APPROVED

Sankofa Montessori

Minutes

Academic Committee Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday September 11, 2024 at 2:00 PM

Location
Meeting ID: 601 495 1069

Through a culturally responsive, child and family-centered Montessori education, Sankofa Montessori ensures that all of our students develop the knowledge, skill, and agency to have a life of purpose.

Committee Members Present
A. Allen-Thames (remote), E. Moore (remote)

Committee Members Absent
None

Ex Officio Members Present
S. Harvey (remote)

Guests Present
Krista Harrell (remote), Parents/Public Members (35+) (remote), Rhushanda Barnes (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

A. Allen-Thames called a meeting of the Academic Excellence Committee of Sankofa Montessori to order on Wednesday Sep 11, 2024 at 2:03 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

E. Moore made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Committee Meeting on 08-14-24.
A. Allen-Thames seconded the motion.
Agreed approval after amendment of correction to attendance.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

D. Leadership Team Updates

Leadership Team presented data in Slide Presentation, the following is an overview of highlights.

1. Goals- Discussed and reviewed GADOE and SCSC metrics and goals for the school year. For attendance, less than 2% chronically absent (12+ absences each quarter). For reading, by end of year, 85% of students have 1.5 years of growth measured with Reading Remediation Pathway. By end of year, goal of growth for reading and math (NWEA MAP) would be average growth percentile of 60% in reading and math and reduce by 10% students performing below 25th percentile. For 3rd graders specifically, the goal would be for 85% of 3rd graders to outperform their zoned districts on GA Milestones.

2. Staffing Updates- 28 Flight crew members (10 flight captains, 9 co-captains, 4 staff support, 5 flight control).

3. Suspensions- Total 14 students. 17 total out of school suspensions. (# of students per grade: K-2, 1st-5, 2nd-4, 3rd-3).

4. Special Ed data- *see in next section.*

5. MAP Overview data- Presented Fall and Winter RIT scores for Math and Reading from 23-24 school year and for Fall 24-25 data per grade level. *Fall 24-25 median scores for Math for all grades- 43rd%* (Math: K-53rd, 1st-43rd, 2nd-28th, 3rd-7th) and *Fall 24-25 median scores for Reading for all grades-44th%* (Reading: K-54th, 1st-41st, 2nd-39th, 3rd-19th).

6. SY 24-25 Priorities- *see section below.*

7. Enrollment/Recruitment- Total 158 students. K-58 1st-48 2nd-26 3rd-24. 12 Withdrawals noted in August (Breakdown as follows: 6-transfer to zoned school, 4-dissatisfied w/ Sankofa, 2-homeschooling, 2-move to another district, 1-move out of state, 1-Montessori not good fit)

8. Attendance- Reflect July 29-August 30 period- K average daily attendance (87.7%), 1st (92.4%), 2nd (93.09%), and 3rd (87.74%).

9. Updates (Miscellaneous): Upcoming Assessments- SEL Web, MAP Reading Fluency Assessment, G-Kids. Posting parent-school compact to website. SCSC Monitoring from August 20-October 1. Discussion of paid parental leave (HB 2010).

E. Special Education

25% of students receiving SPED services with possible 34% at Sankofa in comparison to Clayton county rate ~ 10%.

Total students with IEPs- **27** (K-8, 1st-6, 2nd-7, 3rd-6)
Total students with 504 plan - **9** (K-1, 1st-3, 2nd-2, 3rd-3)
Total students in need of ESOL support - **4** (1 in each grade)
Total students in MTSS process: **14**
Total students in immediate considerations of special education: **4**

F. Gifted Student Services

Not addressed in meeting.

G. SY 24-25 Goals

Academic Priorities for SY 24-25: *Review from MAP data, Montessori Reading Remediation Pathway- found 60% of students are unable to read at grade level, unable to identify all 26 letters or recognize corresponding letter sounds.*

Discussion and explanation of following Priorities:
1. **Small Group Instruction**- Individualized Learning, Hands on and Experiential learning, Collaborative environment, Respect for Independence, Observation and Assessment
2. **Students Receiving Feedback**- Fostering Independence and Self Correction, Encouraging Intrinsic Motivation, Respectful and Non-Competitive, and Promoting Peer Learning
3. **Classroom Management-** Respect for the Child and the Environment, Fostering a Sense of Community

Discussion of Innovative Features of Sankofa:
- **Academic program rooted in Montessori curriculum and methodology**
- **Teachers with extensive training in Montessori method** (3 year plan for MACTE training for teachers)
-**Multi-age groupings** for 1st and 2nd grade; 3rd and K stand alone
-**Child-centered environment with periods of uninterrupted work time** (traditional 2-3 hr work cycle does not meet needs of students)
-**Freedom of choice in learning within a highly structured range of options** (while ensuring targeted support of each student)
-**Freedom of movement**
-**Continuous observation of students** (observation of students informs instruction)

II. Public Comments/Questions

A. Themes/Overview of Public Comment (Note: Not all of the following is verbatim, but a summary of comments due to large volume). Names are not reflected in today's public comment minutes. Blue font indicates responses to questions and comments.

Themes related to the following:

SPED: Help with IEP? Protocols to notify of student deficiencies?
Address any questions to Ms. Barnes, rbarnes@sankofamontessori.org.
Students with IEPs, 504s, and EOSL have accommodations such as small group, extended time, and read aloud.

MAP data: Analysis of MAP for prior vs. new Sankofa students? *Not all students took MAP last year. Orange communication folder sent on Friday with MAP score data (emails).*

Communication: Contact for newsletters from classrooms? Standards for communication for parents? Ensure orange folders with students (in book bag), concerns of parents without receipt of orange folders. Concerns of lack of communication and no work coming home with students. Suggestions for newsletters to be weekly and more communication about individual student's progress or decline. *Parents can email info@sankofamontessori.org and the front office will take care of parents not receiving communication emails. Thank you for feedback.*

Montessori training/accreditation: Reason for majority of educators not Montessori trained? Does school plan to be a fully blown Montessori? Goal to remain following Montessori principles? National Montessori accreditation or official Montessori association? How's the other public Montessori school? *Priority of teachers to have GA state certification, costs $10-15,000 per teacher for Montessori training and lost $40,000 in training due to 4 teachers leaving school. 2 out of 6 lead teachers are Montessori trained; school in phased approach with Montessori training and utilizing Montessori experts to support professional development. Not planned in charter to have Montessori accreditation, extensive process and SCSC not approve school based on that level. Other public charter Montessori school in Savannah is on state failing list and Montessori school in Fayetteville is private.*

Curriculum Schedule Change: Students enough time to do work and transition for lessons an hour at a time? MAP tests taken prior to schedule change? 60% deficiency from last year as reason? Concerns for student transitions and students adapting to transitions? Can students stay in classroom and teachers transition instead? Does 1 hour

include transition time between classrooms? Concerns for no longer 2-3 work blocks, concerns for lack of parental input on schedule change. Concern of mastery of students within 1 hour block time and student struggles with transitions. Concerns for students taught to the test and communication for parents to know how to support students. Concerns for students not completing work and punitive actions for unfinished work. *Reason for schedule change was so most highly trained teacher in subject gives instruction to students (students receive daily). Not full blown Montessori, but utilizing Montessori principles, materials. Example, students receive 60 minutes of phonics or science or math or social studies. Students have 1 hour lesson then transition to classroom. Curriculum had to pivot due to GA standards for Math and ELA. Focus group purpose is to see how communication and messaging lands prior to sending to whole community. Students are finishing work and no student is punished for incomplete work, opportunity to finish work. There were difficulties for the teachers to get lessons done with 30 students in space and now expertise/focused lessons ensure students learn. Suggestion by board member, E.M. for Task Force of parents, staff, and board members to address further topics, particularly communication.*

Other: Issues of student assault, although child moved; concern for supervision of children between classrooms. Change or move up curriculum night from November? Updates on funds for school bus? *No funds for bus transportation. Transitions between classrooms are supervised and school will continue to work/address behavioral issues of students.*

III. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 4:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
A. Allen-Thames