



Great Oaks Charter School - Bridgeport

Minutes

GOBPT February Monthly Board Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday February 8, 2023 at 5:15 PM

Location

Great Oaks Charter School - Bridgeport

375 Howard Avenue

Bridgeport, CT 06605

Directors Present

Bob Carlson (remote), Christopher Mcmillan (remote), Corey Sneed (remote), David Zieff (remote), Eva Vega (remote), Tenssie Ramsay (remote)

Directors Absent

Diane Gordon, Selena Morgan

Guests Present

Janay Garrett (remote), John Scalice, Latoya Hubbard, Lauren Perkins (remote)

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 Feb 8, 2023 at 5:22 PM.

C. Approve January meeting Minutes

Corey Sneed made a motion to approve the minutes from GOBPT January Monthly Board Meeting on 01-11-23.

Christopher Mcmillan seconded the motion.

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

II. Governance Committee

A. Introduction of new board member(s)

David Zieff who was introduced at the December board meeting, did not need another formal introduction.

Bea Bagley, gave a brief intro about her background as a retired teacher from Fairfield public school system. Bea taught for 40 years across K-12, Served as a Middle School Dean and now serves on the Fairfield Foundation for Education - to raise grant money for teachers to apply to innovative programs the board of education may not fund. Bea also talked about her 4 grandchildren that keep her busy.

Welcome Bea!

B. Motion to add David Zieff as new board member

Corey Sneed made a motion to add David Zieff as new board member.

Christopher Mcmillan seconded the motion.

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

C. Motion to add Bea Bagley as new board member

Tenssie Ramsay made a motion to Motion to add Bea Bagley as new board member.

Corey Sneed seconded the motion.

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

D. Motion to add David Zieff as finance committee member

Corey Sneed made a motion to add David Zieff as finance committee member.

Tenssie Ramsay seconded the motion.

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

E. Motion to add Bea Bagley as new member of governance committee

Tenssie Ramsay made a motion to add Bea Bagley as new member of governance committee.

Christopher Mcmillan seconded the motion.

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

F. Executive Director's Report

J. Scalice gave an overview of today's meeting to include

- January testing data review
- Recap and learnings from the Barr Sponsored Kipp visit
- Separation from the foundation - update on staff notification, parent notification and consultant

January Testing Data

EdMentum Testing for Math & Language Arts

EdMentum is an SBAC style assessment that has proven to be accurate with SBAC projections (+/-4%). This assessment feeds directly into the ExactPath Individual Students System used for recovery and advancement during our FLEX Time periods. Edmentum provides data in four proficiency categories; Below, Approaching, or Exceeds.

J. Scalice noted students come in 3-4 years below grade level when they meet us at 6th grade.

IAB Testing for Reading/SBAC aligned

IAB testing (Interim Assessment Block) is provided by CSDE and is created by SBAC. This assessment uses SBAC items and provides proficiency data in three categories; Below, At/approaching, Exceeds.

ELA Data

EdMentum ELA Testing Data - this assessment measures Language Arts; the writing component of SBAC

Grade 6-8

- Below - 27%
- Approaching - 35%
- Meets - 23%
- Exceeds - 8%

J. Scalice noted this is significant growth from previous years

Reading IAB Data- Based on the Standard Deviation of the test, it is more likely than not that Below students would achieve a 1 on SBAC, and Exceeds students would achieves

at least a 3. At/Approaching students are within the Standard Deviation of a Mid-High 2, or low 3 -

Grade 6-8

- Below - 44%
- At/Approaching - 40%
- Exceeds - 16%

Based on the standard deviation because of smaller sample size of questions, they can only guarantee students in level 1 and 4, students at high two or low 3 results in at/approaching.

B. Bagley asked a question about comparison analysis from last year to this year, with a curiosity about cohort data. J. Scalice indicated that yes, we look at cohort data as well as students' incoming 5th grade scores.

Math Data

EdMentum Math Testing Data: This measures all grade level standards (full comparative to SBAC):

Grade 6-8

- Below - 52%
- Approaching - 27%
- Meets: 10%
- Exceeds - 3%

Covered Standards Data: This is based on performance of standards covered up to this point:

Grade 6-8

- Below - 46%
- Approaching - 28%
- Meets: 19%
- Exceeds - 7%

J. Scalice noted for the board that GOBPT switched its curriculum this year to mid school math. So we looked at what materials has been covered by the program so far this year as well as how it compares to the SBAC standards. At this point, students have already achieved the SBAC target from last year which was 13% - it is of note also, that our students came in at about 6% standard at 6th grade. 6th grade saw significant gains but we have a lot of work to do left for math.

When we look at the covered standards data, we see meet/exceed portion going up to 26% so we are at 11 points above proficiency scores compared to last year - we are well within the range of the 10% increased proficiency scores that we projected at our July board retreat.

SBAC Progress Monitor

Targets - 32% ELA, 22% Math

ELA current progress- 32%

Math current progress- 19%

Student Data Profile February 1, 2023

Parent received a very detailed profile of student's academic achievement, SBAC performance and disciplinary data in easy to read format. Attached to this was also ways parents could assist children at home and our after school offerings.

J. Scalice reviewed the various after school offerings, including traditional after School, 5-7 pm support, and 24/7 support through Paper.

Kipp Boston Visit

as a part of our Barr Grant, GOBPT were welcomed to join a review of the KIPP School in Boston. J. Scalice shared a snapshot of the School, describing it as a high performing charter school outside of Boston that's often referred to as a no excuses school but they've changed parts of their climate and culture.

J. Scalice reviewed **KIPP at a Glance** to include the following:

- High Passing Rate - one of the highest passing rates in MA on the MCAs Grade 10 assessment - 74%
- Coaching - 7 full time coaches and 4 classroom teacher coaches; part-time
- Student Support - 5 full time guidance counselors, 2 "Match" counselors, and a Director of Counseling
- Culture Team - 3 Full-time Culture Team members and a Director of Culture
- High School Admin - 2 Assistant Principals and 1 Principal who also coaches teachers and student mediation/discipline
- Student Population - Grades 9-12; 487 students

Fairly comprehensive model in terms of class offerings with a lot of building support.

D. Zieff had questions about how long KIPP school has been around - J. Scalice explained that the KIPP schools is a national name that has been around for a while, so well established.

Key Takeaways

Instruction - the classroom model was focused highly on cooperative group work on pre-made worksheets, small group instruction, limited direct instruction (teacher talk), with clearly established and enforced routines and rituals. Students discussed punitive consequences for small infractions with a "Saturday Detention" most common

Budgeting - Available data suggested between \$18,000-\$21,000 per student in expenditures. Regardless of funding differences, there was little evidence of waste in budget, evidence of well planned space usage, and clarity on the focus of how their budget aligned to their priorities as a school.

*J. Scalice has asked for the Barr Foundation to broker a conversation with the KIPP School to talk about how they align budget priorities and see how they maximize their budget. Trying to move us a little away from historical spending trends and move us towards priority alignment budgeting.

Student voice- While all students on the panel were in AP/Honors programs, all students expressed considerable consideration of their ideas, requests for feedback on staff, and positive changes to the climate of the school through the acknowledgement of their concerns.

Chris Pellegrino and Heather Chila, High school principal and assistant principal went up to Manchester to visit a school, they said the student board was a part of the disciplinary process as well. J. Scalice also shared that they'll be visiting a school in RI in March that will enhance our learning.

C. Sneed asked a question about the historical trend in spending concerns around budgeting. J. Scalice confirmed that yes, he is talking a bit more about allocation percentages based on priorities (e.g. % of funding for instruction, etc.).

B. Carlson asked about the funding per pupil compared to ours here in BPT. C. Sneed clarified that majority of our budget goes to program & B. Carlson confirmed this has been a priority for a while, that money goes to students not administration.

B. Chan shared that per pupil funding is tax based rather than needs based.

Separation Update

J. Scalice gave an update as it relates to the separation from our CMO - Great Oaks

Communication and Hiring

- All staff has been notified as of 2/7/23. Staff was informed of changes to service, impact on programs, creation of central office and the positive tone of discussions. Staff was also informed of the ongoing commitment to the school from the Foundation and the continuation of the Fellow Program. It was received well and staff that has been here longer, were less surprised given the gradual changes over the years.
- Parents will be informed through electronic and paper notification beginning 2/14/23. This will be in the form of the jointly created letter between the foundation and the school previously shared.
- The RFP was made available to private contact as well as publicly through Linked in and our website jobs page. Several promising candidates have sent resumes for review and interviews have already started. We expect a significant update in a few weeks with at least one candidate for the Board to review. J. Scalice noted the conversation was robust with our current candidate; educators from CT that served across the state; started own charter school and central office; has a PhD in law and is familiar with business separations as well.
- B. Carlson shared the decision by the board to find and hire a project manager for the separation. B Zieff asked when the formal separation date will be and what areas we are focused on. B. Carlson said it'll take as long as we need to do it right, no current firm date.

G. Director of Operations Report

Certification & Enrollment

L. Hubbard echoed J. Scalice's sentiments in welcoming new board members - it's been a long time since we've had a full board of directors, so it's nice to see.

L. Hubbard shared that we are in the process of enrolling for our 23-24 SY.

Important Dates

- Application launch - Saturday, January 14th
- Lottery Date - Thursday, April 6th (Changed from Friday, April 7th)
- Open House Dates - March 8th & March 15th

Marketing Efforts

- Hearst Media Marketing - Pre-Roll Video, Stream Audio, Social Media Marketing (90k + impressions)
- Lawn Signs & Family Referral Incentive

- Call Banking
- Postcard Mailing

Applications Received

Grade

6th grade - 15 applications received, 100 Open Seats
7th grade- 18 applications received, 13 open seats
8th grade - 17 applications received, 2 open seats
9th grade- 31 applications received, 8 open seats
10th grade - 6 applications received, 0 open seats
11th grade - 4 applications received, 0 open seats
12th grade- 1 application received, 0 open seats

Total applications received: 92

Total open seats: 123

Certification

Update on progress

- 78% teachers certified
- 18% pending certification
- 4% missing credentials

5 of the 6 new employees hired are non-certified

Certification Compliance, Audit & Process

• CSED Compliance

- 100% certification
 - 50% state certified
 - 50% Temporary Certification (No More than 30% Charter School Education Permit - CSEP)

• Audit Requirements

- Per Pupil Dollars used to cover teacher salaries for only the period of time that a teacher is certified
- Process for minimizing breakdown or gaps in certification process for non certified candidates

Historical Data - Hiring Certified Teachers

SY 2020-2021

- 20% new hires - not certified
- 15% Returning staff- temporary certification

SY 2021-2022

- 31% new hires - not certified
- 12% returning staff- temporary certification

SY 2022-2023

- 30% new hires- not certified
- 15% returning staff- temporary certifications

Previous Recruitment & Certification Processes

Recruitment

- Intent to return Surgery sent out in March
- Job postings on various job boards
- invitational recruitment fairs
- staff referrals

Certification Processes

- Application submission prior to year end for returning staff on temporary certifications
- Initial review of transcript for non-certified staff members
- 2-4 weeks timeline for completing application and submitting official transcripts to CSDE
- Bi-weekly meetings

Improved Recruitment

L. Hubbard shared that after taking feedback from the board and revising current processes, the school has enhanced some of its recruitment strategies

- The intent to return survey went out Friday, February 10th (sent out in March last year)
- Scheduling info sessions with our partner schools to recruit teachers who are on track to completing teaching certification programs
- Attending a minimum of 5 recruitment fairs (inclusive of out of state.- e.g. HBCUs)
- More in depth pre-screening process using our Greenhouse Recruitment & Onboarding Platform
- New LinkedIn Professional Page

- Community Partnerships

L. Hubbard shared more details about the school's enhanced internal process for recruitment and hiring, including centralizing and streamlining initial review of applicant and candidates prior to interview or hiring, to ensure, particularly for credentialed roles, that the candidate is certifiable and can provide documentation ahead of an offer.

Revised Onboarding Plan

L. Hubbard reviewed a new onboarding packet that welcomes new employees, directs them on who the leadership team is and their role/function, a fleshed out agenda for the first week, and allotted time to review certification and expectations for employment as it relates to certification. Lastly, there is a calendar, reflecting a credentialing update the last Friday of their first month.

C. Sneed made a suggestion that for the onboarding document, we add a QR code that links to the leadership team's respective calendars and/or contact information to make it easier and more accessible.

D. Zieff asked about the financial implication to having a teacher who starts not-certified and for some reason cannot complete certification. L. Hubbard noted we still get the funding based on enrollment, but we wouldn't be able to use the per pupil dollars for the period of time the person is uncertified.

It's something we keep an eye on so we don't run into any major budget issues down the line. D. Zieff asked what the crux of the problem is around certification. L. Hubbard noted that the national teacher shortage has significantly contributed to the way the state and school has had to manage certification and teacher/school needs. L. Hubbard also indicated that in the past, they've had to let teachers go who were not able to be certified but/and also in the case where a role cannot be filled because there are no prospective certified teachers, they've had to keep a teacher on.

B. Bagley asked about comparative salary in our school/district compared to other districts. J. Scalice noted we are significantly above other school districts, but/and also, this is because we also have a longer than typical school day.

B. Bagley also asked if once a teacher gets a masters if their pay goes up, much like other school districts and J. Scalice noted that no, it does not go up like other districts. When a teacher gets a masters degree, there is a change in the courses that they are able to teach, the school also looks at hard to staff areas and they also offer incentives regarding additional work (e.g. after school). Our teachers that come in with experience and masters degrees, we offer stipends for coaching, etc.

C. Sneed clarified that there can be a significant budget impact as it relates to certified vs. non-certified teachers, but we have not had a significant problem in previous years.

C. Sneed also noted that we cannot commit to the same levels of salary increases when teachers pursue masters degrees because of our budget - we might not be able to maintain that type of commitment, which is why J. Scalice offers stipends, which are one time incentives as opposed to an ongoing financial commitment that we cannot keep up with due to budget restrictions.

III. Finance Committee

A. Finance Committee Updates

B. Chan shared the school is in a much better position than in the past generally speaking.

Current Cash Position

A. Current Cash Position

Checking: \$ 1,073,430

Food Service: \$ 57,792

Reserve: \$ 244,260

Total: \$ 1,375,482 - to last through the end of March, we were funded January - March for the Quarter

Ben is expecting another \$300,000- \$400,000 or so approximately to come from available funds from two sources, including one quarter's worth of special ed per pupil dollars coming from Bridgeport (~\$130,000), and ESSER funding (II & III) - after reallocation, etc. another ~\$300,000 additional funding

- Credit card balance: \$ 3,757

B. Chan addressed a few questions about burn rate, current cash position, reserve and money incoming versus what has already been accounted.

B. Chan also gave some historical information about how the school has established the reserve and the limitations on how a reserve is built and with which funds.

D. Zieff asked if we had an endowment, is that something the state would be able to dictate and B. Chan indicated no, that's part of the charge of being a public charter is fundraising.

B. Chan shared that one of the things we've targeted in operating support for fundraising, we set a target for raising at least 100,000 or so in additional support each year.

B. Chan gave a brief background on each of the funds provided to the school (e.g. ESSER, Title, State/Local, USDA, etc.) at the request of B. Carlson, for new board members' knowledge.

B. Chan also reviewed current grant applications, approved budget, amount we've spent so far and amount remaining. He also reviewed the limitations/restrictions on the funds the school has received so far. The budget has to be build, in this case on learning recovery/learning loss, equitable technology, parent/community and student mental wellbeing, as well as a safe school building.

B. Chan noted that we are under budget on personnel but that's to account for summer salaries.

B. Chan noted that facilities and school operations broadly are a little high on spending, explaining the building issues we've had, supplies/repairs/maintenance and utility costs that are higher than average. In school ops. we've added a lot of digital platforms.

D. Zieff asked about the reforecast to ask if it was a 7 month, 9 month, or 12 month forecast. B. Chan shared that early in June before fiscal year ended last year, the board approved a budget, but there have been a lot of changes given the grants we've received and staffing (e.g. there were less fellows than the original plan), so rather than giving the approved budget only, everything would look off. The reforest then, is about a more accurate projection about what the rest of the year will look like.

B. Vendor Approvals

Cornell University Online Certificate Program

Nutrition & Health Living Program PD - for our Food Services Manager

Cost of program \$3,000 for the year - billed every other month.

Christopher Mcmillan made a motion to Approve new vendors.

Eva Vega seconded the motion.

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

IV. Foundation Updates

A. Foundation Updates

L. Perkins emphasized the foundation's support of the school with the transition, and noted the J. Garrett has been a great partner to work with in moving the project forward until the consultant comes on board. She also discussed that we'd be working on the next year's budget in the coming week.

Lastly, L Perkins shared that she will be moving on to a new role outside of the foundation, and J. Lombardi would be interim CFO - and many will remember her from previous relationship with the school and GOF.

J. Lombardi reintroduced herself and shared her history with the school - she supported in the writing of the charter and set up of the school's operational structure. J. Lombardi comes back to GOF after completing her MBA and working for an education think tank.

V. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

New Business

B. Carlson asked J. Scalice to give a recap of agreements we have with local colleges and universities and how these partnerships secure professional development and recruitment strategies for teachers, americorps fellows and in building our career and college readiness program.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bob Carlson

To be amended per Governance Committee