APPROVED

Girls Global Academy

Minutes

GGA In-Person Retreat

Budget Vote

Date and Time
Saturday May 3, 2025 at 8:30 AM

Location
GGA 733 8th St NW, Washington, DC 20001

Trustees Present
Andria Wisler, Anita Johnson, Beth Blaufuss, Brian Holden, Jessica Giles, Karen Dresden, Laura Bartos, Lauren Johannesson-McCoy, Maria Miller, Rachel Charles, Ricardo Chapa

Trustees Absent
Ivory Perkins, Max Levasseur, Nia Spencer, Wilnie Petrash

Ex Officio Members Present
Karen Venable-Croft

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

Andria Wisler called a meeting of the board of trustees of Girls Global Academy to order on Saturday May 3, 2025 at 9:15 AM.

B.

Record Attendance

C. Approve Minutes

Karen Dresden made a motion to approve the minutes from GGA Board Meeting (ZOOM) on 03-24-25.
Lauren Johannesson-McCoy seconded the motion.
Maria recommended the following edits:
"Anita shared updates on the ~~alumni~~ **alumae** connection network, with two confirmed speakers from Spelman and Trinity. The network aims to foster sisterhood and retention ~~at their schools~~ **at GGA."**
Approved with edits.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. 5-Year Review

A. Recap of the PCSB's conditions and GGA's response

Highlights were provided about the proposed conditions for the continuation of the charter, emphasizing the need for a pathway to meet these conditions.

It was clarified that today's meeting would not vote on a 5-year budget due to a late submission of the more easily understandable budget summary by Ed Ops. Instead, the 5-year budget vote would be held in May.

B. GGA's ASPIRE data last year/year to date comparison and steps towards improvement plan

The board reviewed the ASPIRE data that the DCPSCB will be reviewing at the upcoming 5-year review meeting on 6/2/25. The school's current points earned were reviewed, and the anticipated points for the upcoming school year show an improvement. Some blank spots on ASPIRE metrics could potentially lead to more points. Actionable items include focusing the time left in this school year on chronic absenteeism, 9th-grade on-track, growth to proficiency, college and career acceptance, and MAP growth.

Other key initiatives include the "Because You Matter" program, which has positively impacted attendance and re-enrollment, along with successful events like the Sisterhood Summit and community engagement days. Additional efforts include the implementation of a mentorship program, a partnership with Restore DC, and the formalization of a student government association. Building positive relationships, fostering family confidence, and gathering feedback from families remain essential priorities.

Re-enrollment and attendance are critical factors affecting the budget, with a strong focus on 9th-grade students as they set the foundation for long-term success and impact graduation rates. A great start includes tutoring, literacy intervention, credit recovery, and student support team meetings, alongside relationship mapping, engineering, and

business pathway connections. Growth to proficiency targets 9th- and 10th-grade students, aiming to improve assessment scores through regular progress monitoring and DC CAPE readiness preparations. Data improvements will be supported through a partnership with Empower K12, weekly whole faculty attendance tracking, and data analysis. Finally, fostering a strong teaching and learning culture remains a priority, incorporating personalized coaching, professional development, and celebrations of learning.

C. Discussion

There are challenges and potential solutions for students to enroll in credit recovery programs, particularly for 9th graders, including attendance requirements, costs for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and the need for parental encouragement.

The school has created a simulation to estimate its current points, which aligns with the DC Public Charter School Board's previous assessment. There is an issue of some students not being counted in certain subgroups due to the requirement of a minimum of ten students in each group. The board agreed to look into this further and support Karen in her efforts to ensure all students are counted and their success is recognized.

The upcoming meeting with the Public Charter School Board requires careful preparation. It is essential to have data ready to demonstrate the school's progress and improvements. A previous case highlighted how one school continued its charter with additional conditions, while another chose to relinquish its charter. Given these precedents, the school should engage in a clear conversation about its future, either identifying a pathway for improvement or considering closure. Financial aspects should also be addressed in the next part of the discussion.

The board discussed the potential revocation of the school's charter if it doesn't improve from last year to this year. There is also a need for additional support in the enrollment team to build one-to-one connections with families.

III. Budget

A. A deep dive into the budget

Financial concerns raised by the Public Charter School Board (PCSB) over the past two months include declining enrollment, an unbalanced budget, and reduced expenses. Key issues involve debt coverage ratio, cash balance, and occupancy costs. Despite these challenges, the school's financial outlook is not overly problematic. The PCSB seeks a conservative budget based on an enrollment of 162, requiring the school to demonstrate operational viability at this level. Conversations are ongoing with financial management contractors, the landlord to adjust lease costs, and the lender to address debt coverage

issues. Two budgets need approval—one as a contingency budget for the PCSB and the other as the actual target budget.

The budget approval process has been accelerated with a goal of finalizing it by the end of May. However, it remains unbalanced and requires further refinements. The Finance and Facility Committee must review and approve the 5-year budget. The committee also needs to consider the impact of notifying parents about the change in charter, which could affect retention and recruitment. There was a discussion about the need for more analysis of enrollment patterns before approving the budget.

Adjustments to the contingency budget are necessary, particularly regarding federal revenue and fundraising. Factors affecting the budget include the mayor's uniform per student funding formula and potential congressional decisions. The finance and facility team is encouraged to spend more time reviewing budget details and city-related financial variables. Additionally, questions were raised about the $255,000 reduction in salaries.

B. Break

IV. Public Meeting

A. Budget Discussion and Vote

Moved to online portion of meeting. See meeting minutes for Public Board meeting starting at 11am on 5/3/25.

V. Next Steps

A. Next Steps

Returned to in-person meeting.

A discussion ensued on the school's strategic plan, focusing on the Aspire Framework and the need for improvement. It was suggested to set aside the current strategic plan to instead focus on the shortest path to the greatest growth according to the Aspire framework. The group was asked to individually identify their top three priorities for improvement next year, considering the Aspire system outcomes. These priorities were then tallied together to identify consensus as a group. The board identified three main areas of focus: 9th grade on-track growth, 11th and 12th grade academic achievements, and cultural aspects such as chronic absenteeism and re-enrollment.

The board discussed the transition of 9th graders into high school, emphasizing the importance of data and quality instruction in bridging the gap between students' current and desired levels. There needs to be consistent instruction and the possibility of older students in mentoring younger ones. The board discussed the possibility of a summer

program for incoming 9th graders, noting that such programs are common in other schools.

The board discussed the importance of transparency with parents about the school's data and the need to improve. Extra communication is needed to build urgency for re-enrollment.

B. Review

• Karen and Andria to prepare presentation for June 2nd PCSB meeting, including coordinating public testimony from alumni, parents, and students.
• Board members to submit written testimony for PCSB meeting (Andria to provide link in follow-up email).
• Karen to hold family Town Halls to notify families about re-enrollment and PCSB situation. Board member participation was encouraged.
• Karen to continue efforts to increase re-enrollment numbers before June 2nd meeting. Provide weekly updates on re-enrollment progress towards targets (50% by end of next week, 75% week after, 90% by June, 100% by May 30th).
• Karen to focus on driving improvement in key metrics: chronic absenteeism, 9th grade on track, growth to proficiency, college/career acceptance, and re-enrollment.
• Board to vote on budget prior to the 6/2 PCSB meeting. Potential dates will be provided by email.
• Board to vote on strategic plan for next year at June 23rd meeting.

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 1:22 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rachel Charles

This meeting is governed by the Open Meetings Act. Please address any questions or complaints arising under this meeting to the Office of Open Government at opengovoffice@dc.gov.