



Great Oaks Charter School - Bridgeport

Minutes

GOBPT May Monthly Board Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday May 10, 2023 at 5:15 PM

Location

Great Oaks Charter School - Bridgeport
375 Howard Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Directors Present

Bea Bagley, Bob Carlson, Christopher Mcmillan (remote), Corey Sneed (remote), David Zieff (remote), Tenssie Ramsay (remote)

Directors Absent

Diane Gordon, Eva Vega, Selena Morgan

Guests Present

Benjamin Chan, Janay Garrett, John Scalice, 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 May 10, 2023 at 5:27 PM.

C. Approve April meeting Minutes

David Zieff made a motion to approve the minutes from GOBPT April Monthly Board Meeting on 04-19-23.

Bea Bagley seconded the motion.

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

II. Governance Committee

A. Executive Director's Report

J Scalice gave an overview of ED report to include

- Spring data
- Generate Update on Testing Preparations
- Hiring
- Dissolution Timeline
- Enrollment
- Safety Update

Spring Data (March 20-31)

- Math testing begins next week, the following week is ELA
- Math Goals: Increase overall proficiency scores by 10% points by end of year
- ELA Goals: Increase overall ELA Proficiency scores by 10% points by end of year
- Growth Goals: Increase overall student growth by 10% points by end of year

Math Action Steps

- Step 1 - Give students the full SBAC practice assessment, which comes from CT state
- Step 2- After reviewing data assign specific teachers, fellows and interventionists to small groups of students to hyper focus on identified skills for those in the "high 2" range for 4 weeks
- Step 3 - Monitor progress of all students with additional targeted intervention time for those showing high growth for 4 weeks

ELA Action Steps

- Step 1 - students engage in literacy SBAC related assessment over 2 days (ExactPath)
- Step 2- Align upcoming units to focus on remaining high-leverage standards for deeper focus for all students (high-leverage standards are standards that are consistently repeated on the SBAC).

- Step 3 - Differentiate groups and intervention to target identified need areas for high-frequency standards on SBAC based on student need over 4 weeks

Spring Math Performance

- Proficiency - SBAC Practice Assessment - 14.5%; 4% overall proficiency increase vs. '22
- SBAC Projected Assessment - 17%, which is 6% overall Proficiency from 2022, short of 10% projection
- Growth
 - Spring Growth- 38%
 - Projected SBAC Growth-42%
 - 11% Total Growth (typical growth is 4-7%), this type of growth will improve our rating with CT state
 - 1% over 10% projection
- Of Note - 6th/7th grade have already exceeded their 10% total growth projection for the school year

Spring ELA performance

- SBAC Aligned Assessment - 30% Proficiency; 6% overall proficiency increase since '22
- SBAC Projected Assessment - 32%, 8% Overall proficiency from 2022, just short of our 10% projection
- Projected SBAC Growth- 41%, 10% total growth, which exceeded to 10% projection.
- Of Note - Priority areas of evidence claims, context clues, and essential understanding/main idea saw over 50% of all students exceed projected scores

General Update

- J. Scalice gave an update on community partnerships and fundraising
- Community Partnerships
 - Social Justice Day - April 25th, GOBPT hosted 15 community organization that participated and work with our students; organized around seminar model, self selected by students. We had an opening and closing ceremony and an upcoming call-to-action to impact/effect change within their community. We were happy to bring this annual event back post covid. Community partners were impressed by student engagement.
 - D. Zieff asked about measuring success for this event
 - J. Scalice noted that student survey and community partnership survey is how the success of Social Justice Day is assessed. The topic of social justice day is always selected by students.
 - Increasing Portfolio - Through the efforts of Albertha Brown, our Director of Community Outreach, we have grown our community organization portfolio to over 30 partner organizations. GOBPT now has a stronger network than

2-3 years ago, to include more mental health resources, drug prevention, after school providers, and counseling. This has been vital post-covid where parents are reporting more alcohol and drug use by students as a direct result of self medicating for anxiety, etc. We've been able to bridge the gap for care that they need and would typically take weeks to access going through routine pathways.

- Organizing and Fundraising - Call for members to participate in a committee to help begin to leverage partnerships into more direct support of our school through fundraising and opportunities for direct connection.
- D. Zieff pledged \$5,000 to the school to help 5 of our students currently enrolled in college through Post University, to support their tuition needs. D. Zieff has a goal of \$10,000 and has already asked board chair, B. Carlson to help match his contribution(s). D. Zieff noted that sharing the potential impact of the career and college pathway for students is a clear opportunity for fundraising. D. Zieff expressed a call to action to the board to lean on their relationships to bring more funding in.
- J. Scalice noted that they are thinking through a fundraising and community organization(s) committee (strategy) to identify unique, specific programs at GOBPT that can be shared with community partners/funders.

Hiring Strategy

Hiring Strategy is in process. We had two of our administrators attend college fairs and mock interviews this last week to start.

Strengths

- Increased visibility to new teachers from certifying colleges
- Cultivation of existing staff and fellows into teaching positions
- Increased experienced teacher interest (5-10 years of experience, now applying to our school; interested in leadership opportunities like after school, etc. for admin consideration)
- Strong retention rate - we are looking at 89.1% retention of current staff, that usually fluctuates by 3-5 teachers by end of summer

Weakness

- Certification concerns for incoming staff members
- Continuation of staff members with temporary certifications
- Certification application timeline
- Replacement for non-certified staff members

T. Ramsay asked if it's difficult to find and hire certified teachers and he indicated that yes, but/and also it's contingent upon the time of year. There are peak times that are more conducive to finding and hiring certified teachers.

J. Scalice reviewed team **STRATEGIES** to address any challenges in hiring practices and strengthen what is already going well as it relates to hiring practices.

- Staff Retention - continuing opportunities for increased payment with additional responsibilities through stipends
- Internal Promotion - Identifying staff with credits aligned to certification to promote opportunities for classroom transition (looking at fellows, climate members with bachelors degrees or ed background, so we can promote into opportunities for student teaching or substitute teaching as they get their licensure).
- Partnerships - Increased partnerships with local colleges and universities has increased our access to newly certified teachers for hire
- Hard to staff areas- Continued training, enrollment opportunities and tuition assistance for staff looking to certify in hard to staff areas
- Payroll Requirements - Evidence of pending certification through CSED or Certifying body priory to payroll assignment; when we do make an offer to staff, that documentation has to be received prior to being added to payroll
- Conditional Offers - Connect offer letters to evidence of certification for staff on limited certification (long term substitute licenses for example)
 - D. Zieff asked about hiring potential teachers ahead of their graduation; J. Scalice noted that no, we hire once certified

Anticipated Vacancies

Middle School

- 1 technology teacher
- 1 math teacher
- 1 science teacher

High School

- 2 science teachers
- 1 math teacher

J. Scalice shared that the anticipated vacancies are based on intent to return forms, certification, and conversation with staff. We typically experience anywhere from 3-5 staff members informing us between June and August of relocation to other districts closer to home or for advanced opportunities. Current projected retention - 89.9%

B. Bagley and D. Zieff asked about the specific certifications needed for grade level and content (e.g. 6th grade math).

B. Director of Operations Report

Dissolution timeline

L. Hubbard reviewed a proposed timeline for separation of services from the foundation, in key three areas: Tech, Human Resources, Finance & Operations. We anticipate starting the IT components this month, towards completion in August. The 2nd phase would be Human Resources inclusive of employee benefit expansion, which we will begin in July with the anticipated completion of offboarding in December, new benefits starting January 1. Finance & Operations starting in November, completion in April/Early May, or upon completion of all aspects of the audit, including filing the 990

Tech - Align with school calendar year, tech team work timeline of 6-8 weeks over summer, and minimal student and staff disruption

HR & Benefits - Align with tax year, allows staff PD time prior to student return after winter break

Finance - Allows time to complete annual audit and aligns with timeline to produce the final 990 in May.

L. Hubbard gave an enrollment overview for SY 23-24

All seats in grades, 7-12 are filled with a growing waitlist; 6th grade has 11 open seats remaining. We are continuing the recruitment process through marketing, contacting families in the area, reaching out to community partners, offering open houses, etc.

L. Hubbard noted it's still early and we tend to see attrition in May/July, usually at the 9th grade, which typically has the highest wait list. But for now, we are in a good spot. This time last year we had a lot more than 11 seats to fill, so this is great.

Safety Update

At the recommendation of the board and after much conversation, we've been planning to make several renovations that would increase the security of our staff and students, and the two key areas are our high school main office entrance area and the girls and boys bathroom located in high school wing.

- Security Grant Award & Construction- In March 2022 Great Oaks Charter School was awarded a security grant through the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection for \$120,975.00 (Grant letter in board packet for review); \$95,219 comes from the state, and will match up to \$25,757 in excess of the \$95,000, the state will match the school contribution
- We plan to use the grant funds for the high school lobby front entrance and boys & girls bathroom modification(s) with doors that can be locked, to shift ease of access

III. Finance Committee

A. Consent Agenda

Bob Carlson made a motion to authorize C. Sneed as treasurer to sign 990 and engagement letter for auditor as a part of annual process.

Christopher Mcmillan seconded the motion.

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

B. Finance Committee Updates

Dashboard for April

B. Chan shared cash position is currently at 1M to take us through the end of the year. We also have available drawdowns of Title funds, up to \$350,000 and some additional ESSER dollars if needed; once grant is complete and closed out and tag expenses, then we can draw down.

Food account was 24,000 at end of April; since then, USDA has funded us further.

Fundraising - Barr grant (\$166,000) but we also have the ball rolling on fundraising, B. Chan is encouraging us to keep up that momentum, for our milestone goal of raising an additional \$100,000

Expenses - we have not drawn down full budgeted amount for ESSER; this was the expectation that we might have additional donations and contributions above and beyond the Barr grant; school salaries are lower because we have teacher summer salaries to consider (160,000 going into summer). One highlight of concern being addressed by the school, are expenses as it relates to facilities, utilities, etc. (\$70,000 above what we budgeted); janitorial took a hit this year, almost 70% higher than previous month; over budget from what we expected by \$136,000. Repairs have been higher, closer to \$80,000 including HVAC, elevator maintenance, and increased security.

FY24 budget summary finance plan

B. Chan gave an overview of the FY24 projected budget. Decrease in revenue from grant funding (private & public); reductions in personnel and non-personnel expenses. End up in the green with a balanced budget for end of year. We are expecting a slightly lower amount in revenue - J. Scalice has worked on a staffing model for middle and high school - with a note that the middle school is on a corrective action plan, with required staffing to meet the asks of that corrective action. Contracted services is lower because of a large chunk of GOF management fees being eliminated, some of which is being compensated in the school's staffing model; in terms of the building, we are factoring in what we think will be a realistic amount and we still come out whole in a balanced budget for end of year.

Tenssie Ramsay made a motion to approve FY24 budget proposal.

Bea Bagley seconded the motion.

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

Bob Carlson made a motion to approve consent agenda as presented - vendor approvals.

Tenssie Ramsay seconded the motion.

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

Bob Carlson made a motion to approve SY 23-24 calendar and dates at a glance.

Bea Bagley seconded the motion.

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

IV. Foundation Updates

A. Foundation Updates

No foundation updates

V. Executive Session

A. Vote to enter Executive Session

Corey Sneed made a motion to enter executive session.

Tenssie Ramsay seconded the motion.

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

B. Executive Session Discussion

C. Vote to end Executive Session

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 7:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bob Carlson

To be amended per Governance Committee