

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SESSION
OF THE SOUTH BEND EMPOWERMENT ZONE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
10/13/23**

MINUTES

- Meeting Time Start: 1:02 pm
- Meeting Called to Order: Sam Centellas, Board President
- Meeting video is available on [Youtube](#)
- Meeting presentation is available on the [Zone website](#)

LOCATION

- Harrison Elementary School

QUORUM

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

SUMMARY

The meeting focused on the importance of social emotional learning and how the Zone is incorporating implementing programs to meet that need among students and their families.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

- Motion to approve agenda: Jeff Rea
- Seconded: Duane Wilson
- Discussion: None
- Approved unanimously

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Motion to approve minutes of September 19 2023 :
- Seconded: Duane Wilson
- Approved unanimously

III. BOARD PRESIDENT REPORT

The Board President extended his gratitude to all the schools for their advocacy about mental health, dyslexia, and bullying, in recognition of the awareness months. He also expressed his excitement for the upcoming celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month on October 17th at the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center at Notre Dame University. Lastly, he thanked all the staff involved in the planning and execution of the current meeting, held at Harrison Elementary School.

IV. FINANCE PRIORITIES

The SBEZ Chief gave a brief overview of the financial and business services status based on 2023-24 enrollment. Based on the October count, enrollment was approximately 1,758 students which reflects a 13% decrease from the last school year. This was consistent with the larger trend across South Bend; SBCSC's enrollment declined by more than 6%. The Zone's decrease is largely due to (1) returning students to their home schools per policy (which SBCSC has not yet implemented), and (2) Warren's impending closure.

The subsequent decrease of funds due to enrollment is driving the Zone's financial priorities and decisions, specifically restaffing, restructuring, and reorganization. Approximately 25 to 35 staff will be reassigned, some positions will be eliminated, and some currently vacant positions will not be filled. These changes will not affect core instructional areas, and the Zone continues to focus on meeting students' needs.

The next priority is changing purchased shared services from SBCSC, to reflect the current enrollment.

Finally, SBCSC/SBEZ and the NEA have reached a Tentative Agreement. Updated enrollment figures were vital for SBEZ to forecast its financial position and effectively participate in collective bargaining regarding salaries and benefits. The SBCSC Board of Trustees is expected to vote on this Tentative Agreement in their November 13th meeting, with the Zone Board to follow in the November 21st meeting.

- Board comment:
Kareemah Fowler, board member, commended the Zone's staff who participated on the process of feedback on the budget, shared services, the teacher agreement, working with South Bend Schools as a partner, but also looking at the future to make sure that the Zone comes up with plans that are necessary not only for one area, but for the entire district.

V. FOCUS TOPICS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Social Emotional Learning Plan

The Executive Director of Student Services presented the Social Emotional Learning Plan, starting with five reasons it is necessary to prioritize student wellness:

- 1) 20% of children are diagnosed with a mental health challenge.
- 2) 37% of children with mental health challenges drop out of school.
- 3) 70% of the children in the juvenile justice system have a mental health challenge.
- 4) Suicide is the third leading cause of death among children ages 8 to 24.
- 5) Children with untreated mental health challenges perform poorly in school.

Social Emotional Learning is based on the CASEL 5 framework, and which consist of:

- 1) Self awareness
- 2) Self Management
- 3) Social awareness
- 4) Relations Skills
- 5) Responsible decision making

The evidence supporting SEL learning suggests that the skills developed increase academic growth/achievement, improve the students well-being, reduce violent behavior and substance abuse, and promote a positive school climate. Research also demonstrates that the adults (teachers, educators, support staff) also felt well-supported, a better classroom environment, improved professional development, among other benefits.

The Zone's comprehensive SEL plan has three key goals within their respective domains:

- 1) Leadership: Implementing the Tier One Second Step Curriculum, which is educator facilitated and includes progress monitoring.
- 2) Learning: Operationalizing the Resource Tracker to ensure the families and students are well supported
- 3) Resources: Operationalizing Parent Resource Centers, to provide information (e.g., applying for benefits) and other assistance..

Board questions:

- What are partnerships that we are either looking for, or how do we help make those connections with organizations who want to do similar work?
 - We want each of our schools to have a partnership with a community organization and make sure they have a list of services and resources. In

addition, the Director of Partnership Development & Athletics works with our schools to identify and connect with community partners that meet their needs..

- What is the difference between the Resource Tracker, the Parent Resource Center, and other supports?
 - The Resource Tracker is a list about available resources for parents, whether it is a service, or any other type of resource. The parents can connect directly with the identified resource providers. We are also working with those organizations to monitor use by Zone parents.

The Parent Resource Center is a room at each school that is a central location that provides a variety of information, services, and assistance. For example, the Resource Centers will also have washers and dryers, take home boxes of food, and other items. We are currently in the process of fully operationalizing each Resource Center.

Parent workshops are focused on giving our parents the tools, and strategies they need to support their children at home. This includes a mixture of topics, ranging from how to use Power School, to others that they may need but are not necessarily requested. For example, the first topic will teach “correction and connection”--how to work with children, especially when they are experiencing emotional dysregulation. Another topic will be on how families who receive Medicaid and Medicare can receive an additional \$125-\$150 per month for utility bills.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

VII. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

The next Board Meeting would be on November 21st at 6pm.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

- Motion to adjourn: Jeff Rea
- Seconded: Ryan Matthys
- Approved: unanimously
- Adjournment: 1:43 pm