

At SCS we aim to enable our learners to have success for today and to be prepared for tomorrow.
نحن في مدرسة الصفا كومونيوتي نسعى الى تأهيل طلابنا للنجاح اليوم وتحضيرهم لمواجهة المستقبل

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEMBERS MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 21ST MAY 2024 AT 16H30

PRESENT:	T. GREGORY	(SUSTAINABILITY ADVISOR)	(TG)
	M. AL HAMRI	(PARENT) (ISLAMIC AND ARABIC)	(MH)
	T. GREGORY	(PARENT) (PARENT LIAISON)	(TRG)
	Z. HARRINGTON	(PRINCIPAL) (SBS)	(ZH)
	L. MCGEEVER	(HEADTEACHER PRIMARY) (SBS)	(LM)
	L. FRIDD	(PRINCIPAL) (SCS)	(SD)
	M. DAVIES	(HEADTEACHER SECONDARY) (SCS)	(MD)
	J. LUUKAS	(HEADTEACHER PRIMARY) (SCS)	(JL)
	M. ASHTON	(DEPUTY HEADTEACHER SECONDARY) (SCS)	(MA)
APOLOGIES:	L. KHATIB	(CHAIRPERSON) (PROPRIETOR)	(LK)
	S. MERCHANT	(PROPRIETOR)	(SM)
MINUTES:	L. LE GRANGE	(PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO PRINCIPAL)	(LLG)

LF opened the meeting at 16h28 and extended apologies for LK and SM.

1. Challenges Faced by the Principal

The Board Members asked what are the top three challenges that the Principal currently faces which the Board can help provide solutions for (both (immediate) for the remainder of this academic year and separately (long-term) looking ahead to the start of the next academic year).

- **Immediate (for the remainder of the academic year):**
 - LF started by stating that communication with parents was too much and was overwhelming, (too many emails, lack of a centralized platform). A central platform such as iSAMS Parent App is being developed to streamline communication and store historical data. Luke Phillips is working on this and it will go live as soon as iSAMS launch the updated version.
 - LF mentioned that it is a challenge ensuring consistency in educational provision as students' progress through school.
 - LF remarked that currently she is addressing visibility and leadership engagement across school phases.
- **Long-term (looking ahead to the next academic year):**
 - LF explained that currently trying to ensure the sustaining and building upon improvements in sustainability efforts. There is no real body that is championing this in schools and so ensuring that momentum is not lost presents its own challenges.

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- LF mentioned that addressing staffing challenges in key areas, including Arabic and Islamic Studies, and the need for improved retention strategies. With Dubai becoming so competitive in education, schools are offering out of kilter housing allowances and monthly salaries trying to coax staff from the outstanding schools. We would need to look at certain staff packages to ensure our current staff are not lured away by the packages offered out there.
- LF stated that managing continued growth in student numbers, especially in secondary is challenging. The numbers continue to grow as students move up through the year groups.

2. Outstanding Inspection Concerns

The Board asked of the Executive Leadership Team that in looking back at the findings from the last inspection, are there any areas which were flagged as concerns / areas to work on, which have not yet been addressed.

- LF mentioned that the consistency and quality of Arabic language education, particularly for students who do not speak Arabic at home, was discussed. A plan is in place to address this, and staff have been working to elevate Arabic teaching across all levels. We have introduced Arabic C which is Arabic for students who are in Arabic A and cannot speak Arabic. This is making a vast difference and ensuring that students are now able to access the curriculum.
- LF went on to explain that Islamic Studies was highlighted as an area requiring further focus due to challenges posed by the broader educational landscape and competition from other schools.

3. Teacher Departures and Reasons for Leaving

The departure of two secondary teachers was discussed, the board enquired as to the reason for their departure and were they popular teachers:

- MD stated that both teachers are leaving for other schools, a long discussion ensued around staff packages.
- The teachers were reportedly popular with students, and their departure will be felt. The replacement teachers will need to be selected carefully to ensure a smooth transition.

4. Arabic Department Recognition

- Congratulations were extended to the Arabic department for being recognised by the Abu Dhabi Board of Education (ABT) for their progress toward Arabic A and Arabic B standards. This marks a significant achievement for the department and Safa Community School.

5. Professional Learning Community (PLC) Showcase Feedback

- LF mentioned the recent Professional Learning Community (PLC) Showcase received positive feedback. Staff were commended for their engagement and the successful implementation of ideas discussed at the event.

6. Alice in Wonderland Performance

- A special congratulations was given to all involved in the **Alice in Wonderland** production. It was described as an exceptional performance, and the Board expressed pride in the event's success.

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Parent Feedback Sessions

TRG presented the highlights from the parent sessions held over the past weeks. Parents included were those that completed the parent survey. The selected parents were chosen based on their negative and positive feedback:

Generic points were raised across phases including the need for more accessible communication, a central platform for information, and improved visibility from school leadership.

- **Parent Survey Results:** Feedback from the recent parent survey was analysed, with emphasis on areas of improvement.
- **Consistency of Provision:** Parents stated that the provision for students was outstanding but were concerned with whether this was consistently provided all through the schooling phases.

LF stated that MD and JL would meet with their teams and ensure this is addressed and feedback provided to parents.

- **iSAMS Parent App:** LF mentioned that the new parent app is expected to be launched soon, offering a central platform for communication, academic calendars, contracts, and quick links. This will address many of the issues raised by parents regarding communication.

TRG stated that the sessions were informative and enjoyable, parents often find it easier and are quite comfortable to talk to TRG. More sessions would be held in the next academic year with a different focus.

Teaching and Learning Presentation

LM presented the feedback from the learning walks taken with the T&L teams.

LM stated that it was evident that the KHDA recommendations had and are being followed.

- **Sustainability Initiatives:**
 - There is strong momentum in sustainability efforts, with students taking the lead in initiatives like biofuel research and environmental education.
 - However, there is concern about the challenges surrounding accreditation, as the UAE Ministry of Education has not facilitated Eco-Schools certification post-COVID.
 - The school is actively working with other British schools to continue efforts towards sustainability and environmental education.

Arabic and Islamic Education and Heritage Heroes

A report of feedback was provided by MAH and LK:

- Arabic teaching has been elevated with a focus on improving standards and ensuring students are able to thrive in Arabic A and B courses.

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- Islamic Studies is also a key focus, with particular attention on ensuring students receive the highest quality of education in this area.
- MAH mentioned that meeting with the Heritage Heroes was an honour and he was pleased to see Emirati students enjoying their full experience at SCS.

KS3 and KS5 Curriculum Expansion

ZH met with the KS4 and KS5 academic teams:

- There was a focus on refining the curriculum offering for senior students, with new course options being considered, including mini-MBA programmes. There are discussions underway regarding space reconfigurations to accommodate this expansion.

Wellbeing and Pastoral Care

ZH attended the presentation by the wellbeing and pastoral care teams. The following feedback was provided:

- There is a strong focus on the wellbeing of both staff and students. Plans are in place to continue improving staff training in IT integration for pastoral care platforms.
- New initiatives such as wellbeing days, yoga, and drop-in sessions for staff have been well received.

Sustainability

TG reported on the ongoing sustainability efforts:

- The school has made significant progress in promoting sustainability, with student-led projects on sustainability, including the creation of green spaces and recycling initiatives.
- Discussions regarding potential facilities, including the development of a new farm on-site and the addition of more sustainability-related resources, are ongoing.
- The learning walk presented wonderful opportunities to see the sustainability agenda embedded in lessons and environments throughout the school sites.

Staffing and Recruitment

- LF mentioned again that staff retention remains a challenge due to higher housing allowances offered by competitors such as GEMS.
- The school is addressing this by moving towards a full term's notice for resigning staff and revisiting compensation packages.
- Four pregnancies have been reported for the next academic year, which will require adjustments in staffing.

Child Protection and Wellbeing

- LF highlighted two incidents related to teacher conduct were discussed, both involving concerns with physical interactions with students. These are being investigated, and the necessary actions will be taken to ensure student safety and uphold safeguarding protocols.

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- The school continues to provide extensive support for students through counselling services, particularly in light of increased social media challenges.

Admissions and Enrolment

- There was a discussion about challenges related to student retention, particularly with regards to re-registration fees. The school is finding it difficult to replace students who leave at the start of the academic year, and the Board agreed that more proactive measures are needed to engage families earlier in the process.
- There has been a noticeable increase in Emirati students enrolling, and the school has had to manage waitlists for some year groups.

Facilities and Campus Updates

- New infrastructure projects include the building of a new sports pitch, which will be ready by the start of next year. This will support both extracurricular activities and the broader school community.
- The school is also exploring options for expanding parking facilities due to increasing demand.

Other Business

- **Safeguarding Training:** The Board discussed upcoming face-to-face and online Level 3 safeguarding training. It was recommended that all staff complete this training to ensure the highest standards of care are maintained across the school.
- **BSO Inspection:** The British Schools Overseas (BSO) inspection is scheduled for January 2025. The Board stressed the importance of preparing thoroughly for this assessment.
- **Spring Fayre:** The Spring Fayre raised enough funds for the **Students for Students** initiative, which will pack 1,000 bags for less privileged students.

The meeting concluded and adjourned at 16h47.