

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SESSION
OF THE SOUTH BEND EMPOWERMENT ZONE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
8/22/23**

MINUTES

- Meeting Time Start: 4:39 pm
- Meeting Called to Order: Sam Centellas, Board President
- [Meeting video is available on Youtube](#)
- Meeting presentation is available on the Zone [website](#)

LOCATION

- SBCSC Boardroom

QUORUM

- Attendees:
 - Sam Centellas,, Board Chair (Virtual)
 - Rosa Hiestand, Board Secretary (Virtual)
 - Ryan Matthys, Board Treasurer
 - Stephanie Ball
 - Jeff Rea
 - Duane Wilson
- Absent:
 - Ashley Northern
 - Kareemah Fowler
 - Leslie Wesley
 - Sonya Watkins
- Quorum Established (Y/N): Y

SUMMARY

The August meeting included (1) key votes on the continuation of the Zone, and the board membership of Ashley Northern, (2) reports on the 2022-23 ILEARN data, (3) School Spotlights on Navarre Middle School and Warren Elementary School, and (4) the beginning of the 2023-24 school year. The board voted to approve the continuation of the Zone, per the resolution approved by the SBCSC Board of Trustees on August 7, 2023. The board also voted to remove Ashley Northern from the board due to lack of attendance and participation.

AGENDA ITEMS

- **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

- Motion to approve agenda: Jeff Rea
- Seconded: Stephanie Ball
- Discussion: Duane Wilson
- Approved unanimously

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Motion to approve minutes of June 26 and July 11: Jeff Rea
- Seconded: Stephanie Ball
- Discussion: None
- Approved unanimously

- **BOARD PRESIDENT REPORT**

The Board President thanked La Casa de Amistad for the Back to School event organized in conjunction with SBEZ, which was attended by a significant number of guests from the community. He also commented on the Welcome Back and professional development event for teachers and staff (which some board members also attended), in particular how engaged they were to start the new school year. Upcoming events for the new school calendar year were announced and board member Jeff Rea was recognized for chairing the meeting in the Board President's absence.

IV. FOCUS TOPICS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Teaching and Learning

The Executive Director of Teaching and Learning shared an overview and key highlights of the Zone's 2022-23 ILEARN results. In addition, Principal Kwalfle Scott-Bradley of Warren Elementary School and Assistant Principal Jennifer Roden of Navarre Middle School shared how their schools have used data and are approaching their comprehensive needs assessment.

The Zone-wide average growth in both ELA and Math exceeded that of SBCSC high-needs schools, all SBCSC schools, St. Joseph County charter schools, and all schools in Indiana. All schools and grades showed positive growth in both subject areas, as did all student subgroups (e.g., race, gender, ELL, special education, free or reduced lunch) with the exception of multiracial students in Math. The Zone also achieved higher rates of proficiency in ILEARN in specific areas compared to SBCSC high-needs schools, all SBCSC schools, St. Joseph County charter schools, and/or Indiana schools. For example, Zone students eligible for free or reduced lunch achieved a higher rate of proficiency in Math, than those at SBCSC's high-needs schools.

- Board question:
Could you provide examples of what has changed and led to these results?
 - Increased instructional time in the classrooms, due to decreased time spent managing behavioral issues
 - High expectations are crucial when changing the adult's mindset when teaching, accompanied by professional development (e.g., during Thursday early release).
- Board question:
What is the main difference between Warren's data and the data of other schools?
 - The differences between the scores of iReady vs iLearn. In other schools, iReady is given as an assessment at the beginning of the year and then at the end of the year. In comparison to this, iReady should be adopted as a tool to adjust the learning pathway of the students. Warren has been a great example of how this can be a tool for the student's success.

Dr. Scott-Bradley, of Warren Elementary, explained that IREADY places students on lower pathways based on test results, which often does not reflect a student's ability to learn content beyond their current level (e.g., they may be placed on a grade level below pathway, but are capable of learning content on grade level). At Warren, they ensure that students below grade level are still exposed to both grade level and above grade level material. She also described the implementation of station rotation, which allows teachers to target individual students' particular needs.

Jennifer Roden, Assistant Principal at Navarre, shared that one of the significant challenges last year was the reliance on substitutes due to teacher vacancies. In addition, she shared changes the school has planned as part of its comprehensive needs assessment. As with Warren, Navarre is focusing on high expectations and greater accountability for teachers. In addition, they have a school-wide support team that will push into classrooms as needed to support classroom management and student behavior. The team is purposefully school-wide versus specific to grades or classrooms so that they individually feel responsible for all students in the school. In addition, Navarre has been able to fully staff its Social Workers team, and hire three interventionists that will both push in and pull out students.

The school is also implementing processes and information trackers to better understand and improve patterns of parent calls and classroom observations.

- Board question:
How many observations with feedback are done per year? Are you doing something else different than this?
 - The minimum required per the Teacher Union contract is two formal observations per year. The formal observation process has a pre-observation meeting, which is scheduled for early in semester one. Then the formal observations will start at the end of semester one. A formal meeting will take place at the beginning of semester two, followed by a formal observation in

quarter four. In addition, building administrators will conduct many informal observations as part of their walkthroughs.

- The Zone has the autonomy to use a different teacher evaluation system which is under development and is expected to be implemented this year.

Looking back at the challenges you mentioned, Could you point to two practices that really helped improve overall classroom management?

- Setting common expectations for the entire building and adhering to those school-wide, was important so that students experienced consistency in any class. This process also helped teachers establish the line between supporting a student and respecting the rights of all the other students in the classroom.
- Early release time helped the staff to get on the same page and know how to implement rules and regulations and classroom procedures.

IV. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CONTINUATION OF THE AGREEMENT WITH THE SOUTH BEND EMPOWERMENT ZONE

On August 7th, the SBCSC Board of Trustees voted to extend the Zone through June of 2026. The Zone's Board of Directors voted to ratify this Resolution.

- Motion to ratify the Resolution: Jeff Rea
- Seconded: Stephanie Ball
- Discussion: Board members were pleased with the decision and expressed their support for the South Bend Empowerment Zone's work.
- Approved Unanimously

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

VI. OTHER DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

The board expressed its gratitude to Ashley Northern for her service to the Zone. Under Article 5, Section 2, Paragraph f of the Zone bylaws, the Board voted to remove Ashley Northern from the board.

- Motion to remove: Sam Centellas.
- Seconded: Duane Wilson.
- Discussion: Stephanie Ball asked if there was a reasonable attempt to contact Ashley Northern. Jeff Rea stated he, Sam Centellas, and staff members, tried to reach out to her with no response.
- Approved Unanimously.

VII. FINANCE REPORT

The finance report began with the summary of revenue coming from different funds requisitioned from SBCSC; expenditures are primarily payroll. The report also included the Zone's 501c3 financial position reflecting a healthy balance back in June 2023

- Board Question:
We see a significant surplus for the month in the statement of activity, and we are in a strong cash position. Can you speak more about the timing of funds coming in, and their disbursement?

Our budget is only one million dollars per year, and seeing we are in a good financial position, we will reconcile a good cash balance and make a requisition to SBCSC for just what is needed instead of the full amount for the year.

- Board Question:
 - Did the Resolution change how often the Zone could requisition?
 - Dr. Lewis answered: Outside of the resolution, there is no change of any sort.
- Board Question:
 - Where do the contributions and funds from fundraisings go?
 - Ronda Ross answered: We have made a new line item this year under revenue for contributions.

Overall, the Zone was under budget for the past school year. In budget to actuals, the Zone is still on track for a balance of ESSER funds that can be used for the next school year.

- Motion to approve the financial reports: Ryan Matthys
- Seconded: Duane Wilson
- Discussion: none
- Approved Unanimously

VIII. ZONE CHIEF REPORT

The Zone Chief gave a brief report on staffing: Staff-student ratio is currently 1 to 5.7 students which is a better ratio than the one presented last year. The central office staff is down 54% due to a mandate of cost reduction.

IX. Back to School

The Executive Director of Student Services, Viressa Davis, shared the current enrollment data for the 2023-24 school year. At 1900 students as of August 18th, this is a 12% decrease from the last school year. However, the official count date is on September 15th and numbers typically fluctuate through Labor Day.

Schools recently held student-family orientation events where they presented the code of conduct, parent communications, ways to get involved with the school, and the resource centers.

The Executive Director of Talent Development, Melanie Hackett, shared the first new teacher orientation and professional development, which occurred over two days and included 50 new teachers. Some of the topics discussed were: getting connected, high impact teacher actions, essential computer technology, class management strategies, and pathways to licensure

The Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, Roxana Zapata, spoke about the Level Up: Back to School Staff Event, hosted at Navarre Middle School on August 9th. 73% of the Zone staff attended the optional event, and were welcomed by several board members, Dr. Lewis, and members of the central office, who served breakfast to the attendees. After Dr. Lewis's welcome session where he shared progress the Zone has made, among other topics, staff went into break out sessions on a variety of topics.. The event closed with a session by a guest speaker, Robert Jackson.

X. ADJOURNMENT

- Motion to adjourn: Jeff Rea
- Seconded: Ryan Matthys.
- The board unanimously approved the motion to adjourn at 6:02 pm.