



SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: December 16, 2013

Meeting Location: SRFACS Library

Recorded By: Jennifer Jimenez

ATTENDANCE

Pascal Stricher

Jennifer Jimenez

Brian Benefield

Jennifer Schwinn

Gwenaelle Peyret

Cindy Beurtheret

Kathleen Helleskov

Sheila Moore

Jason Davis

Rachel Monarrez: Assistant Superintendent SRCS K-6 Curr. and Instruct.

Kim Agrella: Executive Director Fiscal Services SRCS

Clemence Spita

Nas Salamati

Rochelle Cooper

Emmanuele Benefield

Aurelie Brault

Zeina Stricher

Severin Bernard

Claire Storm

Najine Shariat

Jeff Gospe

Diana Fakih

Natasha O'Keefe

Brauley McNulty

Michelle Gervais

MEETING START

Meeting Schedule Start: 5:00 p.m.

Meeting Scribe: Jennifer Jimenez

Meeting Actual Start: 5:08 p.m.

Meeting Timekeeper: C. Beurtheret

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Some discussion took place about how to condense the minutes for future meetings. B. Benefield made a motion to approve the minutes and seconded. J. Schwinn seconded.



Unanimous approval.

Approval of the Agenda

B. Benefield and P. Stricher reminded the group of the decision made by last year's SAB to limit the public comment to five minutes as well as the decision made about how SAB would address and discuss public comments. It was agreed that this will be the current protocol and that people who come to provide public comment will be informed of this at the beginning of the meeting. Agenda approved with the removal of the action item: Vote on time limits and parameters for public comment.

Public Comment: None

Principal's Report

P. Stricher shared that open houses for new families to learn about SRFACS are continuing. About 17 families attended the last open house. As a result of the recent open houses, several new kindergarten students were registered to begin this year in January, which will bring the school numbers up to last year's projected totals.

In the last SAB meeting several questions regarding the school's district budget arose. It was decided that those questions should be posed to the district and certain budget reports were requested by J. Schwinn to get a better picture of the funding provided for the school through the district budget. K. Agrella, Executive Director for Fiscal Services Santa Rosa City Schools attended this SAB meeting in order to address those questions. She shared copies of the SRFACS budget for years 2012-2016, see attached and explained that SRFACS, along with other charter schools in the district have their own budgets, separate from the General Fund. She mentioned that the district waived the administrative fees (10% of expenditures) that it usually assess charter schools in the school's first year and the district was able to allocate money for reduced class size funding in the first year, which was unexpected based on the timing of the charter approval. She explained some of the reasons for the figures differing from the first year 2012-13 to this year's budget for 2013-2014, which had to do with how the state calculates certain funding streams and how the district has to account for that. The district is charging some administrative fees this year, but not the full amount usually charged to charter schools in the district.

J. Davis asked how many students the budget is based on and K. Agrella responded that it is based on attendance not enrollment and budgets are usually set based on previous year's enrollment numbers. J. Davis asked if there is a possibility to ask for more money for computers, particularly to prepare for the upcoming Smarter Balanced standardized test. K. Agrella responded that a request could be made from SAB in its advisory role to Pascal and the district would take it into consideration but that essentially the school has to work within the



budget it has.

A question was asked about how the school could get more access to funds generated from the income based on student enrollment. K. Agrella responded that the district treats charters the same based on fees, but this school has a better budget than most of the other charter schools. She explained that this has to do with how the district uses discretionary funds and the second year status of SRFACS. She shared that there is also a reserve Common Core fund for charter schools that is approximately \$ 44,000 that should be available once the school board approves plans for the use of the money, possibly by the end of January. Some questions were posed regarding how the money will be allocated for each site. R. Monarrez confirmed that the money can be spent on three areas, professional development, technology, and supplemental materials. She said that the principal will decide with consultation with SAB about how to use the Common Core Funds and how it will align with the District's Common Core Network plan. She also noted that a singular focus on technology and test preparation rather than the subject matter and content goals of Common Core should be considered critically, because the district does not want to take the position or send the message that preparing for the test is all that matters. She did acknowledge that the district is behind in its preparation for implementation of Common Core and Smarter Balanced testing but that a larger issue is that schools in California are underfunded. She also noted that the budgetary needs to fully prepare for the Smarter Balanced testing and Common Core will not be fulfilled by any one funding source and larger political and policy based action must be taken, such as bond measures.

P. Stricher shared that part of the Common Core money will be used for professional development and technology purchases. He shared that he believes SRFACS should be a priority with respect with technology given the age of its computer lab. J. Davis asked how the money will be allocated , evenly across schools or on a case by case basis and asked if the district would take into consideration that SRFACS has grown by over $\frac{1}{3}$ since last year. R. Monarrez shared that the principal will decide with consultation from SAB how to use the Common Core funds, but the school has to be aware that if it decides to go in a different direction with the funds, it will not benefit from the district infrastructure.

J. Schwinn stated that the Foundation and parents are raising money for much of the supplemental budget but that there needs to be a balance between the district responsibilities and the Foundation and parents. Concern was expressed that a district wide assessment of technology should have been done sooner but that it is good it is being done. R. Cooper expressed that the issue regarding Smarter Balanced testing readiness is much bigger than the individual school given the state's rapid implementation timeline. R. Monarrez shared that the district has been assessing technology needs prior to this year and this year is a continuation of that process. She also stated that infrastructure and technology support plans need to be in place and that just purchasing computers is only part of the equation. More questions were posed about how the district calculates the per student funding. P. Stricher expressed



confidence that the school will be ready for the technology needs of Common Core implementation and Smarter Balanced testing. B. Benefield shared that SAB is trying to figure out how to work toward budgetary solutions for areas of need such as technology, under its responsibility of overseeing the school budget as well as determine what the process is for addressing budgetary needs with regard to approaching the district vs. the Foundation. G. Peyret and C. Beurtheret expressed that the teachers are glad to have the IPADs and projectors in their classrooms provided by the district and that all teachers are working on incorporating technology usage in the classroom. Teachers also expressed satisfaction with the funding that they have received from both the school district and the Foundation.

P. Stricher responded that the school has to look at the school budget first for technology needs and then determine a direction. M. Gervais asked who would be involved in this process and expressed that from the Foundation's standpoint the principal and teachers will lead the way in determining budgetary needs with support and consultation from SAB, and then make requests from the Foundation for fundraising. C. Beurtheret added that seeking out a major grant for areas such as technology would be advisable.

N. Shariat expressed that the school's charter as it was perceived by the founders, means that the school should be able to move faster or have more freedom in implementing curriculum which includes more technology. R. Monarrez shared that the Common Core Network is working on technology implementation and moving as fast as possible, but as a dependent charter the school works in partnership with the district. She shared that being a charter means the school has more freedom with its education program, which is dual immersion, but that the district is responsible for bringing all schools in the district up to speed and the process for budgetary approval must be followed with regard to the new Common Core funding. N. Shariat shared that part of the issue is the fact the school's charter was written for an independent charter school, but for budgetary reasons it was changed to a dependent charter and perceptions and expectations have been based on an idea that the school may have more independence. It was concluded that an understanding of the school's relationship with the district with regard to areas such as budget and curriculum implementation is evolving.

A question was posed about what the SAB's role is in approval of curriculum, based on what is written in the school's charter as well as how the district defines the role of a School Advisory Board. It was clarified that all public schools have School Advisory Boards or School Site Councils that are comprised of administrators, faculty, and parent/community representatives. R. Monarrez shared that SAB's role is not to approve curriculum per se, but to advise and consult with the staff and administration. Teachers feel that in some areas, SAB has contributed to a perception that it's role is to dictate how teachers teach and expressed concern about this. Teachers also expressed that they are working very hard to implement Common Core and align it with the French immersion program, but feel excessive parental pressure. B. Benefield explained that the language in the school's charter regarding SAB was



intended to enable SAB to facilitate a balance between the French standards and the California or Common Core standards. R. Monarrez clarified that it sounded like the question is: can SAB advise on how the school's charter is implemented? Her answer was yes, however, curriculum is determined by the Standards, approved by the district's school board and implemented via the school's administration and faculty. She noted that SAB can be involved in long term planning around charter implementation but that it has to be done in the spirit of support and mutual trust. She also shared that as a new school, it takes time to determine roles and responsibilities as well as parameters for involvement for an advisory board such as SAB, but that it is important that the teachers do not feel unrepresented in the process. She recommended considering some team building between all stakeholders. R. Cooper expressed support for SAB's role in long term vision and planning as it relates to charter implementation.

P. Stricher shared that areas of curriculum mentioned in the charter, such as approaching science instruction with a STEM focus will be addressed, but the establishment of a well developed and rigorous dual immersion language program is the first priority. R. Monarrez confirmed that from the district's perspective, the dual immersion program needs work first, but long term planning and vision are important as well. P. Stricher also stressed that the school's charter needs to be clarified with incoming staff and harmonization between the standards of both the French and American systems is essential but that it will take time. He also noted that SRFACS is the only school in the district that has a dedicated science teacher in the upper grades.

P. Stricher shared that he has heard positive feedback from the majority of parents about curriculum and instruction, but that communication can always be improved between teachers and parents. It was expressed that as a charter school there is a higher expectation of parent involvement. It was agreed that perhaps more communication on a bigger level will help, such as informational curriculum meetings for parents. There was discussion that the school is dealing with a tremendous amount of development and long term implementation of all areas of curriculum will be addressed, but time and trust are needed.

B. Benefield asked about the web sites that the district is supposed to provide for teacher/parent communication. Apparently the district does not have the web sites and support for teacher use of the web sites running yet. The district is in the process of hiring a new IT person, so the process has been delayed for all schools. A suggestion was made to include positive news about SAB action items, grants, teachers' collaborative efforts, etc. such as a regular item in La Plume so as to engender more positive awareness of all of the effort being put into the development of the school.

Motion to table the last two agenda items for the next meeting.



Meeting Scheduled End: 8:00 p.m.

Meeting Actual End: 7:55

Next meeting

Next Meeting Location: SRFACS Library

Next Meeting Date: January, 21, 2014

Next Meeting Time: 5 PM