

The Genesee Community Charter School
Board of Trustees
Education Governance Council
FINAL Meeting Minutes
November 11, 2020
Virtual Meeting via Zoom (Due to COVID-19)

Board Members Present: Michele Hannagan, Ryan O'Malley, Nolica Murray-Fields, **Elizabeth Pietrzykowski**, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Tasha Stevens, Kevin Sutherland, Traci Terrance, Jess Wanner, Annemarie Wess
(Bold: BOT non-voting)

Board Members Absent: **Ivelisse Gonzalez (joined at 6:12pm)**, **Cheryl Moeller**, Lukas Wilson
(Bold: BOT non-voting)

Educational Governance Council Members Present: **Maggie Deutschbein**, **Becki Mason**, **Shannon Hillman (Bold: BOT non-voting)**

Educational Governance Council Members Absent:

Guests: **Maureen Milke**, **Robin Blew**

Legal Counsel Present: **George DesMarteau**

1. Welcome, Call to Order, Agenda Overview

Meeting called to order by Michele Hannagan at 5:33pm.

Quorum is present.

Welcome to everybody. Reminder to the group that the agenda is in the Google Drive and that the zoom links and documents for the meeting are available there.

2. Greeting--Shannon Hillman

Group typed answers into the chat to the question: "What gets them into the yellow zone?" At GCCS "Yellow Zone" is how students/staff express that they are feeling frustrated or anxious. Board answers included screen time, dog barking, walking on things that stick to your feet, having to clean gutters, cats, writing exhibit labels, everyone talking at once, and getting woken up from a nap.

3. Teacher Pulse Check: Climate and Culture Survey Data & Updates--Shannon Hillman

Shannon reported on the teacher survey sent out to staff 1.5 - 2 weeks ago on feelings about current school climate and culture, and how things are going. Teachers felt that as a group they are doing well and are able to share with each other and have trust in the school leader.

- Teachers were asked how they felt about this fall compared to previous years: 40.6% responded that this fall has been a difficult start, but could be compared to first year and 43.8% responded that this fall has been the most difficult experience that they have ever had at the beginning of the school year.

- A second survey specifically asked if the staff would prefer to stay with the hybrid model or go fully remote. 29% responded that they would stay with the existing hybrid model, 36.5% would move to a fully virtual model, and 32.3% would continue with the hybrid model, but consider modifying it.

On Monday GCCS was told that the school is in a yellow zone per Governor Cuomo's COVID response. This came with mandates for schools, including mandated testing for 20% of in-person staff and students. Tomorrow night the charter leaders are meeting with Dr. Mendoza to get more information. They can provide rapid tests, but in order to keep testing going you have to be a certified site which comes with a list of requirements. The reopening task force met Monday to discuss the pros and cons of staying hybrid for as long as possible or to get ahead of the potential to be forced to go remote if the area goes orange by going remote sooner. Further discussion happened in the Re-opening Task Force Update.

4. Review & Approve Monthly Minutes

Review and Approve October 2020 Minutes

Motion 201111.1

Upon motion of Annemarie Wess, and duly seconded by Traci Terrance, RESOLVED, that the minutes of October 14, 2020 be approved.

Voting in the affirmative: Michele Hannagan, Ryan O'Malley, Nolica Murray-Fields, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Tasha Stevens, Kevin Sutherland, Traci Terrance, Jess Wanner, Annemarie Wess

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 201111.1 passed: 10 to 0

5. Finance Review/Budget Review - Kevin & Robin

Robin reported on the budget review for September 2020. The review covered topics that were discussed at October's meeting and included new updates on:

- Budget to actual report for September 2020:
 - Revenue: as of the end of September 2020, 2 payments have come in (July-August, September-October). \$721K (actual) vs. 734K (budget). Students moved districts so the variance is due in part to timing. We will see this variance again next month. We are at full enrollments so billing should even out by January.
 - Food Service: Reimbursements for September were not able to be put in because the website was down. The website has since been fixed and we will catch back up next month.
 - Instruction: The substitute line was used for a staff member out on disability.
 - Supplies: Noted that supply expenses are always higher at the beginning of the year. Anticipating this evening out as the year progresses.
 - Operations: There was a change in an insurance carrier.
- Overall, the review reports that for September, finances are in the black and that we are close to projected bottom line and comparable to last year at this time.
- Balance Sheet Review:

- Cash on hand: \$467,000, up slightly from last year
- Accrued expenses are NY state teacher retirement
- Assets: down a little bit from last year, not as many grants
- Investments:
 - End of June 30th
 - Vanguard: has a small gain
 - Fidelity: 23K anonymous donation of stocks

Kevin reported on the Form 990 required by the IRS for all non-profits. Kevin completed his letter and review of the Form 990 per the board's request from the last meeting. He has approved the form and it can be submitted.

Motion 201111.2

Upon motion of Michelle Hannigan, and duly seconded by Kevin Sutherland, RESOLVED, that the final Form 990 be approved.

Voting in the affirmative: Michele Hannagan, Ryan O'Malley, Nolica Murray-Fields, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Tasha Stevens, Kevin Sutherland, Traci Terrance, Jess Wanner, Annemarie Wess

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 201111.2 passed: 10 to 0

Kevin reported on the Corrective Action Plan for the State Comptroller. NY State did an audit of expenses and made some recommendations. One of the suggestions from the audit was that the Treasurer review every transaction and supporting documents as opposed to a sampling and the process has been updated to meet that recommendation. There were disagreements about methodology for appropriate supporting documentation but suggestions for making GCCS processes better were reviewed and adopted.

Motion 201111.3

Upon motion of Nolica Murray-Fields, and duly seconded by Tasha Stevens, RESOLVED, that the Corrective Action Plan for the State Comptroller be approved.

Voting in the affirmative: Michele Hannagan, Ryan O'Malley, Nolica Murray-Fields, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Tasha Stevens, Kevin Sutherland, Traci Terrance, Jess Wanner, Annemarie Wess

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 201111.3 passed: 10 to 0

6. Committee Updates

a. Advocacy (Jessica Wanner)

Updates: The committee met with Deb Hamner last week and are moving forward on connecting with local groups including Teen Empowerment, Roc the Future, Ibero, Chamber of Commerce, Urban League, and Starbridge Foundation. The committee will meet next week with Roc the Future and want to have initial conversations with the other groups completed by winter break.

b. **Discipline (Nolica Murray-Fields)**

Updates: The committee has been continuing work on the code of conduct. The work is coming to an end and has gone through Level 1 which focuses on classroom behaviors and are now looking into Levels 4, 5, and 6 which focus on administrative responses and behaviors. The committee is going to work on wrapping up those last few sections to incorporate some old language into the new version. Once those updates are done, the Committee will be ready to share a finished product.

c. **Nominating (Annemarie Wess)**

Updates: None

d. **Personnel (Michele/Shannon):**

Breakthrough Leadership Proposal: The committee is working with Deb Hamner to take a deeper dive into the administrative structure to see what could be improved.

Motion 201111.4 (NOTE THAT NOLICA LEFT PRIOR TO THIS MOTION)

Upon motion of Michele Hannigan, and duly seconded by Jessica Wanner, RESOLVED, that the Breakthrough Leadership Proposal be approved.

Voting in the affirmative: Michele Hannagan, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Tasha Stevens, Kevin Sutherland, Traci Terrance, Jess Wanner, Annemarie Wess

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 201111.4 passed: 9 to 0

e. ***Safety: (Shannon)**

District Safety Plan Approval: Last month the open/public comment was held on the District Safety Plan. No feedback was received and it can now be sent to be approved by the State.

Motion 201111.5

Upon motion of Annemarie Wess, and duly seconded by Traci Terrance, RESOLVED, that the GCCS District Safety Plan be approved.

Voting in the affirmative: Michele Hannagan, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Tasha Stevens, Kevin Sutherland, Traci Terrance, Jess Wanner, Annemarie Wess

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 201111.5 passed: 9 to 0

f. ***Diversity & Equity: (Traci Terrance)**

Updates: Traci reported that Deb Hamner was at the last meeting to get a read on the group and parents, and has been very invested in getting information about the work that the committee has done so far. The committee is focusing on the Wednesday Community Circles and planning ahead for those.

7. School Leader Update: Enrollment & Family Survey Data

Enrollment

Shannon presented the “Who Are We?” document with the addition of regional comparisons. You can find this info on data.nysed.gov as well. Shannon doesn’t believe that this accounts for parochial or private schools. She also compared the percentages to Census information using poverty as the match for free and reduced lunch, and people with disabilities for SPED. GCCS matches well with Monroe County demographic percentages for white students and students of color, but is below in the remaining categories. Progress is being made to more closely match Monroe County in those areas.

Family Survey Data

Shannon presented the high level survey data from the survey sent to families. It was encouraging that communication appeared very strong.

- 86.7% of families felt they knew the expectations for instruction in the fall.
- Email was the preferred method for school communications, followed by texting, letters/backpack mail, and phone calls.
- 52% of families felt this fall was the most challenging experience, 25.5% felt it was familiar to their first year. Comments were encouraging and that the right mechanisms were in place for students to get situated with the structure.
- 82.5% of families preferred staying with the hybrid model, 17.5% preferring switching to virtual instruction. This was asked prior to the changes on Monday with New York State COVID-19 cluster zoning.

Discussion was had on the data and questions about how the survey was shared with families, response rate and on alternatives for getting information out to families.

Outstanding Business:

8. None

New Business:

9. *i-Ready Results*

i-Ready is a benchmarking assessment tool for teachers and students. It is a helpful comparison tool against New York State tests. Fall assessments were completed by grades 1-6 and Kindergarten will be done in January. These i-Ready assessments were administered and taken by the students where they were: some took these at home, or at school where it was monitored by teachers. Assessments were done in both reading and math and show results in Tier 1 (Green--students at Grade Level; Tier 2 (Yellow--students at one grade level below); Tier 3 (Red--students at 2 or more grade levels below). The goal is to have students in the Green, Tier 1 zones.

- *Reading*: domains were encouraging: attributed to focused curriculum with focus on how to read and phonics. Concerns about informational text and comprehension were revealed.
- *Math*: results were lower than normal, beginning of the year and were anticipating slide

Overall, results were more in the “red” than a normal year and there is concern about time to get these students back on track. Today the teachers and staff spent time reviewing the results and thinking about what actions should be taken, and looking at the charts and different

breakdowns of the data. One of the result charts is broken into 5 levels, instead of just the 3 tiers, that include Above Grade Level and 3 or more Grade Levels Below. Additional demographic data can also be extracted broken down into race, ethnicity, ELL, SPED students and other disadvantaged students that identified achievement gaps across these different, historically marginalized groups. Staff worked to review their class data and how that compares to what they are seeing in their classrooms. i-Ready results as well as information from last fall for comparison are in the drive.

Board members discussed the results of the i-Ready testing. Maggie and Becki expressed their concerns about a continued slide in grade level and student performance. Their biggest concerns were about students in the red zones who are two or more grade levels behind and the compounding effects of having to reteach previous grade level content at the expense of current grade level content. Michele expressed concern at multiple factors causing the slide including COVID restrictions as well as family stress and asked about an action plan. Shannon and Becki explained that the Engage NY math curriculum is a big concern because the program did not work well with Response to Intervention (RTI), a system in place to determine students who need additional support and the level of support required from the intervention team. Staff are looking into simple changes to improve this while looking at the cultural implications of the program. Traci expressed appreciation for immediate action and higher level change that includes the breakdown of race and learning style which makes it easier to help specific students. Ryan asked about the realistic goals for improving student performance to get them to their current grade level. Shannon explained that the goal is to get students back on track to their current grade level or closing the gap to bring them closer to where they need to be. Staff is focusing on tightening RTI systems so there is a clear pathway to help students make the most growth they can in a school year. Jess expressed concern of a continued or greater slide if the students go to full remote instruction and would like for staff to have conversations with parents currently doing full remote instruction to help the transition should it happen.

10. Re-opening Task Force Update: Review of Instructional Model Proposal

The Re-opening Task Force met Monday night to discuss the possibility of GCCS being shut down due to the increasing COVID-19 infection rate and the classification of Monroe County as a Yellow Zone. The discussion, based on lessons learned from the March 2020 closure, was focused on the pros and cons of waiting until the school is forced to close due to government executive order, or being proactive and starting remote instruction after Thanksgiving break. The Task Force is recommending that after Thanksgiving Break, GCCS move to fully remote instruction for all students.

By setting a clear timeframe and planning in advance, the goal is to help prepare families and students for the transition, unlike the forced closure in March. The proposed time frame for fully remote learning is from Thanksgiving Break until March 12 (at the end of the next Expedition) at which time the school will phase in the hybrid model. During that time, the Re-opening Task Force would meet monthly to review state and county data and assess the return to a hybrid model sooner.

Board members engaged in a lengthy discussion and shared a variety of questions, concerns and feedback about the about the proposal including:

- Concerns about how moving to remote would widen gaps in access to families (heating problems, free & reduced lunch, single parents, etc.).
- Questions about spots in the RMSC Curiosity Club for GCCS families full time which are available through May.
- The impact of moving to remote instruction on teacher planning time and workload. Some teachers think that getting students all on the same schedule would be helpful for pacing, but expect it to present new challenges such as getting materials to families and prepping materials. Even the best laid plans will not work for all students and families.
- The need for unified communication from GCCS about the next steps and ensuring student to teacher ratios provide proper support.
- The overall teacher consensus is that moving to full remote instruction is a good idea at this time, though there is concern about the social and emotional impact on students over four months of remote instruction and recommendations have been made to re-evaluate the current in-use instruction model at the beginning of January.
- The board will actively engage in providing resources to deal with issues as they arise including student, family, and staff support that may not be available through the school, as well as technological needs. Ivelisse offered to gather resource information to share with Shannon that could help students and families who are struggling and need additional support beyond what the school can provide. The staff will continue to work with the intervention team to embed social and emotional support into instruction and provide additional support based on teacher recommendation.
- GCCS is looking into the feasibility of providing food service as they did in the spring.
- Concerns were expressed about ensuring that decision making is centered around the students and that the staff and board are transparent about that decision making.
- Shannon presented the COVID-19 Updates and Instructional Plan Revisions and Scenario 3: Virtual Instruction Model Information documents to better inform the board on current practices, lessons learned, and the planning that has begun by staff in the last 72 hours to create a master schedule for remote instruction.
 - The bulk of core instruction would occur in the morning and the arts instruction would occur in the afternoon with a more relaxed schedule.
- New York State will supply all schools with COVID tests though there are many questions that still need to be answered, hopefully in the meeting with Dr. Mendoza, including the school becoming a certified LSL testing site. Concerns were raised about testing compliance in order to stay open though it was determined that the testing method is the less invasive option.

The discussion came to a request for endorsement of the proposal by the board from Shannon. Michele expressed that she would entertain a motion to endorse the proposal with the caveat that the instructional model be reviewed in early January by the Re-opening Task Force.

Motion 201111.6

Upon motion of Michele Hannigan, and duly seconded by Ryan O'Malley, RESOLVED, to endorse the Re-Opening Task Force's proposal of moving to a fully remote instructional model after the Thanksgiving Break with plans in place to support that model through March 12, 2020 with the

caveat that the decision to continue in that model will be revisited in January 2021 and at each future Board meeting to determine if returning to a hybrid model can happen sooner (pending county and state regulations).

Voting in the affirmative: Michele Hannagan, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Tasha Stevens, Kevin Sutherland, Traci Terrance, Jess Wanner

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 201111.6 passed: 8 to 0

Open Forum

11. Future Agenda Topics and/or Public Comment

8:13pm--Michele Hannagan opened up the meeting to public comment. No comments were made.

Executive Session

12. Executive Session was not called during this meeting.

Meeting Wrap-Up

13. Review Actions and Agreements

Motion 201111.7

Upon motion of Michele Hannagan, and duly seconded by Allison Shultes, RESOLVED, that the Board adjourn the November 11, 2020 meeting at 8:13pm.

Voting in the affirmative: Michele Hannagan, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Tasha Stevens, Kevin Sutherland, Traci Terrance, Jess Wanner

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 201111.7 passed: 8 to 0

Respectfully Submitted,
Allison Shultes
Secretary of GCCS Board of Trustees
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