

The Genesee Community Charter School
Board of Trustees
Education Governance Council
FINAL Meeting Minutes
October 14, 2020
Virtual Meeting via Zoom (Due to COVID-19)

Board Members Present: Ivelisse Gonzalez, Michele Hannagan, Ryan O'Malley, **Elizabeth Pietrzykowski**, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Tasha Stevens, Kevin Sutherland, Traci Terrance, Jess Wanner, Annemarie Wess, Lukas Wilson
(Bold: BOT non-voting)

Board Members Absent: Nolica Murray-Fields, **Cheryl Moeller (Bold: BOT non-voting)**

Educational Governance Council Members Present: Maggie Deutschbein, Becki Mason, Shannon Hillman **(Bold: BOT non-voting)**

Educational Governance Council Members Absent: None

Guests: Maureen Milke, Robin Blew, Melinda Perez (Heveron & Heveron)

Legal Counsel Present: George DesMarteau

1. Welcome, Call to Order, Agenda Overview

Meeting called to order by Michele Hannagan at 5:32pm.

Quorum is present. Welcome to guest, Melinda Perez, from *Heveron & Heveron*.

2. Greeting--Shannon Hillman

Really quick greeting this evening--question for the group is *How are You?* Based on Shannon and her team's check in that they do with the staff to say, "how are the children?" and remembering that it is important to check in with yourself as well. Meeting attendees replied in the Zoom Meeting's Chat box a brief statement about how we are doing. Responses were varied.

3. Review & Approve Monthly Minutes

Review and Approve September 2020 Minutes

Motion 201014.1

Upon motion of Michele Hannagan, and duly seconded by Annemarie Wess, RESOLVED, that the minutes of September 9, 2020 be approved.

Voting in the affirmative: Michele Hannagan, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Tasha Stevens, Kevin Sutherland, Traci Terrance, Jess Wanner, Annemarie Wess, Lukas Wilson

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 201014.1 passed: 10 to 0

4. GCCS Audit Summary 2019-2020 -*Heveron & Heveron*

Melinda Perez from *Heveron & Heveron* reported their findings in the 2019-2020 Audit Report Summary. A draft of the report was sent to the board for review. Ms. Perez, the manager of the project, focused on the audit summary including information reviewed annually. The audit is necessary under the New York Department of Education for Charter Schools for compliance. The audit provides information reducing risk of financial loss or resources, and minimizes embarrassment over misuse of funds. Ms. Perez reported that while GCCS did have a separate audit completed last year by New York State, the audit completed by *Heveron & Heveron* does not look at the same things. It was also noted that new policies that were put into place by GCCS at the end of last school year, have been included but will be reviewed this coming year as they were implemented so late in the year.

The audit includes best practices and controls in place for things like paying bills, and ensures GCCS is up to date on new tax laws, accounting laws, and new legislation coming down the line. It is a resource for GCCS to use and its main objectives are to: help assure that the processes and systems in place at GCCS can be relied upon to help manage financial risks. Audit report findings indicate that at GCCS, these conditions are fair and good and would help mitigate theft within the organization. In all material respects, reports are clean and fairly stated; *Heveron & Heveron* reported no material weakness or significant deficiencies. Required communications are indicated on the draft of the Management Letter.

Ms. Perez shared that a previous recommendation of implementing a new procurement policy was completed in a timely manner and is noted in this year's report. Additionally, in this year's report *Heveron & Heveron* recommends that a physical inventory of the school should be taken on a yearly basis as it is helpful should the need arise for insurance claims. This was initiated last year but due to COVID closure, is being recommended that it is continued and implemented this year. It was found that all invoices were not initially dated by the treasurer, which may be attributed to challenges presented by COVID-19 but it recommended that for this year that all invoices be properly initialed, dated and signed-off on by the Board Treasurer. Appropriate timeliness, internal controls are good and management is responsive to recommendations and there are indications of illegal activity or fraud.

The Audit Report Summary includes major items, results, benchmark comparisons and highlights. See the summary document for details.

Heveron & Heveron also provided additional links and resources for nonprofits including details on upcoming changes to regulations. One of these upcoming changes will change how lease agreements and rent are presented on financial statements. Beginning in December 2021,

(impacting GCCS in June 2023), lease and rent agreements will need to be presented as a liability, indicating that the entire value of the lease over the years is both an asset (right of use) and liability (have to pay it) over the course of the entire lease. The Board questioned if any preparations or actions were needed to be taken for this now. Ms. Perez shared that no action is needed from the Board on this future regulation change at this point as it will mostly impact organizations looking to obtain loans as it can impact debt ratios.

Motion 201014.2

Upon motion of Mark Schiesser, and duly seconded by Jess Wanner, RESOLVED, that the GCCS 2019-2020 Audit Report as presented by *Heveron & Heveron* be approved pending the final review and approval with certification by the board Treasurer, Kevin Sutherland.

Voting in the affirmative: Michele Hannagan, Nolica Murray-Fields, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Tasha Stevens, Kevin Sutherland, Traci Terrance, Jess Wanner, Annemarie Wess, Lukas Wilson

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 201014.2 passed: 10 to 0

5. Finance Review/Budget Review - Kevin & Robin

Robin reported on the year end finances and actuals from June 2019. The review covered topics that were discussed throughout last year and included notes on:

- The per pupil revenue from RCSD that was budgeted incorrectly and meant that the budget ran at a deficit throughout the year and ended \$21,000 under budget because of those per pupil cost changes not from reduced enrollment;
- Lower grant funding was received last year than in year's past due to the timing of the dissemination grant
- A good investment gain of \$77K in Fidelity and Vanguard investments; received a private donation of ~\$23K; had normal reimbursement for teacher on special assessment and RCSD tech loan (recognized as support and expenses)
- Error in the budget in excel under administrative benefits - was corrected for 2021 budget.
- IT support contracts are currently under budget, but will change once invoices come in.
- Operations: student testing i-Ready with Title 4 funds, hired strategic leadership consultant so business expenses were higher.
- Robin reported that it was overall a good year with no major variances, just some changes in expenditures due to COVID.

Overall, the 2019-2020 year end came in at a deficit of \$2,300.

Financials for July and August of the new fiscal year (2020-2021) were reviewed and all reports were within normal variances. There is no expected increase in expenditure due to COVID-19 due to support from Monroe County for sanitizer and PPE supplies. GCCS has a strong cash flow and increased investments from last year.

Approve Form 990

Deferred to November meeting; draft will be uploaded to NYS Education portal.

6. Committee Updates

a. Advocacy (Jessica Wanner)

Updates: Jess shared that she, Shannon and Deb will meet in early November and start the SWOT interview process for a potential GCCS partnership. Deb is taking the lead on this and they are planning on holding their first meeting in mid November with parents. The committee is intentionally moving at a slower paces because everyone is still getting settled in this school year.

b. Discipline (Nolica Murray-Fields)

Updates: The committee is still working on the Code of Conduct. The process is going well, but is slow. The committee is more than half-way through and are going line by line to ensure the language is inclusive and restorative. The plan is for the team to take it for a test drive in the near future.

c. Nominating (Annemarie Wess)

Open Positions Update: Annemarie Wess moved to Florida for a new position and is asking to remain on the board remotely. Michele Hannagan expressed that this is unprecedented and a conversation with SED resulted in a response that nothing prohibits her from continuing. An open conversation was had amongst the board and the decision was to keep things as it is with Annemarie continuing as a board member and Vice President of the Board. Kevin Sutherland suggested documenting this precedent through board meeting minutes. Annemarie suggested that she would work to stay connected to the school and visit when she is town.

d. Personnel (Michele/Shannon):

School Leader Evaluation: Shannon took action to follow up with Deb Hamner and do a deep dive into the framework for administrative procedures. Deb sent a proposal and Michele will review and add an update to the November agenda.

e. *Safety: (Shannon)

District Safety Plan: Originally, it was planned to combine the district and building plans per the original safety audit. However, upon submission of the safety plan components, further feedback was given that GCCS would need a separate district safety plan that covers the school and RMSC campus. Along with the Safety Committee's input, Lisa Wing provided volunteer support on the development of this district plan. Most of the language came from the building plan and was filled out to reflect the district plan needs.

The GCCS website has a summary of all safety measures and the draft District plan is posted. While submission of the plan was delayed, the 30-day public comment period is important and thus, the draft of the District Plan was posted to the website on October 11th, 30 days before the next board meeting. The draft of the plan was also posted with the *Democrat & Chronicle* and was shared in outgoing emails to the GCCS school community from the School Leader, and in the latest issues of *Currents*, the GCCS newsletter. The public comment period on the draft of the District Safety plan remains open and anyone with questions or comments on the plan is invited to email the school leader.

Overall, the draft of the district plan is a high level document that details the overarching information about responses to threats and violence on our campus, including the RMSC. Additionally, the plan identifies best practices in response, identifies communication channels, highlights how GCCS is working with the RMSC, and how staff and students engage in trainings throughout the year to make sure everyone is prepared. The Safety Team members listed in the District Plan are the same team members that listed in the building plan. Prevention of threats or incidents is a big theme through the draft and highlights current practices that are in place to help prevent threats or violence on the campus. School security procedures outlined in the draft were reviewed with the Safety Committee, including the RMSC's new Facilities Director, Tom Gleason to ensure accuracy and shared input. That group agreed that the safety procedures for the school will be written into a letter, to be signed by the RMSC to formally recognize the agreements and best practices. The draft also highlights communications and notification procedures and reviews the aftermath response plan and resources. Trainings that occur throughout the year are also identified; many were shared that are done with both staff and students throughout each school. The State was very helpful with this process and a checklist of requirements was provided.

IMPORTANT The School Leader reviewed the district safety plan and that it is posted for public comment and approval will take place at November 11th board meeting. Within these 30 days, all are invited to email the school leader, Shannon Hillman at shillman@gccschool.org, if they have any additional comments or questions about the District Safety Plan.

The floor was open for public comment during this part of the meeting. No comments or questions were made by the Board and no one else attended the meeting.

f. ***Diversity: (Traci Terrance)**

Updates: The committee has been meeting biweekly and will be meeting tomorrow. The group is balancing the diversity, equity, and inclusion work with how to be helpful to the school. There is energy around partnering with Erica Dooley.

7. School Leader Update: Enrollment & Demographics, Tent Permit

Tent Permit

The School Leader thought they needed to obtain a tent permit (to be used as an outdoor classroom space) through the State Education Department, but in fact it needed to be done through the City of Rochester based on when GCCS Charter was initiated. When the permit

needed to be obtained through the State Education Department, it was going to need Board Approval, however board approval is not needed when obtaining the permit through the City.

Enrollment & Demographics

Shannon reviewed the “Who We Are” document provided to the board. This includes comparative data about the enrollment of the students including suburban vs. urban, and demographics, and special services.

District Enrollment: 80.6% of the student body is from the Rochester City School District and the remaining 19.4% are located in suburban districts. A table in the document outlines exactly what school districts the students are coming from. Work is being done with Deb Hamner to better determine what we want our target enrollment and demographic to be. Shannon expressed that staff was hearing from families that GCCS was a very white population and she wanted to have data to determine just how white the population is and be able evaluate change over time. Shannon will do a comparison of this data to county and city data and bring that information to the November board meeting.

Racial and ethnic enrollment: A comparison to the 2019 enrollment numbers shows GCCS has increased enrollment in the Black and African American population, decreased in the Multiracial population, increased in Hispanic population, remained the same in Asian and Pacific Islander population, and decreased in the White population. There also appears to be a correlation between students of color and free and reduced lunch with kindergarten with the highest percentage of students of color and free and reduced lunch and 6th grade with the lowest. This shows the school is making progress around enrollment and Shannon attributes this to the Good Schools ROC application.

Academic Support: This refers to the services provided to the students beyond general education. Shannon does argue with the state about the levels of support classifications as 504 Plans aren't listed with the state, only IEPs and students who qualify ELL. Shannon explained the numbers will appear slightly inflated than state numbers because they don't include 504 plans. Compared to last year GCCS has decreased in students with IEPs, 504 plans, but increased in ELL/MLL students.

Shannon and the Advocacy Committee will bring up this information to Deb Hamner in early November. Ivelisse suggested applying to table at Sundays in the Plaza at Clinton and Irondequoit to help diversify enrollment and reach out to the community. She will share this information with Shannon.

Attendance: GCCS sent out a memo with specific language about qualifications for attendance to families and then reached out to make sure they have what they need to be successful. The September attendance report has a 95.69% attendance rate, only about 2% points off the usual. Staff and the support team are checking in on families with attendance issues.

Outstanding Business

8. None

9. New Business: Dishwasher Purchase

Dishwasher Purchase

A new dishwasher is being purchased for the school. The board does not need to approve this purchase.

Building Insurance Renewal Package

Shannon reported that the building insurance package is up for review and the main change is that the cost is increasing by 8% due to the effects nationally of COVID-19 and the stock market. GCCS will renew with the insurance company.

10. Open Forum: Future Agenda Topics and/or Public Comment

7:24pm--Michele Hannagan opened up the meeting to public comment.

A discussion was had regarding how the staff is feeling. The staff expressed that there is joy in the classrooms and they are working hard to keep the feeling of crew and EL Education. Staff is tired because you have to plan for different scenarios for full time, hybrid, and full remote. Preparation is extremely important and the logistics are challenging, and it has been hard to see where students are academically. Staff believes the most important piece is that school is safe and fun. Shannon has been working hard just to keep the doors open beyond the everyday administrative and teaching support. Shannon feels that the school is in a better place than six weeks ago and moving forward, figuring out how to keep the virtual learners included. So far COVID free which is good news. The board applauded all GCCS staff for their hard work during these challenging times. The staff expressed that this is not a sustainable work load, they are just getting into the groove and finding the schedule. Shannon explained that being completely virtual or completely in-person are both not sustainable models. The board will continue to listen and receive feedback in order to provide action when needed.

11. Executive Session

Executive Session was not called during this meeting.

Meeting Wrap-Up

12. Review Actions and Agreements

Motion 201014.3

Upon motion of Michele Hannagan, and duly seconded by Traci Terrance, RESOLVED, that the Board adjourn the October meeting at 7:38pm.

Voting in the affirmative: Ivelisse Gonzalez, Michele Hannagan, Ryan O'Malley, Mark Schiesser, Allison Shultes, Tasha Stevens, Kevin Sutherland, Traci Terrance, Jess Wanner, Annemarie Wess

Voting in the negative: None

Abstaining: None

Motion 201014.3 passed 9 to 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison Shultes

Secretary of GCCS Board of Trustees

GCCS Board Minutes/ October 14, 2020