



Great Oaks Charter School - Bridgeport

Minutes

GOBPT July Board Retreat

Date and Time

Wednesday July 29, 2026 at 8:30 AM

Location

Brooklawn Country Club

500 Algonquin Road

Fairfield, CT 06825

Directors Present

Bea Bagley, Bob Carlson, David Zieff, Marie Casper, Matthew Nwosu, Robert Traber, Tenssie Ramsay

Directors Absent

Daniel Luciano

Guests Present

Benjamin Chan, Brian Frazier, Christopher Pellegrino, Denise Linares, Farah Martin, John Scalice, Karen Francis-Barnes, Ryanne Davis

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Bob Carlson called a meeting to order on Wednesday Jul 29, 2026 at 8:31 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

Marie Casper made a motion to approve the minutes from GOBPT June Board Meeting on 06-15-26.

Bea Bagley seconded the motion.

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

D. Review and Sign Conflict of Interest Forms

F. Martin shared with the board of directors the conflict of interest form.

E. Set Meeting (Governance, Finance and Board) Calendar for SY 26-27

B. Carlson and the rest of the board of directors discussed meeting dates and times. The official meeting schedule is as follows.

2nd Wednesdays of the Month:

Governance- 4:00PM- 4:30PM

Finance- 4:30PM-5:30PM

Board - 5:30PM-6:30PM

II. Vendor Approvals and Finance Goals 2026-2027 School Year

A. Vendor Approval

B. Finance Goals

Finance Goal: Closer planning & tracking of spending aligned to each department's budget

Action Plan: Standardized budget plans & enhanced coding to track dept. spending by purpose

Goal: Quicker completion of audit process

Action Plan: Early preparation of key documents and analysis: targeting mid-August

Goal: Continued efforts to reduce costs to generate a \$100,000 surplus

Action Plan: Close monitoring of new custodial staff in comparison to SMG costs

Goal: Enhanced use of Sage Intacct software

Action Plan: Prepared key report templates & searched for certified Sage consultants

Goal: Improve cash management & banking services

Action Plan: Review of First County comparison with Chase at next Board meeting

Goal: Develop Capital Expenditure plan together with Facility Manager

Action Plan: Map expenditure needs by systems group, priority and timing

III. School Performance Review

A. School Performance Review

Q: In what ways is Great Oaks Charter School more effective than Bridgeport Public Schools?

1. Stronger ELA Growth

- ELA Growth (All Students): Great Oaks = **55.5%**, Bridgeport = **52.0%**.
- ELA Growth (High Needs Students): Great Oaks = **55.0%**, Bridgeport = **51.4%**.

2. Better Middle School ELA Performance

- Grade 7 ELA Proficiency (Levels 3–4): Great Oaks was approximately **27.4%**, slightly above Bridgeport's **25.8%**.
- Grade 8 ELA Proficiency: Great Oaks **30.3%** vs Bridgeport **25.8%**.

3. Higher Science Achievement

- 2024-25 Science Proficiency (Level 3 or 4): Great Oaks = **24.6%**, Bridgeport = **20.9%**.

4. Stronger Arts Access

- Arts Access: Great Oaks earned **100% of possible points** compared with Bridgeport's **74.7%**

5. Better Postsecondary Outcomes

- Postsecondary Entrance: Great Oaks = **56.6%**, Bridgeport = **49.7%**.

6. Better Long-Term Graduation Outcomes for High-Needs Students

- 6-Year Graduation Rate (High Needs Students): Great Oaks = **90.2%**, Bridgeport = **78.6%**.

Q: In what ways is Great Oaks Charter School less effective than Bridgeport Public Schools?

1. Improve Physical Fitness Results

- Physical Fitness Rate:
 - Bridgeport = **42.1%**
 - Great Oaks = **10.7%**.

2. Increase Math Achievement

- Math Performance Index (All Students):
 - Bridgeport = **44.9**
 - Great Oaks = **39.1**

3. Expand College and Career Readiness Participation

- Percent Taking CCR Courses:
 - Bridgeport = **84.2%**
 - Great Oaks = **66.7%**

2026-2027 Goals-

Goal 1: Improve Physical Fitness and Student Wellness

- Raise the Physical Fitness indicator from **10.7%** to at least **30%** over the next accountability cycle.

Goal 2: Increase College- and Career-Readiness Exam Success (SAT)

- CCR Exam Pass Rate: Increase the college readiness rate from **24.7%** to **35%**.

Goal 3: Improve Math Growth

- Increase Math Academic Growth from **42.1%** to **47%+** for all students.

IV. Middle School Presentation

A. Middle School Presentation

Q: In terms of educational programs, what is the most crucial issue(s) facing the Middle School?

Primary Issue

- Students are entering middle school with significant unfinished learning in foundational mathematics
- Students begin the year one to three grade levels below proficiency making it difficult to access grade-level curriculum without targeted support.

Math Preparedness
How Are We Responding?

Providing students with more time practice Math

- Targeted re-design of Math Intervention

- Content Experts pushing into Math intervention to model instruction practice
- Purchased curriculum
- Focus on unit aligned foundational skills
- Focus on Tier 1 instruction
- Provide Professional Learning
 - Lesson Study
 - Building the Thinking Classroom

Q: What added resources that are not presently provided would assist you in your work?

1. Funding for Saturday Academy -Separate funding to establish a 20 week Saturday Intervention Academy
2. Pipeline to STEM- Educator programs and learning programs to build out STEM department
3. Certified Math Interventionist- Certified Math Specialist to work specifically with Tier 2 and Tier 3 students
4. Technology- An additional Chromebook Cart

2026 - 2027 Middle School Goals

Tier 1 Behavior Structures- Creating classroom cultures that hold students to high expectations

Engagement & Discourse- Provide teacher skills to promote deeper student collaboration and thinking

Math Achievement- Targeted Approach to Intervention Structure

Strengthen Leadership Monitoring & Accountability System - Targeted Action to improve teacher ownership of classroom culture

V. High School Presentation

A. High School Presentation

Q: What added resources that are not presently provided would assist you in your work?

Partnerships- Connection to college and career resources for students

STEM Pipeline- Educator programs and learning programs to build out STEM department

Labs- Supplies for room 118 & 148

Technology- Additional Chromebooks

Q: In terms of educational programs, what is the most crucial issue(s) facing the High School?

1. Depth of dual enrollment partnership
2. Limited scope of STEM programs
 1. STEM electives
 2. STEM pathway

3. Access to resume building opportunities tied to student college and career preparedness

1. Traditional internships
2. Networking opportunities
3. Trade related experiences
4. Field related certification programs

College, Training Program, STEM Career- 44 of our 2026 graduates are attending either a 2 or 4 year college

Training Program- 23 of our 2026 graduates are enrolled in trade school/training program

STEM Career- 24 of our 2026 graduates are going into STEM careers

2026-2027 Goals: 2026 - 2027 High School Goals

Student Experience:

Class Attendance -Targeted action to increase period attendance for all students

Pathway Expansion- Students driving their own learning experience

Engagement & Discourse- Data driven opportunities connected to student voice

Student Voice- Student voice incorporated into future planning

VI. Math Curriculum Presentation

A. Math Curriculum Presentation

K. Francis-Barnes went over Math Curriculum Overview with the Board of Directors.

We currently use MidSchool Math- Supports the basics and builds fluency to close the gaps in learning

- Uses a scaffolded model to move students from concrete application to abstract reasoning
- Build real world connections
- Aims to counter the national trend of achievement dip that occurs in the middle grades

High School Core Math Program:

- **Problem-Based Learning:** Students build understanding by doing math and solving non-routine problems first.
- **Equitable Access:** Built on the belief that all students can learn grade-level mathematics.

- **Consistent Routines:** Uses predictable structures like "Notice and Wonder" and "Which One Doesn't Belong?".

High School Math intervention

Problem-based, Tier 1 acceleration model that keeps all students engaged in grade-level mathematics.

Eliminates traditional remedial tracking by providing support within core instruction.

Built-in scaffolds help students access rigorous, grade-level tasks.

Diagnostic warm-ups identify unfinished learning before new instruction begins.

Daily formative assessments ("Cool-Downs") monitor student understanding.

Real-time instructional adjustments address learning gaps as they emerge.

Focuses on accelerating learning rather than remediating below-grade-level content.

VII. CEO/COO Report

A. CEO/COO Report

Q: What is a major area of concern facing Great Oaks Charter School?

Teacher Availability

While steps have been taken to reduce barriers to certification, teacher shortages still persist.

Current Reality: CT Highlights*

- Over 1300 teaching vacancies
- 563 vacancies for Science, Math and Special education

Great Oaks Vacancies

Certified Vacancies: 1 Math

Total Vacancies : 4 Total Vacancies

- 1 Math Teacher
- 1 Accountant
- 1 Culture Team
- 1 Maintenance

R. Davis, HR Manager, discussed Recruitment and Retention with board members.

FY26 Hiring Volume:

Successfully onboarded **16** new hires during the FY26 cycle w/ **13** returning.

Active Outreach:

Attended 7 education career fairs and collected 50+ resumes combined, resulting in 1 direct hire.

100% Certified Status Maintained:

Prioritized certifiable candidates across all hiring streams, successfully maintaining our 100% certified staff status.

Strategic Recruitment Pillars:

Fellowship- Continue to have an ongoing pipeline recruiting Fellows each year

TFA Partnership- Secured 3 teachers in high-need areas (Special Education and Science)

Referral Incentive- Awarded employee referral bonuses for 2 consecutive years

Retention-

Opportunities

Staff members are provided and encouraged to apply for additional opportunities. Opportunities are designed to be inclusive of high-percentages of staff encouraging them to explore roles aligned, but outside of their typical duties.

Celebrations

Off-Site and On-Site events are planned throughout the year to celebrate staff attendance, accomplishments, and show gratitude.

Certification Support

A wide range of program and support offerings designed to support employees from entry level to certified positions at reduced costs.

Establishing a Pipeline:

EXPLORE: Fellowship

AmeriCorps Great Oaks Fellowship

- Re-established partnership with Great Oaks Foundation regarding Tutoring Program
- AmeriCorps service awarded
- Provides direct to student academic support through tutoring
- \$8,000 Education Award for completion (years 1 and 2 of service)
- Ideal for college graduates uncertain of education careers

ENGAGE: Teaching Resident

Great Oaks Fellowship

- Combination of Great Oaks Foundation and Great Oaks Bridgeport programs through university and college partnerships
- Two-Year CSDE Certification Program

- Provides direct to student support through tutoring and transition into student teaching
- Ideal for college graduates or change of career candidates interested in pursuing a certified position in education with scaffolded supports

IMMERSE: Teach for America

AmeriCorps Teaching Certification Program

- Re-established partnership Teach For America
- TFA Members receive summer training preparation for teaching positions in fall
- TFA Members receive AmeriCorps service credit
- Combined support from TFA personnel and school-based personnel
- Provides a pathway to certification in one to two years
- Two year commitment at site
- Ideal for college graduates or change of career candidates interested in pursuing a certified position in education through hands-on application in real-time

Dr. Brian Frazier spoke to board members about Fellowship and Residency:
Development and Support

Fellows-

- 5 Returning Fellows (year 2 or Year 3)
- 3 New Fellows (2 from Bridgeport!)
- Will go back under GO Foundation and AmeriCorps
- Monthly meetings with me to discuss career options and choices.

Teacher Residents-

8 Teacher Residents

- 6 of the Residents came through the Fellowship
- Teacher Residents include Elementary Education, ELA, Special Education
- Must be assigned with a Mentor Teacher who is traditionally certified
- Enrolled in a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program at RELAY or Western Governors' University.
- In discussion with University of Bridgeport and Fairfield University to set up partnerships.

Teach for America-

- School-based support includes
 - Instructional Coaching
 - Professional Development
 - Observations and Feedback
 - Mentoring

- Check-Ins related to TFA College Courses and Support
- TFA support includes
 - Enrollment in courses required for certification
 - Generalized Coaching
 - Observation and Feedback
 - Support Plans for members if they are in danger of falling out of standing
- Paid annual salary aligned to first-year teachers
- Count as “certified” teachers
- TFA Fee recruitment and training fee is required (\$5,000)
- TFA Teachers are offered a Housing Option aligned to a salary reduction
- Must maintain “Good Standing” within the TFA program
- May be offered “alternative” placement through school-based recommendation
- Provided a grievance process aligned with AmeriCorps programs

Building and Expansion Update:

- No anticipated or communicated delays outside of expected lead times (doors, door frames)
- Limited impact as classrooms are not immediately needed
- No impact experienced by Summer Programs
- Strong and effective bi-lateral communication between Robert (Building Management), Construction (Lanese), and Staff when needed
- Classrooms visually meet expectations for instructional implementation

Q: What other physical improvements to the school building should have top priority?

Meeting Space (50k)-Sound-tiles, sound equipment, visual equipment, seating for cafeteria for school and staff meeting space

Lab Spaces (30K per)- More equipped lab spaces, redesigned and intentionally purposed lab spaces to align with current or future programming

Gymnasium (1.2m)- Stand-alone Gymnasium for student activity, after-school programs, community use, and program alignment

General (300K)- Furniture updates and replacement, class library upgrades, maximizing unused space for student and service usage

VIII. Renewal Update

A.

Renewal Update

J. Scalice, CEO, went over renewal details with the board of directors present in today's board retreat.

Renewal Update-

Initial Application: Originally due 7.23 changed to 8.21

General overview of program, instructional delivery, board governance, State compliance, enrollment process, and performance.

Supporting Evidence: Due Date: Not Provided

Evidence being requested has not been finalized or communicated to schools as of 7.28.26

CSDE On-Site: Hold Date: Thursday, 10.29.26 (full day)

CSDE visit inclusive of classroom observation, group meetings (teacher, students, service providers, parents, board), leadership meetings

CSDE Public Hearing: Hold Dates: 11.5.25, 11.10.25, 11.12.25

State Board and CSDE attended; parent, student, staff, board, community opportunity to provide thoughts on the schools impact and need (6-8 pm)

IX. Executive Session

A. Executive Executive Session- Cancelled

Board Chair B. Carlson moved the Executive Session to the September board meeting because the meeting ran out of time.

X. 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 12:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bob Carlson