

Great Oaks Bridgeport Monthly Board Meeting
Wednesday, May 12, 2021

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

Board Members Absent: Dexter Upshaw

GO-BPT Staff Present: Latoya Hubbard, John Scalice

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

Called to order at 5:21 pm by Susan Briggs

Review of Minutes from the April Board Meeting

- The Board independently reviewed the April minutes and a motion was moved to approve the minutes with changes by Pam, seconded by Brea and passed unanimously.

Governance Committee Report (Susan Briggs)

- Susan opened up the meeting and invited the board to collectively decide on a time for the July Board Retreat.
- A motion was moved to set the board retreat for July 21st from 5:00pm to 8:00pm moved by Corey and seconded by Leticia and passed unanimously.
- Susan discussed setting up a task force to discuss opening an elementary school.
- John shared the school's desire to work on the elementary school model and expressed excitement around discussing the mentoring aspect and closing the gap between incoming students and students that have been with the school for several years.
- A motion was moved to approve the school leadership team and Susan and Corey to discuss expansion of the school, moved by Leticia second by Corey and passed unanimously.
- Susan informed the board that conversations have been taking place with the foundation around the services agreement and noted the schools desire to pay back the foundation loan.
- Corey shared a plan to pay portions of the loan quarterly using per pupil funding, with a goal to pay off the loan within 2 years.

- Motion was moved to approve repayment of the loan from the foundation to the school in quarterly increments of \$30,000, over a 2 year period with the caveat that if the school is in a position to pay back the loan by 2022 the school will do so moved by Brea, seconded by Leticia and passed unanimously.

Directory of Operations Report (Latoya Hubbard)

Latoya presented

- Motion moved to accept Anthony's Ocean view as a new vendor by Corey second by Brea passed unanimously.
- Motion to approve the Klein Memorial as a new vendor for graduation moved by Corey second by Leticia and passed unanimously.
- Motion to approve CT Party Booth as a new vendor moved by Corey second by Brea passed unanimously.
- Motion to approve Love Jones Entertainment as a new vendor moved by Corey second by Leticia passed unanimously.
- Following the approvals for new vendors Latoya provided the board with an update regarding enrollment and noted that 43 out of the 76 students that were recently accepted have completed their registration.
- Latoya also noted that attrition continues to be relatively low and retention of students has been high.
- Latoya shared a recent initiative by the CSDE in partnership with the DSS to provide eligible households with SNAP benefits. She noted that the SNAP benefits program will provide these households with an Electronic benefits transfer card that contains the value of the free school breakfast and lunch reimbursement rates for the days that schools are closed.
- Latoya closed out the Operations report by sharing photos from teacher appreciation week which included a Pizza truck and gifts that were given to teachers, and noted that teachers were happy and excited about the gifts.

Principal's Report (John Scalice)

- John opened up the Principal report by providing updates on SBAC and noted that students have the option to take the test virtually or in school and also informed the board that the school team spent a lot of time ensuring that students were familiar with the interface.
- John also noted that the option was made available to virtual students to come in the afternoon.

- John informed the board that based on experience testing in multiple ways the team has found that allowing the students to take the test increments of time have proven to be more successful. He noted that students will have three 90 minutes sessions to complete the assessments including students with accommodations.
- He noted a program called GoGuardian will be used to ensure safety and allow for active progress monitoring.
- John informed the board that a “call student” feature of GoGuardian will be used during testing and will allow for proctors to get the attention of the student if they have remained idle for periods of time to ensure they are actively engaged.
- John also gave the board an update on Great Oaks Re-Entry and noted all students that indicated plans to return have been allowed back into the building.
- John noted a limited number of COVID issues with the overwhelming majority being contact of a contact and not directly testing positive.
- John noted communication with the Department of Health for guidance on questions has been positive and noted that the school nurse Patty has been amazing with following up with staff and families.
- He also confirmed that students would remain in half day schedules for the remainder of the year given the significant online population.
- John shared that the CSDE has declared that districts will not be required to offer any form of distance learning for the upcoming school year and noted that while the school will continue to explore new ways to serve students a full virtual experience outside of closures or mandates will not be offered.
- John also advised that Saturday Academy, Enrichment Opportunities, and other programs would still be offered through the distance platform.
- John provided the board with an update on the ARP ESSER III funding for 2022-2024 school year which will allocate 2.5 million to Great Oaks Charter School through initial reports from the State.
- Susan raised a question about the ability to use funding to improve outdoor space and John advised based on the guidelines of the grant there could be opportunities to improve the outdoor space.
- John shared this month’s teacher/staff spotlight on Nurse Patty and noted she has demonstrated an amazing ability throughout the pandemic to work with families to do our own inhouse contact tracing. She has helped families to become vaccinated, increased student physical compliance and additionally measured the entire 8th grade class for caps and gowns.

Finance Committee Report (Corey Sneed)

- Ben opened up the finance portion of the meeting by briefly reviewing details of the current financial dashboard and noted that the school was in a healthy financial place.
- Corey discussed goals to build the school's cash reserves and noted financial priorities in addition to building programs include paying down the debt to Blue Hub and getting back the school's Operating Deficit Reserve (ODR).
- Corey noted being able to receive the ODR funds would allow the school to pay down the Blue Hub Loan. He also noted an opportunity to apply for security grant funds that would allow the school to further pay down the loan.
- Corey emphasized the importance of remaining fiscally responsible and showing the school is in a positive financial position in order to have the ODR funds released.
- John began to discuss the budget for the SY 2021-2022 and noted that there were several surprise costs specific to the operations of the budget. John noted that while rebuilding the budget the main focus was building the best program for students.
- John mentioned with this first iteration of the budget it does show a deficiency of about \$100k. He noted that this version of the budget was being built based on funding sources.
- John also noted that the budget is still being revised and he is confident that the budget can be adjusted to address the deficit, without adding funding to places that would not make sense for the school, and to make sure the budget is stable.
- Susan added that she wanted to make sure that the Board had an opportunity to speak to priorities.
- Bob noted that the way that John approached building the budget is sound, and asked to be able to take a closer look at the Operating budget at a later time.
- Corey reiterated the ODR, Blue Hub and Foundation repayment which would open up approximately \$20k per month, should remain a priority.

New Business

- Bob Carlson asked if the school had a rolling 3 year plan financially and Susan welcomed his thoughts and said we planned to discuss at the board retreat in July.

Susan asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion moved by Corey and second by Bob. The meeting was adjourned by 6:48pm.