



MINUTES for the
Meeting of the Gateway Public Schools Board of Trustees
Wednesday, October 21st, 2020, 5:00 - 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Board Members Present: Therese Arsenault, Beth Berliner, Cynthia Billops, Sapna Boze, Sara Byrne, Dan Carr, Elizabeth Colen, Katie Colley, Mark Felton, Sharon Gillenwater, Susan Masto, Harper Matheson, Sharon Olken, Molly Orner, Mary Plant-Thomas, Kevin Rafter, Dina To, Valerie Toler, Julie Wise

Board Members Excused: Allison Bhusri, Laura Spivy
Also present: Danielle Ciccarelli, Chris Hero, Chanda Lockhart, Aaron Watson

Welcome and Announcements

Sharon Gillenwater welcomed everyone to the October meeting. She thanked Chanda and her team for their hard work putting together the Matters of the Mind event last week. She also thanked the development team for the beautiful annual report which was done completely in house this year. She reminded trustees that we are going to hold a virtual meet and greet with the new leadership team at Gateway High and Gateway Middle, on October 28th at 4:30. On October 9th an email went out from Danielle about helping seniors with college essays. Sharon G. said that she had the pleasure of doing that a few years ago and it was amazing. She wished happy birthday to Elizabeth Colen and Katie Colley, who have birthdays in October.

Approval of Minutes from September 16, 2020

Sharon G. asked everyone to take a few minutes to review the minutes from September 16, 2020 and note any changes. Beth Berliner motioned to approve, and Therese seconded the motion. The September minutes were approved, unanimously, without issue.

Public Forum

Sharon G. opened the floor for the public forum. No further discussions or motions were introduced.

Mission Moment - Sharon Gillenwater spoke about "being in a breakout room at the luncheon with someone new to Gateway. After all of our breakout room participants introduced themselves, the guest said it was remarkable how many different types of connections our small group had to Gateway; we were alumni/current parents; past and present board members; teachers and spouses of teachers; and relatives of Gateway founders. I did not realize it until she pointed it out, but our little breakout room was a microcosm of our community."

Committee On Trustees

Vote on Trusteeship of Mark Felton
Welcome Mark Felton

Susan Masto gave the floor to Kevin Rafter, Chair of the Committee on Trustees. Kevin talked about Mark Felton, whose trusteeship the board will vote on tonight. Here is Mark's brief biography:

Mark is a Professor of Teacher Education and Associate Dean for Research in the Lurie College of Education at San José State University. As a teacher educator and research psychologist, he focuses on dialogue and the development of evidence-based reasoning in history and science classrooms. He has applied this work to support young adolescents' academic literacy in projects funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the National Science Foundation and the

U.S. Office of English Language Acquisition. He earned a B.A. in Psychology from Stanford University (1990) and a Ph.D. in Cognitive Development from Columbia University (1999).

Mark is married to middle school humanities teacher, Suzanne Herko. Their daughter and son attended Gateway Middle School and their son is currently a sophomore at Gateway High. Mark previously served two terms on the board, and is excited to return.

Members of the board had the opportunity to share about Mark. Mark Felton's trusteeship was approved unanimously, without issue.

Mark joined the meeting and was welcomed by Kevin and the trustees.

Executive Director's Report

Sharon Olken welcomed Mark back to the board and shared that he was instrumental in getting the middle school off the ground. When he left the board, he said that he would be open to rejoining when the time was right. We are thankful that the time is right, now, since he is needed. Sharon led the trustees through a "Get to Know You" activity to introduce everyone to Mark.

Sharon shared about the Matters of the Mind Luncheon and how proud she is of our team for pulling off something that was never envisioned before, had more moving parts than a luncheon in a normal year, and was ambitious. She is so thankful to be on a team that rolled up their sleeves and figured things out. She is very grateful to Chanda for leading the team with grace and spirit. She realizes that, because of technical challenges, some people did not have the opportunity to feel as connected as they have in past years. She would like to make that up to them in other ways, through other means.

Sharon reminded the board that, at the September board meeting, we talked about our commitment to working to be an anti-racist organization, and that means looking at our practices, policies and attitudes and beliefs. Today we are going to hear from teachers about the work they did over the summer, that was focused on anti-racist teaching practices.

Molly Orner shared that she attended the [Teaching for Equity and Justice: An Online Equity Summit](#) put on by [Facing History and Ourselves](#), an organization that Gateway has been partnering with for several years. The summit started off with everyone exploring their own identities as teachers, especially the role that race and privilege play, and then shifted into an exploration of the history of race in schooling and academic identity. They examined some historical documents that impacted our present educational system, and heard from remarkable and inspiring speakers who are scholars in the field of race and equity, such as Bettina Love, Dr. Scott Seider and Dr. Daren Graves. The summit tied in with the anti-racism work that Gateway is engaged in. The humanities department used a rubric to look at and assess our curriculum through the lens of anti-racism and is talking a lot about how we can move our curriculum and instruction to be more inclusive. Humanities 9 is moving towards becoming an ethnic studies course which would mean that all of our ninth graders would be taking ethnic studies.

Elizabeth Colen spoke about the educator book talks that [Facing History and Ourselves](#) held at Gateway Middle School during the first week of school. Teachers had a choice of books to read and the small book talks allowed for them to get together and discuss these books and how they may impact their own classroom practices. Elizabeth read *Everyday Antiracism: Getting Real about Race in Schools* by Mica Pollock. The book is a series of essays that discusses classroom practices and how to implement them. This particular book was helpful to reinforce some practices that were already happening while also suggesting new ones.

Mary Plant Thomas spoke about the book *Science in the City* by Brian Anthony Brown, a professor at Stanford, whom she learned about through the Hollyhock Fellowship. She found the book incredible. It is hard to find writing about culturally relevant teaching in science. The book focuses on how language in science classes can affect students and, because science teachers don't see themselves as language teachers, they don't examine that aspect of teaching and take language for granted. The book provides concrete strategies to restructure ordering and frame vocabulary. It is important to let our students know that it is okay if they don't know the vocabulary.

Therese Arsenault talked about the book, *Coaching for Equity: Conversations That Change Practice* by Elena Aguilar, and how it fits in with coaching goals at GMS. Therese has been immersed in a complete study of all of Ms. Aguilar's work and this summer she enrolled in her Coaching for Equity Master Class. Ms. Aguilar espouses what is called transformational coaching. Her work is based around compassion, creativity, connection, courage and purpose and Therese found that those are the pillars we really need to be using in coaching right now. The most important part about Aguilar's work is understanding our own identity and our race and privilege. Therese said that it is important for her as a coach to understand herself and how she responds so she can really build trusting relationships with others. It's an ongoing process and it's not always easy. We have an education system that was designed to marginalize people and so we need to explore how to work to change that. We are basing our work on the ideas put forth by Elena Aguilar and really thinking about how we can coach so we best meet the needs of our students.

Sharon thanked Molly, Elizabeth, Mary and Therese for sharing what they are working on and for helping us understand the amazing work that is going on at our schools. Due to time constraints, Sharon will discuss her 2020/21 goals at the November meeting.

Committee Goals: Susan Masto asked committee chairs to present overviews of their committee's 2020/2021 goals.

Development Committee: The committee will continue working to support Gateway's development efforts, focus on facilitating a smooth transition during Chanda's maternity leave, and help to sustain philanthropic investment in Gateway during a difficult year.

Trustees Committee: The committee will focus on identifying and cultivating potential trustees and diversifying our board and identifying and addressing aspects of our process and culture that may impede our ability to recruit and retain diverse board members.

Audit Committee: The audit committee's goal is to support Gateway's finance team with the yearly audit. The process is made more challenging by the pandemic and the necessity of doing everything virtually.

Faculty Affairs Committee: The goals of the FAC are to:

- Identify opportunity to share across schools, ways to foster connection and provide opportunities to share practices
- Facilitate and analyze feedback on teacher and staff virtual teaching experience, in order to make recommendations
- Implement, analyze and make recommendations based on Annual Faculty Survey & CSM Survey & Community Meeting
- Facilitate and analyze trends from new hire focus groups & staff retention

Investment Committee: The investment committee's goals are both to preserve and to grow the board designated funds. Chris, Sara and three other committee members are the designated managers and stewards of Gateway's portfolio. The markets have recovered from their low point in March and April, and the committee is keeping a sharp eye on the portfolio, given the uncertainty and potential volatility due to the pandemic and the upcoming election. If there are changes, the committee could call a meeting to reallocate funds as needed.

Hospitality: The goal of the hospitality committee is to do what it can to make trustees feel welcome and make meetings enjoyable, even though we can not be together. Julie will provide as many snacks and treats as possible given the constraints of the pandemic.

Finance Committee: The goals of the Finance Committee are to ensure Gateway's long term sustainability. It will do this by collaborating with the development and investment teams and by closely monitoring the budget and outside events and developments that have an impact on funding and cash flow for this year's budget as well as future budgets.

Facilities Committee: The Facilities Committee is focused on providing support to our Director of Facilities through phases of reopening and keeping everyone safe during the pandemic.

Development Update

Susan gave the floor to Chanda Lockhart for the development update. Chanda gave a shout out to Dan Carr for all his help before the MOTM luncheon. She then continued with the luncheon income update. As of 10/18/20, we raised \$341,220. Last year our final gross was \$353,980 but this year's expenses were half of what we spent last year, so we have actually surpassed last year; we still expect to have more money coming in. We have reached 54% of our yearly fundraising goal. Our Major Donor Initiative efforts have been very helpful this year.

Chanda updated trustees on the status of the End of Year Appeal. We are waiting until November to send out the End of Year Appeal, which will include video messages from students and teachers. Trustee help will be welcome for sending out handwritten notes. If you are willing to help, let Chanda know and Marianne will drop off the notes for you.

Development is looking at the donor life cycle and strategizing intentional touch points. A big focus is donor retention. Chanda asked trustees to let her know if they are aware of any foundations that may be interested in us.

Interim Planning Update: Ryan Hazelton will start on 12/7/20 and will be full time until 5/31. He will help in June and July during Chanda's transition back from maternity leave.

Chanda thanked everyone for their kind words about the luncheon. If anyone wants to do a debrief, please let her know.

Finance Committee

Susan gave the floor to Chris for the finance update. He reviewed the financials and noted that the increase in our rent has put us over budget on our expenses. In addition, the government is calculating Gateway's 20/21 revenue using last year's enrollment data, which was lower than normal. We budget pretty conservatively and forecast conservatively, so, while we do show a deficit for this year, we do feel that there are some intriguing upsides out there that could materialize and which could have a big impact for our current financial year. Chris reviewed these potential upsides, such as Prop G, Prop J, Prop 15, and a potential federal stimulus. The state of California said that, without extra stimulus for education costs, there would be cuts for next year. Prop 15 is the ballot measure which will redefine how commercial property taxes are paid, bringing those taxes up to date

and much needed funds to education. In spite of the challenges that 2020 has brought, there's enough on the table to make us feel optimistic about the financial outlook for this year and the next couple of years. Because of the stock market recovery, our reserves are at a much more comfortable level than they were a few months ago so that is reassuring. The goal is for a longer-term sustainability model that includes additional funding in the next five years. Chris emphasized that what makes the numbers have meaning is that we are successfully serving our students, and, by all accounts, we have heard from our community that our distance learning has been a tremendous success, so he would like to leave focused on that; our students are why we worry about these numbers in the first place.

Closing Thoughts Whip Around

The board had a discussion about the work Gateway is doing to be an anti-racist organization. Mark Felton remarked that he is very grateful for the work Gateway is doing around abolitionist teaching and anti-racism. This work is cutting edge and is what is going on in universities in the area and it is wonderful to see this work happening among veteran teachers. Trustees discussed that Gateway is weaving anti-racist practices into professional development and bringing that work into classroom discussions and curriculum, and expressed that they feel that the level of engagement among teachers and staff is remarkable. This effort is being undertaken on all levels and is at the core of Gateway's philosophy and mission. Discussions about race are taking place in all classes, not just humanities, but in science, math, art, etc. The theme is carried throughout the day. These are big topics for students in middle and high school but Gateway staff are doing an amazing job of having these discussions in a thoughtful way. Katie Collie remarked that it is inspiring that this effort is a part of the ethos and is not a side dish.

Sharon G. thanked everyone who shared during this meeting.

Meeting Adjourned

Sharon Gillenwater adjourned the meeting at 7:00

Signed:  Date: 12/21/20
Sapna Boze, Board Secretary