

Salem Academy Charter School

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Monday, December 14th, 2015 at 6:00 pm, Room 124

Members Present: Peter Copelas, , Leslie Tuttle, Amy Slate, , Thomas Monroe, Josh Biber, Nina Cohen, Karen Cady, Ana Nuncio, Connie Burke, Steve Palmer, Paige Nalipinski

Members Absent:

Guests: Sean O'Neil, Stephanie Callahan, Sean Gass, Fawaz Abusharkh, Karen Corbett, Pam Boardway, Erik Sayce

I. Call to Order

The monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Salem Academy Charter School, 45 Congress Street, Salem, Massachusetts was called to order on December 14th, 2015 at 6:10 pm, in Room 124 by Chair, Peter Copelas.

II. Approval of the Minutes

MOTION: The minutes of the November 23rd, 2015 meeting were presented for review. Ana Nuncio made a motion to accept the minutes as written. With the motion seconded by Connie Burke, it was

RESOLVED: to accept the November 23rd, 2015 monthly meeting minutes as written. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Public Comment

Josh Biber thanked Fawaz Abusharkh for joining the TFA committee to talk about what an ideal school should be. It was wonderful using Salem Academy to shed real life experience and examples in this forum.

IV. SFC Report **Pam Boardway**

This year, there are 3 moderators on the SFC and Pam Boardway introduced herself to the Trustees as one of the moderators.

At the last SFC meeting, Drew Betts, the athletic Director at SACS presented and asked the SFC to help fund championship banners for the successful soccer and cross country seasons this past fall.

Sean O'Neil discussed the plans for the gymnasium, and the expansion of an arts wing. Parents are concerned about what is currently offered in terms of art and music. SACS needs to improve the facilities for music and art, and also increase staffing.

Stephanie Callahan also attended the meeting and summarized the PARCC results. She highlighted the high results and high growth at the lower school.

The SFC had conversation around what the SFC should be and how to increase parent involvement. At the next meeting, on January 13th, the SFC will discuss the goals and purpose of the organization.

V. New Business

Physical Restraint Policy

Sean O'Neil explained that now, each school needs to identify a person as Coordinator of the Physical Restraint Policy, and this requires Board approval. The Dean of Students is the appropriate person for this role. The policy has made minor modifications to ensure safety of all students.

MOTION: Leslie Tuttle made a motion to name Chyna Onembo, the Dean of Students, as the Coordinator of the Physical Restraint Policy. With the motion seconded by Nina Cohen, it was:

RESOLVED: to name Chyna Onembo as the Coordinator of the Physical Restraint Policy. The motion carried unanimously.

Board of Trustees

Peter Copelas thanked Connie Burke for her service to the Board for six years. Tonight is her last meeting and he presented her with a copy of the SACS Charter in appreciation of her service.

In addition, the Board is required to vote on the new slate of officers. Peter Copelas is nominated as Board Chair, Leslie Tuttle as Vice Chair, Paige Nalipinski as Secretary, and Thomas Monroe as Treasurer.

MOTION: Connie Burke made a motion to accept the slate of nominees for 2016. With the motion seconded by Karen Cady, it was:

RESOLVED: to accept the proposed slate of nominees: Peter Copelas as Board Chair, Leslie Tuttle as Vice-Chair, Paige Nalipinski as Secretary, and Thomas Monroe as Treasurer. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board needed to vote to re-elect Josh Biber for a second term on the Board of Trustees, and elect Rick Jones for his first term.

MOTION: Nina Cohen made a motion to re-elect Josh Biber for a second term on the Board of Trustees. With the motion seconded by Thomas Monroe, it was:

RESOLVED: to re-elect Josh Biber to a second term. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: Steve Palmer made a motion to elect Rick Jones for a first term on the Board of Trustees. With the motion seconded by Paige Nalipinski, it was:

RESOLVED: to elect Rick Jones to his first term on the Board of Trustees. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board needed to vote to approve the slate of Committee Chairs.

MOTION: Steve Palmer made a motion to approve Committee Chairs for 2016 to include Amy Slate as the Education Committee Chair, Nina Cohen as the Development Committee Chair, Leslie Tuttle as the Facilities Committee Chair, Paige Nalipinski as the Human Resources

Committee Chair, Thomas Monroe as the Finance Committee Chair, and Steve Palmer as the Executive Director Search Committee Chair. With the motion seconded by Connie Burke, it was:

RESOLVED: to accept the slate of Committee Chairs for 2016. The motion carried unanimously.

Finally, it was required that the Board vote separately to approve the Chair of the Trusteeship Committee.

MOTION: Steve Palmer made a motion to approve Paige Nalipinski as Chair of the Trusteeship Committee. With the motion seconded by Leslie Tuttle, it was:

RESOLVED: to approve Paige Nalipinski as Chair of the Trusteeship Committee. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. Head of School Report

Stephanie Callahan and Sean Gass

Sean Gass reported on events in the Upper School. The AP Government teacher, Kimberly Stanhouse, hosted an event called, *We The People*. It is based on a nationwide curriculum created by the Supreme Court Justices. Students give testimony in front of a panel of judges on issues around the Constitution and current issues. A number of attorneys from the community were invited to act as the judges on our panel. The students were challenged and enjoyed the event. It was also very well attended.

The college application season is in full swing. 70 percent of students have submitted applications and students are starting to hear back. Evan Aroko and Luis Barreras have been chosen to receive Posse Scholarships and will join alumnus Herbie Charmont, SACS Class of 2011, at Center College in Kentucky.

SACS kicked off a partnership with Boston University, offering scholarships for our teachers towards a Master of Education degree.

The Upper School has hired a new paraprofessional. And we have hired a new part-time Assistant Dean of Students.

The Spoken Word event is tomorrow night. Poetry Out Loud is a state-wide competition. The Shakespeare monologue competition is followed by the poetry slam. Tomorrow night kicks off this season.

Peter Copelas asked for more information regarding the Boston University Scholarship. Amy Slate responded that the School of Education is now offering classes in the evening for charter school teachers who teach at extended day schools. This is a part-time MA program for 2 years. Boston University is offering a 1/3 scholarship. Applications are being accepted now for fall 2016 classes.

Nina Cohen asked if Salem Academy will offer any assistance. Sean O'Neil replied that we will look at Professional Development budget to try to make small grants available. We will discuss this further.

VII. Executive Director Report

Sean O'Neil

Enrollment

Sean O'Neil reported that we are preparing for the 2016-2017 enrollments. The first Admissions Information Session was held on December. Additional Open Houses are planned for January 20 and February 23. There is typically a good turnout. We will send out our annual mailing to all 5th and 8th graders in the city in January, continue our newspaper ads, host individual visits, and promote admissions on our website and Facebook. We are maintaining our 420 enrollment number, but there continue to be fluctuations. We anticipate a possible 9th grade enrollment.

Steve Palmer asked about the fluctuations in enrollment this year compared with past years. Sean O'Neil replied that in the past we have had students leave for discipline reasons. This year, that hasn't happened. Student behavior is more appropriate this year. Teachers are helping students develop more positive citizenship skills.

Peter Copelas asked if SACS will be able to fill the middle school and 9th grade openings. Sean O'Neil replied that he believes enrollment will remain at 420 throughout the year, up until March 1st.

Human Resources

We have hired a new paraprofessional in the Upper School, and new Front Desk Administrative Assistant. Both hires seem to be very good matches and are going well.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee Chair, Connie Burke

There have been some changes for some software upgrades. The projected year end is fairly accurate.

We had budgeted for a rent reserve - so we are in good shape for the end of the year.

PARRC exams are now available on line. The Lower School needs to order 100 more chrome books to be able to use the computer based option across the school. This way every student has the same, easy access to take tests.

Peter Copelas asked if there is a 1-1 ratio in the upper school. Stephanie Callahan answered that there is a 1:1 ratio in the Upper School but the Chromebooks are assigned specifically to each student. The Upper School students take the computers home with them, carry them like a notebook, and are responsible for loss or damage. The Lower School chrome books stay in the school and are distributed from carts kept in teachers' classrooms. Having a 1-to-1 ratio in the Lower School would allow students to become more comfortable using computers on a daily basis, thus making them even more comfortable on test days.

Nina Cohen asked where the computers will be housed. Stephanie Callahan responded that we have carts for them. Nina Cohen added that she is intrigued by the concept of using technology in classroom.

Peter Copelas added that this will accelerate our move away from netbooks as well.

Connie Burke asked the Board for an approval of this expenditure in the amount of \$25,000. Our budget includes a rental reserve fund that we expect not to use, and so we can transfer \$25,000 from this reserve fund to the capital investments line. The funds exist in the budget; however, we are just moving them to a different expense line.

Paige Nalipinski asked if students do take computers home, are they asked to sign a waiver. Sean Gass replied that students and parents have been asked to sign an agreement to be financially responsible for loss.

MOTION: Steve Palmer made a motion to approve the purchase of new Chrome Books for the lower school in the amount of \$25,000. With the motion seconded by Leslie Tuttle, it was:

RESOLVED: to approve the purchase of new Chrome Books. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Facilities Committee.
Leslie Tuttle, Chair

Leslie Tuttle and Sean O'Neil reported on the latest developments regarding the expansions. SACS is working with attorneys to find out what our position is regarding the prevailing wage requirements. We should have an answer by end of month. Shetland Park is still looking for contractors. In addition, they are looking at constructing the gym on top of the parking garage. We should have more answers by the New Year.

Sean O'Neil explained the option of going forward with the Arts Center in Building 2. The space is available now, although it will take some time to renovate. Currently, we are looking for at least a small theatre space. We would like to consider looking at the gym and arts center as two separate projects so we can start on the Arts Center as soon as possible. Sean O'Neil is already working with Mark Meche to develop some initial plans.

Connie Burke asked if the music program will be housed there. Sean O'Neil replied that ideally the following components would be included: 2 music rooms, 2 arts studios, a dance studio, a health classroom, 2 music practice rooms, and a small theatre.

C. Development committee.
Steve Palmer, Chair

Steve Palmer shared that we have until September 1, 2016 to raise \$40,000 in order to receive the matching funds from the Amelia Peabody Foundation. They will match dollar for dollar.

Nina Cohen added that we hope to reach all of the parents in different ways to help raise funds. Erik Sayce, Director of Communication, has made pledge cards and will identify a list of key donors. We will implement an on-line fundraising option as well.

D. Transition Planning
Steve Palmer, Chair

Steve Palmer will email the search plan for a new Executive Director to all trustees. He asked for comments beginning in January. He is working on assigning dates and responsibilities to the action plan.

IX. Motion to Adjourn

Connie Burke made a motion to adjourn the meeting. With the motion duly seconded by Leslie Tuttle and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.