



# STARGATE SCHOOL

## Governance Board Newsletter

July 2023

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As we approach the beginning of another school year, we want to recognize our staff who have continued to work throughout the summer to prepare for the return of students. We appreciate everyone for their teamwork, dedication, and for keeping the needs of students foremost in their minds.

The board met for our regular business meeting last week. To comply with new legislation, each member participated in the Oath of Office, including our newest board member, Lindsey Paquette. We look forward to working with Lindsey, as she brings valuable perspective from her service on the School Accountability Committee, as well as management consulting expertise.

Each July, we appoint officers to serve for the coming year. With each member's skill set, this can be a tough decision. Several factors are considered in the selection of each officer, and our discussion can be quite thorough as we evaluate various perspectives. This year, the following members were appointed by majority vote of the board to serve in their respective offices until next July:

President: Lisa Hosfelt

Vice President: Lindsey Paquette

Secretary: Danielle Fox

Treasurer: Samantha Howorko

I feel it is important to note that during the board discussion regarding the role of president, I expressed a concern that should have been discussed in private. In asking about an approach that would be taken to maintain clarity for the board's voice and promote unity, I offended a valuable member of the community in a public meeting, and for that I sincerely apologize. I have reached out to this individual personally.

If you would like more information regarding our decisions beyond what is included in this newsletter, please reach out via [governance@stargateschool.org](mailto:governance@stargateschool.org). We are happy to discuss what we can. Community involvement is vital, and we invite you to attend our board meetings to hear the discussions firsthand. Please know that even when board members disagree with one another and may not be united in our decisions, we remain united in our purpose of trying to do what is best for the students, and in promoting a unified board voice once a decision has been made.

Please join us for our next meeting, August 9th at 6:00 pm in the secondary library. We will be receiving reports from our Executive Directors; discussing plans for the upcoming School Accountability Committee election with the Recruiting and Election Committees; approving Fundraising Allocations and Financial Policies and Procedures; approving a second reading of the revised school logo policy; reviewing and approving the Committee Handbook; discussing a new evaluation process for our Executive Directors; and making plans for our Strategic Planning Session in October.

Lisa Hosfelt

Stargate Board President

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## Recognitions:

- Dr. Cynthia Rundquist for all of her work on the Acceleration and Admissions Policies
- Dr. Robin Greene, Wayne Granger, and Jenn Roach for their work over the summer and engaging with other staff
- The admin team for facilitating a smooth transition in leadership
- Danielle Fox for the many hours spent preparing for our transition to BoardOnTrack
- Administration and board members who invested many hours preparing documents for review
- Dara Knox for her service as Recruiting Committee Chair

Please [email us](#) if there is someone you would like us to publicly acknowledge.

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## Academics Report

- Dr. Greene, along with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Cynthia Rundquist, and board member Dr. Meryl Faulkner, completed revisions to the Acceleration Policy, which provides guidance for placement of students in advanced levels for math and English Language Arts. The updated policy will be posted to the school website.
- Dr. Greene and members of her staff also made updates to the Admissions policy to update eligibility criteria, further define timelines, make adjustments to the appeals process, and update priority status guidelines. The updated policy will be posted to the school website.
- Dr. Greene is engaged in empathy interviews with stakeholders, including associates within the district, to build relationships and offer support going into the new year.
- Dr. Greene has also been working with Mr. Granger on plans for the upcoming school year. They have revised the organizational chart (which was approved within the Board Handbook), reviewed the Reimagine report and recommendations and begun plans for implementation, and are preparing training, activities, meetings, and orientations for the staff's return to school.

## Operations Report

- Ms. Whitney presented on behalf of Mr. Granger, who was out of town and joined the meeting remotely.
- We ended the 2022-2023 financial year with revenues on target and expenses under budget.
- Construction of the loop is in progress and scheduled to be completed in August.
- Ms. Whitney reviewed changes to the Staff Handbook, including a return to a PTO system for staff due to the School Finance Act, which states that charter schools are not subject to Colorado wage law.
- The complete Executive Director of Operations and Finance report will be attached to the [minutes](#), which will be available after approval at the following meeting.

## Committee Report

The Election and Recruiting Committees will begin preparing for the School Accountability Committee election in August. Two parent seats and two staff seats will be open for election this September. If you are interested in participating on these committees, please contact [volunteer@stargateschool.org](mailto:volunteer@stargateschool.org).

## Policy Updates

The Board approved the new Admissions Policy and Acceleration Policy as presented by Dr. Greene and discussed above.

We conducted the second reading of a new policy, [Board Vacancy and Independent Director Appointments \(1.21\)](#). This was drafted to provide clarity for requirements outlined in the school's [bylaws](#). The bylaws define a staff member as a "full-time employee of faculty or administration" (4.1), and define an eligible independent director as "neither a parent member nor a staff member who has not been either within one year of appointment" (5.2.2). A part-time employee is not specifically addressed in the bylaws, so until we are able to draft and approve revisions to the bylaws (formal discussions will begin this year), the board felt the need to address terms related to an independent director position. For example, it may be seen as inequitable for a part-time teacher to become an independent director, while a full-time teacher is currently restricted from such. Furthermore, a staff member serving on the board may need to recuse themselves from multiple decisions and reviews due to a conflict of interest, especially in dealings with the board's direct reports, the Executive Directors.

The policy also addresses the processes used to fill board vacancies and appoint the independent director positions. This is outlined in Section 3 of the new policy linked above.

Due to the timing of this policy being drafted during the summer when community participation is limited, we will be reviewing this policy again in August to allow additional discussion. We will also be commencing our annual review of all policies in the coming months. This is led by two board members.

## Board Approvals

- Staff Handbook
  - Changes were made regarding PTO, as described above
  - Approved as discussed, with two board members assigned to finalize changes with administration
- Community Handbook
  - Approved as discussed, with two board members assigned to finalize changes with administration
- Acceleration and Admissions Policies (described in Academics Report)
- [Governance Handbook](#)
  - The Governance Board Handbook and Board Agreement were officially merged as one document
  - New organizational chart was inserted
  - Changes were made to board responsibilities to align with description in bylaws
  - Some officer duties were changed to more accurately reflect positions
  - Language was revised to further protect board from nepotism by adding a new definition of close family members, clarifying that no two board members can be related
  - Removed restriction regarding board members being prohibited from being employed by the school for two years following termination or resignation from the board
- [2023-2024 Board Calendar](#)
  - Meetings will continue to be held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month with a few exceptions due to holidays and school events
- [Revised Policy 1.13 School Logo Use](#)
  - The Executive Director of Operations and Finance approves logo use
- [Policy 1.21 Board Vacancy and Independent Director Appointments](#)
  - Changes described in Policy Update section

## Board Discussions

- Received an update on the Differentiated Learning Environment and Responsible Leadership goals from the Strategic Plan
- Reviewed recommendations from Reimagine specific to the board and discussed first steps
- Made assignments for committee liaisons and other board responsibilities
- Reviewed features of the new BoardOnTrack program
- Discussed the board training plans for 2023-2024, including training planned during our Strategic Planning session, as well as one to be held in early 2024. We also discussed an upcoming evaluation of our training policy and potential transition to newer resources provided by BoardOnTrack, the League of Charter Schools, and CDE

## Board 101

## Board Officer Responsibilities (from the Governance Handbook 2023-2024)

Board Officers are elected by a majority of the Board each July and serve until the next officer elections. The following specific duties are assigned to each Officer.

### BOARD PRESIDENT

- Act as spokesperson for the school, or delegate as appropriate
- Oversee the sessions of the Board:
  - Call meetings to order and adjournment
  - Call for motions and discussions
  - Summarize votes
- Ensure that legal and ethical integrity is maintained
- Administer the employer/employee relationship with the Executive Director(s):
  - Meet with, or delegate another board member to meet with, the Executive Director(s) on a regular basis to provide support, guidance, and direction
  - Relay the direction of the school as determined by all Board members to the Executive Director(s)
  - Brief all Board members on issues discussed with the Executive Director(s)
- Act as liaison to the District/Authorizer:
  - Attend, or delegate another Board member to attend, all appropriate meetings with the authorizer to ensure that a Board representative is present when needed
  - Ensure that charter contract deliverables and deadlines are met
- Develop and manage agendas
  - Prior to each business meeting, prepare a draft agenda for the following meeting so that agenda items can be reviewed
  - One week prior to each business meeting, send the draft agenda to the Board members for review
  - Ensure the final agenda is posted to the school's website at least 24 hours prior to the meeting
- Prepare documents for review:
  - Governance Handbook for approval at the July business meeting
  - Board Planning Calendar for approval at the July business meeting,
    - update as needed throughout the year
    - ensure most current version is posted to the governance page of the website
- Prepare regular communication for the community, including monthly summaries of business meetings

### VICE PRESIDENT

- Understand the responsibilities and duties of the President and be able to perform these duties in the President's absence
- Work with the President to prepare the agenda and Board documents for all open sessions
- Prepare and lead annual presentations:
  - Presentation to Stakeholders in the fall
  - State of the School in the spring
- Conduct an annual review of the Board Policy Manual
- Lead Strategic Planning:
  - Plan the board retreat and planning session
  - Revise the Strategic Plan document and present it for Board approval
  - Ensure committee goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) are incorporated into the strategic planning process
  - Once approved, share the plan with board members, administrators, and committees

## SECRETARY

- Ensure that minutes of all business meetings are manually recorded
  - Review drafted minutes from the Recording Secretary and finalize for approval by the Board
  - Once approved, minutes and relevant attachments are converted to PDF and posted to the website within 10 days
- Ensure public availability of agenda for each meeting
- Ensure that minutes of executive sessions are mechanically recorded
- Maintain all Board records and ensure their accuracy and safety
- Maintain approved documents according to the Document Control Policy
- Manage document and website updates:
  - Work with the administration to prepare Community and Staff Handbooks for Board review and approval at the July business meeting
  - Work with the administration and designated individuals to ensure the school's website is updated and easy to navigate
  - Ensure that the latest approved versions of board policies and other documents are posted to the school's website
  - Maintain a historical record of motions and executive sessions in existing documents
- Manage Governance Drive access and content:
  - Ensure access to governance folders is limited to appropriate individuals
  - Ensure content is well organized and updated
  - Prepare board packets for meetings, ensuring all relevant documents have been added to the packet one week prior to the meeting when possible
- Work with school technology consultant to manage distribution lists for the Board and SAC

## TREASURER

- Work with the Executive Director of Operations and Finance as needed to provide support for evaluating the budget
- Act as liaison to the Finance Committee and attend Finance Committee meetings on a regular basis
- Maintain a thorough understanding of all financial details of the school, including policies and budgets
- Lead discussions on finance-related agenda items at board meetings

## Upcoming Board Events

### **Business Meetings:**

August 9th, 6:00 pm (secondary library)

September 13th, 6:00 pm

### **Strategic Planning session:**

October 7th, 2023

## Helpful Links

[Minutes](#)

[Agendas](#)

[Meeting Calendar](#)  
[Community Compact](#)  
[Past Board Communication](#)  
[Communication Pathways](#)  
[Strategic Plan and Data Dashboard](#)  
[School Calendar \(for meeting link\)](#)  
[Stargate School Facebook](#)