

Sussex Academy
Executive Board of Directors Virtual Meeting Minutes
April 22, 2020

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Martin Cosgrove, Board President, called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

Board Members Present: Martin Cosgrove, Lauren Wisely, Heather Applegate, Precious Benson, Steve Burke, Uday Jani, Lance Manlove, Sara Messina, Chris Moody, Darlene O'Neill, Chris Schell, Jen Scott, Denise Wells

Staff Present: Eric M. Anderson, Head of School, Tom Peet, Dean of STEM, Janet Owens, Dean of Humanities, Franny Silcott, Director of Human Resources, Duncan Smith, Chief Operating Officer, Andrea Rogers, Board Secretary (joined at 3:34 p.m), Gina Derrickson, Director of Development

Visitors: Jennifer Couch (faculty), Art Doakes (faculty), Maria Edgerton (staff), Mindy Hete (faculty), Jennifer Leonard (faculty), Mike Marotta (faculty), Maureen McLaughlin (faculty), Stephanie Sherman (faculty)

Martin Cosgrove offered congratulations to Eric M. Anderson and all staff that assisted with the major charter modification.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Denise Wells to accept the minutes of the March 25, 2020 Executive Board meeting. Lauren Wisely seconded; the motion carried. The motion passed unanimously (13-0).

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS' REPORT

Eric Anderson reported:

Eric Anderson participates in a weekly update call with the Delaware Department of Education. Secretary of Education, Dr. Susan Bunting, is Sussex Academy's contact for the weekly updates.

The Remote Learning Plan was presented to the Board. The plan includes information about the online learning schedule, live Zoom classes, faculty office hours, homeroom and emotional check-ins, work study groups and grade 6-8 exploratory classes. The plan also outlines educator and student expectations during the virtual learning process and the support system that is being provided for special education students.

The Sussex Academy school calendar will not be extended for the 2019-2020 school year.

Eric Anderson hosted a virtual town hall meeting with both middle school and high school parents to discuss virtual learning and the grading process for marking period 4.

To revitalize the Sussex Academy Parent Teacher Organization, the club will become a member of the Parent Teachers Association (PTA). A PTA will provide Sussex Academy with support, advocacy, training and membership assistance. A virtual town hall with elementary school families and a second one with middle and high school families will be held at a later date to provide information and obtain memberships.

On Friday, April 24 Sussex Academy will participate in the DIAA's Friday Night Lights. The school will turn on the athletic field lights at 8pm to support the spring athletes.

Sussex Academy has partnered with the Brandywine Valley SPCA. They will be using the school parking lot on April 23 for a drive-thru food pantry for pets.

Sussex Academy
Executive Board Meeting
April 22, 2020

IB teachers have been working to complete the additional work requests that must be done as a result of the IB testing being cancelled for this year. Jennifer Leonard and Debbie Fees held a town hall meeting with parents to address questions and concerns about 2020 IB courses and cancelled tests.

AP teachers have been working with College Board to provide modified AP testing.

MONTHLY BOARD FINANCIAL REPORT

Steve Burke and Duncan Smith reported:

A motion was made by Lance Manlove to approve the March 31, 2020 Financial Reports as presented. Precious Benson seconded; the motion carried. The motion passed unanimously (13-0).

The SY 2020-2021 budget will be presented for approval at the April 2020 Board meeting.

SUSSEX ACADEMY FOUNDATION UPDATE

Steve Burke reported that Eric Anderson attended the April Sussex Academy Foundation Board meeting to provide an update on the elementary school lottery and staffing.

The Sussex Academy Foundation has financially committed funding for the purchase of The Jefferson School property, the renovation of a high school science lab and the summer college tour (should that occur). The Foundation will also provide two scholarships for a graduating male and female from the Class of 2020.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive/Nominating/Succession

No report was presented.

Finance

No report was presented.

Outreach

Written report was presented.

Building & Grounds

No report was presented.

Governance (Policy & Legislative)

No report was presented.

Ad Hoc Grant Research

No report was presented.

Ad Hoc Director Evaluation Committee

No report presented.

Ad Hoc Student Welfare Committee

No report was presented.

OLD BUSINESS

K – 12 Update

Eric Anderson reported:

Work is going to be done on the current Jefferson School to align it with Sussex Academy branding.

There has been a delay in the elementary school lottery verification. The delay is due to schools being closed and parents not being able to register students in their district schools and obtain a student identification number. Andrea Rogers has been working with Data Services and the results will be released by 3pm on April 24, 2020. There were over 840 applicants and 240 will be accepted.

Duncan Smith reported that he and Connie Hendricks (future Sussex Academy Dean of Elementary School) have completed an elementary school staffing plan. They have received over 90 applications for the elementary school positions and are currently pre-screening the applicants. They will conduct virtual interviews and hope to have elementary school faculty and staff hired by the end of May.

Special Interest Preference-Grades 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11

Eric Anderson reported that the special preference interest for grades 7-11 will occur if there are seats available in those grades. Availability will be determined once the elementary school lottery is complete and sibling preference has been addressed.

COVID 19

Eric Anderson reported that Governor Carney has not made any changes and school is still scheduled to resume on May 18.

Upcoming Board Vacancies

Jen Scott reported that there would be three Board vacancies: Jen Scott, Chris Moody and Denise Wells. Chris Moody announced that he has interest in remaining on the Board for one more year. Board applications are available on the school website and Facebook page.

Tuition Reimbursement

Jen Scott reported that Sussex Academy did not complete the tuition reimbursement policy. Duncan Smith suggested \$15,000 per year to be used to reimburse for the cost of up to two 3-credit courses at the University of Delaware rate. Distribution would be provided two times per year with Eric Anderson approving the distribution requests. Should additional funds remain after the second distribution, they may be used to reimburse for a third course. Remaining funds would not carry over to the next year. Eric Anderson is to report to Duncan Smith and Steve Burke who has requested tuition reimbursement for the 2019-2020 school year.

NEW BUSINESS

Graduation and Postponed School Functions

The Board agreed to postpone the May 29, 2020 commencement. Once a government decision has been made about the shut down, Eric Anderson will work on plans to re-schedule commencement and other postponed senior activities. He will provide the plan to the Board during the May meeting.

Pool Deck Update

Lance Manlove reported that pool deck work will be completed by the beginning of May.

2020-2021 School Calendar

Eric Anderson presented the proposed 2020-2021 school calendar. Lance Manlove made a motion to approve the 2020-2021 school calendar as presented. Denise Wells questioned why the start/end times of the school day were not included. Eric Anderson reported that they would be added once a decision has been made about the elementary school schedule. Chris Schell seconded; the motion carried. The motion passed unanimously (13-0)

Jen Scott reminded the Board members to submit their \$200 for the senior scholarships.

Andrea Rogers reported that only 8 of the school's current 128 eighth graders are not returning for grade 9.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 4:56 p.m. Martin Cosgrove announced that the Executive Board would be going into Executive Session and would not return to the public session.

ADJOURNMENT

Martin Cosgrove made a motion at 4:56 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. Uday Jani seconded; the motion carried. The motion passed unanimously (13-0).

Respectfully submitted,

Gina Derrickson, Director of Development