



## Notes

Regional Alternative School Board of Control

**Immediately following the District Superintendent meeting, but not before 9:30 AM**

Friday, November 6, 2020.

1. CALL TO ORDER

***by Dr. Julie Morris, President RAS Board of Control at 9:31 AM***

2. ROLL CALL\*

Belvidere\*

Harlem\*

Hononegah\*

Pecatonica\*

North Boone\*

Rockford\*

South Beloit\*

Winnebago\*

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

If there is no discussion or changes to the agenda:

**Is there a motion to approve the agenda as presented Hononegah second Belvidere**

**All in Favor: 8 Opposed: 0 Motion carries.**

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM August 21, 2020

**Is there a motion to approve the open and closed session minutes from August 21, 2020 as presented: Harlem second Belvidere**

**All in Favor: 8 Opposed: 0 Motion carries.**

6. BUDGET UPDATE--See Item 6. Rachelle Blitch, the Director of Finance for the Regional Office discussed the actual budget, which was featured as one of the documents in the previous meeting. Scott Bloomquist asked about the current status of revenue for the program. Rachelle indicated that so far, the budget is doing well and she does not anticipate that we will end up in the red. One of the key factors is grant funding, including more detailed information on the food services application, which will generate more revenue than originally included. Carlie Roeschley added that some of the line items were ahead of the game and that allowed for things to even out. Rachelle stated the need for transparency on the cash flow, since RAS is cash based and the ROE is accrual. After Carlie asked if there were any more questions, Scott wrapped up the discussion by reminding everyone about the need to insist that our programs be held harmless, when talking to legislators and in communications with the state. With all of our funding is driven by enrollment, for the prior year, we are currently getting paid based on the rate of enrollment from the last school year. He has concerns that, due to the nature of the program, we could have significant cuts due to COVID.

7.

8. PROGRAM UPDATE

- a. Enrollment--Current total enrollment at Summit Academy is 211 students, with the RAS program representing 120 of those students. 53 students are enrolled in our Hybrid model and 67 are enrolled in the Full Remote model. We continue to grow, with approximately 2-3 new referrals being made each week. Carlie added that we gained two more students yesterday, putting the enrollment at 213. She appreciates the districts for continuing to send students, and we have seen about 10 referrals in the last week. The Admin team has been very busy trying to get families in to complete the intake process.
- b. Attendance--As with many schools, attendance during these unprecedented times has been a challenge. Given our student population, we have many students who have a desire to do a fully remote program and not engage synchronously. As a result, many students complete assignments, as designed and presented on Google Classroom, but are not logging in synchronously. Thus, our attendance rate, as measured by synchronous participation, is approximately 40%. This is an increase from approximately 25% in early September and reflective of additional support put in place to encourage participation. We continue to implement new interventions to increase synchronous participation, as we know this is the best way to connect and engage with students to support not only their academic success, but help support their social/emotional functioning, as well. Carlie explained that we are working directly with students only as they are showing up synchronously on Google Meets for classes and about 85% of our student participation comes from students who are not logging on, but are completing assignments. We've seen increasing attendance since putting interventions in place that put relationships first, and we will continue to develop strategies to help boost rates.

Scott Fisher stated that they've added in positions to provide students with support, and asked what was being done to support students.

Carlie explained the functions of our Student Support Services Team – which includes: receiving a Tier 1 check in with a counselor, skill-building in small groups both online and in person, home visits for those who are not engaged, and virtual classrooms with easily accessible resources one-click away. We were able to increase staffing in these areas to add another support for students. Our Director of Student Services helped design systems and procedures for student support, while our Director of Curriculum created lesson plans that teachers were able to implement easily in the transition from an in person to a remote learning environment.

Scott asked if it would be an appropriate time to share stories of his time in the building at Summit Academy. He spoke about his weekly visits to the school and how it's nothing like he's ever seen, while encouraging members to visit when they can to experience the excitement, engagement and community response themselves. He has the following account of his experience firsthand: "On one day that I was there, the kids flooded the hallways and all it took was for the students to have one person look at them and they removed their hoods with zero issues, because wearing the hoods was something they asked for in Circles. I also had a conversation in the cafeteria with one of the new students who said that they love it here because the teachers care about me and do not want me to come back. The cafeteria had about 30 kids in there at a time, and they were quiet and even doing work during lunch. I was then approached by two students – one who had previously attended. The student spoke about how they feel like the school trusts them because they don't make them feel like criminals by coming through metal detectors and patting them down. The culture has changed so much that they don't even realize it's the same program because Summit Academy is a different environment." Carlie mentioned that nearly every day we have students asking to come in more days, with our remote students asking us to persuade their parents to switch them to hybrid.

- c. Personnel--Due to uncertainty of enrollment at the beginning of the year, we held off on hiring two teacher positions that were previously budgeted for. Given our growing enrollment in the RAS program, and continued lower enrollment in the Regional Safe Schools Program, for Semester 2, we will be transitioning 1.5 FTE positions from the Regional Safe Schools Program to the RAS program. This will help keep class sizes within our thresholds, and better support equitable workloads. Carlie stated that there was a need to increase staffing, but since RLA is not growing at the moment, we will be moving some of those positions to the RAS side, for the second semester in January.
- d. Programming--November 2, 2020 marked the return of our RAS students after a 2 week period of Full Remote Instruction for the program. It is wonderful to have our Hybrid students back in the building with us two days a week! The Student Support Services Team (School Counselors, Drug/Rehab Counselor, and School Social Worker) has

launched their Social/Emotional Learning Google Classroom, where they each created a virtual office filled with different resources as students click around the page. Our Specialized Services Team (Academic Resource Support, Career and Technical Education, and Job Coaching) is growing services and supports weekly. While job coaching and careers classes look a little different in this virtual world, we are working on providing opportunities for all students to participate in Career Cruising, potentially earn credit for work experiences, and help build vision and direction for their lives after graduation.

As we look at resource allocation moving forward, it is important that we continuously examine our programming. While we currently function without having students from both programs in classes together, consideration of merging programs at the high school level would be advantageous. This would allow us to offer a wider range of classes (including electives) and be less reliant on fully online programs (Edgenuity). Carlie added that we are currently looking for more ways to build relationships through Direct Instruction for core classes and reserve Edgenuity for electives. Next year, we would like to pilot combining the high school students for both programs for electives.

Dr. Morris asked if the idea was to start with a pilot due to some perception issues around mixing both groups of students. Carlie agreed that perception is huge and added that we've only had three major incidents this year. Being proactive with students as opposed to reactive has helped tremendously, and no more than three electives will be combined to start. Discussions about specifics for combined electives can continue at the next meeting.

- e. Curriculum--Our teachers and staff have risen to the challenge of hybrid and remote teaching. As we continue to grow skills together, their perseverance and heart for our students is evident. They continue to design lessons, using Summit Academy's lesson planning format, that provide opportunities daily for performance feedback, differentiation, and adaptability no matter in-person or remote instruction. Ms. DeFrancesca, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Transition, provides coaching, resources, and professional development. She is designing a curriculum review cycle that will help us to systematically look at curriculum and standards in each content area, reviewing each area at least once every two years.
- f. Professional Development--Focus areas: Creating culturally relevant schools and classrooms, Neurosequential Model in Education, Restorative Circles (virtual and in-person), Google (Classroom, Meets, Scheduling), Classroom Management (virtual and in-person), Sharing and demonstrating online resources. Carlie said that staff are still utilizing Wednesday afternoons for Professional Development, after synchronous learning in the morning. We still walk as a trauma-informed school, and we have received a lot of positive feedback from the work we have been doing in our Restorative Circles. Around the building, we have done walks to see where changes are needed to increase cultural relevance, and staff have shared resources to make sure that cultural relevance is built into the day-to-day structure as well.

g. Community Outreach--We are working on creating community connections both in-person and on social media. Within the community, we have connected with many organizations and individuals, including the Boys and Girls Club, Rotary of Loves Park, Rockford Rescue Mission, and Village of Machesney Park (Mr. Johnson, Mr. Richter, Lt. Stanley). We have also connected with many local businesses. Huge Prints of Machesney Park, has been incredible with doing much of our signage in and outside of our building. Director of Community Outreach, Brian Weavel, keeps social media up to date and helps capture the day-to-day happenings of Summit Academy. We have 334 Facebook Followers.

i. Facebook: facebook.com/SummitAcademy815/

ii. Twitter: @SummitAcademy\_

iii. Instagram: @summitacademy\_

Carlie added that it is important to continue connecting with our partners in the community. Recently, the Village of Machesney Park, including Mayor Johnson and Lieutenant Stanley, came in for a tour and to discuss security precautions and impacts on village resources. The conversation began with a lot of skepticism, but after talking about how our philosophy led us to make certain decisions – like not having metal detectors and doing social-emotional checks upon arrival – their body language began to change. By the end of the visit, they were happy to have us in their community, and offered to assist in creating more opportunities for our students. Lt. Stanley asked if we had an interest in having officers drive by routinely, but we would prefer having them interact more directly with students by having breakfast or lunch or playing basketball so that they can connect in a non-punitive way with students.

Dr Morris added that Lt. Stanley is the first woman to be promoted to Police Chief next week. She also stated, “As you may or may not know, I will be entering retirement and I just want to say thank you. This has been a dream to see the program as it is now, with Allison and Scott’s vision and commitment to making a program work. This is what it should be. What can we do to change and adjust to make sure that they feel welcomed? Across the nation, schools are looking to remove resource officers and how they aren’t a part of the vision. We work hard so that they are there to get to know the students, not to arrest them. Thank you again, this is the culmination, and I can retire happy.”

h. Updated Calendar--See Item 7 documents a few minor changes

9. CLOSED SESSION\*

a. The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).

**Is there a motion go into closed session for the presented purposes Belvidere second Harlem, roll call vote:**

Belvidere\*

Harlem\*

Hononegah\*

Pecatonica\*

North Boone\*

Rockford\*

South Beloit\*

Winnebago\*

**Motion Carries: Time: \_\_10:12am\_\_**

10. ADJOURNMENT

**Is there a motion to Adjourn: \_Belvidere\_\_ second \_Hononegah\_\_\_ All in Favor: 8 Opposed: 0  
Motion carries/fails: carries Time: 10:24am\_**