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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE SOUTH BEND EMPOWERMENT ZONE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
10/10/22**

## **MINUTES**

- Meeting Time Start: 6:09 pm
- Meeting Called to Order: Sam Centellas, Board Chair

## **LOCATION**

- SBCSC, 3rd Floor Board/Conference Room

## **QUORUM**

- Attendees:
  - Stephanie Ball
  - Rosa Hiestand
  - Kareemah Fowler
  - Sam Centellas
  - Ashley Northern
  - Ryan Matthys
- Quorum Established (Y/N): Yes

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## **AGENDA ITEMS**

### **I. Approve Agenda**

- A. Motion: Sam Centellas motioned to approve
- B. Second: yes
- C. Discussion: one additional item added to agenda
- D. Outcome: Agenda approved

### **II. Approve Board Meeting Minutes, September 13, 2022**

- A. Motion: Sam Centellas motioned to approve
- B. Second: yes
- C. Discussion: changes/additions requested
- D. Outcome: Minutes approved with recommended edits (add location, add and correct spelling of board members in attendance, note that the quorum was established.

### **III. President's Report**

- A. Board Member, Jasmine Bradley, who served on the board for the last two years has resigned. Thanks was given for her commitment and hard work. She served us well and was engaged in our schools.

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- B. School Reflection: Great to see the momentum and excitement happening around the schools. Loving the social media presence, the great photography which is showing the great activities and ways students and families are engaging in our buildings.

#### IV. Committee Report

- A. Academic Committee Report, Roxana Zapata
1. Shared vision for transforming student outcomes through shifts in the master schedule and professional development priorities.
  2. Master Schedule Shifts: include a focused home room period, learning blocks, and enrichment and club build into the school day.
  3. Professional Development Shifts: Weekly adult learning sessions, Professional Learning Communities, and Leveraging the differentiation in our professional development facilitators
  4. Professional Development Areas of Priority Survey: 25% of staff completed the survey (152 respondents). The top two areas were: #1 Classroom Management/Student Discipline, #2 Unpacking Learning Standards
  5. Board Questions: **Ryan Matthys' Question**: Have you contemplated whether it would be helpful to students and teachers to have either parents or community members come in to facilitate some of thematic opportunities? Is that a possibility? It might give the teachers a break. Roxana Zapata's Response: This is not something that has been put on the table, but I think it is a great idea and something for us to take a look at, at each school.
  6. Board Question: **Stephanie Ball's Question**: You mentioned school leadership and teachers. I was curious as to what role our support staff will have in their professional development. Can you speak a little bit about that? Roxana Zapata's Response: Every group of our educators and staff will be provided professional development opportunities. They might vary for different groups. There will also be opportunities for vertical conversations and professional learning. This can be extremely powerful.

*Research by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences concluded that student achievement can improve by as much as 21 percentile points as a result of teachers' participation in well-designed professional development programs. -Queens University of Charlotte*

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B. Finance Committee Report, Ronda Ross - Executive Director of Business Services & General Counsel

1. Background: Presenting the Zone, 501(c)(3) side of the financials which is little over one million dollars. These funds are used to cover payroll and other operating expenses. The other 36 million is housed with the South Bend School Corporation. We spend down those funds in various ways including purchase orders and reimbursement requests from the Zone 501(c)(3) side. We work with accounting firm Kruggel Lawton to prepare the monthly 501(c)(3) financial statements.
2. Our process under new leadership is that Business Services meets with the Finance Committee of the Board. At this meeting, we presented to Ryan Matthys our bank statement, Statement of Financial Position and Y-T-D Budget to Actual. Ryan is given time to look through the data and ask questions. This will be part of our ongoing process.
3. Presented financials ending September 30, 2022. Most overage on budget to actual report are due to timing of expenses.
4. Our accounting firm was pleased with the ease of closing this month. Some of this is due to the decision to reduce the number of credit cards available for use.
5. Board Comment: Ryan Matthys, Board Finance Chair. When looking at the bulk of the funds, we need to enact programs that can sustain over the long haul. When the Zone funds run out, we don't want to have to pull the plug immediately on a lot of things. I applaud the increased control over credit card use. Good progress overall. We still have some opportunities for analysis of where we are spending dollars and the relative success in return. We are starting to get better accountability and control.
6. Board Comment: Kareemah Fowler. Thank you for taking the time to put this together. We appreciate that. We can follow up on some reconciliation and also transfers if you need to transfer between line items and what that process looks like. At the next board meeting on the district side, we will be doing the overall district transfer from the education to operations budget. Thank you for your presentation and I look forward to continuing to work with you all.
7. Comment: Dr. Davion R. Lewis, Zone Chief. Thank you Ms. Ross. When I came into the role [of Zone Chief], one of the first charges towards me was to increase transparency around finances. Having meetings where we are not just talking about numbers in a theoretical sense but folks

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are also seeing the numbers, I think helps to increase that transparency. I also appreciate you in putting this together because these types of reports did not exist previously. Also, my charge to you is to build our back office so that it is not centered on one individual but that we also have systems in place, so I appreciate you doing all that hard work in the midst of everything else that's going on. I'm looking forward to even more transparency. We will get to a point where not just the Finance Committee but all three of our standing committees will be open for public participation. This is just a part of my overall commitment to accountability and transparency, so appreciate you helping us in taking those initial steps. Great presentation!

8. Vote: Motion: Sam Centellas motioned to approve the Financial Report. Second: yes. All in favor without opposition. Outcome: Financial Report approved.
- C. Governance Report, Dr. Davion R. Lewis, Zone Chief.
  1. Staff from the Indiana Department of Education's Office of School Performance and Transformation will visit Wednesday, October 12, 2022 from 8:30 am - 3:00 pm. Board Members are invited to attend.
  2. The Kickoff for Board Training is the Board Retreat on October 21, 2022 from 9:00 am -2:00 pm. This is to ensure board members are functioning at their highest level. Dr. Lewis presented the Board Training Timeline from September 2022 to April 2023.
  3. S.Ball Question: Please discuss how we are going about filling board member vacancies? Dr. Lewis provided we are using Empower Schools to facilitate the search for board members. Empower Schools will help vet and we are hoping for a vote on any new board members on October 21, 2022. The goal is to secure an odd number, of at least 11 members, so as to not overwhelm the current board members. The maximum number of board members can be discussed at the retreat.
- D. Zone Chief Report, Dr. Lewis
  1. Recognitions
    - i. Recognition of Filipino American Heritage month; proclamation was read aloud and signed by the board president.
    - ii. Recognition of Indigenous People Day; proclamation was read aloud and signed by the board president.
    - iii. National Principals Month- principals in attendance were asked to stand and be recognized. Dr. Lewis expressed gratitude for their hard work and dedication.

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- iv. National Teachers Day- teachers in attendance were also asked to stand and be recognized. Dr. Lewis expressed gratitude and thanks for their hard work.
  - v. National Food Service Week - All food service staff across the 5 Zone schools were recognized.
  - vi. National School Lunch Week & National Custodian Appreciation Day. Dr. Lewis extended a special thank you to these staff.
2. Highlights
- i. Zone Chief highlighted Harrison elementary school, including Yanic McDowell and Principal Lee in their effort in regards to the receipt of a \$20,000 grant from Dick's Sporting Goods Foundation. Dr. Lewis expressed he is intent about bringing more sports and afterschool programs to the Zone. He added after school activities motivated him while he was in school.
  - ii. Yanic McDowell will be new Director of Athletics for Elementary Schools
  - iii. Dr. Lewis recognized the new Director of Student Experience, Amber Davidson.
3. Personnel Report
- i. Personnel movement for September: included 14 new hires and 9 separations.
4. Quarter II Reset: Dr. Lewis provided an overview that this reset is to include: Student Dress Code, Attendance Policy, Parent/Rights and Responsibilities, Homework and Grading, and Safety and Security changes, to name a few. Handbooks are being rolled out as well and are discussed below.
- i. Revised Zone Staff handbook
    1. Presented by Ronda Ross. This handbook applies to the 70 or so employees onboarded by the Zone as a 501(c)(3). Ms. Ross explained the handbook is roughly 70% the same as previously approved by the board; however, Dr. Lewis has added a lot of clarification and fleshed out some key components including: Anti-Harrasment and Anti- Discrimination policies, Harrasment Grievance Procedures, Dispute Resolution, Shared Values and Workplace Commitments, Whistleblower Policy, Updated PTO Policy, Continued Education Assistance, and a Conflict of Interest Policy.

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2. S. Ball requested clarification on whether the new hire probationary period is 30 or 90 days. Dr. Lewis clarified it is in fact 30 days.
  3. S. Ball requested gender neutrality be considered in this handbook instead of “he or she” in the handbook.
  4. S. Ball suggested in the Continued Education section, paragraph 3, to strike the board approval requirement, as this discretion can be left up to the Zone Chief.
  5. Dr. Lewis provided the Continued Education stipend could be revisited and increased in the future.
- ii. The Board President moved to adopt the Zone handbook subject to changes discussed above and adding the table of contents.
    1. Motion: Sam Centellas motioned to approve
    2. Second: Ms. Fowler
    3. Discussion: None.
    4. Outcome: approved.
5. Teacher and School-Based Staff Manual
    - i. Present by Roxana Zapata. Highlights include: Vision for Teaching and Learning; Professional Learning Committees, Instructional Systemes, Assessments and Academic Policies, School Culture and Discipline, School and Classroom Protocol, and Educator Etiquette
    - ii. Discussion
      1. S. Ball asked a question about the Retention Appeals Committee in the handbook. Dr. Lewis explained that this policy refers to a school-based committee decision and he, the Zone Chief, would defer to the committee decision, but will hear parent appeals.
      2. Ms. Ball wanted more information on how the resets will be rolled out and whether the handbook will reflect the changes. Dr. Lewis said the handbook will in fact reflect the changes.
    - iii. Motion
      1. Ryan Matthys moved to approve the adoption of the handbook subject to its alignment with the Student and Family Handbook and a timeline as to when key changes will be adopted.
    - iv. Second: K. Fowler
    - v. Discussion: None.

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- vi. Outcome: approved.
- 6. Student and Family Handbook
  - i. Presented by Viressa Davis, Executive Director of Student Services. Highlights include: Parent Organizations, Family university Nights, Parent Resource Centers, Parent Capacity Building and Parent Volunteerism.
  - ii. Dr. Lewis added a lot of research and planning went into the crafting of this handbook, including: school visits, staff and administration feedback, district input, outside legal counsel review, solicited feedback from DOJ, and (teacher's) union input. In addition the Quarter 2 reset will begin 10/24/22 and will include parent townhalls, clear backpacks and a proposed two sets of uniforms to be provided to each student with an estimated cost of \$28,000 and \$80,000 respectively.
  - iii. S. Ball noted that there is a lot in this new handbook and would like to see some comparison, or baseline to actual data, to gauge whether the proposed changes are impactful. For example In-School Suspension Data from last year to current year. Dr. Lewis replied the data is driving these changes, and the goal is to stabilize the Zone. He provided that the Zone will be able to collect the data, analyze, and present this requested data to the board.
  - iv. S.. Ball wants to be sure the Zone is working in tandem with all its moving parts and is intrigued by the Parent Volunteerism piece in this handbook.. Dr. Lewis replied that meaningful parent participation is important to building parent investment.
  - v. S. Centellas would like an implementation timeline.
  - vi. Dr. Lewis will go back and speak with his team to revise the implementation timeline, including near term and longer term roll out..
  - vii. Ryan Mattys asked that a timeline of parent communication be included.
- 7. Motion
  - i. K. Fowler moved to approve the adoption of the Student and Family handbook. The handbook shall coincide with other handbooks already approved. In addition, a communication timeline shall be presented at the next board meeting, and the full implementation shall be January 2023.
- 8. Second: S. Ball
- 9. Discussion: None.

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10. Outcome: approved.

E. School Level Reports

1. Coquillard, presented by Laura Krieger. L. Krieger presented iReady, Academic Updates, Student Engagement; After School Clubs and Events, Family Engagement, as well as Staff Development and Celebrations.
2. Harrison, presented by Karla Lee. K Lee presented Academic Updates, K12 Lift Partnership, School Culture and Community Engagement events, Family Engagement, and Staff Development. Ms. Darice Austin-Phillips also spoke as to intentionality in the teaching and learning at Harrison and efforts to ensure student growth. Dr. Lewis added there is also a GearUp partnership starting at Harrison as well.
3. Warren, presented by Colleen Derse. C. Derse provided Academic Updates, School Culture and Family/Community Engagement activities, and Staff Development and Celebrations.
4. Wilson, presented by Germaine Smith, Assistant Principal. G. Smith presented Academic Updates including iReady data, School Culture and Engagement, Family Engagement as well as Staff Development and Celebrations.
5. Navarre, presented by Melanie Hackett. M. Hackett presented Academic Highlights, School Culture & Student Engagement, Incident Report Update, School Culture Highlights, Staff Development, Family Engagement, as well as Family Celebrations and Highlights.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Who: Y. Winston. 8th grader at Navarre Middle School
- Address 738 S. McKinley, South Bend, IN.
- Comment: She would like to acknowledge the importance of after school clubs and activities as Dr. Lewis discussed. She believes teachers should be held accountable for their actions and should investigate the whole issue and not just take one side. She is running for student council president and wants to be the voice of her peers to listen to and share their concerns.
  
- Who: Mrs. Winston.
- Address: 738 S. McKinley, South Bend, IN.
- Comment: She remarked on the changing energy at Navarre presently but also remarked on the help that Mr. Solis provided last year. She supports school uniforms and supports clear backpacks, both which she says were

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discussed last year. She believes the immunizations at Harrison via Bowen Center is a great idea. Also, she would like physicals to be more available for student athletes. She supports girls volleyball and wants the sport and the team to be given more respect. She asked about early release Thursdays and would like more detail. Last year, she was part of the Parent Engagement team and was able to engage students. She believes changes need to be planned and shared before the start of school to be successful. She notices there is a breakdown in parent participation from Elementary to Middle School, and parent involvement needs more support.

- Sam Centallas thanked the public participants for their comments.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

- Vote to Adjourn: Sam Centallas moved to adjourn at 8:41 pm.
- Second: Yes
- Meeting Adjournment Time: 8:41 pm.

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