**Sussex AcademyExecutive Board of Directors Virtual Meeting Minutes**

**January 19, 2022**

# CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALLChris Moody, Board President, called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

*Board Members Present:* Chris Moody, Patches Hill, Steve Burke, Brittany Burslem, Jennifer Donahue, Uday Jani,

Lance Manlove, Sara Messina, Darlene O’Neill, Chris Schell, Jennifer Scott, Lauren Wisely

*Board Members Absent:* Precious Benson

*Staff Present:* Eric M. Anderson, Head of School, Franny Silcott, Director of Human Resources, Duncan Smith, Chief Operating Officer, and Gina Derrickson, Director of Communications

*Visitors:*

Heather Manlove (parent), Matt Oliver (parent), and Rita Williams (parent)

Grace Brubacker (parent) joined at 5:02pm

Sam Brubacker (student) joined at 5:05pm

# APPROVAL OF MINUTES

# A motion was made by Steve Burke to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2021 Executive Board meeting. Jennifer Donahue seconded; the motion carried. The motion passed unanimously (12-0).

# PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments were read during New Business.

**HEAD OF SCHOOL REPORT**

*Eric Anderson reported:*

The Junior Class Ring Ceremony was held on December 8, 2021.

Winter break was extended by one week due to the high number of faculty out due to COVID 19.

Last week, Dr. Mark Holodick was confirmed as the new Delaware Secretary of Education following the retirement of Dr. Susan Bunting. Dr. Holodick met with individual school leaders on January 18, 2022.

Sussex Academy will be a pilot school for the new teacher evaluation system project for the 2022-2023 school year. All Delaware schools will begin using the program for the 2023-2024 school year.

Sussex Academy received 190 responses to the strategic plan survey. The school performance committee met on January 18 to review the data. Those who responded that they would like to serve on a committee will receive an invitation to the first committee meeting.

The State of Sussex Academy will be held virtually at 6:30pm on Wednesday, February 9, 2022. The strategic planning kick off meeting will be held immediately following at 7pm.

The school choice lottery will be held on January 20, 2022. This year Sussex Academy received a record number of applicants with the majority of applications being for kindergarten, grade 6, and grade 9.

Sussex Academy juniors will sit for the SAT on March 23, 2022. This test is used for both college admission and the Delaware State Assessment. Mr. Anderson is offering free SAT preparation math classes to all juniors.

A student directed performance of *Clue* will be held on January 20, 21, and 22 beginning at 7pm each night.

Sussex Academy Counselor Update

*As requested by the Board, Eric Anderson reported:*

Stacey Alinkoff was hired in mid-August. Alinkoff is working with students in grades 6-8.

Dr. Sherry Macbury assisted the seniors with college preparation during Sussex Academy’s search for a new high school counselor. Macbury provided senior group sessions, one on one meetings and helped with scheduling.

Kim Henry, a supporting counselor supported by a grant, started on October 26. Henry is being mentored by Crystal Little and is working with students in grades 9-10.

Crystal Little, academic counselor, started on November 17. Little’s focus is on 11th and 12th graders. She is currently completing one on one meetings with seniors.

Little is working to create a comprehensive college and career program for students in grades 8-12. She currently has a college planning meeting scheduled for Sussex Academy juniors as well as college process and financial aid meetings scheduled for the parents/guardians of the 11th graders.

This report will be sent to Board members. A communication to all Sussex Academy families will also be sent.

Grading Practices

*As requested by the Board, Eric Anderson reported:*

Last year it was decided that Sussex Academy would develop more consistent practices across the board as it related to grading practices in the classroom.  In February 2021, focus groups by school level (elementary, middle, and high) were held and every instructional faculty member participated in one of the three groups.  The findings from those group meetings were compiled and all faculty were invited to join the grading committee.  22 faculty members representing the K-12 community served on the grading committee, attending several meetings and breaking up into subgroups based on grade bands to do work.  An organizational statement on grading, based on the data from the focus groups was shared with faculty members not on the committee to finalize the statement.  Each group (using the most recent and up-to-date research in the field) submitted final recommendations and the data was synthesized to come up with a guiding document on grading practices that teachers use as acceptable parameters in developing grading practices for their classroom. These practices were created as an internal document leaving the responsibility for each teacher to provide a class grading policy to students.

There was discussion about teachers and their implementation of the new policy. Mr. Anderson answered all questions and asked that those with individual questions about their student contact him directly. The grading policy will be discussed with during the February 9 State of Sussex Academy.

**MONTHLY BOARD FINANCIAL REPORT**

*Duncan Smith reported:*

***Monthly Financial Reports***

A motion was made by Patches Hill to approve the November 30, 2021 Financial Report as presented. Steve Burke seconded; the motion carried. The motion passed unanimously (12-0).

A motion was made by Chris Schell to approve the December 31, 2021 Financial Report as presented. Steve Burked seconded; the motion carried. The motion passed unanimously (12-0)

**SUSSEX ACADEMY FOUNDATION UPDATE**

No report presented.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Executive/Nominating/Succession**

No report presented.

**Finance**

Under Finance Report.

**Outreach**

No report presented.

**Building & Grounds**

No report presented.

**Governance (Policy & Legislative)**

Jennifer Scott reported that the committee will meet prior to the February Board meeting to begin work on by-laws and policies. Those wishing to serve on this committee were asked to contact Jennifer Scott.

**School Performance Committee**

Under Head of School Report.

**OLD BUSINESS**

COVID 19 Update

*Eric Anderson reported:*

On January 14 over 100 faculty, staff and students from both campuses were tested. There was one student who tested positive and that student had not been in school. Sussex Academy did have almost 200 students and faculty out with exposure or positives.

Sussex Academy is starting to see some tracing in school.

On December 31, 2021 the State of Delaware extended COVID 19 leave for approval until June 30, 2022.

The State of Delaware will be distributing K95 masks to schools.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Date for February 2022 Board meeting

There was discussion about moving the February 2022 meeting date as Eric Anderson will be traveling as a chaperone for the Class of 2022 Senior Trip to Disney World. Discussion included timing between February and March meeting dates should the February meeting date be changed.

Jennifer Scott made a motion to change the February 2022 Board meeting date from February 16 to February 23 and to change the March 2022 Board meeting date from March 16 to March 23. Lauren Wisely seconded; the motion carried. The motion passed unanimously (12-0)

Grace Brubacker, meeting guest and SA parent, entered the meeting after the public comment timing. Board President, Chris Moody, provided her an opportunity to speak during the New Business portion of the meeting. Mrs. Brubacker read a statement regarding the availability of virtual classes.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 5:27p.m. Chris Moody announced that the Executive Board would be going into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters and would not return to the public session. Jennifer Donahue made a motion to move to Executive Session. Uday Jani seconded; the motion carried. The motion passed unanimously (12-0).

Respectfully submitted,

Gina Derrickson, Director of Development