

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SESSION  
OF THE SOUTH BEND EMPOWERMENT ZONE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
6/26/23**

**MINUTES**

- Meeting Time Start 6:10pm
- Meeting Called to Order: Sam Centellas, Board President
- Meeting presentation is available on [YouTube](#)
- Meeting presentations available on [The Zone Website](#)

**LOCATION**

- SBCSC Boardroom

**QUORUM**

- Attendees:
  - Sam Centellas, Board President
  - Rosa Hiestand, Board Secretary
  - Stephanie Ball
  - Jeff Rea (virtual)
  - Sonya Watkins
  - Leslie Wesley
  - Duane Wilson
  - Davion Lewis, SBEZ Chief
- Absent:
  - Kareemah Fowler
  - Ashley Northern
- Quorum Established (Y/N): Yes

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**SUMMARY**

The June board meeting focused on a discussion of: the proposed new public comment policy, the survey data results for the end of the school year 2021-2022, the finance update on all Zone funds.

The board voted unanimously to approve the new public comment policy which adds comment periods before each board vote, as well as at the end of the meeting. The board discussed the ongoing challenge of school climate, specifically student and staff responses to the survey.

### **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

- Motion to approve agenda: Stephanie Ball
- Seconded: Sonya Watkins
- Discussion: none
- Approved unanimously

### **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Motion to approve: Sonya Watkins
- Seconded: Stephanie Ball
- Discussion: none
- Approved unanimously

### **III. BOARD PRESIDENT REPORT**

The Board President congratulated staff members, parents, students, and Zone partners on their hard work, collaboration, and achievements for a successful school year. He also provided an update on the MOU, which is expected to be voted on by the SBCSC Board of Trustees in August, and then ratified by the Zone Board of Directors. The Board President also expressed his gratitude to SBCSC for their partnership, as they look to the future and move The Empowerment Zone forward.

### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY**

Key points of the new policy are:

- At regular meetings, the board will hold a public comment period before each member votes for the agenda and the minutes; The board will hold a public comment period on all other topics at the end of the meeting.
- To address the board in public comment, individuals must EITHER sign up online by 12:00 PM on the meeting date, OR in-person, no later than 10 minutes after the call to order, on the paper copy that will be available.

The signup link is available on the Empowerment Zone website. Motion to approve the policy: Rosa Hiestand. Seconded: Sonya Watkins. Approved unanimously.

### **V. Q4 SURVEY DATA**

The Board reviewed the results of the Q4 survey of students, staff, and families. Overall, students of elementary schools reported feeling competent as leaders, and trusting adults to help them succeed. However, peer-to-peer relationships is an area that continues to need improvement. In middle school, the results reversed: peer-to-peer relationships scored the highest, however trust in adults continued to score low across the year.

The significant caveat to the data is the unusually low response rate, which creates the need for caution when interpreting and relying on this data. As The Zone continues to develop and implement an overall data strategy, it will also plan for the process challenges identified in the quarterly survey (e.g., timing).

Family scores increased from quarter one to quarter four. Communication improved the most overall, and Warren achieved the greatest increase between Q1 and Q4. Warren also continues to have the highest family scores across all schools.

Staff consistently reported high self-confidence and enjoyment of their work. However, some areas continue to need improvement, including a culture of accountability. Coquillard was highlighted as the school that improved across the most survey questions (11 of 15), between Q1 and Q4.

Also discussed were two hypotheses that might explain the higher and lower survey scores. One hypothesis was the principals' use of data to identify areas of focus, plan, and take action. The second hypothesis was that because the survey took place during the last two weeks of the school year, a period of stress for both students and staff.

The Zone continues to focus on improvement in the challenging areas. The data has shown that increased support for teachers has been one of the most effective steps taken this year, and has helped mitigate other problems.

## VI. FINANCE REPORT

The financial report began with the Zone's 501c3, for which expenditures are primarily payroll. Expenditures outpaced revenues due to the timing of reimbursements and processing time; the revenue funds will be posted next month. The report also included a new line item, "contributions" which documents donations to the 501C3, and also reimbursement by donors when the Zone purchases goods or services covered by their donation.

A new item on the report was a second revenue, which is interest income from a higher yield checking account. The Zone plans to use this income to help the community, with board approval.

In the “All Funds” report, the Zone was at 88% of its budget, and on track to remain at or under budget by the end of the year.

Motion to approve the financial reports: Stephanie Ball. Seconded: Sonya Watkins. Approved unanimously

### **VII. ZONE CHIEF REPORT**

The Zone Chief recognized Mrs. Melanie Hackett, who recently became the Executive Director of Talent Development, and was previously the Director of Diverse Learners. The Zone Chief also thanked SBCSC Trustee Mrs. McCullough, for encouraging the Zone to focus on increasing the number of certified teachers. As the Executive Director of Talent Development, Mrs. Hackett will create a new teacher induction program that provides year-long mentorship for new teachers, tracks teacher certification, and supports teachers completing programs to receive their certification.

In the month of June, the Zone has not onboarded any new staff; there was one new hire through SBCSC. The Zone separated from four staff members, and three separations through SBCSC; all seven were school-based roles.

### **IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **X. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS**

The Board Chair announced the next board meeting was expected to be on July 11th.

### **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm.