

**Social Justice Public Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
September 27, 2023**

Board Members Present: Pat Brantley (PB), Tammy Tuck (TT), Neils Ribeiro-Yemofio (NRY)

Board Members Absent: Maia Shanklin Roberts (MSR), Dionne McDonald (DM), Eric Goldstein (EG), Meenakshi Nankani (MN), Aaron Stallworth (AS)

Staff Members Present: Myron Long (ML) Executive Director

Guests Present: Caitlin Campbell-Hahn (CCH), Joel Smith Goering (JSG)

A. Meeting Opening

Roll Call; Establishment of Quorum; Call to Order, Approval of Minutes

TT called the meeting to order at 6:21 pm. Quorum was not established, with 3 board members and 1 staff member present.

Since there was no quorum, TT shared that the board will vote to approve the August 2023 meeting minutes over email.

Other board votes that will need to be conducted over email include the approval of CCH and JSG's board candidacy and election of a board secretary, treasurer and vice chair. NRY has agreed to serve as vice chair but we are looking for volunteers to serve as treasurer or secretary.

B. Activity - Mission Moment

ML invited board members to share a favorite childhood memory. He shared about students' recent use of the school's 3D printer, which is being facilitated by the new Learning Design Lab teacher who has been a great addition to the team.

C. Executive Director Updates

- ML shared that the school is undergoing a brand audit to ensure consistency, which has implications for marketing and recruitment. As a result the school will be moving away from the bold red/black and will be introducing more blue and yellow since most schools in the city use those colors. The output will be an updated brand guide to help ensure that there are consistent images associated with SJS.
- ML shared the following enrollment updates:
 - 122 students will be enrolled by September 28, and the team is continuing to push for more student enrollment before Count Day.

D. Committee Updates

TT transitioned the meeting to committee updates.

- **Finance Committee**

- ML shared that although current enrollment is under the SY23-24 target, we are still projected to end the year with 121 days of cash on hand, which is well above the PCSB threshold. Decreased enrollment led to a decrease of \$302k in revenue and created a \$130-140k negative net income for July-August 2023. ML is going through the budget and reducing expenses.
- Through reducing expenses and the contingency expenses accounted for in the budget, we should be able to break even. ML does not want to dip into cash reserves as we approach developers for long-term facility options; SJS's strong cash position makes the school appealing as a tenant.
- SJS received its first WTU payment.
- The finance committee recently talked about the positions that were included in the SY23-24 budget but are currently vacant:
 - Social Justice Coordinator – intended to help expand SJS's impact by organizing citywide design challenges and coordinating community advocacy efforts.
 - Social worker (full-time)
 - 5th grade special education teacherThe Social Justice Coordinator and full-time social worker positions will not be filled this school year. The 5th grade special education teacher may be a necessary position to fill based on student need, so this expense will remain in the SY23-24 budget.
- TT asked for clarity on the open positions that have not been filled.
- ML shared that it has been difficult to find a full-time social worker. Currently SJS has some master's of social work candidates who are doing art therapy and mindfulness/self-regulation work with students, and there is a rotation of three part-time clinicians who are seeing students.
- CCH shared that Ed Forward DC is funding a fellowship slated to launch in SY24-25 to improve the pipeline of school-based mental clinicians in DC.
- ML added that SJS is partnering with OSSE to get support on crisis management and understand the resources that are available to support students and staff.
- NRY asked if there was any way to leverage federal COVID funding to cover budget shortfalls. ML shared that SJS has used ESSER 2 and ESSER 3 funds, and has extended its use of ESSER funds out as far as possible, but it's not covering the full gap. ML is confident that with some minor changes will help reduce expenses in the current year, and revenue is adequate to cover payroll expenses this year.
- ML shared the following fundraising updates:
 - Submitted application to Junior League of Washington (\$15k) for a grant to support a universal basic income pilot
 - Submitted application to New Leaders (\$10k) for a grant to form a parent activist academy

- OSSE has expanded its Career & Technical Education program for middle school, which would allow for \$100k over two years. OSSE staff seemed excited to read SJS's application, which would involve community organizing as a career pathway. SJS hopes to partner with organizations such as Harriet's Dream and Black Swan Academy in this work.
 - PB agreed that CTE funding can be very flexible.
- TT expressed that she is proud that SJS's fiscal health has been strong, even with under-enrollment.
- School Performance Committee
 - TT shared that the School Performance Committee recently met to provide context on past role of the committee
 - Provide oversight and support for SJS's school performance indicators and goals
 - To provide some thought partnership and support for academic programming and troubleshooting
 - In SY22-23, the committee spent a lot of time thinking about 5-year renewal and pending shifts that PCSB is making to the accountability framework
- CCH and TT shared some additional reflections on the positive gains that SJS saw on PARCC in 2023 compared to 2022, and asked ML to share about why the growth in ELA was so strong compared to math.
 - ML shared that there was a stronger rhythm of interventions and school-wide vision for ELA compared to math last year. For the current school year, we've reaffirmed Zearn and how we will use it, and we'll be using Math 180 for intervention.
 - PB shared that pre-pandemic, reading proficiency was growing faster than math proficiency in DC. SJS and other schools have shown that ELA scores are rebounding more quickly since the pandemic. PB has found that students are 2x more likely to enter the middle school grades proficient in reading vs. math. School schedules and teachers are not well-equipped to provide the level of intervention required when students are missing basic math skills; we've learned how to address this better for reading gaps but not for math. ML responded that this resonates with what he's seen at SJS.
 - PB added that she is trying to organize a DC math summit, on Pi day in March.
 - TT added that teachers also need support with curriculum and how to supplement in a coherent and connected way. Zearn offers this, and the Standards Institute has helpful supports for thinking about math curriculum alignment. SJS benefitted from EL curriculum support last year; is there an equivalent for math?

- ML shared that the school has revised its Wednesday schedule somewhat to allow students to reassess on exit tickets and get support from content teachers.
 - PB shared some other school performance updates: the new standardized assessment is DC will now be called DC CAPE (expected to be the same as PARCC), and PARCC growth scores should be out in the next few weeks. Unlike past years, growth scores will be solely based on DC data instead of including other districts that use PARCC.
- TT and ML shared an overview of the 5-year renewal process:
 - This happens in the school's fifth year of operation (SY24-25) but will be based on data through the school's fourth year of operation (SY23-24). Last year, the committee looked at the 5-year reviews and hearings for Statesmen and DPA in spring 2023. TT suggested that we could approach preparation similarly to the charter application process, with a mock hearing.
 - CCH gave an overview of available supports:
 - The DC Charter Alliance will be offering a mock review process for schools facing an upcoming review, which will use previous year's data to give a sense of how the school would fare against the review criteria.
 - Bellwether Education Partners supported SJS in creating a strategic plan in SY22-23, and is leading a convening in November on strong strategic plan implementation. Board chairs or another board representative are encouraged to attend, and there will be a board self-assessment survey coming to board members soon to support the work at the convening.
 - PB gave advice on making sure that any data analysis in preparation for the review is truly comprehensive, and noted that the 5-year review will be a permanent part of SJS's record.
 - PB and NRY noted that schools can also give feedback to the PCSB as needed on both data, the accompanying narrative, and the school's qualitative site review (QSR).
- Community Engagement Committee
 - NRY shared that this new committee will start meeting next month, with a focus on PCSB engagement, facility engagement, general funding opportunities, and engagement with other key stakeholders such as city council members.
 - ML shared some brief facility updates. The school is almost at the point of submitting a letter of intent for one facility that will be less expensive than its current lease with Rocketship.
 - CCH agreed to support with exploring ideas for pro bono legal representation in lease negotiation.
 - ML has also been exploring other options for longer-term locations.

E. Closing

- TT reminded the group of the opportunities to engage through an officer role (secretary or treasurer) and participation in the November convening with Bellwether, and asked board members to be on the lookout for an email to vote on items discussed tonight as there was not a quorum.
- CCH reminded board members of the upcoming board self-assessment from Bellwether.
- TT adjourned the meeting at 7:40.