

# 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: August 20, 2020

Time: 7:05 PM

Location: Remote Meeting using Google Meetings, NH

#### Voting Board Members in Attendance:

Danielle Charest (Chair)

Sarah Thibeault (Secretary)

Felicia Doucette (Treasurer)

Neil Mahoney (Parent Rep)

Jenny Hitzeman

#### Absent Board Members:

#### Non-Voting Members in Attendance:

Suzanne Wheeler

Astrid Alvarado

Jennifer Blanchette

#### Attending Public:

#### Public Comments/Public Matters

No public comment

#### Approval of Minutes from June 2020

**MOTION** (Neil Mahoney/Jenny Hitzemen) Motion to accept minutes at June 2020 Meeting accepted unanimously

#### Approval of Minutes from July 2020

**MOTION** (Neil Mahoney/Jenny Hitzemen) Motion to accept minutes at July 2020 Meeting accepted unanimously

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## **Committee Reports**

PTO- Neil Mahoney. No meeting in August

Curriculum Committee- Jennifer Blanchette-see directors report

H/R Policy Committee-Jenny Hitzemen-No meeting

PR and Community Relations committee- Sarah Thibeault-No meeting

Grants Committee- No meeting

Facilities Committee- Eric Charest- Eric Charest is working on getting the Chromebooks updated and the webcams installed.

**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 August.

The 2018 audit has been finished and sent to the state. 2019 needs to be reconciled next but we will need to find new auditors.

Next meeting is TBD

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

## **Old Business**

Brady Sullivan- we are no longer working with Brady Sullivan and will have to revisit finding a new building later.

Approve budget for 2020/2021- moved to next meeting

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Grants for upcoming school year-we will revisit this item after the 2019 audit is finished.

Update to maternity/paternity policy-we are waiting for the finance committee to review the budget.

Returning to school 2020/2021-The board discussed remote learning policies brought forth from the opening task force. We amended the attendance policy to read all live classes require participation.

**MOTION** (Neil Mahoney/Jenny Hitzemen) Motion to accept the attendance policy allowing for spelling and grammatical corrections accepted unanimously.

## **New Business**

Building usage for Special Education-Brianna would like to meet with children in the building, the board discussed different options, landing on outside meet and greets to start the year to give time to continue working on building usage policies and cleaning protocol.

Cares Act utilization-The school has \$31,000 in Cares Acts funding that has not be already been allocated in the budget. As followed are the needs for remote curriculum based on remote and hybrid learning.

i-ready- \$30/student-\$7200

Lexia-\$2320

Study Sync-\$45/student

Adobe software-\$2500/year includes up to 100 licenses

Google voice for staff working from home \$40/month includes:

1 line for teachers

1 line for administrators

1 line for enrollment

1 line for Lynn Rae (office)

Less than half of the \$31,000 will be spent for remote learning but more funds will need to be utilized if/when we start hybrid learning.

## **Directors Report**

Suzanne Wheeler-

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August has been prepping month and policy month. Researching close by vicinity districts and how they are returning to school and what their policies are has been very interesting and mind boggling as it changes from day to day. Merrimack is returning using the hybrid model with one teacher from each grade level using the remote model. There has been no mandate on masks as of yesterday although they had a meeting last night. Nashua is using the remote model until they recess in in October and have stated a specific date to do this. Mask requirements are still unknown. Hudson is going back at 100% with a choice to go remote. At one elementary school 96 students chose remote. They also will have a teacher at grade level to teach remotely.

On August 7th, the DOE offered workshops on topics related to the Covid virus. They varied on specific areas including special education.

The administrative team has chosen a day and time to meet weekly. This will assure that we are all on the same page.

On August 5<sup>th</sup> Sycamore training was held for the administrative team. Task Force Meetings have been held on Wednesdays to discuss expectations for students, parents, and teachers. It was very worthwhile to break into small cohorts to accomplish this. I met with Nicole, Julia and Sarah on Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup>. Previously I had researched other districts to compare their expectations.

We continue to meet with the Commissioner and NH administrators every Wednesday. Lynn picked up 95 cloth face masks at the DMV yesterday as the commissioner announced the dates for pick up.

I have been in communication with the Nashua school district to plan for meetings with all Nashua students who have an I.E.P. By law all the I.E.P.s will need to be amended to adjust how delivery of services will take place. Although the total amount of time will stay the same, the daily amounts will change because as of now their special education teacher will only be working with Gate City students two days a week. I have suggested they change this method and was told they would consider it.

Manchester meetings will take place in the next two weeks as every I.E. P. must be reviewed. I am waiting for other districts to set meeting dates with me. I am waiting for other districts to set up meetings with me.

Tomorrow all teachers and EA's will attend a picnic lunch in the back-parking lot. New staff will be introduced, and EA's will be given additional information concerning what grade they are assigned to as well as the looping process. All I.E.P. binders have been updated and will be

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distributed to the teachers. The accommodation and modification pages will be distributed to the EA's.

Professional Days for the staff will be held on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>. On Thursday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> parents have been notified to pick up chrome books and all virtual school supplies that teachers will have ready for students. Two times are being offered to accommodate parents (10-12 and 4-6). There will be an alternate pick up day on Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup> on the chance that some people were on vacation.

On our agenda this evening is the topic of building usage. There are a few teachers that plan on teaching remotely from their classrooms I feel very strongly about this and after talking with Julia today she added more positive reasons why she feels this is so important for her kids. Brianna stressed the importance of working 1:1 with some of her students and how she would approach the parents to give them a choice.

I am looking forward to September 9<sup>th</sup>. I just wish I could welcome all students back in person!

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Jennifer Blanchette-

## **Curriculum Needs and Acquisition**

During the past month I evaluated and researched our immediate curriculum needs for remote learning.

I have acquired the following programs for the listed levels and subjects of instruction:

Savvas- All school Math

Kesler Science- Middle School Science

Writer's Workshop-4th & 5th Grade Writing

Spire Reading Intervention-Title I Intervention K-8 RTI

Mystery Science-All School Science Curriculum/Supplemental

Typing Club-Tech Education 5th Grade

Social Studies 4&5 Grade SS Curriculum-4&5th Grade

Still being acquired:

I-Ready: Instruction & Assessment Grades K-5 and 6-8 Assessment

SmartMusic: Remote schooling music creation/application K-8

Adobe Student Suite: K-8 Art instruction and administrative applications

Being considered:

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StudySync(as an alternative to Lexia for its better data, assessment, and accommodations):  
Grades 6-8

## **Teacher Meetings:**

I have met with each teacher in the past 4 weeks. Topics for each discussion were:

1. Teacher concerns and questions
2. Reflection on Spring remote learning
3. Current Curriculum Used
4. Curriculum/Material Needs
5. Training/PD/resources needed
6. Remediation/assessment
7. Teacher and Curriculum Director expectations

## **PD Planning and Development:**

After an assessment of PD needs, I have developed the following beginning of school PD plan:

August 21st: Teachers and EAs initial meeting and luncheon (remote or socially distanced outside at the school.

August 25-28: Flex PD during which teachers will take part in personal pd from a grid of over 30 options I have compiled. Teachers will choose PD options centered on their individual needs. All options have been previewed. Categories include Project Based Learning, assessment, remote learning, technology tools and applications, arts integration, and social-emotional needs. Each teacher will earn PD hours by filling out reflection forms. Each teacher is expected to take part in approximately 3 hours of PD each flex day with a reflection meeting taking place on Friday.

September 1-3: All EA and teacher PD remote but synchronous. Topics include Sycamore, student accommodation, EA/teacher collaboration, Google, Pearson/Savvas, SEL through Art, Choose Love, teacher/student/parent expectations, essential tech tools.

## **Schedule and Instructional Approach Changes:**

Collaborated with teachers to develop a more structured, consistent schedule for fall and to shift remote instructional approach to live learning and live individualized and group instruction.

## **Enrichment Elective Groups:**

EA's and teachers will each be offering a club/enrichment activity to students after core instructional time at all grade levels (while not all groups are appropriate for every age, every age will have groups to join). Activities include Legos, songwriting, empowerment, dinosaur club, intuitive art, Storytime, writing, history club and many more. This element is key to creating an engaging, dynamic, robust remote learning environment. It will strengthen our

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community by bringing students at various grade levels together. Our groups will meet virtually, at locations, at schools outside and a mix. Policies are underway to address concerns regarding building use, masks, and liability.

## **Hiring:**

Brianne Fleury has taken a position as our Title1 instructor. She has recently graduated from Rivier with a teaching certificate and a licensure.

Unfortunately, our new hire for middle school science decided to accept employment elsewhere. I am still on the hunt. Send your teacher friends our way!

## **Training Galore:**

I have taken part in approximately 70+ hours of PD this month to preview potential PD for teachers and gain insight into helping our students and teachers succeed emotionally and academically in the remote environment.

Additionally, I have attended training for I-Ready, Title I & II, Curriculum Assessment, Sycamore, Kesler Science and Equitable Learning

**In Process:** Grant training/DOE training

Astrid Alvarado

## **Financials**

2018 Audit has been officially completed and sent to the State

Counting House has been able to link our bank account with our QuickBooks account to ease tracking usage of funds. Rather than having to manually import them we can simply assign them to the correct GL number.

Still in the process of needing to reconcile a few accounts on QuickBooks to make sure they are allocated to the proper GL account number. Once this is completed, we will get started on our 2019 Audit which will hopefully be a much smoother transaction than 2018 with Counting House on staff.

We need to find new Auditors, as Melanson has decided that they are no longer willing to work with GCCS.

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## Changes in Staff

I am excited to announce that we have hired an enrollment & social media coordinator to our staff. Paige Duval comes to us with experience in event coordinating, drafting of advertisements and social media content.

Marsha Bottino, our previous grant writer has written to us determining that she will no longer be working with the school. This was due to insufficient information being funneled to her in a timely manner. We will need to look for a new grant writer.

## 2020-2021 Enrollment

Enrollment has taken a dip this past month. We have several families who have moved, returning to their home district, or moving to VLACs or alternative online education opportunities.

We will be starting to follow up with families who choose to withdraw from GCCS to further clarify any misconceptions that we are able to. I have followed up with 1 family to start, who are thinking it over and will get back to me soon.

Grade	Current Student Class Size	Waitlist
Kinder	18	22
1st	19	6
2nd	18	5
3rd	19	7
4th	19	10
5th	16	5
6th	19	17
7th	16	1
8th	15	1
<b>TOTAL # of students</b>	<b>159</b>	

## DOE Reporting

Our annual accountability report is due to the State by the end of this month. There are a few Board related questions that I will need responses to for the previous school year.

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They are as follows: Have there been any changes in the membership of the Board of Trustees since the last annual report? If so, explain.

Have there been any changes to the Trustee’s methods of operations since the last annual report? If so, explain

Have there been any changes to the Trustee’s by-laws since the last annual report? If so, explain.

Have there been any recusals made by a member of the Board of Trustees, under RSA 194-B:5, VII? If so, explain.

Emergency Operations Plan is also due at the end of this month. This will be reviewed and submitted to the State.

The DOE-25 which is the financial document that is required by the State is also due at the end of this month. This will not be able to be completed, we will ask for an extension to finish updating our QuickBooks system to get the most accurate reporting numbers, as possible.

## **Title Programs**

In order to begin Title planning of funds, the Board will need to sign off on a list of General Program assurances that states we are abiding by Federal rules and regulations as well as have the proper policies that are needed for Federal funds, that are outlined in the document linked. <https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/2020-04/charter-school-general-assurances-fy21.pdf>

**MOTION** (Jenny Hitzeman/Neil Mahoney) **Motion** to adjourn was accepted unanimously.

Next public meeting on September 17, 2020 7pm

Meeting adjourned 9:04pm