

Gate City Charter School for the Arts

Board of Trustees Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date:

“The mission of the GCCSA is to use an arts integrated curriculum ... to produce graduates who excel in both academics and the arts and have the knowledge, creativity and inquisitive nature that foster a life-long love of learning”

Meeting Date: Thursday April 16, 2020

Time: 7:10 PM

Location: Video conference

Voting Board Members in Attendance:

Danielle Charest (Chair)

Sarah Thibeault (Secretary)

Felicia Doucette (Treasurer)

Neil Mahoney (Parent Rep)

Jack Balcom (Vice Chair)

Absent Board Members:

Non-Voting Members in Attendance:

Suzanne Wheeler

Betty Mulrey

Astrid Alvarado

Attending Public:

Mandy Darah

Public Comments/Public Matters

No public comment

Approval of Minutes from March

MOTION (Sarah Thibeault/Jack Balcom) Motion to accept the minutes from the meeting was accepted unanimously

Committee Reports

PTO- Neil Mahoney:

The PTO held their first remote meeting with great attendance. It was decided that all fundraisers will be put on hold. We are looking into how much money can be carried over to 2020/2021 school year. Mom Prom will be rescheduled till May 31. Teacher Appreciation Week be budgeted \$200 and the Facebook group already created will be used to brainstorm ideas. Field Day and BBQ could possibly be all in one day later in the Summer.

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Curriculum Committee- Betty Mulrey

Please see Directors Report

H/R Policy Committee-

PR and Community Relations committee- Sarah Thibeault

The school held a parade for students to drive thru with their families to see their teachers and a nice article was published in The Telegraph.

Grants Committee- Jack Balcom

Facilities Committee- Eric Charest-

MOTION (Jack Balcom/Neil Mahoney) Motion to accept the committee meeting reports was accepted unanimously.

Finance Committee Meeting

Felicia gave a review of the finance committee meeting minutes from on April. The audit is still being worked on, with the hopes of finishing 2018/2019 audit by July. The board also discussed asking Lynn Rae to help with finances over the summer.

Next meeting is TBA

MOTION (Neil Mahoney/Sarah Thibeault) Motion to accept minutes of the Finance Committee dated was accepted unanimously.

Old Business

Remote Learning-Please see directors report

New Business

Teachers contracts-The board first needs to review the proposed budget for 2020/2021. A special meeting to discuss the proposed 2020/2021 budget will be set up next week.

Addition of a second 6th grade-The board discussed the potential of adding a second 6th grade class. The school has 15 returning 6th grade students, 9 students attended an info night and

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would like to attend GCCSA and 9 students are interested in attending GCCSA but have not attended an info night. We have the potential of having two 18 student classes.

Recognition for volunteers-The board discussed giving an award or plaque to recognize parents that go above and beyond.

Directors Report

Suzanne Wheeler-

The staff had two days of training on Google Classroom on March 16th and 17th and the next day, March 18th we were up and running. As I drop into their group lunches and morning meetings, I am so proud of the amazing way they have adapted to this new model. They have gone above and beyond to reach each student.

During this time, I have attended nine IEP meetings as well as been in constant touch with Brianna. She is doing a fabulous job and we brainstorm strategies to get IEP students motivated and adjust their needs.

I have multiple meetings with the DOE every week to include the commissioner, SPED, and charter schools' discussions. At all meetings there is a chat box to allow for audience questions. Michaelene held the kindergarten lottery live. It appeared to go very well.

Yesterday's parade was a dream come true. I could not tell who enjoyed it more-the students or the staff! There were tears and cheers. It made my month!

We had a great turnout! You can read about it in today's Nashua Telegraph, pages A3 and A5, pictures included!!!

I am so proud to be part of GCCS

Betty Mulrey

NH has announced that remote learning will continue for the rest of the school year. GCCSA teachers, students, and families have rallied well behind our new remote learning initiative. We have received valuable feedback from students and families which has enabled us to augment or revise our remote learning practices and strategies on a continuing basis. One example is the use of the “mute” button during virtual classroom meetings! That button is more complicated than you may think! Virtual meetings have been a great way for our students to see each other and to keep up their social classroom connections. Teachers have been available to have individual class sessions with students as well. Our students continue to receive Title and ELL services online. We also continue to use free remote learning licenses from I-Ready, Lexia, Learning A-Z and others.

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The NH Department of Education has been keeping us updated and informed as to what to expect and how to handle it in this unique environment and time. They designed a new site called “NH Learns Remotely” to support community, families, and students. This site has “resources geared to seasoned and new educators as well as information for NH students.” The website includes links to instructional sites and lessons, as well as to excellent professional development for teachers. There are many free opportunities for teacher P.D. currently. A graph on this NH site shows 23% of NH with fully implemented remote learning. That percentage would include us! (<http://www.nhlearnsremotely.com/>)

It was announced at a NH state online session that MA student teachers could do practicum hours in NH during this time of remote learning. I am pleased to say that GCCSA is now hosting two practicum students from Merrimack College in our first and second grade online classrooms! This is an excellent experience for these student teachers, and they appreciate this opportunity very much.

Art teacher Beth Ashton worked hard to submit student artwork from GCCSA to the “Drawn to the Music” art and music program on behalf of the New Hampshire Philharmonic Orchestra. All our students’ drawings that were submitted were selected for the production! Students acted out and drew scenes inspired by “The Firebird Suite” from 1919. Here is a link to their work: <https://www.artsonia.com/museum/gallery.asp?project=1921073>

“Midyear Progress Reports” will be shared with families this year on April 24. These reports will be in the same format as Trimester 1. We are working now on what the final school year report card should look like, given remote learning challenges as well as a shortened semester. There is currently a wide variation among schools as to the form these final report cards will take.

We have been able to loan Chromebook to students over the past few weeks in a manner that maximizes social distancing. Fortunately, we have Title funds available for purchasing some of our chrome books, and we were able to have some new Title chrome books up and running just as remote learning began.

We mailed in our ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State) testing for English Language Learners by the due date, which happened to be the last day we had the school open. Excellent timing there.

NH state testing has been suspended because of the COVID 19 public health emergency and will not take place this semester. The next time it will be administered is being discussed by the state. Schools and families have been given access to ways to use practice state assessment test questions and test resources. Practice tests for students now exist in ELA, math, and science, and they are available on the NHSAS website.

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Astrid Alvarado

Current COVID-19 Crisis

We have received additional information that we will be extending remote learning for the remainder of the school year.

State testing (SAS) has been officially waived for the 2019-2020 school year, which poses additional questions related to our “check-in” with the Department of Education renewal date.

Only Catering will be issuing us a refund for the rest of March’s lunch orders. I will be working with Lynn to discuss issuing refunds to families who have already paid along with field trips that were scheduled.

Plans are being made as to how we are going to collect Chromebook and library books that were given out to families during this time. I will ask Mandy to compile a list of library books lent out to families.

End of Year Calendar

After going through last year’s approved calendar, we had appropriated 52 additional hours to account for snow days over the course of the school year. We had 5 snow days and a 2-hour delay thus far this year. The total amount of hours that equals to is 32 hours. This means we have 20 additional hours scheduled into our calendar over our mandated 990 hours by the Department of Education. This brings the question, that we could potentially end our school year (June 1st) even sooner given that we have an abundance of hours built into our calendar and given our circumstances.

MOTION (Neil Mahoney/Jack Balcom) Motion to end the 2019/2020 school year on Monday June 1 was accepted unanimously.

Department of Education Renewal Timeline

Having been in contact with Jane Waterhouse regarding our charter renewal. She stated that our renewal has been extended until April 11th, 2021. We can decide when we are ready to have this meeting. She recommended that we move this to late next fall or early winter.

After re-watching the video from the Department of Education meetings from April & July it seems these are the items, they are looking for us to check in on:

- Years’ worth of academic progress with I-Ready data & SAS
- Holes in data collection to be filled in as organizationally & administratively was lacking on staying “on top of it”
- Measuring and measurement of goals in relation to achieving our mission and individual student achievement
- Systemic manner of collecting and housing school data

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- Plans for fundraising

2020-2021 Enrollment Information

	Returning Students	Unconfirmed	Non-returning	Reason(s)	Waitlisted	Expressed Interest
1st	18	1	1		2	2
2nd	18	1	1	Moving	2	
3rd	15	2			1	2
4th	18	1			3	4
5th	17	2				
6th	15	3	3	ASD	9	9
7th	11	4	2	More opportunity at a typical public school	1	
8th	14				1	1
*Kinder	12	7	1			15
TOTAL # of students	126	14	7	*Not counted under percentages	19	18
Percentage	85%	10%	5%			

We have reached out to our Kindergarten lottery winners, 10 have already confirmed, we have 2 siblings that we are awaiting to hear confirmation and are reaching out to the additional families to get our new Kindergarten class fully enrolled.

Teacher Contracts

Michaelene, Lynn, & I will be working to create new teacher contracts that have an in-depth scope of practice for our teaching staff. The current, 1-page documents that have been given to staff, is sorely lacking in details and a comprehensive scope of practice. We have just begun this process and will be working on it over the course of the month.

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Potential additional 6th Grade

I have reached out to a company referred to us by Cubicle Solutions for quotes on purchasing partition walls for an additional 6th grade classroom. Have not heard back from them yet but have communicated with them and sent pictures of our current partitions. Once I have their quote, I will reach out to Cubicle solutions for a quote as well and Michaelene is currently looking into how much it would cost to furnish an additional classroom.

Car Parade

I would like to personally thank Krystal Cameron for the wonderful idea to host a car parade at Gate City this past Wednesday.

MOTION (Jack Balcom/Neil Mahoney) Motion to adjourn was accepted unanimously.

Next public meeting Thursday May 21 at 7pm

Meeting adjourned 9:00pm