



Segue Institute for Learning

Where ALL Students are "AT PROMISE"

325 Cowden Street – Central Falls, RI – 02863

Phone – (401) 721-0964 * Fax – (401) 721-0984 * Website – SegueIFL.org

Angelo Garcia – Founder/Head of School

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 13, 2014

5:30 – 7:00 PM

Call to Order

Mr. Cohen called the meeting to order at 5:42 p.m. and established there was quorum.

Roll Call

Mr. Cohen called each board member, the following members were present:

Jesse Cohen, Tabitha Elefsiades, Maggie Rivera, Lauren Schechtman, James Setaro, and Jeffrey Wentzell. Segue staff present were: Angelo Garcia, Ann Manocchio, Amanda Larner, Mary Ackerman, Melissa Lourenco and Grace Rivera. Additionally, we had a Segue parent present: Mrs. Michele Figuiera.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes for December 2, 2013 will be submitted for approval and vote at the February 10 meeting along with the minutes from the current meeting.

Reports and Presentations

- **Head of School**

Academics – During December, Segue students had another round of STAR testing. Teaching staff have used the information from testing to make decisions in classroom instruction. Students also continue to self-monitor their progress as they see their own growth from one test to another. Furthermore, students ended December with a 96 percent of completion in their portfolios. Four students had to come over the holiday break to complete reflections and assignments with the help of staff. Students also continue to take part in innovative interventions such as Power Hour, Food for Thought, and Weekend Warriors) were they receive extra help with the assistance of staff. These interventions occur during the school week, after school and on Saturdays here at Segue.

Student Life – In December, students participated in Segue's Fourth Annual Showcase. The event was very successful with an attendance of about 200 people. Students were able to perform songs, dances, magic tricks and play musical instruments.

Segue's Square Mile Chorus performed three times during December. Performances were at the State House, a local church and at Segue during its Arts Night. In sports, students (boys and girls) had their basketball practices. Boys had two games, while the girls had none. Students also had the opportunity to participate in several service learning projects which included a canned food drive, Central Falls Tree Lighting Ceremony and volunteer in several local schools during Friday afternoons.

Scholars also continue to participate on the second round of after school programs. Programs include Theater, Keyboarding, Photo Shop, Fashionistas, Basketball, Yearbook and Chorus. Staff is in the process of preparing programs for the next quarter. Students and staff alike continue to take part in Advisory activities throughout the school week for 30 minutes each day. Staff works with students in team building activities and strategies in small groups. These advisories are grouped by grade. Discussions range from bullying to values clarification. Lastly, several scheduled high school visits for our 8th grade cohort had to be re-scheduled due to the holiday season and the weather. Among the high schools that scholars would visit are Blackstone Valley Prep and the RI Nurses Middle College Institute.

Parental Involvement – During December, the RI Regional Adult Learning (RIRAL) continue to offer ESL classes to Segue parents who have expressed interest in learning basic English and Literacy skills. Parents also were able to



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participate in Segue's annual "Brains and Beauty" Night where local hairdressers and cosmetologists came to Segue to do make-overs while wellness and parenting mini-workshops were offered as well. Parents also continue to volunteer at the school either offering office support or assisting with outreach activities for next year and beyond.

Segue Staff – Evaluating tools have been finalized and the first round of teacher and staff evaluations have been implemented during December and planned for the start of January. Teaching staff will be evaluated by Mrs. Lourenco, Mrs. Boule while Mr. Garcia will evaluate non-teaching lead staff. Segue staff celebrated another great holiday celebration with a Secret Santa and an evening dinner and dancing. This is a great event to show staff appreciation. Board members and their spouses joined the staff as well. Lastly, Segue staff is preparing to attend the Rhode Island Middle Level Educator's Conference in mid-January. Several Segue staff will be presenting and attending the conference.

School Community – On December 19, Segue had its Whole Child Award Ceremony where our school was named the title school for the 2013-2014 academic year. The ceremony had several presentations, speakers and musical arrangements. The event also had a great turn out and press. Segue administration and board members attended December's RI Board of Education meeting where the Commissioner of Education announced that she was removing the conditions of our school's renewal for a 5 year charter.

Building Issues – Administration is currently working with Mr. Rory Marty, a representative from Automatic Temperature Control (ATC) to have the outside unit up and running. There has been a considerable amount of miscommunication with this vendor. Administration is also working with RI Lead regarding the painting and abatement for both Segue buildings. Two bids were offered (one high, one low) deciding to go with the lower bid, administration had a hard time contacting this vendor. Communication with Dome Construction has been attempted several times to address roof repair issues without much success. Segue building continues to be utilized by outside entities such as the Crusaders, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and other public entities.

- **Academics Committee**

Mrs. Melissa Lourenco, Director of Academic Supports, provided a brief report regarding the recent results of the STAR testing. The STAR assessment provides teachers with a baseline growth in Math and Reading of their students and the data helps them make classroom decisions. Testing so far has taken place twice in the 2013-2014 academic year. Students who need interventions take the assessment every two weeks. The Fall testing data was used to determine placement in the interventions/programs named Power Hour Interventions, Power Hour Work Centers, Homework Club and Weekend Warriors Saturday Academy. The Winter data is still undergoing review by the Department of Academic Supports.

Certificates of academic achievement were awarded to a large group of Segue scholars across the three grades for their growth during the Fall to Winter results. This growth is compared to the test results of students across the nation. Those who achieved a growth percentile exceeding 75% were awarded these certificates of achievement and were recognized during our Whole Child Award celebration. In reading, scholars in the 6th grade had a growth of 84%; in grade 7 the growth percent was 53% and grade 8 had a growth of 51%. In math, 6th grade's growth percent was 45%, 7th grade had 37% and 8th grade 65%.

Amanda Larner, 7th grade lead and Humanities teacher shared with the Board a transition to standards based grading. Under the current grading practice most student assignments are graded using a rubric with a 4 point scale where 4=100; 3=85; 2=70; and 1=55. In her handout, Ms. Larner states that effort, participation, and other non-academic qualifiers are included in a student's overall grade which makes it difficult to distinguish achievement from character. Furthermore, a 65 is indicative of a passing grade but a 2 is indicative of proficiency, which translates to say that a student could fail to meet a certain standard but still could be promoted. By transitioning into standards based grading, the student's effort, participation, and responsibility would be grade separately from his/her



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academic assessment. Scores obtained through rubrics will have no correlation to grades on a 100 point scale. Ms. Larner states that rubric scores will clearly define a student's progress toward meeting a specific standard or goal where a 4 means Proficient with Distinction, a 3 means Proficient, 2 Approaching Proficiency and 1 Below Proficiency. As next steps Ms. Larner indicates that the committee will meet once more to define an action timeline in two weeks' time. The committee is looking in establishing this new philosophy with the new incoming 6th graders for the 2014-2015 school year. A policy will be drafted to present to the Board and for their vote. Also, Mrs. Rua-Cortes, Individual Needs coordinator and Mrs. Rosa Morel, Family Engagement coordinator will work towards engaging parents in understanding the shift in this grading policy while the Research committee will look at all aspects of its implementation. Mr. Cohen asks if there are any other schools in the state that are following this form of grading. Ms. Larner indicates that several schools such as Chariho Public Schools have a similar grading policy. Mr. Cohen suggests that this new policy be revised and approved by the Academics committee. Mrs. Lourenco indicated that they are in the process of writing a policy to reflect this and bring it to the Academics committee for their review and approval.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met on November 25, 2013 and January 8, 2014. Committee members present were Mr. Cohen, Ms. Ristaino-Siegel, and Mrs. Manocchio. Next meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2014 at 7:00 am.

The bank reconciliation statements for the operating checking account have been reviewed through the end of 2013 in two separate reports. Accounts Payables and Receivables have been reviewed through January 3, 2014 and November 30, 2013, respectively. Mr. Cohen informed the Board that the school debit card used in Mrs. Manocchio's name was compromised. Two charges were made, caught by Dexter Credit Union and subsequently refunded. The school management has purchased additional insurance policies to extend further liability coverage and protect students at school.

In its report regarding the lead abatement work, the Finance committee reported that although Guwoe Home Improvement visited the building it has been slow submitting a work plan. School management is prepared to put down a deposit for the work if the work plan is submitted. During this time, Segue has received another contractor reference who recently concluded another project. This contractor has done a walk through the school buildings and performed an initial test. As indicated in the Finance report, one very important issue that affects the cost of the work is the section containments while school is still in session. The school will pay for all first round testing per contractor lead, but all the follow up testing within the same areas will be paid by the contractor.

Mr. Garcia mentioned that the school contracted A-Team Contractors to perform the lead abatement work.

In terms of the roof of the building, Dome Construction performed the initial work in the Annex. The building has some leaks but at this time it is not clear that these leaks are due to the roof or the HVAC system. Further visits have been scheduled.

Lastly, the heating system in the Annex building has been converted into natural gas once the oil supply was exhausted. The heating system is not fully up and running. There was a problem with the regulation of the system, basically when the temperature was in the 40s or 50s the building was very warm. Automatic Temperature Controls personnel are working to regulate the system. They have identified one steam trap is malfunctioning.

Old Business

- Personnel – Head of School Evaluation Timeline (second read and vote) – At the previous board meeting the head of school policy was approved but not the timeline since there were several commentary. Mrs. Schechtman read the timeline for the evaluation of the head of school to the Board. After reading it, Mrs. Schechtman requested questions from the Board, after a brief conversation and having no other questions or comments a motion was



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made by Mr. Cohen, Mr. Wentzell second, having no opposition, the board unanimously approved the Head of School timeline.

- Finance – Discussion regarding Elementary School growth and financial planning (second discussion and vote) – Mr. Cohen informed the Board that the amount proposed to begin to work with the elementary school expansion will be \$30,000. Members commented that the amount was not too low and that it was a good amount to start with. Also, it was agreed that the amount could change depending on need. The original proposed amount was of \$50, 000 but it was agreed that it was too much to start with. After a brief discussion among board members a vote took place where Mr. Setaro made a motion to approve this amount and was second by Ms. Elefsiades. Having no other comments of objections, the full board approved the amount for the Elementary school growth and financial planning.
- Executive – Committee Membership – At the previous board meeting several members current and new volunteered to be part of the existing board committees. The following additions to committees were agreed: Finance – Mr. Wentzell, Personnel – Ms. Maggie Rivera, Mr. Wentzell, Ms. Elefsiades, and Mr. Setaro. In the Academics committee – Ms. Brown, Ms. Elefsiades, Mr. Harrison (to be confirmed), and Ms. Rios. Nominations – Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Hoffens-Vargas, and Ms. Maggie Rivera.
- Governance and Nominations – nothing to report except new committee assignments.
- Update on \$50K allocation to Central Falls Arts Partnership – Mr. Garcia and Mrs. Lourenco briefly informed the Board that he had a conversation with Dr. Gallo and the principal from Veterans school, Ann Lynch regarding Segue's intent with this partnership. Unfortunately, it was understood that instead of being a partnership, it would fall on Segue to lead and do the mayor portion (if not all) of the work of the project as it was not clear what would the CF district undertake to take advantage of this partnership. At this point Mr. Garcia indicates that no further efforts would be made on Segue's part but that if the district does decide what they will do, the funds will be expedited.
- Update on Charter Expansion Request – Segue's attorney, Matt Plain submitted a request to the Board of Education on behalf of our school for charter modification. The request was immediately denied without providing due process. Mr. Plain is currently in conversations with the attorneys of the Board. In the meantime, we are in the process of requesting letters of support from community members, our families and elected officials and other Segue collaborators. As soon as Mr. Garcia has more information he will provide it to the Board.

New Business

- Governance –Timeline to Revise existing policies and establish Ad Hoc Committee to revisit Board of Directors Bylaws. Mr. Garcia has in his goals is to support along with Ms. Grace Rivera, the board to revising and adopting the existing board bylaws. For this Mr. Garcia requests that the board name an ad-hoc committee to undertake this. Point of order by Mr. Cohen that moving forward this should be something undertaken by the Governance committee. Ad-hoc committee is Lauren Schechtman, Tabitha Elefsiades and Jeff Wentzell.
- Share out of Process of Non-Tenured staff renewal for 2014-2015 – Mr. Garcia and Mrs. Manocchio met with legal counsel on how to proceed with this process and follow what the RIDE law mandates. This law indicates that any person working for less than three (3) years at the school needs to be given a termination letter. The board is to approve possible staff termination. Mr. Garcia and Mrs. Manocchio explained to the board this process and provided a copy of the letter of termination for their review. Board consensus was requested to go ahead to serve these letters to Segue staff. The board gave its consensus after reading the document. The document was returned to the board secretary.

Public Comment – Mr. Garcia brought to the board the request for a first reading of the 2014-2015 School Year Calendar. If the board is in the process to change its meeting dates from Mondays, changes need to be reflected on the calendar by March 2014. Ms. Elefsiades informed the board that Dunkin Donuts will be having its 3rd annual fundraiser "Brighter Future Fund" where Segue is one of the beneficiaries. The event will start February 14.



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Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m. with a motion made by Mr. Cohen and second by Mrs. Schechtman. All were in favor, meeting was adjourned.

Minutes approved by:

Minutes recorded by: _____
Grace M. Rivera

Board Co-Chair

Approved on: February 10, 2014
Date

Next Board Meeting: Monday, February 10, 2014– 5:30 p.m.