

GEO Academies EBR

Minutes

February 2019 Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday February 28, 2019 at 1:00 PM

Location

GEO Prep Academy (2311 N. Sherwood Forest Dr. Baton Rouge, LA 70815)

Directors Present

D. Slan, L. Anderson, L. Fontenot, L. Johnson, R. McGarner

Directors Absent

T. Wade

Guests Present

Aleshia Taylor, D. Teasley, Nicole Honore

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

Dana Teasley was present via conference.

B. Call the Meeting to Order

L. Johnson called a meeting of the board of directors of GEO Academies EBR to order on Thursday Feb 28, 2019 at 1:04 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

L. Fontenot made a motion to approve minutes January 2019 Meeting on 01-24-19.

D. Slan seconded the motion.

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

II. GEO NEXT GEN HIGH SCHOOL

A. New Building

K. Teasley shared NSBR has been in contact regarding assistance with financing to build a new HS building. Consultants have toured the Sherwood campus and ongoing conversations are very promising. NSBR is offering a low-interest loan for \$9 million to build a new school. K. Teasley is meeting with architects today (Feb 28th) to discuss design options. The target date for opening the new school is Aug 2020, which is when loan payments will begin. The specific location of the campus is TBD but board members will be engaged in the decision making process. K. Teasley expressed appreciation to NSBR for this opportunity, which was echoed by board members. L. Johnson inquired as to whether the board needed to vote on the matter. K. Teasley asked the board to approve GEO moving forward with conversations to secure a new high school building. D. Slan shared she is in favor of building on the Sherwood campus and that it would show a seamless way to become a true K-12 campus. L. Fontenot agreed and mentioned the various properties located directly behind the school that could be purchased to expand the campus down the road.

R. McGarner made a motion for GEO Foundation to move forward with securing a new high school building, which was seconded by L Anderson. The motion carried without opposition.

A member of the audience asked if a feasibility study had been conducted to determine whether building on the Sherwood site vs. elsewhere is the most cost beneficial option. L. Johnson shared that no formal study was done. K. Teasley mentioned NSBR has done a study on GEO's behalf, which indicated it is more cost beneficial to build on the Sherwood site as there are existing resources that could be shared (i.e., staffing, gymnasium, cafeteria). K. Teasley reiterated that decisions about what will be included with the new build still needs to be decided. A question was raised about steps to be taken to separate younger kids from older kids on the campus. K. Teasley reminded the board that grades K-3 will be moving back to Platt Drive and that the architects will ensure the design provides adequate separation.

B. Update

Kevin Teasley shared with the Board the process taken to hire the HS principal, which included a written application, interviews, and a visit to the high school in Gary, IN. The search to find an extraordinary leader took approximately one year. K. Teasley shared the HS principal was recommended by S. Douglas, then introduced A. Taylor as the principal of GEO Next Generation High School. A. Taylor expressed her excitement and eagerness to "hit the ground running" with board members. K. Teasley reminded the board that the high school will consist of A. Taylor overseeing sixth, seventh, and ninth grade. The Board welcomed A. Taylor to GEO Academies of GBR.

N. Honore provided the board with an update on 2019-2020 student enrollment, which kicked off in February and is conducted in two phases. During phase 1 current GEO students indicate their intent to return the upcoming school year and during phase 2 new students are able to apply for available seats. In terms of enrollment for GEO Next Generation High School, N. Honore reminded the board the target enrollment of 100 students. As of Feb. 28th, 15 of the 8th graders at Mid-City are enrolled at the high school. N. Honore shared that A. Taylor will be following up with those 8th grade parents who have not indicated their intent to return next year and that phase 2 of enrollment began today and will utilize the Enroll BR system. N. Honore also shared that community outreach activities (i.e, community walks) and another HS Information session are being scheduled to assist recruitment efforts. L. Johnson shared her desired target for 9th grade enrollment is 120 students. She suggested a meeting with local church ministers be held to help recruit students to the high school. D. Slan questioned whether students would be required to participate in a summer experience. N. Honore shared that students would be required to attend a summer bridge/enrichment program, which will focus on success strategies (i.e., study skills, critical thinking) and ELA and math content.

N. Honore informed the Board that GEO has pursued a start-up grant for the high school via the LDE's Charter Schools Program (CSP). The CSP funds are for pre-opening and initial implementation activities, such as marketing, PD, curriculum, personnel, etc. GEO requested \$240,000 in start-up funding for the high school to support personnel costs, curriculum, equipment, and marketing. The funds can be used from date of approval through March 15, 2020. The BESE will review and make a decision on GEO CSP application at its April Board meeting.

L. Johnson reminded the board of \$100,000 in funding from Mid-City that had not been utilized during its start-up/take over and asked for a motion to use those funds to support start-up activities for GEO Next Generation High School. D. Slan made a motion to transfer all remaining start-up/take over funding from Mid-City's budget to GEO Next Generation's budget. The motion was seconded by L. Anderson. There was no opposition. The motion carried.

III. GEO Prep Academy

A. UPDATE

N. Honore shared that 359/513 (70%) of the students at Prep Academy have indicated their intent to return next school year. Registrars will be aggressively following up with those parents who have not yet indicated their intent to determine seat availability for new students. A projected K-7 enrollment for Prep Academy for next year is 650 students. N. Honore also shared there are 179 new student applications on EnrollBR and that school registrars will begin contacting those parents about seat availability.

S. Douglas shared with the board that staff recently met to discuss facility logistics for housing 9th grade at the Sherwood campus. Based upon available space and projected enrollment, it was determined that grades K-3 will move back to the school on Platt Dr.

and grades 4-7 will remain at Sherwood, along with 9th grade. S. Douglas reminded the board that the plan is to have a new building for high school by fall 2020.

D. Teasley reminded the board that the financing currently in place for the Sherwood property is for one year. The goal is to refinance, meaning the Foundation will sell the Platt Dr. facility to GEO Prep and refinancing by the Board will include the Sherwood property and Platt property. D. Teasley stated that Business First Bank will be handling paperwork and that a target completion date for refinancing is by the end of April.

B. FINANCIAL REVIEW

D. Teasley provided the financial statement for GEO Prep Academy. She stated that in prior years the school was running a bit in the "red." However, as of this school year the school has a positive balance of \$236,000. She referred board members to the line item "payment of principal" and reminded members that GEO Foundation has not collected on the debt its owed. The goal is for the Board to pay back the \$100,000 loan. D. Slan made a motion to approve the financial statement for GEO Prep Academy, which was seconded by L. Fontenot. The motion carried without opposition.

IV. GEO PREP MID-CITY

A. UPDATE

N. Honore shared that 490/593 (83%) of the K-7 students at Mid-City have indicated their intent to return next school year. Similar to Prep Academy, the school registrar will be following up with parents who have not yet indicated their intent to determine seat availability for new students. A projected K-8 enrollment for Mid-City for next year is 650-675 students.

N. Honore also shared there are 154 new student applications on Enroll BR and that school registrars will begin contacting those parents about seat availability.

B. FINANCIAL REVIEW

D. Teasley shared that like Prep Academy, Mid-City is in a good financial position. Last year we didn't quite know the amount of actual expenses. However, we now see a positive school balance of \$62,000. D. Teasley also explained that the budget shows Mid-City overpaying on curriculum, but in reality Mid-City purchased curriculum for both schools and NSBR funding help to pay for part of that cost. In total, it should not present a problem for the school's budget. L. Anderson asked if there have been additional conversations regarding leasing the Mid-City property vs. outright buying it. D. Teasley indicated there have not since the focus and primarily been on the new Sherwood property. She did remind board members that although it's not ideal to pay for the lease, the school's budget can accommodate the expense. L. Fontenot made a motion to approve the financial statement for GEO Prep Mid-City, which was seconded by R. McGarner. The motion carried without opposition.

C. GEO - Grant Request

Teasley noted that Mid-City will be receiving an additional \$160,000 transfer from the LA DOE that was not anticipated in the school's original budget. Given that GEO Foundation is currently working for the set up of GEO Next Generation High School with no management agreement or fees in place, and that the Mid-City students will be the first to benefit from that school, GEO is requesting a grant of those funds to GEO to support the development of GEO Next Gen High School. Motion to make the grant to GEO put forth by D. Slan, second by L. Fontenot. Motion carried without opposition.

V. GOVERNANCE

A. CMO REVIEW

L Johnson reminded the board about the Governance checklist she previously shared, which will be used to evaluate GEO Foundation as the CMO. She solicited questions from members and asked that they take time to carefully review the document and send questions/feedback directly to her.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Sandra Douglas - Announcement

K. Teasley reminded board of the process taken to hire S. Douglas, which was a great choice in school leader for GEO. S. Douglas has helped to not only recruit the current school leaders (T. Porter and S. Clay), but also several teachers. K. Teasley announced that S. Douglas has been promoted to Chief Academic Officer for GEO Academies in EBR.

VII. New section

A. Discussion

S. Douglas shared the LDE's recent site visit by Kelly DiMarco for charter review/renewal, which was very favorable for GEO. The LDE indicated everything was in place and was impressed with GEO's curriculum, instruction and facilities.

L Johnson shared the Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF) held its Board of Directors meeting at Mid-City on February 20, 2019. NSBR provided the group with an presentation on the "State of Education in EBR." L. Johnson shared it was great to have the group using GEO facilities for their meeting and for us to share about our schools.

R. McGarner thanked the GEO staff for the presentation to the EBR Police Department for their Adopt-A-School efforts. GEO presented EBR Police with a plaque during the Metro Council meeting on February 27, 2019. R. McGarner indicated it was an honor to serve GEO students and provide them with a bit of joy during Christmas time.

S. Douglas recognized Ms. Jackson in the audience and shared that she has helped to write and submit a grant to LSU for gardening for the Sherwood school.

VIII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

D. Slan made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

L. Fontenot seconded the motion.

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

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 2:04 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

D. Teasley