

## MEETING NOTES

### Board of Trustees Meeting

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

6:00 pm, Room 114

Members Present: Nina Cohen, Steve Palmer, Bill Henning, David Pabich, Alfonso Perillo, Daniel McCaughey, Christine Wynne,

Members Absent: Michelle Aroko, Janine Matho, Joshua Biber

Staff: Kathy Egmont, Diego Fellows, Sean Gass, Jennifer Lebzelter, Stephanie Callahan, Kim Stanhouse, Brian Cutler

SFC Representatives: Fawaz Abusharkh

Guests: Pintso Lauenstein

#### I. Call to Order:

Nina Cohen called the meeting at 6:10PM  
Nina invited Sean Gass to share the Presentation on Restorative Practices in Upper School – Community Circles  
Brian Cutler and Kim Stanhouse delivered a presentation on restorative practices and how they fit into the classroom today. A large part of this practice focuses on the social and emotional learning environment that students need to be successful. Part of our approach at Salem Academy is to hold Community Circles in grades 9-12. Brian and Kim explained how this practice helps benefit a strong culture in the classrooms and across grade levels. Following an overview, they shared a breakdown of how the Circles are run in a typical Connections. A question and answer session followed. Nina expressed the Board's appreciation for the information.

Nina Cohen introduced Pintso Lauenstein. He formerly worked as Principal at the Taktse School in Skkim, India.

#### II. Public Comment

Fawaz Abusharkh reported on the progress of the Salem Seal of Bi-Literacy. He announced that there will be a community meeting on March 14. He will keep the board posted on where this meeting will be held but everyone is welcome. He also announces that March 2, 2018 is the Muslim International Day of Prayer. Nine congregations will come together at 7PM and groups will take turns discussing their prayers.

#### III. Minutes of the Meeting of January 24, 2018(Vote) Attachment A

The minutes of the January 24 Meeting were approved with corrections. The corrections appeared in the listing of guests in attendance. Nina Cohen requested a motion to approve as amended. The motion was made by Steve Palmer and seconded by Bill Henning. The Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes with correction.

#### IV. Committee Reports

A. Finance

Alfonso Perillo

Attachment D

Alfonso begins by explaining that the committee is working to condense and summarize the report so that it is easier to read by members.

Main Takeaways:

- The adjustment based on tuition revenue came into effect December 30<sup>th</sup>. (Salem Academy is impacted by a tuition that is slightly below budget).
- Salaries remain the largest part of the budget but we remain under budget in this line which hopefully means it won't be impacted as much by revenue loss.
- We took a big hit on fringe benefits and health insurance.
- Facilities used around \$50,000 for painting and other costs at the beginning of the year in addition to consultant fees.
- We have a few months' cash on hand and our current liability to asset ratio is strong.
- The committee will continue to monitor the cash reserves to ensure that it stays at 2-3 months minimum.
- Will continue to work with Central Source to ensure proper accounting.

B. Development Committee Report

Christine Wynne

Christine reported that the Committee is moving quickly to get the Arts Alive! Showcase planned. The date is April 4, 2018 from 5:30-8PM. The theme for Arts Alive this year is "Building Momentum". Dan McCaughey asked if Arts Alive is a fundraiser and she replied that it is. She also gave an update on the Annual Fund. The big news for the month is that we have an anonymous donor who has agreed to match every dollar raised up to \$10,000. With this addition, the new Annual Fund goal is now \$25,000. As part of this new campaign, Christine explained that the Committee has strategized ways to bring this to the attention of our greater community in attempts to get more gifts. She believes that we are entering a new chapter of Salem Academy focused on philanthropic efforts. Bill adds that we shouldn't be afraid to put ourselves out there in regards to fundraising.

C. Governance

Rick Jones

Nina Cohen reported for the Governance Committee. The committee has begun to dig into the bylaws of our Board of Trustees and has been using a checklist provided by DESE to ensure that we are in compliance. She presented a draft of the updates to our bylaws that she hopes will be voted on March 28<sup>th</sup>. The board discussed several of the proposed changes. All changes except the following bring the bylaws to compliance. Salem Academy is proposing the addition of the ability to participate remotely & striking the requirement to have an odd number of board members. Following this discussion Nina explained that we are pushing to recruit new trustees. We are looking to diversify and fill holes with people who fill certain needs of our board. Nina explained the recruitment process and suggested that anyone who has any person they think should be brought for consideration should reach out to Rick, Bill or herself. Lastly, she mentioned that if anyone has any suggestions for proposed changes to the bylaws should reach out to the committee and that on March 24, the Board will be sending some members to the Institute for Trustees in Pingree.

V. Strategic Planning Committee Report

Steve Palmer

Steve Palmer explained that we have a process management team that is overseeing the broad aspects of the planning. He shared that we had a workshop on Friday, February 8 at IDP led by Liz and Josh that provided an outline to staff on the process and allowed them a structured opportunity to discuss. David adds that they did a great job with extracting information from the staff and Christine mentions that it was helpful for the community to feel some ownership for the process. Stephanie, reporting on staff feeling,

felt that the staff enjoyed parts of it, and that they are curious where this will go. She feels that more broadly, staff doesn't really know what a strategic plan is, and would benefit from seeing an example of one. Steve added that there is a write up that will be provided to staff that outlines the three stages of the process. In addition to the PMT, Kathy explained that there will also be a steering committee which will represent the voices of the various stakeholders. So far, she adds, we are at 15-17 people (including five teachers), and we're inviting a few more to join. At this point, Steve reminded us that we are still in the data collection period and that we will regroup on March 16. In addition, he mentions that the level of engagement is great, and that we will continue to push for more responses on the survey. As previously mentioned, the final outcome, will be delivered in June.

#### VI. SFC report

Pam Rochna

Kathy begins by explaining that the SFC is selling Yankee Candle for its last fundraiser of the year. She mentions that Diego will be reaching out to Pam to get the online code. Nina Cohen asks if it is only candles being sold, to which the answer is no. We will be marketing through emails and social media to collect as many sales as possible.

#### VII. Head of School Report Stephanie Callahan & Sean Gass

Stephanie Callahan & Sean Gass provided a written report.

Stephanie reported that the Lower School academic achievement measured by ANet is stable across grades 6-8. Having gone through three testing cycles she is pleased that we are doing better than last year at this same point. She adds that we are still seeing some concerns in 6<sup>th</sup> grade math, but that the cohort that entered this year, came in much lower in proficiency than in the past. Stephanie adds that we have implemented some tutoring as push in/pull out support in that math class. She notes that this only began in the second quarter but that early indications are that it is going over well with the students.

Sean began by explaining the state of the Upper School. He mentioned that we are still seeing some challenges in 9<sup>th</sup> grade and that we are seeing a polarizing math grading spectrum. There are students achieving and some that are struggling but that there are no in-betweens. He mentions that as a school, we are trying many things to provide support including acquiring a tutor. Other grades remain consistent with some increasing risk in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade sliding but, he adds, this trend may be more closely tied with senior slide. On a positive note he mentions that one student got a perfect score on the AP exam. Additionally, we have started an SAT prep course in our college counseling class. He will have more information about college acceptances at the next meeting. All of our seniors have applied and 97% have completed the FAFSA process. Sean concludes by explain that we had a great turnout for the 10<sup>th</sup> grade parent night. He also mentions that students will be participating in the March 14 walkout against gun violence and it is entirely student led.

School Safety: Stephanie reviewed the school safety portion of the written report and broke down the work we are doing as a school to remain a safe and supportive environment for students. She notes that the work we are doing stems from the 2014 policy agreed upon to reduce gun violence and that we are one of the schools who has been involved with safe and supportive strategies from the ground up. She mentions that the next steps for Salem Academy focus on the social and emotional learning guidelines. She adds that DESE is adding explicit guidelines for schools to follow and that we will continue to revise, and tweak our strategies to fit both schools to ensure best practices. A discussion follows about the stressors that are involved in a student's life now and how we can best prepare ourselves to handle the challenges – not only students but teachers as well. Overall, Stephanie remains confident that we are being proactive and that we are using our available resources to ensure proper school safety procedures.

Jennifer Lebzelter adds that the Upper School Play: CLUE is happening on March 16-18 and that everyone should go!

VIII. Executive Director Report

Kathy Egmont provided a written report.

A. Enrollment/Planning

Kathy explained that Senator Lovely will assist with the Lottery picking names for us.

B. Salem – Near Cap Status

At this time, we have received an email from the MCSA that asks if any members of the board would be willing to call legislators on behalf of Charter Schools since many of the laws being proposed are not pro-charter. The hope is that many people will reach out and be a more powerful voice.

C. Technology Needs

We are working to address our wireless network challenges. At present, we can connect everyone but it becomes much slower with many people connected at the same time. We applied to E-Rate, a Federal program to help schools with internet access to see if we can get 50-60% of our internet upgrades paid for.

D. Staffing Needs

We expect 1-3 maternity/paternity leaves.

E. Quarterly Newsletter.

Lots of positive responses from the newsletter from various constituencies.

IX. Vote to Adjourn entertained by Nina Cohen.

So moved by Bill Henning and seconded by Christine Wynne. Voted unanimously.

Meeting Concluded at 8:02PM.