



Great Oaks Charter School - Bridgeport

Minutes

GOBPT November Board Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday November 8, 2023 at 5:15 PM

Location

Great Oaks Charter School
375 Howard Ave
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Directors Present

Bea Bagley (remote), Bob Carlson, Corey Sneed (remote), David Zieff (remote), Eva Vega (remote), Matthew Nwosu (remote), Tenssie Ramsay (remote)

Directors Absent

Selena Morgan

Guests Present

Beatrice Mitchell, Benjamin Chan, Farah Martin, John Scalice, Karen Francis-Barnes, Latoya Hubbard

I. Opening Items

- A. Record Attendance & Begin Recording Meeting (if remote participants are present)**
- B. Call the Meeting to Order**

Bob Carlson called a meeting of the board of directors of Great Oaks Charter School - Bridgeport to order on Wednesday Nov 8, 2023 at 5:15 PM.

C. Approve October meeting Minutes

Could not approve minutes due to email migration therefore board members could not review minutes prior to meeting.

II. Finance Committee

A. Finance Committee Updates

B. Chan reported the October Dashboard to the board and states the school has no debt.

Fundraising:

- We have 3 year Barr Grant
- Goal is to raise money and achieve \$100,000 goal

Updates:

- Per pupil rate increased 5% or so which is a significant positive of about 400,000 to the budget for the school.
- School has 50,000 more in Title Funds that was budgeted. This is to offset the decrease in ESSER funding which was used all of FY23.
- As of October until the rest of the year we will not be paying management fee to the Foundation

Audit:

- Auditor will have a Final December presentation regarding the Audit.

Fiscal Policy:

- Needs to be updated: every reference that was towards the Foundation will be changed and will be presented to the board.

C. Sneed asked if we're breaking out the fiscal policy that the board members should be given this.

B. Vendor Approvals

- Veloz Accounting- presented under the Emergency Clause which will allow for the school to continue to get book keeping services for continuity purposes.

- Teachers on Demand- assists with recruiting teachers as this has been an important need for the school. We have a significant 3 resignations in 2 week period. It has been difficult almost impossible to assist the shortage with our current staff. There are no active candidates on CT Reap or other platforms. J. Scalice requested Emergency Approval. We will need to ratify.

- Lyman Orchards- Vendor we used before but paid with a credit card because it was a small group of students but now it was a bigger field trip and were invoiced. We need to ratify.

- Kevin Dill of SNT Education Consulting- Classroom Management and de-escalation methods was a big ask from culture and teaching staff. Students are still experiencing outside violence that's affecting the school.
 - We are able to make some adjustments from our mental Health grant and the Commissioner's Network funding which will make it a Zero cost for the school to hire the consultant. Dr. Francis-Barnes gathered 3 quotes from consultants. This consultant gave us a quote of around 30,000. Kevin Dill has a Doctorate in Education and will be assisting and training staff.
 - The other two consulting agencies were MTG was \$32,000 and Insights to Behavior is \$46,000.

Tensie Ramsay made a motion to Approve Veloz Accounting.

Bea Bagley seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Bea Bagley made a motion to Teachers on Demand to become a new vendor.

Eva Vega seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Bob Carlson made a motion to Ratify Lyman Orchard.

Tensie Ramsay seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Bea Bagley made a motion to Accept SNT Education Consulting LLC. as a recommended vendor provider by John.

Tensie Ramsay seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

III. Executive Session

A. Vote to enter Executive Session

Corey Sneed made a motion to Enter into Executive Session.

Eva Vega seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Executive Session Discussion

Unrecorded discussion held by Board Members and school admin team.

C. Vote to end Executive Session

Corey Sneed made a motion to Close Executive Session.

David Zieff seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Corey Sneed made a motion to have B. Carlson sign for the school.

Tenssie Ramsay seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

IV. Governance Committee

A. Executive Director's Report

Grant update:

- High Dosage Tutoring Grant- total of \$675,000 and has a school budget impact of \$570,000 to the school.
- Low Performing Bond- applied and aimed for Technology and related furniture/supplies for the school. The grant total is \$261,000. This will be used for Chromebooks for middle school and used to build out tutor rooms.
- Barr Foundation- We're at our final year of the Barr Foundation. We are looking into getting into 2 of their portfolios like Innovation and Teacher Certification. We were selected as a Barr Foundation site for February 2024 for their Cohort visit where they will be coming to the school in person to discuss work around leadership/ leadership training and offsite where they will be talking about certain skills. Partnership with the foundation continues to be strong and positive.

Teacher Shortage:

- There is a huge shortage of teachers including our region.
- CT Reap is a huge platform for teacher recruiting. For our current region, there are a total of 0 science teachers available, 1 math teacher and 7 special education teachers available on that site.
- More mid-year leaves for non-instructional employment.
- More teaching periods, more absences for teachers, reduced moral, and puts the school in a difficult position to figure out what are "non-negotiable" aspects of the program vs. moveable or rework-able and the long term impact of those decisions.
- Licensure issues for those willing to teach but are not certified.

Short- Term Action Steps-

- Begun an internship program opportunity for our Fellows to serve in dual capacity as "substitutes" and "fellows" at various parts of the day.
- Reduction of Data Team and Intervention meetings to reduce teacher workload given the current staffing levels
- Reduction of overall teaching time for staff to make better use of current staffing levels
- Addition of a 3D Design course to offset vacancies
- Teacher requested Professional Development from outside source regarding Classroom Management as mentioned before.

B. Bagley asked if the school is in a block schedule and how long do teachers teach throughout the day? J. Scalice states we are on a block schedule and the teachers typically teach 3 and a half to 4 hours a day and the rest of the time is for intervention and collaboration.

More Short-Term Action Steps-

- Emergency Authorization for a Teacher Staffing Agency specializing in Urban School Staffing
- Continued Outreach to local universities and colleges
- Posting on Approved Certification Programs websites for positions through Handshake
- December Hiring Fair for new graduates

Long Term Action Steps-

- Develop a stronger pipeline program for Fellows and Student Teachers
- Investigate opportunities for Residential Certification, similar to Teach for America, in partnership with other local districts
- Bi-Annual onsite hiring fair in conjunction with advertising

B. Bagley asked if we have looked into Retired teachers from the school district to come and work as paraprofessionals. J. Scalice stated this usually comes from the LEA (Bridgeport for Special Ed) and are from IEPs.

K. Francis- Barnes and B. Mitchell attended the meeting to discuss ELA and humanities curriculum.

K. Francis- Barnes discussed:

Use 2 different curriculums for ELA:

1. UnboundEd
2. Fishtank Learning

Unbound Ed is looking at skills and allows teachers to do assessments on students. This prepares them for our Fishtank curriculum.

The main curriculum is **Fishtank**, for 6-12th grade and allows students to go deeper with rigorous questions, they are able to look at multiple types of texts, get a rich understanding of the content they are studying and critically think. Fishtank is DEI so everyone has a cannon book but for the most part they are focused on DEI.

Literacy Block:

This year we have switched our benchmark assessment in Skill Time. It was changed to Lumos. Teachers get assessment, grade level test prep and support and intervention support. During 30 min block, students are able to use paperback books and online remedial support.

Middle School Components of ELA:

Core Instruction:

- 60 min ELA Core Block
- 30 Min Skills

Small Group Instruction:

- Students are group on Lumos and classroom teacher data

Interventions:

- Through Lumos Learning
- Fellows play an important role to support throughout Core. They take small groups and work with individual students.

High School Components of ELA:

- 70 Min ELA Core Block

Student- Centered Instruction:

- 1-1 conferences
- Small Groups
- Feedback check ins

Fellows Role:

- Support throughout Core
- Take Small groups
- Lead tutor groups

B. Mitchell discussed Coaching:

Lesson planning and intellectually planning

- Weekly Meetings- 1 on 1
- Support teachers with intellectual prep for the upcoming week
- Support teachers with unit concept mapping
- Reviewing student work data from classroom and/or checkpoints
- Plan and Practice (see it, name it, do it)- adapted from Leverage Leadership

Coaching support:

- Research-based strategies for instruction
- Co-teaching Model
- In the moment feedback and implementation
- Observe and provide feedback after class
- Peer observation
- Learning labs
- Video reflection

Coaching Tiers: (3 tiers)

Tier 1: teachers receive once every 2 week walkthroughs, micro coaching

Tier 2: Based on evidence from Tier 1 walkthroughs, teachers are selected for additional support through a formal coaching cycle for 4-6 weeks with weekly or bi-weekly meetings.

Tier 3: Teachers who need comprehensive support will work through their school admin to create an Instructional Support Plan and/pr Corrective Action Plan. Then, teachers will receive individualized coaching support for a period of 6-8 weeks with weekly walkthroughs and meetings.

B. Carlson asked if there are reading requirements throughout the year? K. Francis-Barnes stated there are reading requirements of 20- 30 minutes a night and need at least 2 vlogs a week. There is also SSR time- read for about 15 minutes throughout the time.

B. Director of Operations Report

L. Hubbard went over Operations

L. Hubbard stated that we are in the implementation process for ADP. We need to make a decision for our funding strategy. How much as an employer we want to contribute to our health plans for staff.

Once implementation is complete, we will train staff on how to use ADP.

Open Questions we have:

- Transition to ADP 401k plan or stay with our current 403B plan provider

- Discuss partial deductibles met by employees given the transition
 - C. Sneed advised L. Hubbard to ask ADP with the excess funds how can they then be used to cover any short falls that employees may have and see what ideas they have.
- B. Carlson asked if the school has a matching 401k? L. Hubbard stated that the school has 403B and employees does a match 2% of employee contribution.

L. Hubbard went over utility systems control plans.

- B. Chan negotiated a reduction from 5% to 10% on school building and tutor housing.
- Utilities jumped 38% and the goal is to lower this number.
- A meeting was held with B. Chan, M. Little and L. Hubbard and Scott from Nupower. Scott will review the plan and get back to the school with more ideas on how to save money.
- Retrocommissioning- get a 3rd party to come in and take a look at HVAC and electrical system and they will make sure everything is working properly as a second set of eyes.
- The school had another meeting with ABS.
 - ABS manages all systems that controls the HVAC system. This was a meeting to make sure that everything is working properly and see what we can improve on. They brought to our attention that the way our current HVAC system works is that it's either heating or cooling. If we turn the system down or shut things down, instead it kicks the system into cooling which takes up more energy to heat back up.
 - ABS also recommended putting curtains up near thermostats in order to regulate the temperature.

V. Other Business

A. New Business

No new business.

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 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bob Carlson

To be amended per Governance Committee