



MINUTES for the  
Meeting of the Gateway Public Schools Board of Trustees  
Wednesday, September 16th, 2020, 5:00 - 6:45 PM  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

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

**Board Members Excused:** Allison Bhusri

**Also present:** Danielle Ciccarelli, Chris Hero, Chanda Lockhart, Joyce McMinn, Aaron Watson

**Welcome and Announcements**

Susan Masto welcomed everyone to the first board meeting of the 2020/2021 school year. It is great to see everyone again, even on Zoom. Gateway students have been meeting remotely since mid August, and the administrative team and faculty have been working very hard on developing a strong distance learning program. We will learn more about these plans tonight. Sharon O. will give an Executive Director's report, we will hear the results of the trustee survey, get a finance update from Chris, and Chanda will give a luncheon update.

**Approval of Minutes from June 3rd, 2020**

The meeting minutes from June 3rd, 2020 were approved, unanimously, without issue.

**Public Forum**

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

**Mission Moment - Aaron Watson**

Susan introduced Aaron Watson for the mission moment. He shared examples from GMS and GHS of how teachers are going above and beyond to re-make virtual learning experiences that are interactive, relevant to the moment, and engage students in real critical thinking. Among his examples was Gateway High School's Art 2 project titled "*Breakout Rooms*", a colorful and creative investigation of "portraiture, character building, and celebrating diversity inside the "grid life".

**Executive Director's Report *Shifting to a New Lens***

Sharon Olken welcomed everyone to a new school year. Although we are starting off the year with distance learning, we are still trying to create a sense of community and find ways that students can share and connect with other students, not just with their teachers. One tool we have been using is Padlet, which is like a digital bulletin board. Sharon shared images of a Padlet where seniors shared their dreams for senior year and beyond. Trustees discussed what stood out to them about the seniors' statements. Trustees mentioned student maturity and caring for others. Sharon O. said that she sees a difference between what students will share with a tool like Padlet, and what they will share in an in person classroom; this is an example of one of the particular strengths of distance learning. Sharon asked the teachers present to share what they are experiencing with their students right now. Mary Plant Thomas said that she is inspired by how her students are stepping up in AP bio. Sharon O. remarked that she wants to share students' voices during meetings to inspire our work.

Sharon invited the board to take up the same objectives that were taken up during GHS faculty week, some of which are:

- Continue and improve upon our work as an anti-racist community
- Support online learning - all teachers are new teachers this year
- Wellness and connectedness for students and teachers

- Focus on key process of learning skills
- Feeling connected, energized, resilient and flexible in the current setting

Sharon shared goals for both schools. Among GHS's goals are achieving equitable student outcomes, particularly African American students' academic success, belonging, and voice in our school community, and ensuring that all students have success. The best means for achieving this goal are to support independent learning skills, wellness, and connectedness in every environment, and continue to become an anti-racist community by developing anti-racist thinking, practices, and accountability.

GMS is working to support students to build social-emotional skills and gain proficiency on standards-aligned content, with a focus on equitable outcomes for Black and Latinx students, students with IEPs, English Language Learners, and students who are eligible for free and reduced priced lunch.

- Means to support the goal:
  - Explicitly teach social-emotional skills and assess and support students' well-being
  - Provide engaging, accessible, differentiated, student-centered learning experiences
  - Provide structure and routine, connection to community, and space to attend to our humanity
  - Explicitly teach learning strategies that are particularly important for independent learning

Sharon said that the work to make sure we have equitable outcomes and to be an anti-racist schools is part of who we are. This is ongoing work, and our understanding of what this means gets deeper every year. Because of trends in student achievement, and all we have learned about a collective deep history and the emotional pain that is sitting with us, the work we do around anti-racism has gotten more explicit. She would like to challenge us as a board to answer that call to be an anti-racist organization. In addition to the work we do as individuals to understand the part we play in perpetuating racism, we need to look at systemic policies and structures that further racism or equality, or not. Every year, when we reflect on the results of the board survey, we report that trustees know the GPS Board would be stronger if it better reflected the students we serve. This will be discussed later in the meeting during the Committee on Trustees update.

We are taking a deep look at Gateway's structures and practices. If our goal is for everyone to reach their potential, the support we give need to be different for different students. We don't start with an even playing field, and it is difficult for the person with privilege to see this. Our goal is to get rid of obstacles in the first place. We are trying to figure out how we can have differential inputs and eliminate the policies and practices that perpetuate the problems. Sharon asked everyone to share on a Padlet what it means to be an anti-racist, and the board discussed the comments and expressed support for this work.

### **Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan - Public Hearing**

Sharon opened the public hearing of the Learning Accountability and Attendance Plan. She explained that it is a state requirement that we develop and vote on the plan to ensure students will have access to a high quality equitable educational program during the COVID19 crisis in the 2020/21 school year. This document is a distillation of much work and many other documents that outline our plans for distance learning and a return to in person instruction. The GMS and GHS LCAP are on our website, and have been shared with the board. Sharon presented slides that outlined the LCAP. After a period of discussion, the public hearing was adjourned.

### **Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan Adoption**

Sharon G. asked for motion to approve the LCAP. Cynthia Billops motion to approve and Julie Wiise seconded. The Learning Accountability and Attendance Plan was approved unanimously, without issue.

### **Committee On Trustees**

Sharon G. gave the floor to Kevin Rafter for the Trustees Committee update. Kevin shared slides showing results from the 2019/2020 board survey. According to the survey, the most important issues for trustees are financial health and sustainability, meeting student needs during distance learning, hiring and retention of diverse, quality faculty and supporting new leadership.

For the last few years, a theme has emerged around trustee recruitment, and bringing more diversity as well as new spirit and enthusiasm to the board. The Committee on Trustees would like to come up with new thinking about how to recruit and retain diverse board members; Kevin is still getting his head around these questions. Ibram Kendi's position of being actively anti-racist resonates with him, and, to that end, we will examine board policies and practices. He opened up the floor for conversation and encouraged trustees to give suggestions about where we start. We have space on the board for more members, and have a lot of opportunities to grow.

### **Finance Committee**

Sharon Gillenwater gave the floor to Chris Hero for the finance report. He noted that, as an organization, we have never had as many unknowns around our program, operations and financial outlook. In the last 6 months Gateway staff have stepped up to incredible challenges and worked hard on behalf of our students. Chris outlined developments that impact our financial situation. Luckily, the state legislature will not implement funding cuts for the time being. Funding will be based on last year's ADA for every school. This will have a negative impact, as last year's enrollment was the lowest it has been for many years. Through the CARES Act Gateway will receive \$550k between our two schools in COVID relief funding. These funds will support our incremental COVID expenses related to distance learning, facilities costs, supporting our employees and will help to backfill for our state funding deficiencies. Mayor Breed announced a new parcel tax for teacher salaries, which will be on the November ballot. If approved, it would effectively replace the Prop G measure that has been trapped in litigation. It will require a 2/3s majority vote. A bright spot for us is that we hit last year's fundraising target, which is a huge accomplishment. Chris commended the development team.

Our annual audit is underway, and so far no findings have been noted. We will report more on the audit in the coming months.

### **Development Committee**

Chanda thanked everyone for the support they gave to help us reach last year's fundraising goal. She shared Gateway's 20/21 Development/Communications strategic plan. The annual report, which was designed in-house this year, is being mailed out right now. Hard copies will be sent to the upper echelon of donors, postcards for anyone who has donated in the past 6 years. We plan to start major donor activities earlier, and ramp up our efforts by sending video thank yous and thanking every gift personally. If folks are already giving, we want to hold them tight. We are doing foundation research. Through AT&T, we secured a \$75,000 grant this year. The virtual matters of the mind is less than 4 weeks away, and we have raised \$175,000 so far. Invitations have gone out. We have 3 student hosts and 2 student story videos. Party packages will go out to guests who register by October 5th. Chanda has a resource guide which outlines how to talk to your guests. Fund a need is already live, and we will have silent auction packages.

We are hiring an interim to help with Chanda's maternity leave. They will start in December and be full time until May. Chanda expressed thanks to the board for their support.

### **Meeting Adjourned**

Sharon Gillenwater adjourned the meeting at 6:45

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: 1/11/21

Sapna Boze, Board Secretary