



Board of Trustees Meeting
Thursday, September 3rd, 2020
Video Conference via Zoom

Attendees:

Board Members Present: Nancy Biberman, Lori Chemla, Felicia Franklin, Davon Russell, Jodi Schneider,

Board Members Absent: Valerie Capers, Andrea Cohen, Sabrina King

SBECA Staff Present: Jason Adolphus, Anthony Alejandro, Maricruz Badia, Brian Blough, Danielle Corbin, Vanessa Cruz, Dennis Darkeem, Jesus Diaz, Rudy Diaz, Bryan Garcia, Melissa Gaspard, Josef Haas, Nina Krauss, Elaine Martinez, Grizelle Medina, Yeatie Morgan, Debra Ortiz, Abanoub Rezk, Dulce Rico, Natalia Ruiz-Corrales, Bruce Stansbury, Beatrice Tinio, Alysha Willis, Debbie Wong

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

Members of the General Public: 33

Call to Order

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

Public Comment

No members of the public requested to participate in public comment.

Principal's Report

Reopening Plan

Principal Brian Blough reported that SBECA had submitted its reopening plan to NYSED In August. He said that the reopening plan guide had been presented at the August Board meeting and that the detailed daily plan had been presented to the school community on September 2nd during an all-school town hall that engaged over 230 participants.

August PD

Mr. Blough reported that faculty orientation happened at the end of August, including on-site work to prepare faculty for the hybrid teaching model. Teachers and deans conducted simulations to prepare for distancing in the classroom, mask and restroom breaks, arrival and dismissal procedures, and fire drills. The group also developed Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and spent time discussing unit planning, building relationships virtually, and social-emotional learning, among other topics.

Mr. Blough reported that students were very grateful for the book club, facilitated through Jodi Schneider's Books for the Bronx campaign. He showed a brief video extending the kids' thanks.



Comprehensive Education Plan

Mr. Blough reported that he and Dr. Peter MacFarlane have been working together to develop a three-year Comprehensive Education Plan for the school, which aligns with the school's charter and is more accessible and public-facing. The goals in the plan are based on feedback received during past NYSED site visits and the performance benchmark framework, which have been grouped into three main buckets: Academic Goals & Programming; Organizational & Compliance Goals & Programming; and Cultural & Relations Goals & Programming. SBECA will use i-Ready as an important tool to measure student progress. This plan will help create more transparency among the school Leadership Team, the Board and other stakeholders.

i-Ready Data

Mr. Blough reviewed the year-end i-Ready data for Math and ELA, incorporating the district averages as a point of comparison per the Board's request at the August meeting. He said that, based on the students who took the final Math i-Ready assessment, 40.71% demonstrated proficiency, which would exceed the district average. If the January results for all students who did not take the final assessment are incorporated, then about 33% could be assumed proficient. For Reading, Mr. Blough said that 40.6% of the students who took the June i-Ready assessment demonstrated proficiency, compared to the district average of 28% in 2019. When considering the January results for the students who did not take the exam, then SBECA could assume 31% proficiency. Mr. Russell reiterated that, since the State cancelled the 2020 exams, the school's leadership team believes that the June i-Ready results are the best indicator the school has to show growth and proficiency.

The first i-Ready exams for the 2020 – 2021 will be administered on September 16th for ELA and September 23rd for Math.

Student Support Services

Elaine Martinez reported that SBECA currently projects that there are 20 sixth grade students, 28 seventh grade students and 35 eighth grade students with IEPs for the upcoming school year. This represents 25% of the student body, a slight decrease from last year's 26%. SBECA also projects that 12 sixth grade students, 18 seventh grade students and eight eighth grade students are English Language Learners (ELLs). This represents 12% of the student body and a slight increase from last year's 9%. We are now closer to the district average for ELLs, which was 14% in 2019.

Ms. Martinez also reported that she and her team led three workshops during the August Professional Development sessions, including addressing effective co-teaching practices and English as a New Language (ENL) objectives.

She stated that Individualized Learning Time (ILT) teachers will be in the building three days per week, offering three dedicated periods daily for eight students at a time (24 students per day in total), in addition to dedicated remote classes from 2:00 – 3:00 pm. This plan may shift, as it is still unclear how many Students with Disabilities (SWDs) will opt for in-person learning. Those who are learning remotely will be able to tune in to small group work through zoom. The teachers have reviewed all of the IEPs and are sharing information.



Operations & Enrollment

Mr. Blough reported that the current enrollment number for the 2020 – 2021 school year is 308 students. He said that SBECA has engaged Schola to help recruit new students, predominantly in sixth grade, which currently only has 83 confirmed students out of a possible 115 goal. Mr. Blough said that BEDS day is in early October, which is the deadline to attach students to a particular school. He said that he is confident that SBECA will have the needed enrollment by the end of September.

Mr. Russell asked about the outreach to returning families. Mr. Blough said that all families had been contacted and that the current numbers of students in seventh and eighth grades are confirmed. Teachers have begun enrolling kids in Google Classroom. He said that the kids are excited to be back at school and see each other, even if just remotely.

Family Engagement

Natalia Ruiz-Corrales said that SBECA is rolling out Parent Square, a new family engagement software that will facilitate communication moving forward. It will serve as a centralized place for important information, including the school calendar, staff contact information, and access to other platforms that the school uses, including Gradelink, i-Ready, and Kickboard. Ms. Ruiz-Corrales said that engagement has been an all-school effort, including regular phone calls to connect with families. Weekly Community Huddles and newsletters will be available to further build community and keep families connected to the school.

Mr. Russell inquired about wifi availability for families, as well as general tracking process to ensure that the school understands each student's situation and needs. Mr. Blough reported that school surveys have helped identify families who need additional support. When surveys aren't submitted or students aren't logging on for class, SBECA staff follows up with phone calls.

Ms. Ruiz-Corrales reminded families that they would each get a Chromebook to help with their remote learning. Seventh and eighth grade students have their devices from last year, and new students are picking up their devices, as well.

SBECA used Flipgrid to create brief introductory videos for all faculty to help build community with students and families.

Facilities

Mr. Blough reported on some of the safety protocols in place for in-person learning. Each person who enters the building must have their temperature taken and must complete a daily survey prior to obtaining entry into the building. SBECA is doing electrostatic spraying to clean the building and has updated its air purifying system. SBECA has installed floor markings and signage to help foster distancing, and will use outdoor space, including the rooftop, to the degree possible. The isolation room is sectioned off in the Multipurpose Room.



School Culture

Mr. Blough reported that the School Culture team worked with a Responsive Classroom trainer as part of the August professional development sessions. They will continue to monitor online activities using the Bark software that was rolled out in the spring of 2020. For in-person learning, deans will be stationed in the halls to monitor foot traffic, ensure proper distancing, and manage mask breaks.

Higher Education Partners

Mr. Blough reported that two SBECA staff members are enrolled in dual certification programs (SPED and General Education) at MCNY. Other staff members are applying to doctoral programs or are enrolled in Master's programs toward additional certification.

Fordham and NYU are providing four student teachers each for a total of eight student teachers. Lehman College will place a Social Work intern at SBECA in the fall.

Leadership Coaching

Mr. Blough said that he and Dr. McFarlane are continuing to work on the Comprehensive Education Plan, as described previously. He said that Dr. McFarlane also led a workshop on Professional Learning Communities during the August PD session, which was well-received by faculty. Mr. Blough added that he continues his work with Kim Marshall to develop effective evaluations for remote teaching.

Upcoming Events

The first day of in-person school is September 8th. Seventh grade students will be in the building on that day.

As part of SBECA's Corrective Action Plan, Mr. Blough has requested a check-in with NYSED for September or October, so that any feedback that NYSED has is received early in the year.

Meredith Leverich inquired about the status and findings of the family surveys administered. Ms. Ruiz-Corrales said that approximately 200 surveys had been collected to date and that, of those, about 45% of families felt comfortable sending their children into the building for in-person instruction.

Resolution to Approve Minutes from August 6th, 2020

Felicia Franklin made a motion to adopt the minutes from the August 6th, 2020 Board of Trustees Meeting. Nancy Biberman seconded and the Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes.

New Business

Personnel and Community Handbooks

Ms. Leverich said that Ms. Willis and Mr. Blough had shared updated versions of the Personnel and Community Handbooks for the 2020 – 2021 school year, which are ready for Board review. Both documents will be shared with the Board's Personnel Committee for their review and feedback prior to the Board meeting on October 1st, at which time the Board could potentially adopt the documents.



Faculty Comfortability

Mr. Russell asked the faculty in attendance about their comfort level returning to the building for in-person instruction. A number of teachers shared that they were comfortable and felt safe returning.

A parent asked about the plans if a member of the school community tests positive for COVID. Mr. Blough said that the school would have to close for a deep clean, that exposed community members would have to quarantine, and that a series of protocols that are published on the school's website would be followed.

Next Meeting – October 1st, 2020

Adjournment

The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.