

Gateway Public Schools

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Wednesday, February 27, 2019 @ 5:00 - 7:00 PM

Minutes

Board Members Present: Therese Arsenault, Beth Berliner, Cynthia Billops, Sapna Boze, Sara Byrne, Elizabeth Colen, Katie Colley, Sharon Gillenwater, Annie Klebahn, Susan Masto, Sharon Olken, Molly Orner, Mary Plant-Thomas, Jackie Quella, Kevin Rafter, Adina Safer, Suzanne Schutte, Laura Spivy, Dina To, Valerie Toler, Aaron White, Julie Wise

Board Members Excused: Joyce McMinn

Board Members Not Present: Allison Bhusri

Also present: Chris Hero, Danielle Ciccarelli, Chanda Guerin, Lisille Matheson, Will Schutte

Welcome, Call to Order, Approval of Minutes from November 28, 2018

Susan called the meeting to order at 5:09, and called for a motion to approve the minutes from January 23, 2018. Sara motioned to approve and Kevin seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously, without issue.

Public Forum

Susan opened the floor for public forum. No further discussions or motions were introduced. Susan thanked the Faculty Affairs Committee for the 2/13 Community Meeting. She reminded trustees of upcoming events: the Great Gateway Gathering on 3/9, the Tacolicious fundraiser on Mondays in April, Gateway Giants night on April 12th, GMS Career day on April 19, Conversations for impact on April 23rd, Susan gave the floor to Sharon Olken for the ED Report.

ED Report

Sharon introduced Gateway High School principal Tony Rodgers to the board and thanked him for coming. Tony started at Gateway principal last July, and it has been a joy getting to know him. Tony introduced himself to the board, and spoke about his background and approach to education. He was born outside of St. Louis, Missouri, and moved to Oakland when he was 13. After attending Berkeley, he taught at his high school alma mater and subsequently taught math and science in middle schools. He found he has a special talent to help students who are pushed out, and decided to focus on the most vulnerable students. While working at Aim High SF, as a science teacher, he worked in Gateway's building and was able to observe Gateway. This led to his interest in the principal position. Sharon asked what he has observed about the school so far.

He mentioned that everyone at Gateway has the opportunity to collaborate. In his past experiences, staff had very specific roles, but here, everyone has the chance to grow. Roles are more fluid than what he has experienced at other schools.

The school has a goal is to increase a sense of belonging in all of our students, and take time to listen to them in order to customize their educational experience. Sharon gave the board time to ask questions.

Suzanne asked him what he would like to learn from the board. He said it would be nice to get to know everyone, and learn about their visions for Gateway. Suzanne said that the board would like to be a resource for Tony. Sharon introduced the different groups represented on the board, such as founders, teacher members, family members, and talked about committees. Sharon and trustees thanked Tony for coming and sharing with the board.

Sharon would like everyone to look out for an email outlining what board members can do to help with the upcoming GHS charter renewal.

Susan gave the floor to Sharon Gillenwater for the Trustees Committee update.

Committee on Trustees

Sharon Gillenwater talked to trustees about Project FOG (Friends of Gateway), a collaboration between the Trustees Committee and the Development Committee. It is designed to broaden our networks. We are trying to reach into new organizations and areas. Tonight, the Trustees Committee would like trustees to brainstorm about prospective trustees. Please think about people in our communities who align with us. There are three tiers of connection.

- 1. Connections who have any strong and obvious connections to our community
- 2. Connections who are connected to organizations with which you also have strong connections
- 3. Connections who are connected to San Francisco companies and organizations with which you think GPS should have relationships

The board broke up into groups for the FOG brainstorming activity. Afterwards, Sapna gave the floor to Mary and Annie for the Faculty Affairs Committee update

Faculty Affairs Committee

Mary and Annie explained that the annual Faculty Affairs Community Meeting was held in the high school little theater on February 13th. She thanked Julie and Danielle for their work in making the little theater a warm and welcoming place. Twenty seven teachers attended, as well as school leaders and a few trustees. It was a diverse group.

The goal of the meeting was for faculty to have a place to share issues around equity and sustainability of workload and faculty retention. Some issues are universal among teachers, and some are unique to where you teach.

What we learned:

- The intensity of teaching and work-life balance are issues.
- High expectations may contribute to burnout.
- Collaboration is key to our program, but may be contributing to unsustainability of workload.
- Teacher impact on students is a core value for teachers, though it can contribute to burnout.
- Feeling valued by supervisors, students and peers really matters.

Some areas to focus on:

- Time and support are key. Having more adults in classroom, afterschool support, grading support, would help. How can we have more adults in the building to support teaching? Is there a way to reinvent the teaching assistant program?
- Long term options for reducing teacher workload, and allowing for discrete collaboration time

- Consider a more streamlined approach to curriculum requirements
- Advising reimagined
- Innovation around schedules

There will be a community meeting at the middle school next week, as many GMS teachers were not able to attend the February 13th meeting. The FAC will share the results with faculty late next week. Everyone thanked Annie and Mary for their leadership and hard work.

Finance Update

Sapna gave the floor to Chris for the finance update. He reviewed and discussed the Low-Performing Students Block Grant, which requires a vote this evening. It provided funds to support students identified as low-performing on state assessments and who are otherwise not identified for supplemental grant funding under the Local Control Funding Formula, or eligible for special education services.

After discussion, Laura moved to approve the grant and Suzanne seconded. The grant was approved, unanimously, without issue.

Chris discussed Prop G and its impact on our budget. Prop G is facing a legal challenge, and we may not know the results for months. Our current and future budget includes Prop G funds, so we will be watching this closely.

Development Income Report Chanda gave a quick fundraising update. We are doing well compared to where we were this time last year, and she feels we will hit our goal. Major Donors Initiatives will begin soon, and there are other fundraising opportunities coming up, such as the Great Gateway Gathering, the Spring Appeal and outstanding grant proposals.

Committee on Trustees

Sapna told the board today is Suzanne Schutte's last day on the board. She gave time for Laura, Sharon and Lisille to speak about Suzanne and her contributions to Gateway. Laura Spivy spoke about how wonderful it has been to work with Suzanne. It is amazing what she has accomplished and it is thanks to her that Gateway is here today. She has changed many lives and given opportunities to so many students. She is so understated, but speaks with honesty, wisdom, humanity, kindness and caring. Laura thanked Suzanne and said it has been an honor to work with her.

Lisille Matheson, fellow founding mother, came tonight because it was important for her to be here to honor Suzanne. They have spent twenty three years together. She spoke of the early days when they were starting the school. During all these years, Suzanne's heart has remained with Gateway.

Sharon Olken told trustees that this is a day we have always been trying to push a little further away. She is blown away by Suzanne's consistency and dedication. Suzanne helped set the tone for who we are as an organization. She inspires us to always keep growing and learning. She has played the role of the wise founder, innovator, mentor, and educator. People want to listen to her talk and build connections. Her legacy will remain. Sharon thanked Suzanne for her guidance and friendship. Sharon treasures her as a person and she feels so lucky to have spent all these years with her.

Suzanne then said that today is a day she never imagined; it is hard to remember at time before Gateway. Below is a copy of Suzanne's farewell.

"I look at Gateway today and am awed by how far we have come. Over twenty years ago in 1997, we were a ragtag group of passionate dreamers who believed that high schools could better serve a wide range of learners. We imagined a school that could be a laboratory where research about learning and teaching could be implemented and honed into practical pedagogy and practices that could be shared with other schools. Since then so many amazing people, like those of you around this table, have stepped up to make Gateway Public Schools the success they are today. Thank you for being dreamers too!

Like any parent, it is easy to remember the various stages of Gateway's development. When we hired our first principal, we were a school without teachers, without a school site and notably, without students! From the first day of school in 1998, when our rambunctious ninth graders were loaded on buses to go to the Marin Headlands because we didn't have a site yet, to the brave committed founding teachers managing and teaching those same ninth graders in six classrooms on the top floor of Newcomer High School, to the so-called "advanced camping" of classrooms separated by temporary walls on Seventh Avenue, to the rehabbing of abandoned classrooms filled with out of date textbooks, band equipment, and junk at our current site. Over the course of our history we have transformed all these neglected, second-hand school sites into educational wellsprings for more than 2700 students. It has been an extraordinary journey!

Sharon, I want you to know how much I have loved being on this Gateway journey with you. It feels like yesterday when I first met you, the brilliant, passionate teacher who joined our first strategic planning meeting. Since then there have been so many sleepless nights, so much good work, so many goals achieved, and so much recognition from our peers. Thank you for stepping up every time we asked you to and for always taking on the monumental task of making the Gateway idea a living reality for so many teachers, students and their families. Fellow traveler, you have a very special place in my heart and the heart of our school.

So much has changed since we started the journey. However, what really matters has not changed. Gateway continues to support all kids so they can thrive. It is a place where thoughtful, committed, creative teachers work so hard every single day to know and meet the needs of each and every student. Every year since 1998, our students have been remarkably successful. I leave this board confident that in the years to come our seniors will continue to be prepared for college and successful lives.

I am beyond proud of what we have all accomplished together at Gateway. Gateway has been an essential part of my family. Despite stepping off the board today, Gateway will remain deep in my heart and in my life!"

Everyone expressed their appreciation of Suzanne and all that she has contributed to the school.

Sapna adjourned the meeting at 7:02

Signed: _____ Sharon Gillenwater _____ Date: 08/21/19 _____
Sharon Gillenwater, Board Secretary

