APPROVED

Great Oaks Charter School - Bridgeport

Minutes

GOBPT February Board Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday February 12, 2025 at 5:30 PM

Location
375 Howard Ave.
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Directors Present
Bea Bagley (remote), Bob Carlson, Corey Sneed (remote), Daniel Luciano (remote), David Zieff, Matthew Nwosu (remote)

Directors Absent
Eva Vega, Robert Traber, Tenssie Ramsay

Guests Present
Benjamin Chan, Farah Martin, John Scalice, Latoya Hubbard

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance & Begin Recording Meeting

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 12, 2025 at 5:40 PM.

C.

Approve Last Month's Meeting Minutes

Daniel Luciano made a motion to approve the minutes from GOBPT January Board Meeting on 01-15-25.
Bea Bagley seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Finance Committee

A. Vendor Approvals

No new vendor approvals.

B. Finance Committee Updates

C. Sneed went over the Education Financial System, which is a once a year report for the State DOE was filed. The 990 narrative is available and we need approval.

- Vote is below.

C. Sneed also discussed needing approval to sign off on the fiscal policy.

- Vote is below.

B. Chan went over current cash position and dashboard. This is an additional 400 per pupil due to the new calculation. At the next meeting we will have a revised budget.

B. Chan reports our checking account is 1.5M, 15,966 for the food account and 288 for the reserve account which we generally don't touch.

The other bright news is that at the end of March we will have the new and 4th quarter allotment per pupil and we will have access for reimbursement for all the grants at this point. B. Calrson asked how late are we in the receivables? B. Chan reports for food is 45 days which is normal; 15 days before we file. The good news for Bridgeport is that they paid for Q1 and we submitted Q2 at the end of December.

Overall our actual total revenue does exceed total expenses so we are in good shape.

Salaries, we are accruing and tracking summer payroll so we are on track.

C. Sneed asked if we have talked with Dinsmore Steele, Broker, for ADP pricing? L. Hubbard states that we should get an updated document for open enrollment and then until we have the updated document, she will be able to negotiate.

Bob Carlson made a motion to authorize Corey Sneed, Board Treasurer, to sign the 990.
Daniel Luciano seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
Daniel Luciano made a motion to authorize Corey Sneed to sign off on the Fiscal Policy.
Bob Carlson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

III. Governance Committee

A. Chief Operating Officer's Report

L. Hubbard went over COO report.

Enrollment:

- 6th grade has 10 applications
- 7th grade has 18 applications
- 8th grade has 8 applications
- 9th grade has 48 applications
- 10th grade has 13 applications
- 1th grade has 6 applications
- 12th grade has 5 applications

Total application number is 108.

Our applications are coming in from the Bridgeport and surrounding areas.

Community Engagement:

- We hosted our first annual coat drive
- Collected over 500 items
- Successful event by Adriana Jordan, Attendance Coordinator and Albertha Brown, Director of Community Partnerships!

B. Chief Executive Officer's Report

J. Scalice went over CEO report.

Cell phone usage:

- Student cell phone usage and access has been significantly highlighted since the return of students to a traditional learning environment post-COVID closures. As students struggle to return to pre-COVID performance benchmarks, distracting behaviors have become a significant focus for school systems across the country.

When developing Policy, there are three guiding principles used:

- The ability to observe and ensure implementation and enforcement in a reasonable manner
- Consequences of actions in consideration to impacts on class time, school attendance, and reasonability
- Policy is made for the majority and not in consideration of the exception

Media and what the Media is saying:

- While most media outlets appear to support cell phone bans for school districts often citing studies, it is important to note that studies are limited and have not shown causation.
- Strategies discussed in many pieces on the topic cite examples where steps have worked and does not indicate failure rates or costs.
- Studies conducted on cell phone usage have not engaged other factors such as socioeconomic status or pre-existing student habits in relation to school policies and conflate cell phone access to increased anxiety and depression not distinguishing between social media usage and cell phone access.

Important thing to consider:
Disruption or Distraction?

- This distinction is important as it is clarified under CSDE Suspension and Expulsion guidelines regarding “disruption to the educational process.”

Three primary options for Cell Phones
1.cell phone ban
2. Cell Phone Restricted Use/Access
3. Cell Phone Limited Use/Education

Considerations - Bans
Easy to monitor compliance through visual observation

- More upfront student and parent resistance, eventual compliance based on consequences
- Consequences are used to force compliance based on increasing severity
- What is the ladder of consequences and eventual maximum action for consistent failure to follow policy?
- How will students be checked for cell phones and where will they be stored if they are located?
- What are the additional costs associated with locating, storing devices, and replacing functions used for educational purposes??

Considerations - Limited Use

- Difficult to monitor through observation and requires clarity of observed implementation
- Limited to no student and parent resistance
- Limited ability of teacher to monitor appropriate use results in little to no infractions reported, resulting in limited to no consequences

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- What are reasonable expectations for implementation for a teacher and how is this measured for adult compliance and can consequences be applied equally?
- How are limited or educational uses determined?
- What is the typical educational usage in a class when compared to uses not aligned to expectations?

B. Carlson would like to know what the teachers think about policies.

HS Limited Use:

- Usage expectations limit students to photographs of slides, notes, translations and calculations for all students.

MS Limited Use:
Usage expectations restrict phone usage to explicit teacher permission and are expected to be stored and not accessed during class time.

Currently HS has limited use policy. HS was for college and career readiness, a lot of it is cell phone usage in the workplace. The other is self regulation with cell phones.

MS has restrict phone usage policy. This means teachers to decide when students can use their phones. Phones are expected to be put away if they don't say they can be out. D. Luciano, Teacher Board Representative, states that the middle school has a good policy. There is a sense of community in the MS that they know why certain students use their phones such as the MLL students.

C. Sneed states that he would like to be in line with the other districts so there is some uniformity. A full ban is problematic and not having any policy is definitely problematic. Dr. Nwosu would also like to know if there needs to be a change in our policies? J. Scalice, CEO, went over observations.

High School Observations:

- Visual observations show a significant percentage of students engaged in off-task behavior for periods of time with observational data argued as “educational use” by adults based on their inability to observe student screens

- Longer periods of observation often result in hybrid-use observations of students; engaging in non-educational and educational usage during the same class period
- Also noted: Non-distracting but non-educational usage with high-frequency. Example: students engaged in individual assignments and completing tasks and work products using earbuds to listen to music that is non-disruptive

Middle School Observations:

- Visual observations show very low to no cell phone access in most classrooms with higher observation rates outside of class (lunch room, hallway) at times, but not with frequency
- Longer periods of observation confirm visual observations

Considerations for Recommendations

- Would changes to current policy create more or less time on task for students?
- What impact would changes have on career and college readiness?
- Would changes to policy increase or decrease the ability of teachers to effectively implement and monitor the policy?
- Can changes to the policy be effectively communicated to parents and students easily and clearly with a clear rationale?
- What is the anticipated timeline for implementation if a change were to occur?

Board discussed openly the policies and what that looks like for parents, students, teachers and the school in general.

IV. Other Business

A. Board Assessment- Board on Track

This is a tool on Board on Track so it is based on your perception. The data is to structure any additional support, change role of board. It is short and important data and part of compliance.

V. 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 6:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bob Carlson

Attention: Times and Locations are subject to change.