 meetings. The policies describe steps that Stokes School staff are required to take when we have knowledge of actual or alleged sexual misconduct or abuse between students or students and staff. The amendments, drafted by Lauren Baum, Stokes School special education attorney, include the following guidance regarding parental involvement:
 - When talking with students about alleged incidents, the school shall inform students that they may have their parent/guardian present. Schools shall consider the student's age when determining whether it is appropriate to contact the parent/guardian prior to talking with the student.);
 - Policies reflect updates to requirements under Title IX - federal law that protect people in education programs that receive federal funding from discrimination based on sex or gender.

Action: Jenice View offered a motion to approve the proposed amendments to the Preventing Student Sexual Abuse policies. The motion was seconded by Tracey Friedlander. The motion passed with one absention by Ms. Golliday.

- The school is scheduled for a renewal of its Middle States Accreditation this spring. Middle States accreditation is an evaluation process that schools/systems use to demonstrate they are meeting a defined set of research-based performance standards. To prepare for accreditation renewal, schools begin with a self-study that requires input from school leaders, teachers, parents and students. Following the self-study, a team of volunteer educators from Middle States member schools conduct a peer review visit. This year Stokes will also seek recognition of our Programs of Distinction: world language, service-learning, social justice and possibly early child education.

Discussion: Jenice View asked how the board can support preparation for the Middle States Review. Ms. Bryant indicated that she will reach out to board members for development of the Leadership and Governance section.

- Ms. Moore is working with the Development Committee. Committee members have been recruited and initial meetings will be scheduled soon.
- Reopening – Re-Entry
 - Vaccines will be available for educators in DC on January 25th
 - Plans are to reopen buildings for small cohorts of students with highest needs at the beginning of the third trimester, during mid-March. Virtual learning will also continue until all students return to the building. The school will return PreK and Kindergarten students based on social distancing requirements.
- Officially inform school community before the end of January
- Begin summer program in late June/early July. There will be no charge to families for the summer program.

Discussion:

- Carlos Bonner asked whether the school will disseminate recommendations to staff about recommendation/requirements for vaccines. Erika replied that staff may develop a code of conduct for staff, students and families about health safety practices. Heather Harding suggested that Stokes should approach the DC Alliance for Charter Schools about lobbying DC Government for funding for liability insurance. Mr. Bonner volunteered to assist in advocating for funding to support the purchase of Covid-19 liability insurance.
- Hoyt King suggested researching what DCPS is doing about liability insurance.

Open House

- An open house for families who are interested in enrolling their children in Stokes next year is in session during this Board of Trustees meeting. A link to a video that is shared during open house sessions and will be available on the school's website.

Other Business

Carlos Bonner asked whether the school will be in session during the MLK holiday and the Presidential Inauguration Holiday. Ms. Bryant replied that the school will be closed on January 18-20.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:29 am and trustees entered executive session to review the performance evaluation for Erika Bryant.