

# 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: May 21, 2020

Time: 7:11 PM

Location: 7 Henry Clay Drive, Merrimack, NH

#### Voting Board Members in Attendance:

Danielle Charest (Chair)

Jack Balcom (Vice Chair)

Sarah Thibeault (Secretary)

Felicia Doucette (Treasurer)

Neil Mahoney (Parent Rep)

#### Absent Board Members:

#### Non-Voting Members in Attendance:

Suzanne Wheeler

Betty Mulrey

Astrid Alvarado

#### Attending Public:

Amy Cooper

Mandy Darah

Eric Charest

#### Public Comments/Public Matters

No public comment

#### Approval of Minutes from April 2020

**MOTION** (Neil/Felicia) Motion to accept the minutes from the meeting was accepted unanimously

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## **Committee Reports**

PTO- Neil Mahoney. The PTO has decided to dog ear \$2000 to use next year for enrichment for the students and also will put aside \$1400 for the teachers/specials to use. The PTO raised \$470 for Teacher Appreciation the initial gift has been purchased but more discussion will happen to decide what to do with the rest of the funds. Mom Prom has tentatively been moved to October 17 dependent on the Hunt Buildings availability as well as In the Mix. Elections were held for the executive board and the original members got voted back in.

Curriculum Committee- Betty Mulrey- Please see directors report

H/R Policy Committee-

PR and Community Relations committee- Sarah Thibeault

Grants Committee- Jack Balcom

Facilities Committee- Eric Charest- The school will need to perform lead testing and air quality survey for the end of June.

**MOTION** (Sarah Thibeault/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 May 15, 2020. Felicia discussed finalizing the budget as well as looking into rent relief from the past few months due to COVID-19. The financials for 2018 are close to being finished.

Next meeting is June 12, 2020 1pm

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

## **Old Business**

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Teacher Contracts- All teachers have had meetings with the directors.

1 Teacher is TBD

1 Teacher is moving

All other teachers are interested in staying.

### **New Business**

Brady & Sullivan 1 Innovation Way-Recently they spoke to Astrid about an adjusted price that seemed to fit our budget better but realized our operating budget was too high. Astrid is working with them to find a better price by utilizing space better and reducing the classroom size as well as getting rid of unutilized space. Astrid will continue to discuss with Brady & Sullivan and investigate having board members walk the building.

Returning to School 2020/21-We are unsure when we will have guidelines for going back to school. Astrid is putting together a task force committee of teachers, parents, and board members to discuss remote learning, as well as the 3 different scenarios for returning to school in the Fall.

-Fully back into the building, traditional student to teacher learning

-Partial Access to the building some traditional learning as well as some remote learning

-Complete Remote Learning

First Meeting will be Wednesday June 3, 2020

### **Directors Report**

Suzanne Wheeler-

May has been an extremely busy month. I have had 8 IEP meetings, 1 referral meeting, 1 504 meeting, and 1 transition meeting. In addition to that I have the following Department of Education meeting updates: 2 times a week listening to the commissioner, 1 time a month there is a charter school update, 1 time a week there is a special education meeting, and lastly a covid update meeting.

Our last day of school being June 1<sup>st</sup> has led me to organize a return of materials. On Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> students with the last name beginning with A-F will be able to drive into the parking lot and staying in their cars return chrome books, white boards, library books, etc....They will then be asked to open their trunks or back seat door and we will put in a bag that contains their desk and locker belongings. They will be unable to receive these if they do not return GCCS materials. On Wednesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> students with last names ending in G-L will do the same

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process, Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup> last names M-R are expected, and lastly Friday S-Z. Children will not be allowed out of their cars. Only parents who need to look for an article in our lost and found pile will be allowed out of their cars and they must be masked.

The hours will be limited to ten o'clock to two o'clock.

Staff involved these four days are Michaelene, Lynn, Brianna, me and one day Brenda has volunteered. I have requested that no other staff be in the building closing out their rooms on those days to mitigate any personal distancing problems. All the staff involved in the return of materials will be wearing masks.

Astrid and I had zoom meetings with all the educational assistants concerning contracts for next school year. The contract will not change if we work remotely or in the classroom. They were told they would receive letters of intent next week and contracts during the summer. We are waiting to hear back from one EA by next Monday.

The position of Behaviorist has been eliminated for budgetary reasons as well as the fact there would be no need for the position if we go remotely. We made it clear that if a position for an EA opened (which is likely) she would be offered that position. We let go of one EA for several reasons.

Lastly, I have to add that as I “pop” into remote classrooms, I am so proud of all of our staff who are working diligently to make the transition to remote learning as seamless as they can. Proof of this is from parents who have emailed to express their positive feedback on the availability of the teachers to their students.

We all miss the community of being together at GCCS and are hoping for a fall return.

### Betty Mulrey

Our teachers, students, and families continue to valiantly work within our remote learning framework this spring. Virtual class meetings have been an excellent social experience for students, as they are able to see and hear each other on the screen in real time. We continue to receive valuable feedback from students and families on remote learning, which has enabled us to augment or revise our online practices and strategies on a continuing basis.

As our teachers receive this feedback, and as they continue to gain more experience with this mode of teaching and learning, they are in the process of adjusting what they do in order to best meet the needs of students. This includes time expected for assignment completion, number of

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assignments, and a balance of virtual and asynchronous meetings. Teachers are also working together on integrated assignments, such as music and poetry. We are working hard to engage students who have not been turning in assignments. In these cases, teachers have reached out to both students and families to resolve the situation in a positive and workable manner. Online individual sessions with teachers are always available and encouraged.

Given our remote learning challenges as well as a shortened semester, we have altered our third trimester report card. We will grade this final trimester on an “incomplete, pass or excels” scale for overall work in classes (not for specific competencies). As we consider the diverse environments our students and families have regarding their ability to access online learning, this will allow us to address overall participation and growth.

Our students continue to receive Title and ELL services online. We also continue to use free remote learning licenses from i-Ready and Lexia. Both Lexia and i-Ready free licenses will be available for students until the end of July if families wish to use them.

We were able to get Chromebooks loaned to all students who needed them. We have found that this can be particularly important for families with multiple children needing online access at the same time.

The NH Department of Education continues to augment and update their website “NH Learns Remotely” (<http://www.nhlearnsremotely.com>) in order to keep us updated and informed. There are excellent resources on this site for educators, families, and students. Families are encouraged to check it out!

i-Ready scores from the fall and winter this year have been gathered in data form and are available for your review. All grades made gains in the winter in the general category of both reading and math. Scores within the domains in each category differ in the various areas, and teachers are looking at these statistics to see which domains need the most emphasis. Domains for Reading include: Phonological Awareness, Phonics, High-frequency Words, Vocabulary, Comprehension-Literature, and Comprehension-Informational Text. Domains for Math include: Number & Operations, Algebra and Algebraic Thinking, Measurement & Data, and Geometry. Our school’s i-Ready scores have taken on new importance, as the NHSAS tests have been delayed due to the COVID-19 situation, and i-Ready scores will be the main way the state can see our progress this year.

Schools and families have been given access by the state to practice state assessment test questions and test resources in ELA, Math, and Science. These practice tests are available on the NHSAS website (<https://nh.portal.airast.org/training-tests.stm>).

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End of year evaluations for teachers are being shared with teachers in an online manner. These evaluations include lesson highlights from the year, areas of commendation, ways in which to grow, and professional development opportunities.

Our GCCSA Standards & Curriculum folder shared this year with teachers, giving standards and resources for all the grades, now has a new addition called “Remote Learning Instructional Resources.” This folder includes the areas of “Digital Classroom Environments,” “In Support of Wellness,” “Instructional Databases,” “Online Instruction,” and “Professional Development.” Information in this folder has been given to us by the state and by each other, as we find resources to share which have worked for us. I invite anyone who has found an excellent resource to share it with me so that I can add it to this folder.

Our remote learning resources and experience this year may very well come in handy given our uncertain situation for the fall and beyond due to the COVID-19 virus.

Astrid Alvarado

### **COVID**

In the starting phases of organizing a committee to discuss Fall re-opening with the various stakeholders of our community. The sole purpose of this committee would be to discuss challenges/ successes of Remote Learning and barriers that we could potentially see in the Fall if we go back to physically or partially.

Some thoughts/ points of discussion to consider include the need to update our facilities cleaning structure, some small classroom sizes that will not allow for social distancing (Art & Music), families deciding to keep their kids at home, etc.

CARES funding is made available to us for purchases that are due to COVID outbreak. Currently uncertain of how much funding we are set to receive. However, we will have to strategically think about what the biggest need for our space is and how to best utilize those funds. For example: curricula, cleaning materials (UV lights), create an additional usable space for smaller classrooms, etc.

### **2020-2021 Student Enrollment**

	Returning Students	Unconfirmed	Non-returning	Reason(s)	Waitlisted	Expressed Interest
1st	18		2		2	2
2nd	19		1	Moving	2	
3rd	17				1	2

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4th	19				3	4
5th	19					
6th	16		4	ASD	9	9
7th	15		2	More opportunity at a typical public school	1	
8th	13		1		2	1
*Kinder	18					14
TOTAL # of students	136		10	*Not counted under percentages	19	18
Percentage	93%	0%	7%			

**CURRENT TOTAL ENROLLMENT FOR 2020/2021 School Year: 171**

## Whole School Community Event

Lydia in 7th Grade brought up to Beth Ashton the idea to host a virtual paint night. We will be hosting this through Google Meet or Zoom on May 29th at 6pm for those who want to participate. Beth is currently creating a list of supplies that we can give to families to gather ahead of time. Announcement will be made on May 25th through Facebook page, email, and text message.

## 8th Grade Graduation

We will be moving forward with an in-person 8th Grade Graduation on June 12th at 7pm. We will have students remain in their vehicles for the graduation. We will rent or see if we can borrow a large screen to play a slideshow, use some kind of amplifying system so students/families can hear us in the parking lot. Students will be delivered their caps and diplomas ahead of time to decorate and bring to graduation.

## Teacher Contract Discussions

Teachers were notified today regarding grade changes for next year. I had multiple discussions surrounding what would be necessary for next year if we went back remotely vs. physically. Tools that they would need to be successful in both aspects and general long-term plans for them personally, the school as a whole, and for their students. We currently have all but one teacher/full time salary staff for

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**MOTION** (Jack Balcom/Neil Mahoney) Motion to go into non-public RSA 91-A:3, II (a) accepted unanimously

Roll call was taken

**MOTION** (Felicia Doucette/Jack Balcom) **Motion** to adjourn was accepted unanimously.

Next public meeting at July 16, 2020 7pm

Meeting adjourned 9:31 pm