

The Genesee Community Charter School
Board of Trustees
Education Governance Council

FINAL Meeting Minutes | March 10, 2021
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, Traci Terrance, Jessica Wanner, Annemarie Wess, Lukas Wilson
(Bold: BOT non-voting)

Board Members Absent: Kevin Sutherland
(Bold: BOT non-voting)

Educational Governance Council Members Present: Maggie Deutschbein, Becki Mason (left meeting 6:30pm), Shannon Hillman **(Bold: BOT non-voting)**

Educational Governance Council Members Absent:

Guests: Maureen Milke, Robin Blew, Deb Hamner
Legal Counsel Present: George DesMarteau

1. Welcome, Call to Order, Agenda Overview

Welcome to everybody! The meeting was called to order by Michele Hannagan at 5:33 pm. A quorum was present.

2. Greeting-Shannon Hillman

Shannon led the greeting for the evening based on today's staff greeting which was "If You Were a Water Molecule What Would You Be". The discussion and greeting the staff did was about the different states of matter and forms that it takes. Board members shared which form of water they'd be: muck, fog, the oxygen molecule, dew, spring rain, water vapor (excited state!), a flood, evaporation, "going with the flow", and other examples.

3. Teacher Presentation and/or Sabbatical Share

None.

4. Review & Approve Monthly Minutes

Review and Approve February 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion 31021.1

Upon motion of Annemarie Wess, and duly seconded by Jess Wanner, RESOLVED, that the minutes of February 10, 2021 be approved.

Voting in the affirmative: Michele Hannagan, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Tasha Stevens, Jessica Wanner, Annemarie Wess, Lukas Wilson

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 31021.1 passed: 8 to 0

5. Finance Review/Budget Review & Board Designated Funds Discussion- Robin & Kevin

Robin reported on the budget to actual review through January 2021:

- Revenue:
- Per Pupil Revenue: Nothing to report.
- Grants: COVID grants & ESSER funds
- Title I & II: Nothing to report.
- Food Service: We have caught up on State reimbursement money. Expenditures remain down because school wasn't in person.
- Field Study: Nothing to report
- Administration: Nothing new to report.

- Instruction: Nothing new to report, long term substitute has taken over for another teacher no longer paid, won't reflect until next budget report.
- Supplies: Known that these start the year high, have leveled out.
- COVID Technology/ESSER Cares: Robin shared that she has broken out the expenditures that relate to COVID/ESSER Cares Act funding to help itemize those expenses. These expenditures were higher than budget and summer stipends were higher than budgeted.
- Operations: Additional expenditures for business expenditures that the board is aware of including charter association membership fees and Breakthrough Leadership contract.
- Expenditures: Nothing unusual. COVID and reopening did cause higher expenses than the original budget. Some stipends were higher. No impact on bottom line budget. Salaries remained flat for this year.
- Overall: The budget review reports that we are in the black at \$188,644, compared to last year at \$137K. Applications are being finalized for additional grant funds to support COVID related expenditures and there should be an application status update at next month's meeting.
- Balance Sheet Review: Strong cash flow. Accounts receivable variance is due to timing.
- Investments: Nothing new to report on Vanguard. Fidelity did go down a touch due to a downward turn in the stock market, but believe that has rebounded. Overall, investments have a gain over the fiscal year.

Shannon provided an update on the number of Chromebooks that sustained damages during remote learning. IT reports that ~30 have been damaged. While insurance was purchased, there were costs involved. A "Go Fund Me" page has been created and shared with families to ask for financial donations to help support maintenance and repairs on the Chromebooks.

Board Designated Funds Discussion--Shannon & Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met this past week and had a conversation regarding the \$2 million in assets and that it might be time to designate the funding for future actions and assign certain amounts of funds to certain future projects, like replication or facilities. Robin explained that this needs to be voted including how much needs to be designated and what kind of label put on those funds. The funds can be designated to multiple labels and the board can shift and change the designations at any time. The government likes to see that you have some purpose that the money is meant to go toward in the future. Mark felt that replication will likely solve the issue of having bulk savings and Michele didn't feel the board needed to have a motion at this time, but perhaps in the future.

6. Committee Updates

- a. **Community Engagement (fka as Advocacy)** (Jessica Wanner)
Update: Commitment and participation in the meetings is going really well! Will be again later this month and in that meeting they group will be creating talking points about facts regarding the replication so committee members can be knowledgeable and share with others in the community.
- b. **Discipline** (Nolica Murray-Fields)
Updates: None.
- c. **Nominating** (Annemarie Wess)
Open Board Position: Still have open board positions, so if you know anyone who is interested please share and a meeting will be scheduled for strategizing.
- d. **Personnel** (Michele/Shannon)
Updates: None.
- e. ***Safety** (Shannon)
COVID & Vaccination Updates: An Executive Order was sent out regarding reporting staff vaccinations however, the guidance around the order remains and requests for further information have not been provided. Anecdotally, Shannon reports that the majority of the staff have been vaccinated based on no more staff communicating a need to schedule an appointment. The school is still adhering to 6-foot social distancing guidelines until further information is shared

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

Updates: The committee started to read the book “My Grandmother’s Hands” about racialized trauma. It unpacks racialized trauma for both people of color and white people. The committee meets twice per month; the first meeting is on the book and the second is business. The next meeting will include discussion about proactive planning with Community Circle and cultural heritage months.

7. School Leader Update: Hybrid Report & Family Culture & Climate Survey Data Review-Shannon

Hybrid Report

At the last board meeting the decision to return to in-person learning 4-days a week was supported and approved by the Board. Since then, Shannon and the staff have been busy getting the school building ready for that transition and students will return on Monday, March 15th. In order for this to happen, some schedules in remote learning were adjusted this week and a professional development day was added on Friday so teachers can continue to set up.

A moving company was hired to help move classrooms and the movers were on campus all day today to help. Other schools, community organizations (Harley, YMCA, etc.) and parents helped coordinate and loaned furniture and materials for classrooms. The majority of desks and Triumph boards (like SmartBoards) were donated, but 30 desks were purchased.

Staff morale feels like it has gone up due to increased in-person time together. The in-person time spent over February Break feels like it was well spent and Wednesday has been helpful in bringing the staff back together to get ready. Maggie reported about the needs of the move for the 1st grade which is one of the easiest moves, just expanding right across the hall and expressed gratitude and encouragement for other staff making more difficult moves. The 2nd and 3rd grade teams have the most challenging moves and will be operating in the shared spaces (lobby, Ballroom & Auditorium respectively) of the Eisenhower building. Becki reported on the 5th grade move—they are expanding into another classroom but on another level—is viewing it as an adventure and new challenge. Students are expressing a lot of joy and excitement to return to the classroom and seeing their classmates again.

95% of students are coming back and only 11 fully remote learners remain. Reasons for remaining remote are varied and unique to each family. Overall, families are excited and for some families this will be the first time their students are in the building. The staff is doing their best to send out information and make the transition as easy as possible. Board members inquired about how easy the transition from remote learning would be should a student want to return after Monday—this decision would be fully supported by the school and classrooms.

Family Culture & Climate Survey Data Review

GCCS sent out the annual survey that combines elements of an EL survey and parent satisfaction survey that has been used for the past few years. 125 responses were received which is a good response rate. The survey shows that families are happy about how GCCS is communicating with them and how often. Responses to the community culture questions were typical and similar to results from previous years and many families feel they can be open and honest with teachers and leadership. Responses to the question of being open and honest with other families are more mixed. The question of “If my child was involved in a peer conflict, it was resolved respectfully” is a question Shannon watches and this year they haven’t had many conflicts due to remote learning which may be responsible for 34.4% of respondents saying they neither agree nor disagree. Questions on family association events were removed due to COVID.

The 6th graders are going to send out the student survey this year. They will be looking at the previous year’s survey and making tweaks to send it out in the next week or so. Shannon will bring that to the next meeting.

Outstanding Business:

8. Replication Update –Shannon

There are not a lot of updates for the Board at this point as the Replication Task Force is still waiting to hear back from SUNY on whether or not we’ll be invited to participate in a Capacity Interview. We should hear back by March 23rd if we have if we are moving into the Capacity Interview step of the process. If

invited, the interview would be held on either March 30, March 31 or April 1. The Task Force is “studying up” and reviewing documents and resources to help them prepare for the interview should we be invited and will be meeting again next week to participate in a mock interview session with Empire Charter Associates.

9. Breakthrough Leadership Update --Shannon & Deb Hamner

Shannon welcomed Deb Hamner to lead the board in a discussion about how the board can continue to move forward and make concrete decisions about diversity and defining what it means at GCCS is a very specific way. Defining this is important for the school community and in the work being done for the replication process, so that when it is discussed everyone is clear on what it means for and within the GCCS community.

Diversity was identified as one of two main topics for the board to continue working on in a strategic way back in the first meeting with Deb and Breakthrough Leadership in January 2020. (The other main goal was “expansion” which with the events of the last few months actions and decisions have already been made on and the wheels are now in motion for that). Diversity was the main topic discussed at the summer board retreat in July/August, the board continued deeper conversations about why we were having a hard time defining what diversity means to GCCS and what we mean when we say that we are diverse by design school and want to be in service of a more diverse school community. *What does it mean? Are we talking about just increasing percentages of racial/ethnic subgroups of students? Of staff?* This lack of clarity has been identified as a point of confusion for some community members and the goal for tonight is for the Board to provide clarity and support for the plan as outlined in the Updated GCCS Statement on Community document.

Enrollment Slides:

Shannon presented slides on Enrollment Information and student population demographics. Highlights from the data presented include::

- Student population demographic data over the 4-year span from the 2017-2018 to the 2020-2021 school year:
 - Black/African American population has increased from 21% to 28%
 - Hispanic population has increased from 8% to 12%
 - White population has decreased from 62% to 55%
 - Economically Disadvantaged population has increased from 34% to 38%
 - English Language Learners has increased from 0.3% to 4%
 - Special Education population has decreased from 11% down to 8%
- Comparison information from the Rochester City School District most recent and available data indicating that their student population is: 56% Black/African Americans; 33% Hispanic and 10% White. When families are looking for schools, they can see that GCCS looks very different from other schools in Rochester.
- Overall student population demographic changes are trending between 4-5% across the last few years with the biggest increases:
 - over the last year due to major changes in the application process (moving to the Good Schools Roc online format vs. the paper format), providing tours, and to the format of the Parent Information night, etc.
 - at the Kindergarten level as that is where the majority of new enrollment occurs
- There are currently 285 applications (121 Kindergarten, 66% economically disadvantaged, 3 % ELL, 12% special education) submitted for this year’s lottery which takes place on April 6th. GCCS is anticipating lower application numbers than last year due to changes in recruitment because of COVID but may also see applications come in even after the lottery is complete

Questions from the Board were raised about the definitions of Economically Disadvantaged and if there is any data on if that number changes over the years or even within a year. Luke asked questions about comfortability within the staff to the shift in student demographic, asking how comfortable will GCCS staff be when students don’t look like their teachers? How will the teaching shift? Shannon responded that we know there is alignment with race and economic status in Rochester and it is a major thing Deb and Shannon discussed. She explained that GCCS can’t bring black and brown students into the school and nothing changes. There needs to be a lot of shifts at the same time and many of those are already in progress.

Updated Statement on Community:

Shannon shared the updated *Statement on Community* that she and Deborah had been working on. The document recognizes GCCS's awareness that Rochester is a highly segregated city and that we understand and acknowledge the history that has created that. It includes GCCS's statement acknowledging this and the school's commitment to doing what they can as a school to make even small changes in breaking down barriers to racial and social equity in our city. This statement outlines targeted goals of this work including the first steps of recruiting black and brown students which include recruiting more diverse staff, supporting family connections and building the capacity for culturally relevant practice. It includes components and outlines key targets we'd like to see within the next 3 years including intentional recruitment of students of color and English Language Learners, and enrollment expansion as GCCS intends to open a second campus that will provide an additional 210 student seats and plans to increase enrollment in racial demographic percentages among students of color by at least 5%.

Deb explained that there needs to be someone solely focused on this work in order to make substantive change. We don't need a diversity officer, we need someone focused on community engagement, building relationships, and making authentic connections that help in an academic and community setting.

A robust board discussion was had with questions about the statement and other questions on what this will look like for us:

- Nolica commented that this will not be an instantaneous change and that when we go through the motions of life it is common to go back into the comfort zone and return to old habits. She would like to see restorative practices be intertwined with this work so that blindspots of implicit bias can be identified and a conversation can be had that isn't punitive. Additionally she would like to see the student body have a voice in these shifts and be able to bring things to light that adults would not necessarily see.
- Jess expressed that "trust" is a word that doesn't come up a lot in conversations about school and that there needs to be a culture shift in earning the trust of families.
- Tasha explained the need for increased support systems that parents can see when they come in the door and suggested a parent group that speaks and shares current and upcoming community needs.
- Traci expressed the importance of engaging the GCCS community along with the greater Rochester community in these shifts so that the school community can understand the choices being made and the intention behind them.
- Ryan suggested scheduling regularly-intervalled check-ins with parents, teachers, and community partners that might be placed on a calendar to guarantee follow through.
- Michele expressed the need for structures of communication and accountability, and to put funds toward this work. She added that this is a tremendously different conversation from ones had with the board in the past and shows great progress.
- Deb explained that other work related to all of the comments made in discussion is happening and some of the strategy documentation isn't included in the Statement on Community, but does exist in another bucket. She also explained that because of replication some of this is having to happen out of order.
- Shannon further explained that the work she has been doing with Deb has been to synthesize the conversations and work that has already been done amongst staff, the board, and the community. This document is an anchor to create the strategic plans for moving forward with the other documentation.

Motion 31021.2

Upon the motion of Michele Hannagan, and duly seconded by Annemarie Wess, RESOLVED, to approve the updated Statement on Community.

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

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 31021.2 passed: 10 to 0

10. Bylaws Revision Per NYSED

The bylaws were approved back in September after we received feedback from the Board of Regents/New York State Education Department that some minor changes be made. Revisions were made based on those recommendations and the revised bylaws need to be approved.

Motion 31021.3

Upon the motion of Michele Hannagan, and duly seconded by Annemarie Wess, RESOLVED, to approve the reviewed bylaws based on the feedback from the Charter School Office of the New York State Education Department.

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

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 31021.3 passed: 10 to 0

11. Enrollment and Admissions Policy Revision per NYSED

The Enrollment and Admissions Policy was revised based on feedback from NYSED along with a model of how to redo the policy so it is easier to follow and in compliance.

Motion 31021.4

Upon the motion of Traci Terrance, and duly seconded by Mark Schiesser, RESOLVED, to approve the revisions made to the Enrollment & Admissions Policy as required per New York State Education Department.

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

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 31021.4 passed: passed 10 to 0

New Business:

12. Data Security and Protection Policy - George DesMarteau

GCCS is in the process of rolling out the necessary steps to comply with requirements for student protection policies. FERPA addresses parental rights to student data and has recently been updated to address digital data. The law requires that the school has a policy in place to protect the data, make sure that parents are aware of their rights to the data, take steps with vendors to adhere to the policy, and have staff trained in data protection. The Board did previously approve the Parental Bill of Rights which was the first step and the next step is to adopt the Data Security and Protection Policy. The documents are based on ones prepared by the government and are in compliance. George proposed that the Board adopt the policy which will be posted on the website in compliance. Small areas will need to be updated with footnotes, but the policy must be in place to be in compliance.

Motion 31021.5

Upon the motion of Mark Schiesser, and duly seconded by Tasha Stevens, RESOLVED, to adopt the proposed GCCS Data Security & Protection Policy as presented.

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

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 31021.5 passed: passed 10 to 0

Open Forum:

10. Future Agenda Topics and/or Public Comment

Michele Hannagan opened up the meeting to public comment at 7:46 pm. No comments were made. George gave an update that we will need to be looking at third party vendor contracts to adhere to the policy in the future.

11. Executive Session was not called during this meeting.

Meeting Wrap-Up:

12. Review Actions and Agreements

Motion 31021.6

Upon the motion of Michele Hannigan , and duly seconded by Ryan O'Malley, RESOLVED, that the Board adjourn the March 10, 2021 meeting at 7:48 pm.

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

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 31021.6 passed: passed 10 to 0

Respectfully Submitted,
Allison Shultes
Secretary of GCCS Board of Trustees
GCCS Board Minutes/ March 10, 2021