

**The Genesee Community Charter School  
Board of Trustees  
Education Governance Council  
Meeting Minutes  
December 11, 2019  
Held at RMSC Cunningham House, 657 East Avenue**

**Board Members Present:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, **Elizabeth Pietrzykowski**, Allison Shultes, Annemarie Wess  
(Bold: BOT non-voting)

**Board Members Absent:** **Rebecca Boyle**, Nolica Murray-Fields, **Cheryl Moeller**, Mark Schiesser, Kevin Sutherland, **Traci Terrance**,

**Educational Governance Council Members Present:** Maggie Deutschbein, Becki Mason, Shannon Hillman

**Legal Counsel Present:** George DesMarteau

**Invited Guests Present:** Maureen Milke, Robin Blew, Chris Dolgos & Alexis Stubbe (6th grade)

Meeting called to order by Michele Hannagan at 5:36PM

**Teacher Presentation:**

Sixth grade teachers discussed their focus topic for the year. Each year they choose a topic that provides a social justice lens for 6th graders to understand our city. E.g., last year's focus on food equity, and their final product impacted food policy through Rochester's 2034 plan. In reflecting on what the class could do for the school community, using Roc Restorative as a model, the class is doing a deep dive on our code of conduct. The goal is for students to gain a deep understanding of conflict, how to break conflict cycles, how to manage emotion, and behavior regulation. The planned final product is a peer mediation or listening circle process for the school, and feedback to the Board about the school's code of conduct.

The sixth grade year starts with building relationships. At the leadership retreat, there is an opportunity to create new identities, new roles, and exercises that help kids understand themselves as leaders. The curriculum focuses on ancient civilizations, looking at artifacts that are representative of many ancient cultures; this year the focus was on artifacts that speak to how these civilizations addressed conflict. Identity work includes I am lists, identity maps, biopoems, narratives about themselves. (Identity work also supports the relationship-building.)

The winter block is typically science-focused. This year they are focusing on the brain (e.g. activity of prefrontal cortex and limbic cortex during conflict, and during connection), and reflecting on how their individual brain works, their personal background and how that influenced their brain. They will continue with self-reflection through personal narratives and poems, including a poetry slam about their identity. The Gandhi institute is a collaborator through this work as well.

In the spring kids will go on the 4 cities trip to schools that are using restorative practices; the trip will also include visits to community organizations, museums, universities, and other experts that can speak to the topic of conflict resolution. Kids will share out and analyze their findings after they return.

Jessica Nordquist and Nolica Murray-Fields from visited the classroom to kindle their commitment to the expedition with attention to the GCCS code of conduct. Timing of the 4 cities trip has not yet been determined (dodging NYS testing, exhibitions etc.).

A Board member queried how the teachers two choose the hot topic for the year. The process has evolved over time. In early years (when Shannon was teaching 6th grade) the focus was on local infrastructure; it evolved to topics pertaining to sustainability, and more recently to social justice topics (equity, race, class). Social justice is well suited for 6th graders; developmentally 11 and 12 year olds care a lot about justice. Each year they tailor the topic to the class.

The Board celebrated the 6th grade work being highlighted by former Education Secretary John King in his keynote address at the EL national conference. A Board member inquired whether it would be suitable to send a letter to John King highlighting the teacher team. The school leader has also been considering asking Mr. King to provide a letter of support for our school's recredentialing. The Board Secretary will draft a letter for review at the next meeting.

### **Financial review**

Per-pupil billing will remain discrepant from budget forecast for the remainder of the year. City reimbursement is lower this year, at \$13,995. There are two students where district assignment needs to be resolved for payment. Payment from EL for teacher on special assignment was just received and will be reflected in next month's review. School Leader also updated the Board regarding the status of the debit card points that have been accrued through use of this relatively new account. She is also linking Amazon Smile to our school account so that families can use this as a fundraising option.

### **Minutes**

#### **Motion 191211.1**

Upon motion of Annemarie Wess, and duly seconded by Marcia Joy, RESOLVED, that the minutes of the November 6, 2019 meeting be approved.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Allison Shultes, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 191211.1** passed 7 to 0

### **School Leader update**

Family Association auction: Parents who have been running logowear for the past few years took on running the auction. It was very successful with a huge number of items donated. A total of \$8600 was raised which is significantly higher than raised in previous years.

The Board was reminded about the Diversity committee's upcoming Family Table event. (Historically, the live auction fundraiser was held at the family potluck; it subsequently evolved into a separate event, and then to the online version.) Last year, the 6th grade used potluck as exhibition night (with their focus on food equity). It was a full house with many people bringing food, linked to identity and food justice, and discussion prompts with questions about family life and themselves. The Diversity

Committee took over running it this year. Bringing food is not required. Also new is a snow share (sharing outgrown winter wear) happening in conjunction with the event. Family songs will be shared, and auction items can be picked up.

The School Leader shared “Big lightbulb” moments from the year thus far. At the EL Education national conference, she and curriculum specialist (Lisa O’Malley) attended a session by Zaretta Hammond on culturally responsive teaching and the brain, and they are sharing her book with staff. The book includes a framework for understanding dimensions of equity, which they are using for expedition planning. The framework was key for crystallizing how to bring culturally responsive dimensions to the curriculum. As a whole, the school has been furthest along in the Multicultural dimension, adding texts from different perspectives. In the Social justice domain -- addressing racial bias, understanding identity, who is marginalized and who is not -- the energy has been focused on staff, with inward reflection on these topics during professional development. For the Cultural responsiveness domain, the School Leader realized they have been using these words but really were talking about Multicultural or Social justice domains. This new framework moves the needle for making sure everyone can increase and accelerate their learning. It aligns well with Mastery of Knowledge and Skills goals for EL, with high expectations for complex thinking. Teachers will be aligning their learning plan at the beginning of the expedition block into this Dimensions of Equity framework.

The Board reviewed the Expedition curriculum framework. The updated title from “First peoples of the Americas” to “Early peoples/woodland peoples” was highlighted as one example of the evolution of the curriculum. Becki Mason spoke about these changes in the context of the 4-5 loop. Early people used to be earliest finds -- starting with Australopithecus, and ending with the land bridge and coastal migration. The next expedition was the American Revolution, leaving a huge time gap. When Becki started this loop, she shifted the focus to *starting* with the land bridge, and ending with colonization, which was a better launch point for the American revolution. This allows kids to look at a timeline including everything they learned in K-3, from when the last glacier melted, to today. Under the old framework, everything was either before 14,000 years ago or compressed into the last 1000 years; the new framework helps them look more closely at the window from 14,000 years to 1000 years ago. It also led a new Colonization simulation, where another class comes in and uses their space, taking their pencils etc. Maggie Deutschbein highlighted attention in K-3 to *current* Haudenosaunee people, not just long ago, leveraging the school’s relationship with Ganondagan. Keri Gonzalez and Jolene Walter pushed this forward, with impact on exhibits at RMCS and highlighted at EL Education’s national conference 2 years ago. The kids also reflect on names they were called vs. names they want to be called (connecting to identity work).

The Board also reviewed alignment of the Expedition curriculum map with NYS standards, mapped out diligently by Lisa O’Malley, documented in each block of expedition planning and constantly revised. The Board also reviewed Expedition final products in conjunction with the initial expedition plan. (Today & Tomorrow from last spring, and the recent Fall prehistory expedition). Board members shared comments about the high quality of the work, the thoughtfulness and detail of the expedition plan, and the explicit connections to home and community resources.

This work provided context for the Board to understand how the different curriculum resources are integrated: Expeditionary Learning is the framework for the curriculum plan; Rochester-focused curriculum was created by the school founders; expedition plan adjustments are made to integrate NYS standards as these standards evolve

## Committee Updates

### Advocacy (Shannon)

Goodschoolsroc common application launched on December 1st. To date, we have 79 applicants (cf. last year there were 173 applications *total*). Application questions are similar to the prior paper version, with an optional agreements/understandings section. There were multiple rounds of feedback to goodschools roc to make sure essential info is displayed on their site (e.g. school schedule), and the GCCS website has several places to click to get to the application on the Goodschoolsroc site website. Siblings will have lottery preference but will have to apply online. There are opportunities to cross-check eligibility, e.g. ensuring sibling preference is accurate, address is truly the correct district, etc. There will be tours and information sessions in February and March, and we were invited to Pre-K open house/information fair events by Ibero and another Pre-K network.

The School Leader is also finding opportunities for collaboration with other charters through goodschoolsroc, e.g. networked support for handling special ed and meeting other challenges. School Leader and Anne-Michael Henry from Goodschools Roc met with Susan Gibbons yesterday for 2 hours to thoroughly answer questions about the new recruitment process and other concerns. The Board President suggested updating Susan Gibbons and David Frank with a live update on the results of these new recruitment efforts to relay to the Regents as they consider our charter renewal.

### Discipline (Jessica Nordquist)

She is meeting with 6th graders tomorrow to task them with looking at and revising the Code of Conduct as part of their 6th grade project focused on Conflict and Communication.

### Nominating (Annemarie Wess)

All vacancies are currently filled. We are still awaiting info back for state approval for some of the newer members.

### Personnel (Michele Hannagan)

School leader evaluation:

Personnel Committee presented their written School Leader evaluation. Discussion of the process highlighted opportunities for streamlining in the future. Board members commented on many positive aspects, including the overwhelmingly positive staff and school culture, the initiatives toward data reporting and analysis, and tackling EL credentialing and charter renewal in her first two years. Increased administrative support for reporting and data management was identified by the Board as an area where we can invest and liberate Shannon's bandwidth more for students and staff.

## Executive Session

### **Motion 191211.2**

Upon motion of Michelle Burack, and duly seconded by Michele Hannagan, RESOLVED, that the Board move into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Allison Shultes, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 191211.2** passed 7 to 0

## Adjourn from Executive Session

**Motion 191211.3**

Upon motion of Michele Hannagan, and duly seconded by Annemarie Wess, RESOLVED, that the Board adjourn from Executive Session and return to open meeting.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Allison Shultes, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 191211.3** passed 7 to 0

**Motion 191211.4**

Upon motion of Michele Hannagan, and duly seconded by Jessica Nordquist, RESOLVED, that the School Leader evaluation drafted by the Personnel Committee be approved.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Allison Shultes, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 191211.4** passed 7 to 0

**Motion 191211.5**

Upon motion of Michele Hannagan, and duly seconded by Jessica Nordquist, RESOLVED, that the Board instructs the School Leader to meet with the Curriculum Specialist and Lead Administrator to outline a new administrative position, so that funding for this position may be considered by the Board in time for next year's budget proposal.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Allison Shultes, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 191211.5** passed 7 to 0

**Board Retreat**

Deb Hanmer from Breakthrough Leadership consulting submitted a contract proposal for facilitating the upcoming board retreat. Shannon and Michele and Annemarie met her at an event for charter school boards. She was in Washington DC for many years, a region with leadership in diverse charter schools and therefore well-aligned with our strategic goals.

Jessica Nordquist disclosed that she is on the Board of Breakthrough Leadership.

**Motion 191211.6**

Upon motion of Michele Hannagan, and duly seconded by Annemarie Wess, RESOLVED, that the contract for Board Retreat Facilitation be approved.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Ryan O'Malley, Allison Shultes, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** Jessica Nordquist.

**Motion 191211.6** passed 6 to 0

**Future Agenda Items/Public Comment**

**Retreat:** Planetarium conference room January 11 8:30-12:30, in lieu of the Wednesday evening board meeting for January. The meeting will be publicly announced as per open meetings requirements.

**Adjournment**

**Motion 191211.7**

Upon motion of Michele, and duly seconded by Annemarie, RESOLVED, that the {DATE} meeting be adjourned.

**Voting in the affirmative:** Michelle Burack, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Jessica Nordquist, Ryan O'Malley, Allison Shultes, Annemarie Wess

**Voting in the negative:** None

**Abstaining:** None

**Motion 191211.7** passed 7 to 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Burack

Secretary of GCCS Board of Trustees

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