

**The Genesee Community Charter School  
Board of Trustees  
Education Governance Council  
Meeting Minutes  
May 13, 2020  
Virtual meeting (due to CoVID-19)**

**Board Members Present:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Nolica Murray-Fields, **Cheryl Moeller**, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, **Elizabeth Pietrzykowski**, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Kevin Sutherland, Annemarie Wess  
(Bold: BOT non-voting)

**Board Members Absent:** Traci Terrance

**Educational Governance Council Members Present:** Becki Mason, Maggie Deutschbein, Shannon Hillman

**Legal Counsel Present:** George DesMarteau

**Invited Guests Present:** Maureen Milke, Robin Blew, Robin Barone, Deb Hanmer

Meeting called to order by Michele Hannagan at 5:33PM

Teacher presentation was deferred this month due to time constraints.

**Finance Review** (Robin Blew)

Still anticipating to end the year in the black. Decreased field study and food services expenditures due to CoVID will result in greater surplus than previously forecast. Refunds from field study deposits are starting to be credited back and will be reflected in next month's review. No other new variances.

**Minutes**

Clarified with legal counsel that "reserve funds" is appropriate terminology for the school's undesignated surplus funds.

**Motion 200513.1**

Upon motion of Mark Schiesser, and duly seconded by Annemarie Wess, RESOLVED, that the minutes of April 15, 2020 be approved.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Nolica Murray-Fields, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Kevin Sutherland, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 200513.1** passed 10 to 0

**FY 2020-2021 Budget Review**

*Considerations:*

- 5.5% reduction in state education funding relative to the previously forecast 3% per pupil-increase.
- Schools receiving Title 1 funds should receive a boost from the CARES stimulus funding.

- SL targeted 3.5% as the recommended percentage to tap from reserve funds to balance the proposed budget.
- There is a new CoVID-19 expense line to cover additional cleaning and PPE expenses.
- There was a cushion in prior years' instructional salaries line (consistently over-budgeted) that will be utilized to cover an instructional position.

*Cost-savings considerations include:*

- Salary freeze (with consideration of bonuses if there is a projected surplus by Spring 2021)
- No or fewer overnight field studies
- No sabbatical awards (which saves substitute salaries)
- No travel for Professional Development
- EL Education has committed funding for teacher on Special Assignment, although less than last year
- Pre-payment of some expenses from FY 2019-2020 surplus

*New proposals:*

- 0.75 FTE Restorative Practice Coach (added to current SW at 0.75 FTE, this makes 1.5 Social-emotional learning positions for the school)
- 0.5 FTE Math Intervention Specialist

Both of these above positions would be covered by the cushion in the instructional salaries.

- 0.25 FTE Transition Coach (bridging the departure of a founding teacher to brand new staff. She is strong in student support, ideal for working with students and teachers with transition back into the building.)
- More availability of Teacher on Special Assignment (working less for EL Education) and Curriculum Specialist (organizing fewer field studies) for instructional coaching and social-emotional support. (These are budget-neutral.)
- Lease addendum to expand use into Eisenhower Lower Level for additional intervention space and social distancing. Renovation would be deferred while we pilot use of the space and determine best configuration.

There was discussion about implications of reductions in Field Studies on the unique learning experience of GCCS--particularly the 6th grade leadership retreat, 4 cities, and NY immigrant experience. The SL is exploring virtual resources to replace some of this in-person learning as a contingency if CoVID is still curtailing travel. Becki Mason discussed how simulations can be adapted--e.g. one year Ellis Island was closed and they did the simulation in a different space. As the parent of a rising 6th grader, she is also grappling personally with the anticipated losses of the Leadership Retreat trip and 4 Cities trip. Ground travel instead of air travel for 4 Cities trip may restore this possibility, and Spring 2021 is far enough away that this expedition is not completely off the table. Putting these costs into the current budget versus leaving room to approve funds later was a consideration as the draft budget was formulated.

Line items that would be reduced if school continues to be conducted remotely were flagged with an asterisk. The idea of a more dynamic budget document in the face of high uncertainty was discussed. The Finance committee plans to conduct a quarterly review in the upcoming year to adjust as things become clearer.

The budget line for rent was increased to reflect the additional lower level space as well as \$1200 per month to cover actual security costs (~3 hours per day with dropoff, pickup and other on-call activities).

A board member extensively involved in previous lease negotiations offered to review the proposed rates to ensure they are congruent with fair market value, and that they include consideration of the expansion and other improvement costs we have historically incurred.

### **Motion 200513.2**

Upon motion of Michelle Burack, and duly seconded by Jessica Nordquist, RESOLVED, that the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget be approved.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Nolica Murray-Fields, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Kevin Sutherland, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 200513.2** passed 10 to 0

### **Charter Renewal Debrief**

Deb Hanmer joined the meeting to facilitate the discussion, focused on internalizing the feedback from the renewal process and translating it to strategic planning and action as a Board.

Questions:

Will the 3 year renewal process be the same as what was required for the recent renewal?

Would our recent lottery results meet their criteria for progress on Benchmark 9? (Are Monroe County as well as RCSD numbers used?) What is our 3 year plan to try to meet these targets?

Can they give us more concrete targets? (The Regents liason had discussed revising their rubrics and criteria to make the recommendations less subjective.) Will we have to change our lottery? (Weighted lotteries were mentioned multiple times in the Regents meeting.) How does retention of families who move outside of the city impact our numbers, as well as the perception of our school?

What does the need to meet these enrollment targets mean for how we evolve as a school? Does meeting these enrollment targets get us too far away from our identity as a school? If we make these changes, will we still be penalized?

Expansion is clearly not an option based on what happened to Buffalo Science Academy. How do we know when to trust the Regents? Can we switch to SUNY as our Regents Authorizer?

Near-term ideas:

Building on what our SL has been doing around data systems. Zipcode analysis, other demographic-informed review of data. (What are the demographic data for the suburban cohort?)

Increasing SEL and student support services

How are we creating a model for equity in education; student voice, academic achievement; comparing these data with RCSD.

How can we strengthen community partnerships around the city, in service. Sharing learning. Other schools and other community organizations. How can these partnerships increase our reach / recruitment.

In preparation for this, culturally responsive teaching and learning, how expeditionary learning feeds this. Kids who feel included and seen participate in this curriculum.

Will the economic sequelae of CoVID naturally increase our ED percentage?

What actions can we take to directly address the identity crisis provoked by expectations that are not aligned with our mission surrounding diversity. (Is there a formal mechanism by which we can find

middle ground with the Regents? How do we become clear and on the same page about this as a Board?)

SPED and ELL were highlighted as areas for improvement; if we make progress here and not ED, is this sufficient? How can we specifically attract these students? (Smaller class size is not possible for accommodating some students with special needs. Our current support for ELL is good; what other changes would make us an ideal choice for these students?)

Longer range thinking: (Focused on Positive vision, leveraging feedback as opportunity)

What do we hope to see in 3 years and beyond?

Strategic outreach to target populations (e.g. refugees); possible lottery weighting.

Our outcomes data were not prominent in the presentation to the Regents; how can we get that story out? Being more out front with pride and positivity about our success.

Board more prepared and knowledgeable about the process, more prepared to help and add value to these conversations. As a Board, making sure we have people who are well-prepared for and actively participating in the site visit conversation.

Although renewing in 3 years is extra work, we just need to continue doing the good work we are doing.

Shannon's vision for Benchmark 9: If recruitment continues to trend the way we have been going with recruitment, we will match Monroe County. We have not been given guidance from Regents re: whether this is an acceptable target.

Covid is exposing extreme inequity; our school data re: engagement with low-income students compared to other districts, how we have been poised to go above and beyond, can serve as a new datapoint re: the success of our model.

#### **Corrective Action Plan for Benchmark 9 deficiencies**

Many items focus on what our school is uniquely equipped to support, particularly with respect to literacy. The plan identifies opportunities to target refugee communities who are currently underserved within RCSD. SL asked for an extension before submitting the CAP to allow discussion with the full board. Between now and June they will receive feedback from the NYSED Charter Office; approval of the CAP was deferred to the June meeting. Board members inquired whether they could participate in the upcoming call with Susan Gibbons given the number of questions about the process of meeting Benchmark 9. Legal counsel provided guidance regarding open meetings law, specifically that multiple board members can participate in a phone call with Susan Gibbons and ask questions for the purpose of clarifying information, as long as deliberation and decisions are not part of the call.

#### **State Comptroller Audit**

A State Comptroller representative will be meeting with SL, Treasurer, and (Maureen) to provide recommendations from their financial audit. Recommendations are largely focused on tightening up documentation, and will be incorporated into the ongoing revisions to the accounting manual. These revisions are slated for review and approval at the June meeting.

#### **Officer Elections**

##### **Motion 200513.3**

Upon motion of Annemarie Wess, and duly seconded by Michelle Burack, RESOLVED, that Michele Hannagan be approved as President of the Board of Trustees.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Nolica Murray-Fields, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Kevin Sutherland, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 200513.3** passed 10 to 0

**Motion 200513.4**

Upon motion of Michele Hannagan, and duly seconded by Michelle Burack, RESOLVED, that Annemarie Wess be approved as Vice President of the Board of Trustees.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Nolica Murray-Fields, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Kevin Sutherland, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 200513.4** passed 10 to 0

**Motion 200513.5** passed 10 to 0

Upon motion of Annemarie Wess, and duly seconded by Michelle Burack, RESOLVED, that Kevin Sutherland be approved as Treasurer of the Board of Trustees.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Nolica Murray-Fields, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Kevin Sutherland, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 200513.5** passed 10 to 0

**Motion 200513.6** passed 10 to 0

Upon motion of Annemarie Wess, and duly seconded by Michelle Burack, RESOLVED, that Allison Shultes be approved as Secretary of the Board of Trustees.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Nolica Murray-Fields, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Kevin Sutherland, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 200513.6** passed 10 to 0

Due to time considerations, the agenda item re: committee assignments was postponed to the June meeting.

**Executive Session**

**Motion 200513.7**

Upon motion of Michele Hannagan, and duly seconded by Michelle Burack, RESOLVED, that the Board move into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. A member of the Educational Governance Council who served on the interview committee was approved to remain present for part of the discussion. The video recording was paused for this portion of the meeting.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Nolica Murray-Fields, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Kevin Sutherland, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 200513.7** passed 10 to 0

**Adjourn from Executive Session**

**Motion 200513.8**

Upon motion of Michelle Burack, and duly seconded by Annemarie Wess, RESOLVED, that the Board adjourn from Executive Session and return to open meeting.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Nolica Murray-Fields, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Kevin Sutherland, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 200513.8** passed 10 to 0

**Motion 200513.9**

Upon motion of Michelle Burack, and duly seconded by Annemarie Wess, RESOLVED, that the Board authorize hiring of Kyle Skovira for the Restorative Practices Coach 0.75 FTE position at the salary rate recommended by the School Leader.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Nolica Murray-Fields, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Kevin Sutherland, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 200513.9** passed 10 to 0

**Motion 200513.10**

Upon motion of Jessica Nordquist, and duly seconded by Ryan O'Malley RESOLVED, that the Board authorize hiring of Sarah Spano for the classroom teacher position at the salary rate recommended by the School Leader.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Nolica Murray-Fields, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Kevin Sutherland, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 200513.10** passed 10 to 0

**Motion 200513.11**

Upon motion of Michele Hannagan, and duly seconded by Jessica Nordquist, RESOLVED, that the Board authorize retention of Stacy Cicero after her retirement from full-time teaching into a 0.25 FTE position as a Transition Coach at the salary rate recommended by the School Leader.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Nolica Murray-Fields, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Kevin Sutherland, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 200513.11** passed 10 to 0

**Adjournment****Motion 200513.12**

Upon motion of Michele Hannagan, and duly seconded by Annemarie Wess, RESOLVED, that the May 13, 2020 meeting be adjourned.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Nolica Murray-Fields, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Kevin Sutherland, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 200513.12** passed 10 to 0

Respectfully Submitted,  
Michelle Burack  
Secretary of GCCS Board of Trustees  
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