

*Great Oaks Bridgeport Board Meeting  
Wednesday, May 13, 2020*

**Board Members Present:** Susan Briggs, Pamela Fraser-Abder, Corey Sneed, Brea Mangrum, Dexter Upshaw, Leticia Sepulveda

**Board Members Absent:** Michelle Garcia, Denise Carey

**GO-BPT Staff:** Latoya Hubbard, John Scalice, Chris Pellegrino, Kyla Dunn, Jessica Lewis, Angelina Cardoso

**Foundation Members Present:** Ben Chan, Michael Duffy, Lauren Perkins, Josh Thomases

**Called to order at 5:25 pm by Susan Briggs**

**Review of Minutes from the March Board Meeting (Leticia Sepulveda)**

- The board independently reviewed the April Board meeting minutes.
- Motion to approve the April Board meeting minutes moved by Pam second by Dexter and passed unanimously.

**Principal's Report (John Scalice)**

- John gave the board a facilities update and noted that some landscaping work has begun around the exterior of the buildings which includes trees that have been planted. He also noted that the school is currently waiting on Air Quality testing and would provide the board with an update once the results are received.
- John also shared images of what a potential social distancing classroom would look like and shared that the school is currently working on various iterations of a floor plan based on guidance received from the State.
- Jess showed the board a clip from the new initiative of the Culture team called "Keep CALM with culture". She noted that CALM stands for Community, Awareness, Leadership and Mindfulness. This new initiative creates a space for students to have a presence in the community by supporting various community initiatives and also serves as a support for students' social and emotional needs.
- Jess advised the board that this week students have identified various essential workers that meals will be delivered to.
- John informed the board of a "no harm" grading policy that has been adopted.
- Pam asked about summer school and John advised we may provide a distance learning platform for summer school.

- John informed the board that students have been using the distance learning platform and the video check in about 3 days per week and students using both the platform and turning in work is over 70%.
- Michael Duffy asked how we compare to the Bridgeport District and John noted based on feedback from the district, Great Oaks attendance is exceptionally high and Great Oaks has offered more resources through Distance Learning.
- Chris Pellegrino gave an overview of HS attendance and noted that 10th grade had the lowest attendance.
- Chris noted the High School team is pushing all students, with more emphasis on students with poor attendance, to make sure they maintain their GPA, as some of the students may not have the option for a Pass Fail program.
- Chris noted the focus is to meet students where they are and come up with ways that the team can best support students.
- Chris advised the Board that group discussions have been taking place to push students to take ownership on how they are engaging in the work required during this Distance Learning time.
- Chris made a huge shout out to Jessica Lewis for spearheading the Keep CALM with Culture initiative as many students have a real social need.
- Angie informed the Board of the goal to develop a curriculum that is whole child centered. She noted the school was afforded an opportunity to offer a multitude of Sciences, 3 different types of English language arts, and recovery courses.
- Angie noted a high need based on SAT's for support in statistics and probability which prompted a shift for students in grades 9 through 12 to take these courses.
- Angie informed the Board that students now have access to the Allied Health Program which allows students to research different health fields. Students will also be required to take Anatomy and Physiology. Students will also have an opportunity to take recovery Life Science and Geometry courses.
- Angie informed the Board research is being done around summer courses to find out how we can offer a summer course at no cost to students. Angie noted finding a fully accredited program that can be used that the school will be looking into.
- Angie also reported to the board that one 11th grade student recently earned an early acceptance into college.
- Chris added this student took the initiative to engage with the college on his own.
- Chris informed the Board that Jeannie Tuzzio facilitated a class where the drummer from Hamilton did a guest appearance and the students were very engaged and it provided students with an opportunity to learn about theatre roles which include performance, stage lighting, and scene set up.
- John noted currently preparing 8th grade virtual ceremony for graduation and the school is welcoming prepared video messages from the Board, and local state officials.
- Kyla Dunn gave the board an overview of daily routine for MS staff and fellows which includes meetings each day at 8am and PD on Friday afternoons.
- Kyla noted asking teachers to prepare 30 minute PDs to help them to learn from each other and to develop their leadership team.

- Kyla also made a shout out to the culture team and noted their support in helping to contact parents which resulted in perfect attendance in some classes.
- John noted significant spikes in attendance as a result of individual approaches and incentives.
- Kyla noted each culture member is assigned to a grade level and the shift in their role due to distance learning has allowed students to see the culture team as more than just disciplinarians.
- Kyla noted the new schedule that has been implemented has prompted feedback that teachers and fellows feel more in sync. They have been working together to create lesson plans. Kyla noted it has created a stronger partnership that she hopes will continue when we return to the building.
- Kyla noted that 9 Middle School fellows applied for either a lead position or a 2nd year position.
- John's teacher spotlight was on the culture team who has done a phenomenal job rebranding themselves and supporting school during Distance learning.
- Susan prepared a proclamation to staff noting that the board is extremely proud of all the hard work that everyone is doing.
- A motion was made to approve the staff letter proclamation moved by Corey second by Leticia.

#### **Operation/Facilities Report (Latoya Hubbard)**

- In the Operations report Latoya informed the board that a draft of the RFP for a new food service vendor had been completed and would be submitted to the State for approval and then put out to bid. Once the bidding process is complete final candidates will be reviewed with the board.
- Latoya informed the board that preordering of Grab and Go meals would continue through the summer and also told the board about additional SNAP benefits recently allocated to students currently receiving SNAP based on Eligibility for free and reduced lunch.
- Latoya advised the board that recruitment efforts are going well despite not being able to do community canvassing.
- Latoya gave the board an update on enrollment and noted a total of 305 applications have been received to date.
- Lauren gave the board an overview of facilities work that has been taking place in tutor housing which includes air quality testing and clean up. She noted Eagle reported air quality tests showed no issues.
- Lauren noted a call is scheduled with Gary and Geoff where they anticipate fellows may be going back to those spaces. Rent has been abated in the interim while tutors are not in housing.

#### **Finance Committee Report (Corey Sneed)**

- Ben reviewed the financial dashboard for the month of April.

- Ben noted that some of the funds from the School Improvement Grant were moved to cover the cost of technology for students, specifically due to needs due to Distance Learning.
- Ben informed the board that cash flow is being tracked each week. Everything has been moved to an online payment system called Bill.com so there are no contact payments.
- Ben also noted the school has begun the audit plan, in preparation for the audit that will begin late summer.
- Corey suggested when looking at the dashboard we should manage the budget by building in a cash reserve and looking at areas where we can make improvements.
- Corey gave the board an update on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and noted that the rules and the guidelines are unclear at this time so the school should be cautious about applying; and because we were not directly impacted in terms of per pupil funding it may be hard to prove eligibility. Corey noted language in the Act did not make it favorable for the school to apply and made the recommendation that we do not apply, because we would not in good faith qualify. Corey opened this up for feedback from the rest of the board.
- Susan noted language about the audit process for PPP that should be reviewed carefully should it be considered.
- Pastor Dexter asked about the amount we would qualify for and asked if there was any concern about cash flow based on state funding that may decrease or funders that may back out. Pastor Dexter recommended looking into it further because we are in an uncertain time and funding could change, he noted the school may be in good faith in applying.
- Corey made mention of the vagueness of information about the loan which supports his reluctance in wanting to apply.
- John noted he thinks it's a great opportunity but given the current state of the school it doesn't seem like we would be eligible for the money.
- A motion was moved to vote no to applying for the PPP loan moved by Brea second by Pam.

#### **Governance Committee Report (Susan Briggs)**

- The Governance Committee reported that John was appointed to be on the CSDE sponsored Charter School Committee.
- Michael Duffy noted that the GO Charter School in Newark was working on a fund to support families of students and staff. The fund was launched last week. Michael wanted to know if Bridgeport wanted to consider this and Susan said we would discuss in more detail at a late point in time.

Motion to adjourn the Board meeting moved by Corey and second by Pam. Meeting was adjourned at 7:31 pm.