

**STEM Magnet Academy
Local School Council
Regular Meeting Minutes**

January 14, 2015

I. Call to order

Mrs. Langston called to order the regular meeting of the Local School Council for the STEM Magnet Academy at 5:30pm on January 14, 2015, at the STEM Magnet Academy gymnasium.

II. Roll call/Establish Quorum

Mrs. Langston conducted a roll call.

Jeremiah Abiade
Maria Amoruso
Deborah Bonner
Deana Caccavale
Deidra Harper (not present)
Sadika Langston
Jeff McCarter
William O'Neill (arrived at 5:32pm, left at 7:22pm)
Gretchen Brinza
Lindsay McGrane
Zakiya Libby-Williams
Maria McManus

Quorum was established.

III. Review and Approval of Agenda

Dr. Bonner moved to approve the agenda. Mrs. Langston seconded the motion.

Vote: 11 in favor

IV. Review and Approval of December 2, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Mrs. McGrane presented LSC members with copies of minutes from the December 2, 2014 meeting. Mrs. Langston suggested two edits. These edits included removing an agenda amendment for the last meeting and changing a phrase about the 5 Essentials Survey to reflect that it was teachers and not students who took the survey. Mrs. Langston moved that the minutes be approved with the amendments. Mrs. Brinza seconded the motion.

Vote: 11 in favor.

V. Chairperson's Report

- Parent Patrol Thank You – Mrs. Langston thanked parents who volunteer and continue to help with student arrival. Mrs. Langston also thanked the teachers who volunteer their time in the morning to supervise students.
- STEM LSC Weebly Site – Mrs. Langston shared a page that included a proposed addition to the home page of the STEM LSC Weebly site. This addition would include a description of the role of the LSC. Mrs. Amoruso asked that the Weebly website also contain a tab that describes the role of each committee. Mrs. Amoruso felt that this would be helpful for attendees to understand the role of each committee. Ms. McManus said that she felt that it would be important to include minutes from committee meetings on the site. Mrs. Amoruso also asked that the STEM LSC bylaws be included on the website. Mrs. Brinza stated that she would make these changes. Mrs. Langston asked that Ms. McManus email parents when the website has been updated. Mrs. Langston would like for the website to be updated by Friday or early next week.
- PARCC waiver – Illinois Raise Your Hand is continuing to pursue a waiver that would allow CPS students to not take the PARCC assessment this spring.

VI. Principal's Report

- Internal Accounts and Disbursements for November and December were shared. Most checks written were for field trips as well as checks for Scholastic magazines and to Culture Studio for uniforms. Mrs. Amoruso asked if there was any other spending during these months, such as spending for books and supplies. Ms. McManus clarified that money for books and other items comes from the school budget, which is separate from the internal account, which is the school's checking account. Mrs. Amoruso asked if there is a budget meeting planned for the future.
- Budget Transfer - Ms. McManus shared the payroll and non-payroll funds information from the school budget, as she was requesting a transfer of funds. Ms. McManus explained CPS policy with regards to 20th day enrollment. Because STEM's 20th day enrollment was 7 students fewer than projected (due to student transfers), money was withdrawn from the school budget. Ms. McManus was requesting funds be transferred in order to clear a budget deficit that occurred when money was withdrawn due to enrollment on the 20th day. Ms. McManus stated that if Ms. McManus requested to transfer \$10,000 from the Music: Commodities-Supplies budget line, \$15,000 from the Computer Education: Commodities-Supplies budget line, \$1571.60 from the Assessment: Commodities-Supplies budget line, and \$5,000 from the Computer Education: Property-Equipment budget line. In total, this would clear the \$31,571.60 deficit. Mr. Abiade asked how this will impact teaching. Ms. McManus

stated that some of the money (e.g., the Music line) was money that was not going to be used. She also stated that she and Ms. Libby spoke to Ms. Falco to discuss the impact of these transfers and that they made adjustments based on Ms. Falco's projections for her budget needs. Mrs. Brinza asked if moving this money would impact allocations for next year. Ms. McManus stated that the allocations are given strictly based on student enrollment. Mr. Abiade asked what the \$31,571.60 would be used for. Ms. McManus clarified his money will be going back to Chicago Public Schools. Dr. Bonner motioned that these 4 transfers be approved. Mrs. Amoruso seconded the motion.

Vote: 11 in favor

-- Budget Transfer – Ms. McManus requested a budget transfer in the amount of \$3,297.43 from School Recess Support to the Teacher Salary Summer Pay bucket. This allows teachers who do work or attend professional development over the summer to be paid for their time. McManus motioned that the LSC approve the transfer. Mrs. Caccavale seconded the motion.

Vote: 11 in favor

-- Budget Transfer – Ms. McManus requested a budget transfer in the amount of \$984.42 from the School Office Services budget line to the ESP (support staff) Salary Summer Pay bucket. Mr. McCarter motioned that the LSC approve the transfer. Mrs., Amoruso seconded the motion.

Vote: 11 in favor

-- Aramark – Ms. McManus shared that she is increasingly concerned with the quality of service being provided for custodial work through the Aramark company. Ms. McManus stated that she has met with our Aramark Manager, Edgardo Arce and our Facilities Manager, Proferio Ramirez to express her concerns about lack of adequate staffing for our school. Ms. McManus shared that her next steps will involve reaching out to Patricia Taylor, who heads CPS Facilities. Mr. McCarter asked if it would be helpful to parents to make calls to express their concerns. Mr. Abiade asked if changing the work hours of the existing staff would be a possible solution until a more permanent solution can be found. Ms. McManus stated that the current hours of the custodial staff reflect the fact that a staff member needs to be available in the morning to open the building.

-- Facilities walk through – Mr. Dispensa has not gotten back to Ms. McManus

regarding the walk through.

-- Christmas Cheer – STEM received a thank you note from Friendship Baptist Church for our participation in the Christmas Cheer Program.

-- SQRP – Ms. McManus shared the current SQRP data for STEM. Based on NWEA MAP Growth Indicators, Priority Groups, Attainment Indicators, and Other Indicators, STEM received a 1+ rating, which is the highest ranking a school can receive. STEM also received a score of 4.6 out of a possible 5 points. Ms. McManus shared that with the exception of the 5 Essentials survey data, STEM falls in the very good or good categories for all indicators. Mr. McCarter stated that this is really impressive data and encourage the school community to look at the My Voice, My School survey data to continue to improve and be all green. Mrs. Amoruso stated that this rating represented a positive reflection of hard work by students, parents, teachers, and Ms. McManus pushing everyone to do their best. Ms. Amoruso asked about the gap between the growth in some priority groups and the school as a whole. Mrs. Amoruso asked how we use those numbers to target students for more support. Ms. McManus shared that we push for all students to meet their targets and that as we continue to differentiate instruction, those numbers will go up as all students are moving towards meeting their growth targets. Mrs. Langston asked if the 71st percentile/87th percentile numbers are concerning. Ms. McManus shared that her areas of concern are light green areas – specifically all students meeting/exceeding their growth targets (66.2% in 2013-2014) and 50% of students making sufficient annual progress on ACCESS (for English language learners). Ms. McManus shared that the goal for STEM is for 80% of students to meet their growth targets or make sufficient annual progress on ACCESS. Mr. Abiade asked how weights were assigned to each of the indicators. Ms. McManus stated that the CPS Office of Assessment sets the weights for each indicator.

-- Teacher Professional Development – Ms. McManus shared documentation of teacher professional development in order to address 5 Essentials data discussed at the previous meeting, specifically the statement that the principal was not invested in professional development for staff members. Ms. McManus provided information about professional development attended by teachers from 2012-2014. PD for teachers – 3 different stacks. List of PDs teachers attended in 2012, 2013, and 2014. In all, In total, funds from the school budget have supported professional development for 31 staff members at 13 conferences. Funds have been used to pay for registration, accommodations, and travel. These conferences and professional developments have been aimed at a variety of subject areas. In addition, the entire staff has participated in team building at Irons Oaks twice.

-- Teacher Concerns - Ms. McManus shared the results of two meetings she conducted with staff members to discuss the areas of concern from the 5 Essentials survey. 25/27 teachers attended these meetings. Ms. McManus shared concerns that teachers had shared during these meetings. Ms. McManus highlighted parent-teacher issues identified in the 5 Essentials survey and asked how can we build teacher-parents and administration-parents relationships. Mrs. Langston expressed her concern that parents and teachers resolve issues and concerns in a productive manner that will lead to positive outcomes and good relationships. Mr. McCarter thanked Ms. McManus for having the meeting and asked what the reception was from the teachers. Mr. McCarter also stated that he felt it was important not discourage communication amongst interested parties. Mrs. McGrane and Ms. Lohitsa shared that they felt like the staff meetings were a step in the right direction, but there was still more work to be done in building relationships among staff. Mrs. Amoruso asked about how this work on improving the culture and the climate will proceed. Ms. McManus shared that the will be Meeting with the staff January 28th to move forward. Mr. Abiade suggested that there be a mechanism by which teachers could provide anonymous feedback.

-- 6th Graders will be taking 5 Essentials survey this year.

-- LSC Advisory Board – Application available to run for the CPS LSC Advisory Board.

-- Mrs. Amoruso asked about parent section of 5 Essentials survey. Ms. McManus shared that schools need 50% or more of their parents to respond to the survey in order to receive the data. Thus far, STEM has not had 50% or more of the parents respond to the survey. LSC members discussed how this number could be increased and encouraging parents to take the survey at report card pick up. Mrs. Amoruso asked that the survey be sent out electronically in addition to the survey being distributed at report card pick-up.

-- LSC manuals available for LSC members.

VII. Public Participation

-- Mrs. Lopez shared that initially she had negative feelings about STEM. Initially she felt that there was more of a focus on policy rather than success of her student. She felt that a conversation with Ms. McManus and the teacher resolved the issue.

-- Mrs. Marolda shared that when she hears gossip on the playground she makes a conscious decision to remove herself from the situation. Mrs. Marolda expressed a concern about hearing gossip from staff about other parents.

-- Mrs. Caccavale – Asked to clarify the email policy at STEM. STEM teachers should respond to parent emails within 24 hours, excluding weekends. Teachers also

do not respond to emails outside of the hours of 7am-6pm.

-- Mrs. Haddad felt that it was really disheartening to hear what she has heard today, and hopes the comments and actions of a few parents aren't seen as a reflection of the parents as a whole. Mrs. Haddad expressed a concern about communication and stated that parents begin to speculate when they haven't received communication.

-- Mrs. Gulley expressed the need for all parties in the STEM community to be accountability partners and hold each other accountable for not engaging in gossip. Mrs. Gulley also clarified that sometimes teachers are encouraged to not respond via email, but to have an in-person conversation to mitigate misunderstandings.

-- Mrs. Amoruso expressed a desire to see increased communication. Mrs. Amoruso feels that we can work on building community by communicating events like basketball games, cross country, and poms on STEM website. Mrs. Amoruso asked if it would be possible to update the STEM website and suggested that the LSC develop a communication committee to help be in charge of that communication. Ms. McManus would approve have final approval of communications to be disseminated. Mrs. Amoruso suggested that a communication committee be part of the agenda for the next meeting.

-- Mrs. Haddad suggested a weekly newsletter to be created by a STEM Communication Committee made up of parents.

VIII. Old Business

-- Principal Selection Training (on-site) –Mrs. Langston moved to conduct the in-person Principal Selection Training module on January 26 from 4-6pm at STEM. Dr. O'Neill seconded the motion. Mrs. Amoruso asked if it would be possible to do a doodle poll in future to select meeting times. Ms. McManus shared that Mr. Pittman will schedule the Budget Training module session at the January 26th training. There was a brief discussion about the Principal Selection Committee members. Mr. Abiade asked Mrs. Langston about her vision for the Principal Selection committee. Mrs. Langston stated that she envisioned the LSC being the "selection committee" and noted that at the December meeting, the LSC voted against including non-LSC members as official selection committee member. Mrs. Langston stated that the LSC does have the option to solicit and gather their feedback as part of the process. Mr. McCarter suggested that we revisit this discussion, if necessary, following the in-person training on Principal Selection.

-- Budget Training (onsite) - TBD

IX. Committee reports and updates

-- Facilities – Mr. McCarter shared that at the Facilities Committee's last meeting on December 10th, the committee had a productive conversation about the facilities

situation. Ms. McManus has outlined priorities for ancillary rooms currently being used in the building. The committee is also investigating and considering adopting space utilization software. The committee also discussed external possibilities including creating a middle school or even expansion to high school. Mr. Dispensa from CPS has received priority form from Ms. McManus. Mr. McCarter reiterated that he or a member of facilities committee would be happy to attend the facilities walk through when it is scheduled.

-- Bylaws – Mrs. Amoruso sent bylaws to Mr. Villa Senior. Action items are highlighted in yellow and a tract copy of bylaws sent today. Mrs. Amoruso stated that the committee will need to review the section of the bylaws that states that LSC committees are open to non-LSC members, specifically in relation to the Principal Selection committee.

-- Budget – No report.

-- Friends of STEM organization – Mr. Christians spoke on behalf of Mr. Benton. The FOS Gala will be held on Friday, April 17th at St. Ignatius. Donations of food and drink will be beneficial in making the Gala profitable. Ms. McManus inquired about how the date for the gala was selected as there was no conversation with her regarding the date chosen. Committee members responded that the date was chosen based on availability at St. Ignatius. Mrs. Marolda asked if there was a conflict and Ms. McManus stated that that date presents is a conflict for her because she will be attending a conference. The FOS Annual Appeal will continue through February 15th. The FOS is also promoting a “Ten for Friends” initiative, suggesting that if everyone agrees to reach out to 10 people to ask them to donate to the Annual Appeal, the number of donations would be significantly impacted. The FOS is requesting Ms. McManus’s assistance in sending out a reminder note about Annual Appeal. Mrs. Langston asked how annual appeal has been going. Mrs. Marolda stated that donations are not as strong this year as they were last year.

-- CIWP – No report

X. Public Participation

-- Mrs. Marolda stated that she would like to be part of the budget committee when that committee begins meeting.

XI. CIWP/Budget Amendments (optional)

XII. Closed Session (optional)

XIII. Announcements

-- Next Regular Meeting date Tuesday, February 3, 2015 at 5:30pm in the STEM Gym.

XIV. Adjournment

Mrs. Langston moves to adjourn the meeting at 7:32pm. Mrs. Amoruso seconded the

motion.

Vote: 10 in favor.

Minutes submitted by: Lindsay McGrane