

## MINUTES

### THE SEED School of Washington, D.C.

**December 3, 2020**

**9:00 A.M. EST**

#### **Attendance:**

##### Directors

Angelita Buckman  
Vasco Fernandes  
Huck O'Connor  
Lesley Poole  
Desa Sealy  
Ken Slaughter  
David Steinberg

##### Absent

Raj Vinnakato  
Eric Vinson

##### Staff

Vincena Allen  
Ken Arndt  
LaMar Bagley  
Keniq Coney  
Curtis Durham  
Rashida Holman-Jones  
Alisha Huntley  
Kendra Johnson-Tesch  
Jubria Lewis  
Chloe Marshall  
Hopi Moodie  
Brian Rahaman  
Karmin Tia-Green

##### Secretary of the meeting

Vita Makle

#### **Call to Order**

Ms. Desa Sealy, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:07 A.M. Ms. Sealy welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **Consent Agenda**

A motion was made to approve the Minutes of September 29, 2020; the board minutes were passed unanimously.

#### **Head of School Update**

Ms. Poole welcomed Ms. Karmin Tia-Green, Ed Pioneer Fellow.

Mr. Brian Rahaman shared the following objectives for the meeting:

- Understand the school's current student performance and engagement
- Know the school's plan for improvement
- Know the school's current enrollment and financial status; and
- Understand the school's COVID-related protocols for in-person learning

Mr. Rahaman reported that SEED DC is relatively stable with student performance and engagement. The average daily attendance rate is about 92 percent. Mr. Rahaman shared that the school is in a strong position financially, partly because the school has been in virtual learning and has incurred lower expenses in some operational areas.

Mr. Rahaman identified the following areas as priorities for the next quarter:

- Use the Multi-Tiered System of Support (“MTSS”) process to identify students who need to make improvements
- Implement a school-wide literacy effort
- Prepare for PARCC
- Continue developing systems (e.g., attendance tracking, MTSS, etc.)

Mr. Rahaman shared with the board that a survey was sent to students for feedback with the following three questions to gauge students' interest in learning.

1. Do students put forth their best effort?
  - a. Student survey response – 95%
2. Is it important for students to learn?
  - a. Student survey response – 100%
3. Is it important for them to get good grades?
  - a. Student survey response - 97%

Mr. Rahaman reported that SEED DC has 10% of its students that are failing multiple courses. This number equates to 22 students (15 males and 7 females) out of 219 currently enrolled students. The MTSS team has conducted a root cause analysis to identify the root causes of the performance problems. Based on the analysis, the MTSS team designed intervention strategies and will monitor the impact on attendance and course performance over the next few weeks. The MTSS team will meet bi-weekly to monitor student progress and adjust the intervention plans. The goal will be to help these 22 students improve their attendance and course performance so that they are passing all their classes by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.

Mr. Rahaman reported that 9th and 10th grade students took the MAP assessment in October 2020 and will take it again in March 2021. The average achievement percentile by grade and subject is as follows:

- Grade 9
  - 45% mathematics
  - 35% reading
- Grade 10 –
  - 45% mathematics
  - 33% reading.
- The average Lexile reading level was 743 and 774 for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades, respectively.

Mr. Rahaman shared that the reading levels were lower this fall compared to last spring, which suggests that students may have lost some ground since the pandemic began in March 2020. The

other factor that might have impacted the scores was that students took the assessment at home, whereas they took it at school last year.

Mr. Rahaman informed the board members that SEED DC would address the reading deficiencies immediately. The first strategy is to dramatically increase the amount and quality of reading and writing that students do each day across content areas. The second strategy is to implement a structured process using the following steps:

1. Choose high leverage literacy skills;
2. Develop workshops on how to teach the skills;
3. Train teachers across content areas to teach the skills;
4. Create an implementation calendar so that we coordinate which teachers are teaching the skills;
5. Observe implementation; and
6. Adjust the plan as necessary.

Mr. Slaughter asked whether the SEED DC program was meeting its mission given the low reading levels. Mr. Huck O'Connor asked whether we could deliver a better product to SEED students and families. Ms. Lesley Poole stated that the school's terrain has shifted, moving from a middle and high school to only a high school. Prior years students entered SEED DC in 6th or 7th grades versus current 9th or 10th grade entry.

Mr. Vasco Fernandes stated that SEED DC needs a narrative. That narrative being "SEED DC had a structural shift that drove the school to a new place such as 9th grade entry, COVID-19, remote learning, etc." Mr. Fernandes believes this is a model that cannot work. Mr. Fernandes suggested that we might hire literacy consultants as opposed to hiring literacy staff, which we may not be able to sustain long-term.

Mr. Rahaman stated that he believes we can improve students' reading levels by creating a school-wide literacy plan. However, given where our students are starting from, the improvement of literacy skills is a multi-year effort and cannot be done easily or quickly.

### **Academics Update**

Mr. Curtis Durham reported to the board the health and safety of the COVID-related protocols in the preparation of hybrid learning in the future.

#### Daily Health Screen

- Applies to students and staff
- Temperature checks
- COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire

#### Testing

- Tentative PCR tests for all students and staff –
- Funded by Families First Coronavirus Response Act
- Testing once per week
- Results within 24-36 hours

#### Face Coverings

- Required to be worn at all times except meal times
- SEED DC will provide students and staff with a washable mask as needed

#### Cohort Model

- No more than six students per classroom
- No classroom changes for students
- Teachers will alternate classrooms as needed

#### Social Distancing

- Meals served to classrooms
- One student at a time in the restroom
- Staggered arrival and dismissal times
- Floor marking to indicate the distance of six feet
- One student per dorm room

#### Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Classrooms and dorm rooms will be cleaned and disinfected daily
- Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected hourly throughout the week
- Academic building and dorm rooms will be deep cleaned when students have vacated the campus

#### Classroom Setup

- Only six desks setup per classroom
- Desks spaced six feet apart with 7 ft. plastic partitions in between each desk
- Air filters in all classrooms
- Hand sanitizer stations in all classrooms
- Disinfection spray, paper towel, and gloves stored in all classrooms

Mr. Slaughter asked would parents be able to opt-out of returning their student(s) to school? Mr. Rahaman responded “yes” parents would have the option of full virtual learning. Mr. Rahaman noted that this option is not just unique to SEED DC but across the District due to CDC restrictions and protocols with which all schools are required to comply. Mr. Slaughter and Dr. Buckman both shared that they are opposed to students returning to campus due to SEED DC’s 24-hour model until a vaccine is available.

#### **Student Life Update**

Dr. LaMar Bagley reported that the Student Life program is:

- Continuing to assess screen time requirements, programming, and levels of student engagement.
- Adapting our program to meet the needs of students
- Our North Star: student success and well-being

Dr. Bagley also reported the kickoff of the Student Life SPARKS program. SPARKS will be offered four days per week, Monday thru Thursday. Dr. Bagley shared the following SPARKS programs being offered to students:

- Art
- Cultural Exposure
- Fitness and Health

- Gaming and Coding
- Playwright Theatre
- Step Afrika
- Arena Stage

### **Student Support Services Update**

Mr. Rahaman reported the updates below in the absence of Ms. Sherita Wallace, Director of Student Support Services.

- SEED DC continues to maintain an OSSE Recognized IDEA Compliance Determination
- Q1 Compliance Meetings: 31
- Virtual student support services are occurring for students with IEPs

### **Family and Community Engagement Update ("FACE")**

Ms. Rashida Holman-Jones reported that the current enrollment is 219 students; 27 students on the waiting list – all 10th graders. Only one student has withdrawn from SEED since enrollment count day.

Ms. Holman-Jones reported on OSSE's Enrollment Audit. The fieldwork was completed on October 26<sup>th</sup>. SEED DC was 100% compliant with accuracy and completion of the recruitment forms, and is currently awaiting the final audit report.

Ms. Holman-Jones reported on student recruitment. SEED DC's recruitment goal is 90 seats with 300 applications through MySchoolDC. SEED DC explored the following recruitment strategies:

- Social media.
- WMATA bus ads.
- Virtual school tour.
- Direct contact with 8th grade students and families through partnerships.
- Virtual open houses and participation in EdFEST.

Ms. Holman-Jones shared the following Student Recruitment Key Dates:

- MySchoolDC Virtual EdFEST: December 12, 2020
- Virtual Open Houses: December 19, 2020 and January 20, 2021
- MSDC Lottery Application Opens: December 14, 2020
- Application Deadline: February 1, 2021
- Lottery Results Release: April 2, 2021
- Enrollment Decision Deadline: May 3, 2021

### **College Access and Success**

Ms. Vincena Allen reported that the College Access and Success team is moving forward with the college application process. A small percentage of SEED DC students have submitted at

least one application to Right-Fit- Colleges. The team has noticed a little bit of a lag because students are having some challenges with remotely engaging. As the internal deadline of December 18<sup>th</sup> is fast approaching the College Access and Success team has noticed an increase of receiving applications, which is typical due to students wanting to make sure that they get their applications in on time. Ms. Allen concluded with excitement that SEED DC has a POSSE finalist.

### **Finance Update**

Mr. Arndt reported on the following finances for SEED DC.

- YTD Results through October 31, 2020
- Cash Forecast
- 2020 Debt Covenants

Mr. Arndt reported SEED DC is in good financial standing.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 A.M.