

**The Genesee Community Charter School
Board of Trustees
Education Governance Council
Meeting Minutes
March 13, 2019
Held at RMSC Cunningham House, 657 East Avenue**

Board Members Present: Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Nathan Hayes, Marcia Joy, Jessica Nordquist, Jack Peltz, Molly Snell-Larch, Kevin Sutherland, Sherita Traywick, Annemarie Wess
Members Absent: **Larry Coley**, Mark Schiesser (Bold: non-voting)

Educational Governance Council Members Present: Christopher Dolgos, Jennifer Elahi, Shannon Hillman

Invited Guests Present: Maureen Milke, Robin Blew, Melanie Bloodworth (Family Association), Jenny Cos (teacher)

Meeting called to order by Michele Hannagan at 5:31PM

Teacher presentation

Presentation from the Kindergarten teachers focused on strategies for engaging all children across the wide range of differences in cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development. Strategies are informed by Expeditionary Learning resources and Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligences, highlighting 5 entry points that can be used to build understanding: narration (stories, reading, telling); logical/quantitative (mathematical, data); foundational (big questions, perspective/context); esthetics (sensory-oriented; focused on how bodies take in information); experimental (hands-on exploration with materials).

Ms. Cos provided examples of how multiple entry points are used for math, e.g. open-ended questions complemented with parallel tasks that provide students with choices. She read example answers to the question “What’s special about the number 5”, highlighting how students in the class can integrate different strategies when answers are shared out.

Ms. Elahi discussed her instructional work in ELA, focused on how foundational senses impact on higher learning. She uses movement to engage and organize the foundational senses to support all learners, including those who have experienced trauma. The framework is grounded in brain biology, and includes rhythm and repetition, cross-midline movement, and balancing movements. She is producing a guide that integrates movement with teaching practices, disseminating her innovative practices through EL’s curriculum resources and through a grant with School #8. Ms. Elahi highlighted the importance of Charter school environment and school leader support in having the space for developing these innovative practices.

Family association (Melanie Bloodworth)

The role of the Family Association in community-building for the school was highlighted. FA-hosted events provide opportunities for families to come together and make connections to other families. Ms. Bloodworth requested board member donations of services or crafted items for the upcoming online auction, which is the FA’s primary annual fundraiser.

Minutes

Motion 190313.1_BoT

Upon motion of Jessica Nordquist, and duly seconded by Nathan Hayes, RESOLVED, that the minutes of January 9, 2019 be approved.

Voting in the affirmative: Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Nathan Hayes, Marcia Joy, Jessica Nordquist, Jack Peltz, Molly Snell-Larch, Kevin Sutherland, Sherita Traywick, Annemarie Wess

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 190313.1_BoT passed 10 to 0

Financial review:

No significant deviations were identified.

Robin is soliciting quotes from food service vendors (Foodlink, Madeline's, and current vendor Julia Kay).

School leader Update

The board reviewed data from the school climate survey that families completed after the recent Student-Led conferences. A total of 121 responses were received (out of a total of 166 families). The diversity committee has reviewed the results, as well as staff, and a list of follow-up actions was generated. School leader is considering forming a focus group that can look at all 3 school climate surveys (staff, student, and family) together to identify common themes and opportunities.

Committee updates

Advocacy (Shannon): School leader sent invitation to Regents Brown & Norwood to visit the school. Norwood's executive secretary has responded; requesting later dates than those that were offered. SL would like a board member to try to connect by phone with Regent Brown. Both regents were recently reappointed; a board member suggested sending a "congratulations" card that reiterates the invitation.

Discipline (Jessica): The committee reviewed discipline data for the year, by grade, by race & ethnicity (evaluating for disparities). They discussed mechanisms of support for teachers, and modes of communication with families. They hypothesized that the written discipline policy may be a source of mis-communication; the committee is continuing work on revising the language of the policy.

Nominating (Annemarie): The committee interviewed 4 candidates last Monday and ranked them. One of the top-ranked candidates (Don Pryor) subsequently declined board membership but may be interested in joining our Advocacy Committee. Nolica Murray-Fields is the other leading candidate, bringing expertise in supporting social and emotional health at several charter schools.

Motion 190313.2_BoT

Upon motion of Jessica Nordquist, and duly seconded by Jack Peltz, RESOLVED, that Nolica Murray-Fields be offered a position as a community representative on the BoT (pending approval by SED; appointed to the vacated seat that expires June 2021).

Voting in the affirmative: Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Nathan Hayes, Marcia Joy, Jessica Nordquist, Jack Peltz, Molly Snell-Larch, Kevin Sutherland, Sherita Traywick, Annemarie Wess

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 190313.2_BoT passed 10 to 0

Parking lot

Board members were directed to review and prioritize items in the Parking Lot document on google drive.

Charter & credentialing renewal David Frank & Susan Gibbons invited GCCS to a charter information session being held later this month. (Annemarie & Michele in addition to members of the school charter renewal team are planning to attend.) The team is currently prioritizing getting EL Credentials renewed first, with subsequent focus on charter renewal. The EL credentialing renewal involves compiling a list of claims related to what the school does well, in alignment with EL education, and providing evidence to support those claims. School leader received feedback from several individuals from EL before submitting. It was constructed in such a way that it was aligned as much as possible with charter performance benchmarks so the documentation of evidence can serve dual function for the charter renewal in addition to the EL credentialing.

NYSED Charter Meeting

Board President and school leader attended a NYSED meeting targeting new charter applicants. David Frank presented details about what NYSED considers high-quality charter schools and walked through the application process. He highlighted the role of the board in successful schools. David acknowledged the current legal framework that poses challenges for attaining diverse student demographics. There are currently a total of 99 openings for Upstate NY, so the cap is not a particular concern.

Corrective Action Plan

An extension was granted to the end of this week. A phone call with Susan Gibbons clarified that this was an internal tool, and would not be shared publicly (e.g. with the media) unless we wanted it to be. The intention is to prompt thinking about challenges we may face with renewal and address proactively.

During the discussion about enrollment targets, the school leader was asked about supports for students from diverse backgrounds once they are enrolled at GCCS. The school leader has initiated discussions with Robin Blew about possible funds for increased social worker hours and availability of interpreters.

Michele Hannagan excused herself for the remainder of the meeting.

Motion 190313.3_BoT

Upon motion of Molly Snell-Larch, and duly seconded by Jessica Nordquist, RESOLVED, that the Corrective Action Plan be accepted for submission to NYSED.

Voting in the affirmative: Michelle Burack, Nathan Hayes, Marcia Joy, Jessica Nordquist, Jack Peltz, Molly Snell-Larch, Kevin Sutherland, Sherita Traywick, Annemarie Wess

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 190313.3_BoT passed 9 to 0

SED Site Visit

A routine site visit from Susan Gibbons is provisionally slated for April 10th; depending on the duration of the visit, discussion with one or two board members may be included in the visit.

Future Agenda item:

Revised resolution for streamlining EGC and BoT voting and documentation in the minutes.

Adjournment

Motion 190313.4_BoT

Upon motion of Michelle Burack, and duly seconded by Marcia Joy, RESOLVED, that the March 13, 2019 meeting be adjourned.

Voting in the affirmative: Michelle Burack, Nathan Hayes, Marcia Joy, Jessica Nordquist, Jack Peltz, Molly Snell-Larch, Kevin Sutherland, Sherita Traywick, Annemarie Wess

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 190313.4_BoT passed 9 to 0

Addendum: Summary of minutes to be shared with GCCS families

Kindergarten teachers shared with the board strategies that they use to engage all students across the wide range of differences in cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development. The President of the Family Association highlighted ways that the FA supports community-building for the school and promoted the upcoming fundraising auction. The board reviewed results from the school climate survey that families completed after Student-Led conferences. A new board member, Nolica Murray- Fields, was approved for membership. Ongoing work for EL credentialing and charter renewal was reviewed. The board approved a Corrective Action Plan for submission to NYSED regarding efforts to align enrollment demographics with state-mandated targets.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michelle Burack
Secretary of GCCS Board of Trustees
GCCS Board Minutes/ March 13, 2019