

NORTH SIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOL
Board Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2020

Present: Board Members: Jim Brigham, Beth Louis, Kathy Anderson, Michael Carpenter, Crystal Fowler, Ross Woolsey, Tracee Holmes, Ryan Bumb, Ebony Duncan-Shippy, Lamechia Bradford, Tom Hoerr, Byron Francis, Ken Rinderknecht.
School Administrative Staff: Chester Asher, Stella Erundu, Janine Gorrell, Celeste Metcalf, Deb Cottin.
Others: Bill Mendelsohn

4:56pm - Meeting officially called to order at the Grand Center Middle School by Jim Brigham.

Minutes for January 14, 2020 Board meeting were reviewed and approved with one correction - the Capital Campaign contribution commitment from the Kemper Foundation was \$150,000, not \$125,000.

1. Financial Report: Celeste Metcalfe reported North Side is slightly below the 7 month revenue target, but expenditures are also below the budget projected amount. Check registers for December, 2019 and January, 2020 were reviewed and approved with one abstention. Celeste will report back to the Board regarding question about the services provided by Amanda DeBoard. There have been expenses, \$11,561, provided to Essential Network (ENT) to deal with internet issues related to location in some areas on campus. All students will need to be on the internet for MAP testing. Reimbursement for some of the ENT expenses will be made by the eRate Program. The financials for February, 2020 have not yet been distributed.

2. Administrative Report: Chester Asher reported there continues to be a focus on rigor - to improve the complexity of the work being asked of scholars. Asher stated the number of suspensions have been reduced, attributing some of this to actions of Restorative Justice. It was reported that overall North Side has had less than 90% of students with at least 90% attendance. There was discussion of possible discrepancies regarding attendance figures because of including some students in the below 90% attendance figures who have actually left North Side.

Asher reported he is having conversations with individual teachers (20 plus so far) regarding morale issues. He reports it has helped him learn about teachers' concerns, including limited time for student to have lunch and concerns over possible mass layoffs - which is not true, per Asher.

Asher talked about having a staff retreat, with the general response from staff being positive. It is projected it would be in August, and would be overnight.

Regarding the Principal search for the Middle School, there are 25 phone interviews planned, to be narrowed to 5 candidates to be interviewed, with Board members and parents asked to participate with interviewing. There will be need for 8 new teachers in Middle School, and 2 new teachers in the Elementary School.

There was considerable discussion regarding the need and desire to raise the salaries of North Side teachers. The goal is to get all North Side teachers' salaries at least on a par with salaries of teachers in the St. Louis Public School System. Eventually, the hope is to get North Side teacher salaries to exceed SLPS teacher salary schedules, also with the possibility of merit increases for some teachers. Asher has requested authorization for \$150,000 to be budgeted for the 2020-21 school year to allow a 6.2% increase overall in teacher salaries. Discussion was held to assure this would not result in massive increases for some teachers and little or no increases for others. A motion was made, seconded and approved by vote to authorize \$150,000 more to be budgeted and utilized to increase teacher salaries for the next (2020-21) school year.

The goal of being able to better track what happens with our students when they leave North Side was also discussed. This could include building relationships with schools where our students go and improving the ability to communicate with parents and families. It was suggested getting input from other schools as to how they accomplish this would be helpful.

Asher reported he has secured a Facilitator, Matt Homann, CEO of The Filament, for the Board retreat. It is to be on Saturday, March 28, 2020, probably from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Matt Homann's fee is \$3,500.

3. Parent/Community Engagement: Lamechia Bradford and others talked about the March 4 Groundbreaking ceremony. All believe it went very well, especially the presentations of our 2 students/scholars. It was very well received by both guests and parents, and our students were notably attentive and respectful throughout. Both Channel 4 and Channel 5 were present with cameras for media coverage. Post Dispatch and St Louis American representatives were also present.

4. Capital Campaign Report: Ken Rinderknecht related the Capital Campaign is at \$630,000 raised or committed, including over \$100,000 from Board members, all of whom have contributed or committed. Planning for pursuing less than major gifts includes having house parties to promote North Side. Board members will be asked to suggest people

who may attend such parties.

5. Development Report: Deb Cottin reported North Side has been getting some good media coverage, with her thanks going to Common Ground for much of this. She noted the piece in the St. Louis American and the piece on Channel 5 featuring Asher.

The April 3 Magic of Childhood Gala was discussed - how to generate more guests, whether the event would need to be postponed or cancelled due to Coronavirus concerns, what expenses might not be retrievable, etc. There is uncertainty about how people would react either way in light of other events and gatherings being cancelled or postponed. The Gala Committee is meeting again tomorrow.

6. Facilities Report: Kathy Anderson reported the new building construction is a little behind schedule but they will be able to catch up. Kathy reported the construction crew and Mike McClellan, Facilities Manager, have been great. Construction should be completed for the beginning of next school year.

7. Governance Report: Ebony Duncan Shippy reported she and Tom Hoerr will be having a focus group meeting with teachers tomorrow: 1 from ECC, 4 from Elementary School and 2 from the Middle School. The purpose will be to discuss results of the staff surveys and teachers' feelings expressed therein.

There was discussion regarding the importance of a functioning collaboration between the Board and the Executive Director. Kathy, Jim, Tom, Ebony and Asher are to schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss aspects of this. There was also discussion regarding the possibility of teachers leaving North Side, with Asher indicating he has not heard of many teachers thinking of leaving. Asher is planning to present offer letters for the upcoming school year to teachers by this Thursday, March 12, 2020. Teachers will have until March 20, 2020 to respond to their offer letter. Asher will be open to follow-up discussions with the teachers regarding the offer letters.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Rinderknecht, Secretary