TEMPLE SINAI BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING – (Sunday) October 3, 2021

Present [meeting conducted virtually by Zoom]: Michael Baratz, Lori Berman, Naomi Camper, Dora Chen, Ellen Croog, Glenn Engelmann, Cathy Goldwyn, Kenneth Jaffe, Audrey Kramer, Myron Marlin, Matthew Pachman, Debbie Rappaport, Elizabeth Rose, Steve Sacks, Marcie Solomon, Seth Speyer, Laura Steel, Regina Ziegler, Rabbi Jonathan Roos, Rabbi Hannah Goldstein, Cantor-Educator Rebecca Robins, and Acting Nursery School Director Ali Hurewitz. Also present were Religious School Assistant Director Liza Pugh, Chair of the Religious School Committee, Debra Eichorn, and Dr. David Reitman, M.D., a member of the COVID Task Force and American University's Medical Director for the Student Health Center.

Purpose: A special meeting of the Board of Trustees was held to consider the implementation and implications of certain policies and protocols related to health and safety for the re-opening of the Religious School in view of the current COVID-19 resurgence.

Call to order: With a quorum of the Board members present, the meeting was called to order by Temple Sinai President Marcie Solomon at 4:03 p.m.

UPDATES AND DISCUSSION:

- **Overview and Q&A –** The Board met to discuss the concerns surrounding the recent Delta variant surge and the current infectious disease guidance. Marcie Solomon, Rabbi Roos and Cantor Educator Rebecca Robins discussed the updated recommendations regarding proposed COVID protocols for in-person gathering for the Religious School. The Temple Sinai Religious School/ Youth Education Committee (TSRSYEC) met on Sunday September 26, 2021 to discuss the options for return to learning with the COVID-Task Force's suggestions in mind. The goals are to: remain flexible to respond to the needs of our congregation; provide meaningful, high quality programming; maintain the health and safety of students and teachers; create an environment that does not increase family stress caused by further quarantining, particularly for unvaccinated students; and mitigate elementary school classroom risk for the significant spread of COVID across the community. Additionally, on September 23, 2021, in a meeting with the COVID Advisory Group, the TSRSYEC was advised to continue all mitigation protocols – masking, increased hand washing, air filtration, maintaining at least 3 feet of physical distance between classroom participants (and 6 feet when unvaccinated students are singing or chanting), among other precautions. The advisory group also discussed the notification process in the event a student or teacher tested positive for COVID-19 and whether to require vaccines for those currently eligible (12-18) and future eligible (5-11) TS Religious School students and classroom assistants. Implementation of the recommendations of the COVID Task Force will require a change in the operating procedure for the Religious School for meetings on Sundays. Because of the size and number of our classrooms, the School is limited to 10-11 students per classroom plus 2 madrichim and 1 teacher to maintain the minimum physical distancing of 3 feet. Because almost all of classes exceed that size, the TSRSYEC considered the options for the 2021-2022 school year – one that provides space for physical distancing and one where it was not needed – and the Committee looked at alternative program

models for running the Sunday program with physical distancing including: outdoor programming, shorter weekly sessions, and utilizing alternate spaces, etc.

- Cantor Robins' written report was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting and contained two options, with recommendations that the Temple Board adopt Plan B. The TSRSYEC consensus for a short-term strategy is that a hybrid, alternate week programming is the best option at this time (to be temporarily in place at least through December 2021), the benefits of which include: a) implementing a program consistent with the advice of the COVID Advisory Group with learning sessions of substantial length to allow for the most significant in person programming (1:45 hours versus 45 minute mini-sessions); b) increasing the mitigation strategies in the building during Religious School hours without regard to weather changes for outdoor programming; c) maintaining academic education, social emotional learning, community connection, and prayer experiences and learning; d) maintaining relationships with Temple Sinai clergy for students and their families through biweekly online family services; e) decreasing the possibility of quarantine from close contact during the religious school day; f) creating a more comfortable COVID environment for our part time educational team; and g) giving families a predictable plan for school through the end of the calendar year. Dr. Reitman also provided a summary of the medical implications and articulated the reasons why the COVD Advisory Group is supporting this proposal (Plan B).
- There was also an opportunity for questions and discussion about the current policies in place for both the District of Columbia and Montgomery County public schools, the implementation logistics, the potential impact on and disruption for Religious School students and families, and the anticipated changes to programs, enrollment and engagement. There was also discussion about the possibility of using the Temple's flexible and diverse space(s) as an alternative and adding a third session, including the challenges and downsides. The Board also considered a "modified Plan B" with 3 sessions of 75 minutes with no group gathering or t'filah/prayer.
- On motion, the Temple Sinai Board voted by majority vote to endorse a 'new' Plan C that would involve weekly in person learning (with a 3 feet distancing requirement) but with a 'no virtual learning component' to be best determined by Cantor Robins and the TSRSYEC. If such a plan is not feasible, the Board authorizes Cantor Robins to implement her original recommendations and proceed with Plan B for the alternate week in-person vs. hybrid model.
- The above-listed health and safety precautions are considered prudent and necessary to appropriately prioritize health, safety, and well-being and reflects good public health policy designed to lower the risk of community spread of COVID-19. It is anticipated that the Religious School, the TSRSYEC and clergy will develop specific service offerings consistent with these health and safety parameters and Temple values, with the understanding that additional future modifications may be necessary depending upon how the pandemic develops, the changing infectious disease guidance, and whether children become eligible for vaccinations.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Laura Steel, Secretary