

# Gateway Public Schools

## Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Wednesday, April 27th, 2016 @ 5:00 -7:00 PM

### Minutes

#### **Board Members Present:**

Therese Arsenault, Beth Berliner, Cynthia Billops, Sapna Boze, Laura D'Amato Contreras, Sharon Gillenwater, Sam Kary, Susan Kase, Lisa Kirkland, Annie Klebahn, Susan Masto, Joyce McMinn, Sharon Olken, Jackie Quella, Adina Safer, Suzanne Schultes, Suzanne Schutte, Laura Spivy, Phil Susser, Aaron White, Julie Wise

**Board Members Excused:** Will Parish, Valerie Toler, Jennifer Tulley

**Board Members Not Present:** Allison Thoreson Bhusri, David Booth

**Also present:** Chris Hero, Anna Heidinger, Danielle Ciccarelli, Suzanne Herko

#### **Call to Order, Approval of Minutes from March 16th, 2016**

Sapna called the meeting to order at 5:01pm. She called for a motion to approve the March minutes. They were approved without issue.

**Public Forum** Sapna then opened the floor for public forum. No further discussions or motions were introduced.

#### **Welcome and Board Visiting Day Debrief (INFO)**

Sapna welcomed the Trustees and reminded everyone that there will be a happy hour after the May meeting. The place is to be determined, so stay tuned.

Sapna gave the floor to Sharon to speak about Board Visiting Day. The turnout was wonderful and Sharon thanked everyone who came. Guests were able to spend time in classrooms and attend a student panel. Sharon invited Trustees to share what they noticed at Board Visiting day. Trustees mentioned that they were struck by the small community, one on one attention from inspiring teachers, diversity, awareness of growth mindset, and an acceptance of learning differences. It was commented that, during the student panel, it was amazing that students communicated exactly what Gateway is trying to do. The panel included two sophomores who came from the middle school. Trustees noticed that they clearly benefited from going from the middle school to the high school. One of the students mentioned that there is nothing she can't do. During tours of the classrooms, Trustees noted that math classes are very good at differentiating the lessons. In Mr. Martinez's class, all the kids shared their opinions and Mr. Martinez related *The Kite Runner* to the students' lives. There was a suggestion to videotape the panel next year. The trustees mentioned that, last year, they really enjoyed meeting the

teachers during coffee before the event, and they would like to do that again. Sharon thanked Trustees for sharing.

### **Faculty Affairs (INFO)**

Sapna introduced Annie and Laura for an update on the 2015/2016 Community Meeting and faculty survey related to compensation priorities. Beth thanked Annie and Laura for all of their hard work and all the progress they have made.

Laura started by noting that the Faculty Affairs Community Meeting was attended by 18 members of the GPS faculty - a good turnout. Between this year's and last year's meeting, we have heard from the majority of the staff. Faculty retention is the focus for the year.

Annie and Laura talked about what came up during the meeting. Teachers feel that teaching at GPS is a calling and they are sustained by having an impact on students. Teachers expressed a need for more time to prep and physical and emotional space during the day. Teacher salaries are disproportionately low for the work they do. This is not an easy fix, but we are working on creative and innovative approaches to the issue.

Annie and Laura talked about next steps. We would like to support our teachers with time and compensation. We need to make structural changes, especially for high school teachers. Annie mentioned that we should ask, "What do we value? What are the elements of the solution to the issues that came up? Stipends? Time and flexibility? Hybrid roles? How do we get more creative?" Not all teachers want the same thing. There is a need for more compensation differentiation on a larger scale. Sharon mentioned that, at the root, the question is, "how do we better match compensation to teachers?" We want to be a leader philosophically and financially.

Beth thanked the FAC. Annie added that she has heard often that faculty appreciate that the Board is interested in what they have to say, and that the Board gives them a place to be heard.

### **Finance Update (INFO and VOTE)**

Beth gave the floor to Chris Hero for the Finance update. Chris distributed a sheet which outlined the drivers of the FY 17 budget. The sheet shows the most important drivers for the year, a history of how things have changed over time, and estimates for the future. Chris reviewed revenue, enrollment expectations, expenses and noted considerations that affect the budget. Chris discussed the process of determining the compensation line items.

There was a discussion of one-time versus recurring funding and how that affects our spending. The key is sustainability. Laura Spivy noted that we usually have some unknowns, so it is good to have a conservative budget.

Chris asked the Trustees to approve the compensation line items. Everyone impacted by the salary increases left the room as the Trustees voted. The vote passed unanimously.

### E.D. Report (INFO)

Beth gave the floor to Sharon for the E.D. report. Sharon introduced Suzanne Herko and Suzanne Schutte, Co-Chairs of the Strategic Initiatives Committee - Student Agency.

Suzanne Schutte talked about the *Learning and the Brain* conference that was attended by a number of staff. The conference focused on non-cognitive learning skills. When we first started Gateway, the founders recognized that, in high school, teachers tended to teach subjects, not students. Central to Gateway starting was the idea to put research about learning and non-cognitive skills into use. The conference presented the research that backs up what we have been doing. The Student Agency Task Force (SATF) has been focused on making this connection, so the conference was timely and reinforced our methods and mission.

Suzanne Herko moved on to the work being done by the SATF. She went over the student agency chart in the packet, which outlines a way for us to see how our practices can foster observable student behaviors. Another tool is the Process of Learning Rubric. The rubric can be used by the student and/or the teacher to impact teaching and learning. It can be difficult to observe and assess process of learning, and this rubric is an aid in doing that. Ms. Arsenault said that by the end of 6th grade, the students are pretty good at assessing themselves. Sharon added that non-cognitive skills help predict who will be successful in school. If you take out all the other things that kids can't control, non-cognitive skills have the most impact on outcomes. Suzanne went on to say that the University of Chicago talks about how these skills are important during transitions from middle school to high school to college and on to jobs.

Gateway Impact Labs is a way to share our work in this area. Sharing methodologies, both inside and outside of Gateway, has always been part of our intent. Suzanne H. showed a slide of what a Gateway Impact Labs web page may look like. She is working on content for the site that will be a resource for teachers and educators at Gateway and at other schools. Internally, GIL will clarify methods and goals across both schools and with parents and new staff.

The Board thanked Suzanne and Suzanne for the great work they are doing.

### Adjourn Meeting

Beth adjourned the meeting at 7:01

Signed: Allison Bhusri  
Allison Bhusri, Board Secretary

Date: 7/30/16