



**Board of Trustees Meeting
Thursday, June 4th, 2020
Via Zoom**

Board of Trustees Present: Nancy Biberman, Lori Chemla, Andrea Cohen, Felicia Franklin, Sabrina Hope King, Davon Russell, Jodi Schneider

Board of Trustees Absent: Valerie Capers

SBECA Staff Present: Brian Blough, Maricruz Badia, Jennifer Cannella, Shirley Castro, Toni Chavarria, Danielle Corbin, Dennis Darkeem, Bryan Garcia, Melissa Gaspard, Joe Haas, Sophia Jones, Nina Krauss, Elaine Martinez, Mahelia Mighty, Yeatie Morgan, Lucy Peralta, Dulce Rico, Natalia Ruiz-Corrales, Beatrice Tinio, Alysha Willis, Debbie Wong

WHEDco Staff Present: Katie Aylwin, Meredith Leverich, Katie McCaskie

Members of the Public Present: 12

Call to Order

Davon Russell called the meeting to order at 5:12 pm.

Public Comment

No members of the public requested to speak during public comment.

Resolutions to Approve Minutes from May 7th, 2020 and May 20th, 2020

Felicia Franklin made a motion to adopt the May 7th, 2020 Board meeting minutes as presented on June 4th, 2020. Andrea Cohen seconded and the Board unanimously voted to adopt the minutes.

Lori Chemla mad a motion to adopt the May 20th, 2020 Board meeting minutes as presented on June 4th, 2020. Andrea Cohen seconded and the Board unanimously voted to adopt the minutes.

Resolution to Re-elect Board Members for a New Three Year Term, July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023

Mr. Russell stated that the Board uses staggered terms and that every June, approximately one third of the Board is up for re-election. He said that Valerie Capers, Andrea Cohen and Felicia Franklin all have terms ending on June 30th, 2020, and have agreed to continue serving if the Board re-elects them to a new term.

Andrea Cohen made a motion to re-elect Valerie Capers to a new three year term, beginning on July 1, 2020 and expiring on June 30th, 2023. Lori Chemla seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to re-elect Valerie Capers.

Lori Chemla made a motion to re-elect Andrea Cohen to a new three year term, beginning on July 1, 2020 and expiring on June 30th, 2023. Jodi Schneider seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to re-elect Andrea Cohen.

Andrea Cohen made a motion to re-elect Felicia Franklin to a new three year term, beginning on July 1, 2020 and expiring on June 30th, 2023. Jodi Schneider seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to re-elect Felicia Franklin.

Update on Paycheck Protection Program

Mr. Russell reported that the Board had an emergency meeting on May 20th, 2020 to consider whether the school should apply for a federally funded loan through the Paycheck Protection Program, which is part of the CARES Act that Congress passed to assist small businesses during the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. He said that new guidelines indicated that SBECA was eligible and that the funds could help cover payroll and other operations costs, should there be unforeseen shortfalls in the school's revenue as a result of COVID-19.

Mr. Russell said that, following deliberation and counsel from Digant Bahl, the school's accountant, the Board determined that it would be prudent to apply for a loan of approximately \$1,014,000. SBECA's application was approved and the loan was funded today, June 4th, 2020.

Mr. Russell said that the school would continue to treat the funds as a loan, and determine later whether the school will request forgiveness or repay the loan, based on the developing guidelines and the ways that COVID-19 ultimately impacts the school's operations.

Mr. Bahl reported that the Senate had passed additional legislation that amends the original loan terms. The funds can now be used for up to 24 weeks, rather than the eight week period that was initially covered. Further, a change has been made to reduce the percentage of the funds required to be used for payroll from 75% to 60%. Mr. Bahl said that he will continue to monitor this legislation and Small Business Association guidelines and keep the Board apprised.

Finance Committee Report

Review and Adoption of FY21 Budget

Mr. Russell reported that the Finance Committee had met prior to this meeting to review the draft budget in detail. He said that, as of today, the budget anticipates \$8.58 million in revenue and \$8.53 million in expenses, resulting in a \$203,881 surplus. He said that this budget is conservative, but may need to be adjusted throughout the year if per pupil funding or enrollment falls below what is expected.

Mr. Bahl said that early in the year, it was anticipated that there would be a 4 – 5% increase in per pupil revenue; at this stage, there is an anticipated .5% reduction with the possibility of further funding cuts later, given drastic decreases in State revenue.

Nancy Biberman made a motion to adopt the FY21 budget, as presented on June 4th, 2020. Andrea Cohen seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to adopt the budget.

Review of Executive & Key Employee Compensation Policy

Mr. Russell said that the Executive Committee reviewed and discussed the renewal letters of the school's leadership and key employees, including Principal Brian Blough; Vice Principals, Josef Haas and Bryan Garcia; and Director of Human Resources and Budget, Alysha Willis. The Board agreed to renew each of these staff members, and included their compensation in the FY21 budget.

Review of Insurance Coverage

Felicia Franklin, SBECA's Board Treasurer, reported that the Finance Committee reviewed a comparison report for the anticipated increases in premiums for 2020-2021, which have been included in the

adopted FY21 budget. She said that Mr. Bahl has advised that the current level of coverage, which includes a \$3 million umbrella policy, should be sufficient.

Ms. Franklin said that the Committee had requested that Mr. Blough and Mr. Bahl inquire about increasing coverage for the next six months, given recent vandalism in the community, and adding Cyber Security coverage. The Finance Committee will revisit the conversation when information on that additional coverage is available to determine whether or not the premiums are feasible.

Review of All Bank Accounts; Review of Currently Authorized Signers on All Accounts

SBECA currently holds a checking, savings and escrow account with Chase. The savings account balance is currently \$1.6 million. SBECA also has funds set aside at New York Commercial Bank in two CDs and a savings account. An overview of the accounts was shared on-screen for participants to see. Davon Russell and Brian Blough are currently approved signatories on all Chase and NYCB accounts.

Ms. Franklin reported that the school opened an account at Spring Bank recently, which facilitated the PPP loan. The PPP funds were released into this account shortly before this meeting and are, therefore, not represented on the prepared overview.

Mr. Russell noted that funds kept in the Chase savings account are moved into the checking account to process payroll. Mr. Bahl confirmed that the \$1.6 million currently in the bank represents funds paid in advance by the State and will be spent down over the summer.

Resolution to Add Felicia Franklin as Signatory for All Chase Accounts

Mr. Russell stated that Mr. Blough had changed bank branches for the Chase account in 2018 and that, at some point in that process, Felicia Franklin had been dropped as a signatory on the account in error. As school treasurer, Ms. Franklin should be a signatory, which would ensure that there are three people and two at the Board level who can sign checks and initiate bank transfers if needed. Mr. Russell recommended that she be authorized as a signatory on all of SBECA's Chase accounts.

Andrea Cohen made a motion to authorize Felicia Franklin to be added as a signatory on all SBECA accounts held at Chase. Jodi Schneider seconded and the Board unanimously voted to adopt the resolution.

Mr. Russell said that he would coordinate with the bank contact and Ms. Franklin to move this action forward.

Resolution to Amend Fiscal Policies and Procedures for 2020-2021 School Year

Mr. Russell said that, in its annual policy review process, the Finance Committee identified some required changes to the Fiscal Policies and Procedures document for the 2020 – 2021 fiscal year. He added that Mr. Bahl had drafted two addenda to guide how the school's procedures would be adjusted while work is happening remotely as a result of COVID-19, between March and the end of June and at the beginning of the new fiscal year. For example, rather than having signature approval for expenditures, a process would be taken through online banking portals to seek authorization. Mr. Russell said that the Finance Committee had reviewed and discussed these three documents.

Jodi Schneider made a motion to adopt the amended Fiscal Policies and Procedures document, the COVID-19 Addendum for the 2019 – 2020 school year, and the COVID-19 Addendum for the 2020 – 2021

school year. Andrea Cohen seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to adopt the documents, as presented on June 4th, 2020.

Board Conflict of Interest Forms

Meredith Leverich said that she had circulated Conflict of Interest/Financial Disclosure forms to the Board for the 2020 – 2021 school year. These forms are completed and collected annually to ensure transparency. Board members should send them back to Ms. Leverich for filing.

Principal's Report (see presentation for additional details)

Mr. Blough reported that SBECA is in the fourth and final phase of its remote learning plan. Students continue to participate in live and recorded video instruction, submit weekly assignments digitally, and participate in special activities, such as Spartan News.

Third quarter Family-Teacher Conferences were held via Zoom and engaged 90% - 95% of families across grade levels.

SBECA's Comprehensive Education Plan and Academic Programming

Mr. Blough said that he and Dr. Peter McFarlane are developing a three-year Comprehensive Education Plan for the school, tied to NYSED's performance benchmark framework and plans detailed in the charter renewal. This will help make the renewal plan more accessible to faculty and other stakeholders who are helping to achieve the school's academic goals.

Vice Principals Bryan Garcia and Josef Haas reported on units of instruction for each of the core subjects for each grade.

Mr. Haas reported that response rate data continues to improve. In the tenth week of remote learning, 71% of students completed work on time.

Student Support Services

SBECA and the Committee on Special Education (CSE) held a total of 32 IEP meetings since the school building closed in March, engaging 100% of family members via teleconference. Speech attendance has increased, and now 37 of 39 students who require that service on their IEPs are participating in teletherapy. Two students continue to receive hearing services via teletherapy twice per week.

The Student Support Services team has launched a sixth grade reading support group, which is currently engaging seven of ten identified students regularly. The Students of Concern Task Force continues to do outreach and design interventions for students who are high-need academically or social-emotionally. Two home visits were conducted as part of this effort.

Operations and Enrollment Update

Mr. Blough reported that SBECA has enrolled 86 incoming sixth graders, six (6) incoming seventh graders and three (3) incoming eighth graders for the 2020 – 2021 school year. The wait lists for grades six and seven have more than 100 children each, and the wait list for eighth grade has 38 children. Mr. Blough said that he is optimistic that the school will be fully enrolled.

The school is now authorized to enroll and receive per pupil funding for 330 students. The budget revenues are based on that increased number. As a result, and to ensure that SBECA does not experience a shortfall in revenues throughout the year, SBECA will try to over-enroll slightly, so that

enrollment remains at or above 330 students if families move or decide to change schools throughout the year.

Family Engagement

Natalia Ruiz-Corrales reported that the school continues to issue and circulate a weekly newsletter to families. Families are also invited to participate in informal workshops on Google Classroom and Zoom. Workshops will continue throughout June, including high school admissions workshops for seventh grade families.

High School Admissions

Maricruz Badia reported that high school admissions workshops were held on May 21st and 23rd. She said that she will participate in a DOE training session to learn more about changes to the admissions process as a result of COVID-19.

Facilities Update

Mr. Blough said that planning is underway to design a safe and systematic way for students to return to school to retrieve their belongings from their lockers. This will hopefully provide an opportunity for them to leave a message and take a final photo, particularly for the graduating eighth grade students.

School Culture

The School Culture team continues to manage Bark, the software used to monitor online activities during remote learning. The three deans have each been assigned a grade level, and are doing outreach to families regularly to support instructional teams.

Higher Education Partners

Mr. Blough congratulated the faculty who have recently earned degrees and those who are continuing their higher education.

Leadership Coaching

Mr. Blough reported that he and Dr. McFarlane meet weekly to develop the Comprehensive Education Plan and to plan summer programming for staff and students.

Upcoming

Mr. Blough said that town halls will be held to help students process recent events, including George Floyd's death, protests around police brutality, and looting and vandalism in the neighborhood.

A virtual graduation is planned for the eighth grade students.

Planning for summer programming and the 2020 – 2021 school year remains ongoing.

New Business

Mr. Russell made a correction to something said earlier in the meeting. During the Finance Committee report, Ms. Cohen had inquired about the expenditure threshold requiring a Board signature. Mr. Russell had originally said \$2,500; however, he clarified and said that the threshold for two signatures on a check is \$10,000, but that the threshold for requiring Board approval for a vendor is \$2,500.

Executive Session

The Board went into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter.

Adjournment

The Board came out of Executive Session and unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.