

ISU Laboratory Schools
Citizens Advisory Council
University High School, library
March 7th, 2023, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Present: Meredith Diaz, Kathy Murdoch, Stacey Meyer, Joann Yant, Antonio Causarano, Heather Marshall, Ryan Scritchlow, Dr. Anthony Jones, Sienna Beard, Rishi Shukla, Liz Austin, Jeremy Wilcox, & Angela Null

Absent: Curt Richardson, David Sulzberger & Jake Davis

- I. **Call to Order** – Dr. Jones called the meeting to order.
- II. **Roll Call** – Stacey noted the members that were present and absent (listed above).
- III. **Purpose of CAC** – Members reviewed the Purpose of the CAC; the purpose is outlined below.
 - To assist the superintendent in maintaining a viable relationship between the Illinois State University Laboratory Schools and the University, community, and State regulatory systems
 - To provide recommendations regarding both short- and long-term goals of the Laboratory Schools
 - To promote parent and community representation on committees as determined by the superintendent
 - To provide a liaison between the administration, faculty, and parents of students attending the Laboratory Schools
- IV. **Minutes of Prior Regular Meeting** (January 10th, 2023) Jeremy motioned to approve the minutes, and Heather seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as written.
- V. **Announcements** –
 - Spring Break is scheduled for next week (March 13th – 17th).
 - The Circus at Metcalf will be held on March 30th. Dr. Jones has heard a lot about the circus and is looking forward to seeing it for himself.
 - Shoutout to Metcalf and everyone involved with the musical! Dr. Jones was absolutely amazed by the talent of our 4th – 8th grade students; they did so well!
 - The College of Education has initiated two visits with international universities in Thailand, and the Lab Schools were invited to be a part of this experience. The tours are scheduled with SWU on March 29th and Thaksin University in April (sometime between

the 10th and 26th). This is a great opportunity for us to make connections with lab schools internationally.

- Our reunification drill will occur on April 14th. This year, we will be partnering with Carle Hospital and ISU Student Health Services to create a tornado simulation. There will be many involved to make this a successful experience: our administrators will be facilitating, Dr. Jones will be communicating with the media, freshman students will play the role of 8th graders, and current Metcalf students and parents will also be included. This experience gives the Lab Schools an opportunity to model for other school districts in the area. If you are interested in participating, please contact Dr. Surian, as we are still looking for volunteers.
- U-high will soon feature a student-led podcast hosted by the *Clarionette*. This idea was inspired after Dr. Jones attended his first alumni meeting where he listened to several alumni stories and passions. Dr. Jones worked with Amy Reiman and her students to finalize the project. Equipment to start this podcast was purchased with remaining funds from a grant.

VI. Reports from the Director –

- *Admissions Applications* – Metcalf received 790 applications, while U-high received 364. Dr. Jones will get the opportunity to sit in on both admission committee meetings which will occur at the end of March.
- *5 Essentials Survey Update* – The survey closes on March 31st. If you haven't had the opportunity to fill it out, please do so before the deadline. We need a minimum of 20% participation at each school to receive the results. U-high has surpassed the 20% mark, but Metcalf has not. Dr. Jones will work with the leadership team to develop goals moving forward.
- *Visit and Tour of Stanford University & D-Schools* – Dr. Jones had the opportunity to visit Stanford University and a few design schools in late January. He toured with other Lab Schools and COE colleagues, including Mandy Stalets, Kristi Sutter, Brody Walworth, and Dr. Robyn Seglem. The philosophy of each school focused on creating human-centered environments that think about the social/emotional health of students. They believe the school is the community, and the community is the school.
- *Parent Survey Themes* – Dr. Jones received 496 responses to the survey. Of the responses submitted, there were several themes noted for each question:
 - ✓ What is going well for you and your student(s)? - extracurriculars, small class sizes, specials, and friends
 - ✓ What is not going well for you and your student(s)? - communication, and environment-related factors such as culture, climate, etc.
 - ✓ What can the lab schools do to improve things that are not going well? - transparency, communication, curriculum/grading, and parent involvement
 - ✓ What concerns to you have about the lab schools? - increasing size/Metcalf expansion, and culture/climate

Questions/Statements/Observations from CAC Members:

- Do we have a plan for follow-up? If so, can CAC help?
- Will you share these results with the parents?
- Liz has drafted a quarterly survey which gives parents plenty of opportunities to share throughout the year.
- We've been told that the CAC is a collective body, and we should be offering advice and bringing concerns to the Director. However, decisions keep being made without our input. For example, in the State of the Lab Schools address, the pillars were changed without CAC discussion. It appears that our input is not sought or valued.

Dr. Jones stated that the pillars have not been changed; he was only sharing his vision for the schools during the address.

- Since 2015, State of Illinois law states that as a public school who receives attendance-based tax dollars, the lab schools are prohibited from collecting race/ethnicity and economic status (household income) on the admission application.
<https://ilga.gov/commission/icar/admincode/023/023000010B02400R.html>

Illinois State University, however, can and does ask about race/ethnicity on their admission application and gathers financial information through FAFSA.

Eighteen months ago, when the university identified a lack of diversity in race and economics within the lab schools, was the university informed that the lab schools are forbidden by law from asking such identifiers on their admissions application? Since many administrators have since left, how can we verify that indeed the current university administrators are aware that the lab schools are handcuffed by state law when confronting the diversity challenge set by the Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Committee? Can the university be instrumental in amending state legislation to provide an exception for the lab schools in order to achieve its mission of being a model school system?

VII. Open Discussion & Announcements

- *CAC Application Process* - The link to applications will be posted on the district website from April 1st – 30th. Terms for Curt, Liz and Sienna will be expiring, so we will have three open parent-at-large positions. Since Liz and Sienna have not served two full terms, they can reapply.
- *Metcalf Expansion Plan* – A concern was shared regarding the shift in available spots for new kindergarten students. Since we doubled our preschool enrollment, and most of those children will flow into the kindergarten class, we are limiting the number of new

students to be admitted; we have gone from adding up to 25%, to less than 1%, in kindergarten. Is this becoming a “pay to play” situation?

- *Upcoming Fundraising Opportunities*
 - ✓ April 15th at the Proving Ground (Metcalf)
 - ✓ May 8th at Little Beaver Brewery (Metcalf)
 - ✓ April 14th at Fort Jesse Café (U-high Forensics Team)

VIII. **Next Meeting Date:** May 9th from 6:00 – 7:30 pm in the U-high library.

IX. **Adjourn** – Ryan motioned to adjourn, and Jeremy seconded the motion.