

Gateway Public Schools

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Wednesday, September 13, 2017 @ 5:00 -6:40 PM

Minutes

Board Members Present:

Therese Arsenault, Beth Berliner, Allison Bhusri, Sapna Boze, Sara Byrne, Sharon Gillenwater, Susan Masto, Joyce McMinn, Farley Neuman, Sharon Olken, Will Parish, Mary Plant-Thomas, Jackie Quella, Adina Safer, Suzanne Schutte, Laura Spivy, Dina To, Aaron White, Julie Wise

Board Members Excused: Cynthia Billops, Annie Klebahn, Valerie Toler

Also present: Chris Hero, Danielle Ciccarelli, Elizabeth Colen, Stephanie Khaziran

Call to Order and Approval of Minutes from May 17, 2017

Susan Masto welcomed the Trustees and thanked everyone for coming to the first meeting of the 2017/18 school year. Sapna Boze presented the gavel to Susan, and welcomed her as the new co-chair. Susan called the meeting to order at 5:15pm.

Susan called for a motion to approve the minutes from May 17, 2017. Laura motioned and Adina seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously without issue.

Susan noted that the luncheon will be Tuesday, October 10th, not the 13th, as is written on the first page of the board packet.

Committee on Trustees - Approval of New Trustee

Jackie Quella addressed the board about Dina To, in preparation for their vote on her Trusteeship. Jackie told Trustees that Dina sought out Gateway at the Board Match event last spring. She is deeply invested and involved in the SF Community around issues of access and equity for children and women. Dina is the Donor Relations Manager at D-Rev, and a former lawyer. She was Federal Prosecutor for the Department of Justice and a Legal Director at Yahoo!. She was also an Adjunct Professor at University of California, Hastings College of the Law. Jackie recommended the board vote in favor of her appointment. The board voted unanimously to approve Dina's membership. Dina joined the meeting and was warmly welcomed by Trustees.

Sharon Olken briefly discussed other potential board candidates and noted that she hopes to have a couple of teachers join the board, soon. Sapna introduced Sharon for the Executive Director's update.

Gateway Voices - Building a Sense of Belonging at Gateway

Sharon welcomed Board members to the STEAM center. She asked everyone to take a step back to talk about our mission, why we are here, and what it means to belong. Recent current events and developments around DACA sent ripples through the Gateway and brought up questions of belonging.

Sharon asked everyone to read Gateway's mission statement and think about any words or phrases that resonate. What in the mission statement drew you to Gateway? Trustees had the opportunity to share. She asked everyone to think of a time when they felt like they did not belong. How did that make you feel? Were you your best self? How about a time when you felt that you did belong? What does a feeling of belonging do to your confidence and your willingness to take risks? She shared some research about the importance of belonging and the effect it has on students and read quotes from Dear Gateway letters. In the students' words Sharon hears a willingness to step up and take risks. We can use these quotes as evidence of kids' sense of belonging. Trustees discussed what they heard and read.

Sharon introduced Stephanie Khaziran, Assistant Principal at the high school, and Elizabeth Colen, 8th grade Humanities teacher and Advisory lead, and asked them to tell the board about how they ended up at Gateway. Stephanie Khaziran is a transplant from LA and was a school counselor for 9 years in SF before she came to GHS. She was drawn to Gateway because it is authentically diverse. She comes from a counseling background and liked that each student is seen as a whole person. Elizabeth was in the third graduating class at GHS; Sharon was her advisor. She joined Gateway Middle School as a founding 6th grade teacher, after teaching in southern California. She loved Gateway as a student, so she was excited to come back. She continues to stay at Gateway because of its mission. She feels that Gateway has remained true to its mission, which is evidenced by students who come back and hang out because they are comfortable and feel they belong. Sharon asked if they could give the board a window into staff conversations about belonging. Stephanie said that last spring the staff talked about what it means to feel safe, seen and cared for at Gateway High School. They discussed the results of an anonymous survey in Professional Development. This past year it has been necessary to have a lot of responsive discussions concerning things that are going on in the news, such as Black Lives Matter and DACA. Elizabeth stated that the middle school deals with the issue of belonging a lot. They talk about it in advisory. She spoke about partnering with Teach with Africa, and how Gateway has built exercises based on what they have learned from that collaboration. Before coming tonight, she asked her advisory how Gateway helps them have a sense of belonging, and they had MANY things to say.

Stephanie said that Gateway's overarching responsibility is to help kids feel safe. In a traditional school, as assistant principal, she would be the disciplinarian. The way we approach discipline is incredibly important. When you look at data, you see that there can be a negative correlation between traditional discipline and students' futures. Gateway uses Restorative Practices, which has us pull them in closer, not push them out. She asks students and adults what they need when they have done someone wrong, or when someone has done them wrong. With Restorative Practices, consequences include getting things right, but there is also support in conjunction with those consequences.

Elizabeth spoke about Gateway Middle's relationship with Facing History and Ourselves. GMS is the only middle school in Facing History's network, and Elizabeth is part of the teacher leader team on their board. Gateway incorporates Facing History's social justice and history embedded curriculum into its curriculum, particularly the curriculum that investigates identity. Sharon asked why it is important to talk about identity. Elizabeth said that everyone comes with a different story and diversity helps build empathy. If everyone comes from the same background, your beliefs aren't challenged.

Elizabeth walked the board through an abbreviated version of an activity she does with students around identity. After the activity, Sharon gave a huge thank you to Elizabeth and Stephanie, and the board expressed its appreciation.

Finance Update

Sapna passed the floor to Chris for the financial update. He discussed the Fiscal Year 2018 Financial Overview, which is included in the board packet. The state budget did include a modest increase in funding to public schools, but the governor keeps warning that the pace of the revenue increase will probably slow down. A slowdown in revenue can be challenging during a time of increases in employee expenses. Gateway's reserves are at an all time high.

We are watching our operating cash position. We will probably need to draw from our reserves for our operating budget, but, nevertheless, we are in a strong position. Farley will report on the audit in November.

Executive Director's Report

Sharon directed everyone's attention to the board packet, where they can find her objectives and materials that support those objectives. She discussed an enrollment snapshot which shows the diversity of Gateway. We are already at 42% of our development goal for the year, which is extraordinary. We are doing great fundraising for the Luncheon. We are doing well because we have an amazing Development team. She gave a big shout-out to Meg and Marianne for working so hard while we conduct our search for a Director of Development. We have three very strong finalist DOD candidates, and we have completed all three interviews. Sharon is currently collecting feedback on the candidates to inform their decision. Laura Spivy thanked Sharon for working so hard as the acting Development Director.

Adjourn to Happy Hour at Wild Hare, 2801 California Street

Susan adjourned the meeting at 6:50pm.



Signed:

Sharon Gillenwater, Board Secretary

Date: _____10/2/17_____