

SLT Meeting

April 8, 2024

Minutes

In compliance with the Open meeting laws this meeting was recorded and broadcast via Zoom for community information. Due to technology limitations Zoom visitors are unable to participate in the discussion.

The Zoom information and link is here:

<https://zoom.us/j/96993418183?pwd=dDR3WWhpZCtZOXQvNWFrK1pMc1Vpdz09>

Meeting ID: 969 9341 8183

Passcode: 949508

The Meeting was called to order at 5:10PM

Present: President Leon Botstein, Dean Dumaine Williams,

SLT Members:

Stephen Chaterpaul

Denice Gamper

Michele Orecklin

Anne Shields

Petra Riviere

Julia Guerra

Melanie Pflaum

Gabe Rosenberg

Lauren Gottlieb

Amie Macdonald

Cindy Hsiao

Rosemarie Bray

Todd Stevens

Miri Navasky

Laura-Albane Peyronnet

Ivy Laidlaw-Morris

**Guests:**

Carol Turitz

There were many additional guests (students, faculty, parents) and I apologize as I did not circulate an attendance sheet. I am of course ready to take direction from the SLT to add an accurate list of attendees.

- I. Review of Minutes                      Co-Chairs
  - a. The review of Minutes from the March 2024 meeting was tabled until the May 2024 meeting because the Minutes had been turned in but not circulated to the SLT representatives.
- II. Selection of Recording Secretary- Parent
  - a. Amie Macdonald, Y2 parent representative agreed to record the minutes.
- III. SLT Role & Function                      Stephen Chaterpaul, Principal
  - a. Principal Chaterpaul played a DOE video for 15 minutes and then stated that the primary role of the SLT is to formulate the CEP and ensure that it is aligned with the budget. Principal Chaterpaul continued that for next academic year, 24-25, we will modify the membership so that there is an equal number of parents and staff on the SLT (currently there are more staff than parents). Going forward, Principal Chaterpaul stated, there will be open access to all minutes, agendas (which are on our website once minutes are approved by the SLT). Moreover, Principal Chaterpaul stated that going forward SLT members will always have access at each SLT meeting to the SLT Bylaws, CEP, and budget, as well as access to iPlan (a shared DOE computer drive).
- IV. Homework Concerns
  - a. **Data Review**                                      **Stephen Chaterpaul, Principal**
    - Please see Attached Slide presentation as official portion of these SLT Minutes. In addition, Principal Chaterpaul stated that the context for increasing homework load is to prepare students for the College program. This is especially important because once students are in the College program they actually have two separate academic transcripts: one for the DOE and one for Bard College. It is important Principal Chaterpaul stated for students to maintain strong academic performance in the College program since this becomes part of their Bard College transcript. In addition, Principal Chaterpaul stated that BHSEC has to adhere to accreditation standards set by the NYC DOE AND accreditation standards set by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (this is not the same as AP courses).
    - Principal Chaterpaul stated that there cannot be a “homework policy” because enforcement is unrealistic since there is no way to know how long an assignment will take a student to complete. Principal Chaterpaul stated that this has been discussed in the BHSEC Steering Committee and that parents cannot be told who is on the Steering Committee but that it includes members of every department.
    - Homework Guidelines document will be shared by Principal Chaterpaul with the SLT.
  - b. **Bard College Dumaine Williams, Vice President of Early Colleges**
    - Dean Williams thanked everyone for being present and for their time and effort on behalf of the school. He stated that the homework

conversations are actually happening at other BHSECs and thanked people for bringing these conversations to the forefront. Dean Williams stated that the goal of the BHSEC program is success for our graduates when they attend a four year college. He asked: when 8<sup>th</sup> graders applied to BHSEC-M what did they and their parents want? Dean Williams stated that the students in the school want academic rigor with supports and not a traditional high school. And so, he stated, given these shared goals how can we address the homework load? Amplify student voices? And acknowledge the different ways that students learn? The answer, he stated, is to focus on the faculty to trust the faculty and their autonomy, as central to the faculty/student relationships. Dean Williams emphasized that part of this process is to help students communicate successfully with the faculty, and to find ways to make these relationships grow.

**c. Bard College Leon Botstein, President of Bard College**

- President Botstein stated that he wants to be helpful and that it is the first time ever that he has been called to a BHSEC formal meeting. He stated that “for better or for worse I invented this early college model” and that “we in university work know that it is about developing the curiosity, the interest, the skills to sustain intellectual practice. President Botstein stated that there is no homework policy in university. He continued: BHSEC is a public school and it is not a high school, and therefore he wants the community to work together so that parents can understand the early college culture. President Botstein stated that we are on the side of nurturing young people to do well, and can we turn a new lead and focus on this shared goal without “getting under each other’s skin?”

**d. PTA executive board member Michael Weslock then read aloud a Faculty Statement (see attachment).**

- **President Botstein continued in response:** we choose the principal and we take responsibility for that, and he suggested that Dean Williams and President Botstein organize a faculty meeting where these grievances can be aired and discussed. He stated further that there are different groups, mistakes, misunderstandings and that we must find a pathway for second chances and for working together. President Botstein stated that grievances have to be aired and that we absolutely do not want to lose good faculty. President Botstein stated that there is no credible fear of retaliation against faculty, and that the only time the BHSEC administration takes action against faculty is to protect students from harm and from incompetence. Dean Williams concurred and stated that “there is no retaliation” and that “we are moving towards the same goal” and that “no one is here to retaliate.” President Botstein stated that he intends to meet with students to discuss their grievances, and that he and Dean Williams will meet with students,

- e. **Ivy Laidlaw-Morris, 10<sup>th</sup> grade student representative to the SLT** then read aloud a Student Statement (signed by 73 students). (see attachment)
- Dean Williams in response stated that he has spoken with Superintendent Beidleman, that he wants people to be heard, and that he and Bard administration are happy to listen to challenges and solutions. He stated that he is focused on positive outcomes, and more connection between “big” Bard and BHSEC-M. Dean Williams continued by stating that there have been challenges around tone and collaboration, and that when mistakes are made people need to apologize and expect grace and collaboration because of the human part of this being a new job, and a difficult job. Dean Williams stated it is his goal to let the principal be productive.
- f. Continued Discussion:
- Y2 Alternate Parent Representative to the SLT Melanie Wesslock stated she is frustrated as she cannot get an important and urgent problem (drug use on campus) on to the SLT agenda. She stated that when she did speak to Principal Chaterpaul on a zoom call that he was “dismissive” and treated her in a “misogynistic” way. Mrs. Wesslock stated that she is afraid that a student will smoke a fentanyl laced joint on campus.
  - Principal Chaterpaul stated that he asked Mrs. Wesslock for names of specific students who are using drugs and that she did not want to give the names since doing so may get them into trouble. Principal Chaterpaul stated: “I did not ignore a parent who came to me with information about drug use.”
- g. Y1 Parent Representative to the SLT Cindy Hsiao stated that her student and her family love the school and that this year has been so different from prior years. She continued by stating that the trust has been broken and that this breach is hurting our community. Ms. Hsiao stated that we are a school in crisis and that this has been painful for all of us, and that many people have been hurt as a result. She stated “I am begging the DOE and Bard College to take a good look and think about whether this is the way to move forward.

V. Review of Reports meeting. PTA, Student Union, Principal: Tabled to the May SLT

VI. SY 24-25 CEP Tabled to the May SLT meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30PM

Respectfully submitted by Amie Macdonald, Y2 Parent Representative to the SLT

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