

*Great Oaks Bridgeport Monthly Board Meeting
Wednesday, November 11, 2020*

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

Board Members Absent:

GO-BPT Staff Present: Latoya Hubbard, John Scalice, Ayanna Brown, Kay-Ann Hewell-Walker, Karen Francis, Angelina Cardoso

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

Guests:

Called to order at 5:22 pm by Susan Briggs

Review of Minutes from the October Board Meeting (Leticia Sepulveda)

- Leticia asked the board to review the October board meeting minutes.
- Dexter noted corrections to be made to his statement regarding the PPP loan.
- Motion requested to approve the October minutes with the requested changes moved by Pam, seconded by Dexter, passed unanimously.

Principal's Report (John Scalice)

- John introduced our Curriculum team and passed it over to Angie Cardoso to review what the Curriculum team has done in the past and what they have planned going forward.
- Angie Cardoso gave the Board an overview of the current work that the curriculum team has done with cultural relevance in the community and implementation of cultural relevance in the school curriculum.
- Angie noted that some of this work in rebuilding the curriculum consisted of working with a group of teachers to revamp the Math and ELA curriculum, and also introducing new courses such as Literature of the Marginalized, Literature as Protest, and Law and Society.
- Angie noted that the courses were expanded further in the 3rd trimester to include Acting and Playwriting and Historical Perspectives.
- Angie also informed the board that additional work was done in collaboration with the Foundation which included diversity and inclusion work.

- She noted that this collaboration also includes a new program called the CRED which consists of several staff members and Angie explained that the program allows staff to receive additional Professional Development in Diversity and Inclusion.
- Angie noted that through the Professional Development received from the Foundation and other partners, the curriculum team will be able to further implement a more balanced curriculum that offers aspects of African American, Asian American and Latin American Culture.
- Angie informed the Board that students in grades 8 through 12 would be required to complete a call to action project that will be connected to the state framework and cultural responsiveness in today's society.
- Angie noted additional work on the curriculum will include additional community partnerships and more work with teachers on adapting a mindset of cultural responsiveness.
- Pam commented that this is great work and that the school is moving in the right direction.
- John asked Angie to also give the board a brief update on several of the Social Justice days held at Great Oaks.
- Angie noted that there have been multiple social justice days that included community speakers and members of the Bridgeport Police Department. These social justice days included topics such as cyber safety, community relationships and support, and community response to recent events.
- Susan asked if the curriculum team is still looking at text books and if the current textbooks will be replaced by new materials.
- Angie explained that in collaboration with teachers they made the decision to keep some materials and literature that they have used if it meets the new culturally relevant criteria. She also noted that in addition to textbooks and literature materials the school is now using more digital materials and even incorporating music into the curriculum.
- Following Angie's presentation John resumed the Principal Report with a review of the fall NWEA testing data. He reminded the board that the NWEA assessment is correlated very well to the SBAC and is used as a predictor for student performance on the SBAC.
- John reviewed the Math data for the fall of 2020 and noted that 7th and 8th grade students collectively had higher scores than the fall of 2019 noting a 9% increase in 2020.
- John noted that 9th grade despite the high turnover the school sees year over year, showed an increase of around 3%.
- John also noted that the school has continued to see growth year over year for 10th,11th and 12th grade students.

- John also noted increases in NWEA RIT scores across grade levels with the exception of 9th grade where the school saw a slight decrease, but again noting the estimated 40% turnover in 9th grade.
- John discussed ELA data performance against national average and noted increases of students in the average to high range.
- John also noted that what is seen over time is a steady increase in scores the longer students stay at Great Oaks.
- John also noted that for the first time in Great Oaks history 12th grade students are at or above the national norm.
- John gave special thanks and recognition to Teachers Dan Luciano (ELA), Ena Rizvic (Math), Paul Blake (Math), Beatrice Mitchell (ELA), and Heather Chila (Social Studies) for participating in the virtual board walkthrough.
- John also gave special thanks and recognition to Fellows Sarah Isaacson, Paul Morin, Tierra Shannon, Genevieve Guibord, and Josh Smile for also participating in the virtual board walkthrough.
- Josh Thomases noted that the final meeting to discuss the walkthrough would take place tomorrow and presented at the next board meeting.
- Michael Duffy asked if there were any teachers in addition to Dan Luciano who were fellows and John informed the board that Ena Rizvic started the year as a fellow and was hired as the High School math teacher in September.
- John reviewed the dashboard and updated the board on teacher certification and noted that over 70% of teachers currently hold certifications, and also informed the board that there are still multiple certification applications pending with the State and that he and Latoya will be meeting with the CSDE to discuss the status of those pending applications.
- John informed the board that there has been 0 suspensions and noted an overall school attendance average at around 98%.
- John discussed the current state of COVID-19 in the city of Bridgeport. John advised the Board that the current plan is for the school to remain open until the Thanksgiving holiday and be fully virtual until January, after the Martin Luther King holiday.
- Dexter expressed concern and thinks that parents will begin to opt out of hybrid learning and that based on the trends a lot will change in the next week or so.
- John noted that the school admin team along with the school nurse have been meeting daily to discuss these trends and will adjust the plan if needed based on these trends.

Director of Operations Report (Latoya Hubbard)

- Latoya opened the operations report and turned it over to Lauren to discuss recent fellow housing updates.

- Lauren advised the board that every Wednesday morning she along with Gary Flocco, Geof Ravenstine, Latoya, Michael Little, and John, are on a call to discuss outstanding, facilities items. Lauren noted that we are in the final stages of addressing these items.
- Lauren noted some work remains to be done in 4 fellow housing units, which include ceiling remediation, which was surfaced by fellows over the past few months due to fallen debris.
- Lauren noted that fellows were given the option to have crews go in to do the remediation work if they are traveling over the Holiday break. She noted that Gary and his team have been flexible in completing the work based on what works best for the fellows.
- Latoya presented the board with the school year 2020-2021 security and safety plan that will need to be signed by Board Chair Susan Briggs. Latoya requested that the board authorize Susan to sign off on the document that is due prior to December 1st, 2020. Latoya also informed the board that there would need to be a parent rep on the plan and that it is normally our parent rep that is on the board.
- Motion requested to authorize Susan Briggs to sign the school security plan moved by Corey, seconded by Leticia, passed unanimously.

Finance Committee Report (Corey Sneed)

- Corey opened up the Finance report noting the need to have a contingency plan for the Barr grant in the event that we no longer receive the funding, as the positions (curriculum) that the Barr grant are currently funding will be needed long term.
- Lauren briefly updated the board discussing the transition from using the Little Bird HR platform to TriNet. She noted this is the HR platform for payroll processing and the administration of employee benefits.
- Lauren noted that Vanessa Ceas has been working with TriNet to negotiate the fees, and proposes that we use the service through the End of the Year and then put out a bid for the services in the next fiscal year.
- Lauren noted there is an agreement before the board to be reviewed so that an informed decision can be made regarding the TriNet terms and conditions and noted the review is time sensitive so that the school does not experience a disruption of service.
- Susan noted that the contract refers to the school as a new client, and noted the contract did not appear to be personalized for the school.
- Corey shared the same concern as Susan and noted that the contract does not make mention of the acquisition from Little Bird.
- Corey noted he would be in touch with Lauren and Vanessa tomorrow to discuss further.

- Ben shared the dashboard and noted that the cash balance is healthy and he noted the cash balance at the end of October will take the school through December which includes the December rent payment.
- Ben noted the Operational additional funds include the Barr funds and school improvement grants that are fully recognized, and he noted we are still waiting on additional funds through other grants expected to be received.
- Ben noted a slight surplus in the school operations budget due to school closing.
- Ben gave a quick update on the audit and noted they have completed the financials and will be scheduling a school visit.
- Ben also noted the PPP is being returned and the paperwork has been initiated.
- Corey closed by stating that the school is trending in the right direction financially.

Governance Committee Report (Susan Briggs)

- Susan raised the idea of creating a scholarship or gift for graduating seniors, as well as giving a holiday gift to staff from the board and noted she would work with Latoya to decide on a gift.
- Susan informed the board of the upcoming meeting with the committee from the CT State Department of Education, and noted she would be in attendance along with John, Latoya, and Josh Thomases.

Susan wished the Board and School staff a Happy Thanksgiving followed by a motion made to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 pm moved by Pam and second by Brea, and passed unanimously.