



BOARD MEETING MINUTES
THE SEED School of Washington, D.C.
December 2, 2021
9:00 A.M. EST

Attendance:

Directors

Angelita Buckman
Vasco Fernandes
Huck O'Connor
Lesley Poole
Desa Sealy
Raj Vinnakota

Absent

David Steinberg
Eric Vinson

Staff

Vincena Allen
Ken Arndt
Keniq Coney
Curtis Durham
Eriel Holloway
Rashida Holman-Jones
Kendra Johnson-Tesch
Jubria Lewis
Chloe Marshall
Hopi Moodie
Brian Rahaman
Christopher Rooks
Sherita Wallace

Secretary of the Meeting

Marjorie Howard

Call to Order

Ms. Desa Sealy, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. Ms. Sealy welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Ms. Sealy congratulated SEED for participating in the national giving day known as “Giving Tuesday”. Giving Tuesday is a day which is observed on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving in the United States to celebrate giving and charitable acts. Ms. Sealy went on to say that this year’s activity will serve as a



baseline for future Giving Tuesday campaigns. Dr. Brian Rahaman extended thanks to Alisha Huntley- Chief Development Officer for the SEED Foundation for her help in getting the campaign up and running. Attendees of the board meeting asked that the link be shared with them so that they may support SEED's campaign goal.

Consent Agenda

A motion was made to approve the Minutes from December 3, 2021 with the following correction on the attendees list: Keniq Coney was not present at the Q1 board meeting; the board minutes were passed unanimously.

Head of School Update

Dr. Rahaman shared the following objectives of the meeting.

- Update board members on school status and performance
- Discuss merits of paying off debt and determine next steps
- Share next steps and timeline for special project

COVID Health Protocols

Dr. Rahaman reported that COVID testing happens on Friday morning each week. Out of the 10-20% of students tested each week we haven't had any positive tests since early October. Out of the 111 staff members 4 staff members have medical or religious waivers of exemption and the others are vaccinated. We continue to have students needing to quarantine because they were in close contact of a positive case – quarantined students are provided with credentials to access instruction virtually.

Staffing Updates

Dr. Rahaman gave an update on staffing vacancies. As of the board meeting, the academic department is fully staffed. The student life department has two SLC positions vacant that we hope to fill within the next week. There are 4-5 additional support positions that are vacant.

Virtual Learning

Dr. Rahaman reported that we have 3 students currently with a medical consent waiver that allows them to learn virtually from home for their first semester. In order to continue learning from home another waiver must be obtained for their 2nd semester. Currently we have a few students in the process of applying for medical waivers for their 2nd semester.

Master Schedule

Dr. Rahaman reported we adjusted the master schedule in October. The primary reason for this shift was to eliminate a few vacancies. The new schedule includes seven 55-minute periods each day, including a double-block of math. Feedback regarding the adjusted master schedule from both students and teachers has been positive.

Program Improvement



Dr. Rahaman reported that in mid-to-late October our academic staffing issue and student culture began to stabilize, which allowed more time and effort to focus on program improvement.

Mr. Raj Vinnakota asked the following questions of Dr. Rahaman: What are you learning about the quality of the teaching and general staffing pool? And what is the impact on salary/wages? Dr. Rahman responded that there is an entire report on instructional quality later in the agenda however he did address the question regarding the pool and impact on wages. The staffing pool has not been good, and this has been an issue since the beginning of the school year. We often post jobs and receive no resumes. In another case, we had someone accept a teaching position and they didn't pass the background check. Dr. Rahaman added that this struggle is shared with other leaders he has spoken with along with what he has read in media reports about schools across the country.

Mr. Vinnakota asked the following questions: Is your sense that what's happening here is that there is a decrease in the overall pool of teachers in the DC area? Or is the competition going up and there are more slots to fill? or is this just a game of musical chairs where everyone is just moving around as a result of the great resignation portion of our lives? Dr. Rahaman responded that no one really knows the reason why however he shared his hypothesis that when schools received the federal CARES dollars many of them used it to add personnel, and schools did this without increasing the pool of people interested in doing school-based work. Many schools like us had plans to accelerate learning to address learning loss and added more teaching positions that created an even greater demand which resulted in the teacher shortage we are all experiencing this school year. Mr. Vinnakota thanked Dr. Rahaman stating his hypothesis was helpful.

Mr. Huck O'Connor asked the following question: Do you get any sense that there is any less interest in teachers coming to teach at the SEED school in particular? Dr. Rahaman responded that he doesn't have multiple years to compare interest over time.

Dr. Angelita Buckman asked the following question: How do SEED teacher salaries compare to DC public schools (DCPS) and other schools in the area? Dr. Rahaman responded we generally pay a higher salary to less experienced teachers compared to DCPS. DCPS has a whole 16 step process on their pay scale and at the lowest step we don't have any teachers at that low pay grade. We do however need to have a systematic process on how our existing teachers move up the pay scale. We are developing a teacher salary scale this year to increase transparency regarding salaries and to ensure that our salaries are competitive.

Ms. Lesley Poole asked the question: We spent hundreds of thousands of dollars building a scale and for various reasons school went outside of the scale can you go back to the scale and identify where it needs to be updated and update it? The scale created the transparency that teachers and student life counselors needed to stay and to know that they can grow and become compensated without having to leave. Dr. Rahaman asked the question: Do you know what year that work was done? Ms. Poole responded in 2004-2005 the scale was



implemented in 2006. Ms. Poole will provide the scale to Dr. Rahaman. Mr. Ken Arndt said that he went through a process with the previous Head of School and will share that data with Dr. Rahaman.

Ms. Sealy said this may merit a good section of another board meeting in addition to teacher improvement and that since Ms. Poole has a hard stop, she would like to get through this meeting before Ms. Poole has to leave. Dr. Rahaman moved the reporting forward to the next item on the agenda.

Student Performance

Mr. Curtis Durham shared two student performance measurements he began by sharing student course grade performance across content areas which showed that:

- 199 of our 228 students are passing all courses or are only failing one course at the end of the first quarter.
- 105 of the students passing all courses or are only failing one course are girls.
- 8 of the 11 students failing 4 or more classes are boys

The pass-fail rate of these students by grade level showed the following:

- 87% of 9th grade are passing
- 94% of 10th grade are passing
- 85% of 11th grade are passing
- 94% of 12th grade are passing

The important takeaway from the course grade performance data is that we have a subset of students who need additional intervention and support. Approximately 9% of students are failing three or more courses. In the coming weeks, we will develop and begin implementing intervention plans for these students to improve their school performance. We expect the number of students failing multiple courses to decrease by the end of the second quarter.

Ms. Sealy asked the question: Any sense of why there is a dip in the 11th grade passing rate, when it's such an important year for colleges looking at transcripts? Mr. Durham responded that right now we are doing an analysis to identify what are the barriers so that we can minimize and/or eliminate them to promote student improvement by the end of second quarter. Dr. Rahaman added that when we pulled this data three weeks before the end of the first quarter the 11th grade was at 71% in terms of their overall pass rate, and he was pleased to see that it had gone up to 85% by the end of the same quarter.

MAP Performance

Mr. Durham then reported on a second performance measurement which is standardized assessment data to track student learning progress over time. Mr. Durham explained that SEED currently administers a standardized math and reading assessment to students in Grades 9 and 10



at three points during the school year (September, December, March). The baseline data shared was from September of 2020 when students were 100% virtual. The bar graph showed:

- 9th grade students performed better in reading compared to math
- 10th grade students performed better in math compared to reading

Although both grades scored under the 50th percentile, Mr. Durham explained that this is an achievement percentile and does not measure growth or improvement. He also explained that our being a high school, we can't control the incoming skill levels of students who come to us from other schools. We will treat this data for what it is a baseline, and we will monitor changes to our performance trends over time especially from Fall to Fall.

Mr. Vinnakota ask the following question: Are these scores the same persons year over year or is it this 9th grade vs. last year's 9th grade? Dr. Rahaman responded it is this year's 9th grade compared to last year's 9th grade. Mr. Vinnakota stated it would be more helpful to see the scores of the same student over time so that the board can know where to focus their time and how to provide support.

Network Success Measures

Mr. Durham reported on quarter 2 Network Success Measures (NSM) dashboard. Since the MAP data has already been discussed Mr. Durham pointed out three key metrics the first is the percentage of actual enrollment relative to budgeted enrollment which is still well over the targeted enrollment. The second is the percentage of filled direct-service positions at the end of the first quarter we are at 87% of our direct service positions filled. The third being the college readiness metrics where we are using last year's data as our baseline and are tracking how many students applied for right-fit colleges. Our goal is to increase the number of students who are applying to ten or more right fit colleges by February and to increase the number of students who are accepted to two or more right-fit colleges.

Senior Class Update Class of 2022

Mr. Durham called attention to the picture on his slide deck of smiling students on the campus of Frostburg State University. Mr. Durham explained that this was a joint college tour put together by SEED PCS and SEED MD to participate in a shared college tour. SEED also toured Salisbury University and our interim college counselor is working with SEED MD college counselor to plan additional shared college tours for 2022. Mr. Durham reported that SEED PCS has 35 seniors, 34 are in-person students and 33 are on-track for graduation. The other students have signed an MOU and an action plan to get them on-track. FAFSA Completion is over 85% have completed the FAFSA. We hope that over the holiday break to have 100% completed.

Ms. Sealy asked the question: I know that we haven't been able to do college tours due to COVID over the last year and a half, but how motivated are students to participate and what percentage of students are going on the tours? Mr. Durham responded 99% of the students attended the tour. Ms. Sealy added that she liked combining the tour with SEED MD because it



makes a lot of sense and Mr. Durham stated the credit goes to Ms. Vincena Allen and her team who facilitated the process.

School Improvement Plan (SIP)

Mr. Durham gave a brief update on the SIP. There have been two adjustments made since the last quarter. The first adjustment was to add the goal of improving the average score on the instructional domain in the Framework for Teaching from 1.8 (baseline was established in November) to 3.0 or higher by April 2022. And the second adjustment was to change the PARCC proficiency goal from a 10 percent increase to 20 percent overall proficiency for both ELA and math. Mr. Durham provided updates on other SIP goals.

Ms. Sealy said great progress on the college front it's impressive and that the FASFA is the door to entry for our student population.

Ms. Lesley Poole addressed Dr. Rahaman and Ms. Sealy with the following: As a note, at the follow-up discussion after the first quarter board meeting regarding the SIP, she was wondering if we can take another deep dive before the third quarter board meeting to answer some of Raj's questions.

Instructional Quality

Dr. Rahaman shared that the average classroom observation score on the Danielson Framework for Teaching was 2.4 on Domain 2 (Classroom Environment) and 1.8 on Domain 3 (Instruction).

Dr. Rahaman reported that 40 percent of teachers need intensive support, 20 percent need moderate support, and 40 percent need light support. Across the school, the highest priority areas include questioning and discussion strategies and assessment in instruction.

Mr. Raj Vinnakota asked the following question: I have two questions around capacity (1) Do you have the capacity among your instructional leadership team to provide the teachers with the development that they need? and (2) Do you have the bandwidth/enough instructional support to be able to provide all that is necessary for teachers?

Dr. Rahaman replied: Great question, we need an instructional coach, we had one in the beginning of the year and that person has been gone since early October, it is a priority that we hire another instructional coach. We've posted the position, but it's been a hard position to fill especially at this time of the year, so in terms of capacity and bandwidth it would be very helpful to have that instructional coach position filled but again we are working with what we have in-house right now, and that's where we got the idea of creating more time in the schedule, and also doing more things on Saturdays to essentially create more bandwidth by increasing time for coaching.

Mr. Huck O'Connor asked the question: What is your emotional reaction to the distribution of the teachers? (Is it oh okay yeah, it's about where I expected it to be? Or its 10 times better than other schools I've been at?), Give me a sense of what you think about these numbers?



Dr. Rahaman responded: My response is that it's about what I expected. There were no surprises, and it's no better or worse than other schools I've been at. The challenge for us is how quickly can we improve instructional quality.

Ms. Poole asked the question: Dr. Rahaman can you connect some dots for me? We are looking at the SIP, we're looking at the NSM. When I look at the SIP should I see some of the areas that we are talking about here in the SIP? Is there overlap? And/or is there a reason why there is not overlap?

Dr. Rahaman responded: The goal to improve instructional quality is new we added this goal to the SIP in November after we performed classroom observations and looked at the baseline data. So, from that perspective, the answer to your question is yes there is overlap. We quickly assessed that we are not going to achieve our PARCC goal if we don't effectively improve instruction in all classrooms and especially in the identified key subject areas and grade levels.

Ms. Sealy asked the following question: I had a question on the Saturday workshops and I know you've been talking about everyone being burnt-out and tired, in terms of the amount of work the concern is having balance and people may need their Saturdays.

Dr. Rahaman: This is a good point I think we are in a better place than we were in September, early October, and we certainly don't want to overtax them, we would pay them and at the end of the day we wouldn't force anyone to participate but a lot of them like picking up extra money. For example we've had the acceleration academy that is held during spring break where we've brought teachers in they do 4-5 hours per day during their break and we always get teachers interested in that so I think we will have a core group of teachers who are committed to being good and are committed to the students and like making some extra money so we are hopeful that we can do that a few times so that we can accelerate improvement.

Ms. Poole asked the following questions: Not expecting a response in this moment; Do you think we are leveraging the full 24-hours we have with students? Why are we creating this external vehicle on Saturday when we have students for an additional 16-hours a day already? And what is the return on our 16-hour investment of time?

Dr. Rahaman responded that this was a good question that we will continue to ask ourselves to ensure that we make the most of our gift of time.

Student Life

Mr. Christopher Rooks the Director of Student Life presented the board with programming updates on athletics, SPARKS, BUILD, The Falcon Theater, and Peer Group Connection.

Mr. Rooks then transitioned into his first quarter metric in which he shared the data point from a student survey that showed, 93% of students who participate in the daily Math Lab earned a passing grade in their math course during quarter 1. 80-percent of students think that the quality



of the Student Life program is “good” or “excellent”, over 85-percent of students reported that the boarding program helps them resolve inter-personal conflict in healthy and productive ways. And 95-percent of students reported that the boarding program helps improve their school attendance and academic performance.

Mr. Rooks concluded his report by sharing a slide showing students participating in “House Programing,” which includes activities such as goal setting, preparing for interviews, and game room, among others.

Mr. O’Conner congratulated Mr. Rooks on the success of all the cool activities presented. He went on to add the following: As one of the longest standing board members everything you reported on was one of the two critical prongs of what SEED is all about it is top notch academics in the classroom and providing a healthy out of the classroom experience that perhaps not all our students have in their home lives. And that he is so happy to see the return of out of the classroom experiences which he firmly believes that a healthy community is what drives the in-classroom performance.

Mr. Vinnakota asked the following question: Looking at the slide with the four program goals, how are you keeping up in knowing you’re doing a good job with these four goals?

Mr. Rooks responded: We use surveys and student outcome measures to measure our progress with the four goals.

Mr. Vinnakota responded – I get that if the student life programs is successful, you should see it across the board including the academic outcomes plus retention, plus wanting to be at this school and so on. I think if we are going to put program goals, it would be important to get an update on an annual basis. Are we getting exposure, how many of our students believe they have a deep relationship with adults on campus, etc.

Ms. Poole followed up on Mr. Vinnakota’s point: Maybe a conversation later not at this moment is to find out what data are we collecting? What type of data does the board want to see?

Question: The formal capacity building of students, we are doing a great job on activities for students, building relationships and explore their SPARKS. But there is a question of what is the formal program, historically called HALLS, where students are learning formally what the skills of conflict management are, the skill of receiving negative feedback, the skill of giving feedback, asking for help and an overarching question of that we are mindful that we don’t have to start from scratch how we build on the investment that SEED has already made and build upon that investment.

Dr. Rahaman responded that this is great feedback and by the time we get to quarter 3 we can present and speak on some of the feedback you guys have given us today.

Mr. O’Connor added: We love the effort that is being made and its great and totally supportive of let’s hang some metrics around this two steps (1) A metric on what is being done and (2) A



metric that shows to what end? For example, we are having these great programs, but how does it tie into the rate of our college acceptance? (Whatever it is we are trying to accomplish with these activities). It will or should evolve over time as we look at this and he would like to see it quarterly.

Dr. Rahaman transition the discussion to the next report on the agenda Student enrollment given by Ms. Rashida Holman-Jones – Director of Family and Community Engagement (FACE)

Student Enrollment

Ms. Rashida Holman-Jones reported that SEED has a current enrollment of 239 students, 223 of which were included in the residential audit.

Recruitment Update

SEED will participate in EdFEST, DC’s annual public-school fair for the SY21-22 it will be virtual this year on Saturday, Dec. 11 from 10a.m. – 1p.m. Schools can present on a digital platform and chat with Students and families across the district.

We are currently setting up our school fairs our hope is to visit both in-person and virtually schools with 8th grade students and adult charter schools that have high school aged students.

Lastly, we plan on doing some canvassing in Wards 7 and 8 we will drop off flyers at our local businesses and organizations, Put up posters around Benning Rd and Minnesota Avenue metro. OutFront media will have our posters at bike shelters, bus shelters on the side of the bus, Facebook and Instagram which will target all social media outlets.

Debt Discussion

Ms. Poole asked what would it mean if we consider paying off our debt? Dr. Rahaman provided the following information: Right now, the payoff amount is about 1.8M, our monthly payment is about 25K, last year we paid 5K a month in interest, the payments over years 2022-2024 will be 300K with a 900K balloon payment due in December 2024.

Ms. Poole asked the following question: If we pay it off as is, what would be the payoff date?

Dr. Rahaman replied: December 2024

Mr. Vinnakota asked the following question: What’s the interest rate? Is it floating? Or Fixed?

Mr. Ken Arndt replied: It is a variable rate and it’s at 2.9%

Ms. Poole asked the following question: If we were to pay it off today, would the payoff be 1.8M?



Mr. Arndt replied: It would be 1.775M, there are no prepayment penalties so if we decided to do it all it would take us a phone call to the bank, complete some paperwork and the bank would auto debit it from our account.

Ms. Poole asked made the following statement: As a steward of public dollars, we need to always consider our debt first in terms of what we're going to do with our resources. And this is why I asked to advance this conversation so that we can make a decision. However, I will defer this decision to the finance committee.

Mr. O'Connor added: Fiducially speaking, I look at two important questions to ask ourselves and that is 1) Could we prudently carry the debt? Yes, and 2) Do we have a higher better use for the cash then to use it to pay down the debt? Given we already have projects in the works and still have ample access cash he is inclined to agree with Mr. Arndt to pay down the debt.

Mr. O'Connor went on to say: To give the board with a little bit of context, where does cash bottom out? Historically over the past 12-13 years we have historically been comfortable bottoming out cash at about 2M we've gone way lower than that in some dark days, at 2M in the bank we've consider ourselves comfortable. Considering we invested 4M in special projects that would give us about 2M of low point cushion and saving us 60-70K in interest.

Ms. Poole asked the following question: If we decide to move forward, she wonders if there is a memo in the form of a recommendation from Dr. Rahaman and Mr. Arndt to the board(s) with some hard analysis of what exactly the process would be and then the savings would be and just put in writing the pros and cons and we can approve it as a board and that way we've gone through this conversation to a formal recommendation from management and then we can move forward.

Mr. Vinnakota added: My biggest concern is an unknown about cost overruns on our investment projects. Cost overruns could eat through that 2M cushion. It has been his experience that there are always cost overruns. So how long can we wait to make this decision so that we have as much visibility on the capital money?

Mr. O'Connor added: Mr. Vinnakota's concern is very valid, how bothersome would it be to pay down the term debt and put in place a revolver to address Mr. Vinnakota's concern?

Ms. Poole added the following questions: What would happen if we trued up the Greek account? That's 1.5M sitting there and some of that money belongs to the school. And that is another reason why we need that recommendation memo sort of flushing out Mr. Vinnakota's concern and Mr. O'Connor's question.

Mr. O'Connor added: In a perfect world I pay off the facility and refi the revolver that would give us a little more time. To Ms. Sealy's point about cash planning, if we were to hit a budget pinch along the lines that Ms. Sealy described that 900K balloon payment in 2024 would loom large so in a lot of ways a cash management standpoint we want to get it out of the way.



Mr. Vinnakota added: If we could keep the existing deal and just pay off all but 100K and still keep the revolver associated with the existing deal why not just do that?

Mr. O'Connor and Mr. Arndt both like Mr. Vinnakota concept best.

Mr. Arndt added what would be interesting is that he would have to have a conversation with the bank, and they may have to change to principal payments instead of doing 300K a year we may be down to 25-50K we can certainly have that conversation with them.

Mr. O'Connor add: See if they can extend the revolver too.

Finance Update

Mr. O'Connor reported: Cash is very strong and income is ahead of budget.

Dr. Rahaman added that he and Mr. Arndt are working on forecasting the budget over the next few weeks.

Mr. Arndt reported on the status of the audit: The audit is done but unfortunately the auditors will not release it until we get a confirmation from our Greek account. We have the draft we ended the year at about 2.5M worth of net income.

Mr. O'Connor reported: The Greek account is a trust and it sat there for a long time and has accumulated to a large amount and the best of his recollection the advice they got is that we have to leave an amount of money in the trust necessary to execute the trust's mission. This may be a good time to look at how we free up some of that cash and reclassify it.

Special Projects

Dr. Rahaman provided the following update: We are creating a detailed program design, we are in the process of doing the research on multimedia programs, we are looking at other high schools and even some colleges and trying to create the actual program, what courses are we going to offer, what specific programs are we offering, what equipment are we going to need to run the program, how many students will we need for the program, how many points within their SEED career do they engage in the program. We will complete the program design and then take it back to the architect to modify the existing concept designs (if necessary).

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 A.M.