



MINUTES for the Meeting of the Gateway Public Schools Board of Trustees  
Wednesday, March 24th, 5:00 - 7:00 PM  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

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**Board Members Present:** Therese Arsenault, Beth Berliner, Allison Bhusri, Cynthia Billops, Sapna Boze, Sara Byrne, Dan Carr, Elizabeth Colen, Katie Colley, Mark Felton, Sharon Gillenwater, Susan Masto, Harper Matheson, Sharon Olken, Molly Orner, Kevin Rafter, Laura Spivy, Mary Plant-Thomas, Dina To, Valerie Toler, Julie Wise

**Board Members Excused:**

**Board Members Not Present:**

**Also present:** Danielle Ciccarelli, Chris Hero, Aaron Watson, Sharon Priest

**Welcome and Announcements**

Susan Masto brought the meeting to order at 5:05. and reminded trustees about upcoming events. She thanked Dan Carr for being a fantastic host for the wonderful *Gateway's Got Talent* fundraising event. She also thanked all who have participated in Diversity and Inclusion interviews with the Committee on Trustees so far, and told trustees that the board survey will come out next month. April 29th will be a *Conversations for Impact* event featuring three Gateway alumni. They will talk about how the pandemic has impacted their professional lives and how we can prepare students to rise to these challenges. Susan thanked Valerie Toler, Beth Berliner and Beth's son Luke for participating in Career Days at Gateway Middle and Gateway High.

**Approval of Minutes from February 24th, 2021 and March 2, 2021**

Susan asked everyone to review the minutes from February 24th and March 2, 2021. Mark Felton motioned to approve the minutes, and Cynthia Billops seconded the motion. The February 24th and March 2nd minutes were approved, unanimously, without issue.

**Public Forum**

Susan opened the floor for the public forum. No further discussions or motions were introduced.

**Mission Moments**

For the Mission moment, Dan Carr spoke about his experiences hosting the Gateway family fundraising events for the past two years, including this year's *Gateway's Got Talent* event. He remarked that the development team, through a lot of effort and ingenuity, pulled together amazing virtual events. Despite COVID19, we've been able to bring the Gateway community together to fundraise and celebrate Gateway's values in a fun and creative way. He enjoyed taking part and working with such a great group of people. Sharon Olken thanked Dan for stepping up and being a wonderful, engaging host for the past two years. She then presented one of the videos from the event, "Chad's Dream," featuring Gateway staff members.

**Committee On Trustees**

Sharon Gillenwater announced that Kevin Rafter has agreed to take on the position of board co-chair next year. Sharon gave the floor to Kevin for the Committee on Trustees report. Kevin thanked everyone for their nominations and for participating in the diversity and inclusion interviews. The committee found that everyone was appreciative of the opportunity to have those conversations, and it was a very valuable effort. The committee will share their findings at an upcoming board meeting.

Kevin continued by saying that this is the time of year that the committee takes stock of the leadership of all the committees, to make sure we have strong leaders in place for next year. The committee will reach out to chairs and trustees to see how they want to participate in 2021/22.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Sharon Gillenwater gave the floor to Sharon Olken for the ED report. Sharon Olken Gateway has been working to gather input from families about their interest in, and comfort with, participating in in-person activities this spring, as well as feedback that will help us organize for next year. To that end, Gateway hosted 3 community meetings with families to share and about upcoming opportunities for in-person activities and listen to families. In addition, both schools sent out surveys on the same topic. We have had about 35% survey participation so far. We are making phone calls to increase participation among all groups. Sharon shared a summary of family and staff surveys. She noted that we should look at the results as a snapshot; we anticipate that more people will opt-in as more information becomes available. She also presented data from the staff survey, again noting that it is a snapshot, as it did not have 100% participation and reflects a moment in time. We have received feedback that many families are concerned about next year and want some assurance that Gateway will have in person instruction. Because of changing guidelines from the CDC and the city, we are sending a message to families about plans to fully reopen next fall. We will meet all health and safety guidelines.

It has been extraordinary to see how staff and teachers have come together during the past year. We have hit the pandemic wall, but every email that Sharon receives from families starts with the acknowledgement that teachers are doing an incredible job.

Sharon put in a plug for the upcoming Conversation for Impact event on 4/29, which will feature a panel of Gateway alumni. They will talk about how COVID changed their work and the implication for schools. The alumni work in the nonprofit, tech and public health sectors. It should be an amazing event. Please invite people.

### **Development Update**

We are so close to reaching our fundraising goal and ahead of where we were last year. Thank you to everyone who supports those efforts. We had our annual family community builder and fundraiser, this year recast as *"Gateway's Got Talent"*. We are expecting to raise \$52,000. In conjunction with our end of year appeal, we expect to reach our family fundraising goal for the year.

Two big things are coming up this spring, the first being our Major Donor Initiative work, which consists of outreach to individuals. Sharon and a number of people on the board are meeting to review action plans. We recognize that the Major Donors effort has to be an important part of reaching our fundraising goal. The second upcoming fundraising initiative is our annual Spring Appeal. We will be sending an appeal letter in early April to people who have not given yet this year. Trustees are writing notes to include in the letter. Sharon asked Laura Spivy to talk about how trustees can help with the Spring Appeal. Laura asked board members to send the appeal email to their friends and networks. Laura and Sara Byrne are proposing a match to create urgency. If board members come together to contribute a match, it means a lot and motivates donors. The last time the board had a match was 2018, and it enabled us to raise \$105,000. If trustees are interested in participating in the match, please email Sharon and she will keep track of it.

### **Finance Update**

Sharon G gave the floor to Chris for the Finance Update. He began with a look at the budget for next year. He reported that we are better positioned than we thought we would be when we created our FY21 budget, however, most of our surplus is due to accounting entry requirements rather than cash to spend in this current year. We committed to revisiting the topic of compensation increases if financial conditions improved, so we will bring back a recommendation at our next meeting, likely a one-time of increase to align with our one-time funding.

Chris turned the board's attention to the budget and budget drivers for next year and beyond to Gateway's future outlook. In the short-term, our draft budget for next year is almost balanced, thanks to some one-time

COVID funding. In the medium-term, thanks to the sustainability fund, and the ability to leverage our reserves, the next several years will be challenging but manageable. Longer-term, looking forward to FY25, we continue to target new funding streams which will be needed.

Chris discussed how the budget is designed to meet our commitment to Gateway's priorities, which include funding for learning loss mitigation and targeted interventions for students, and full CSM implementation. Chris discussed long-term goals and challenges and paths to a sustainable model. Reaching long-term sustainability will be a challenging project requiring we leverage all of Gateway's many assets.

Our draft budget is nearly final, but things do continue to change. Between now and the next meeting we will continue our analysis of government funding and the needs of our students. Next month we will approve compensation line-items in order to get contracts out in April

**Closed Session: Personnel Update**

Sharon Gillenwater thanked Chris for the finance update. She then called a closed session for a personnel update.

**Adjourn Meeting**

Susan Masto adjourned the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Signed:  Date: 5/1/21  
Sapna Boze, Board Secretary