

Gateway Academy School Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday July 8, 2021 2:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Location: Park Place, Cedar City, UT

Mission Statement: *Our mission is to provide children an individualized education emphasizing practical life skills and demonstrations of student learning in a safe, respectful, and supportive environment*

Agenda Items	Presenter	Materials/Notes
Call to Order	Brittany Jensen	Meeting was called to order at 2:08 pm. Board members present are Paul Dail, Gina Nelson, Tiffany Scheurman, Matt Ogburn, Todd Petersen, Jenna Behm and Brittany Jensen. Staff present are Andy Burt, Jonada Munk and Aimee DiBrienza.
Public Comment	Public Attendees	There were no public attendees.
June 2021 Consent Calendar	Brittany Jensen	Consent Calendar: July agenda and June minutes (changed from agenda as published). Paul is listed as “the Paul” somewhere in the notes. There was a question about the nomination and vote for Paul by himself, but he had abstained so there was not an issue. Paul moved to approve the consent calendar, Todd seconded, motion passed.
Board Training		There is a new member training from UAPCS for Matt. Jonada will send the link. There was also a board training from Brian Carpenter. Most members have watched it. Questions/Comments: Todd pointed out that the training appeared to be directed at a governing board, but his understanding is that this board is an advisory board. Jonada agrees with that assessment and posited that not every school needs the same set-up for their board; our school is well-enough established for the board to act in an advisory capacity based on historical success of our current structure. Jonada and Brittany had a conversation about the benefits of analyzing some of the recommended processes for cost-effectiveness. Changes we have made recently include adaptations to who signs checks to create balance between accountability, ethics, and efficiency. The training recommended having a lot of board committees. There was some discussion about the commitment required of board members involved in committee work. We have the required audit committee, and the rest of the committees are optional. We have a PR committee and a committee for administrative evaluation. There are no other standing committees. It was a consensus that for our size of school, our current board and committee structures and procedures make sense and are efficient. There was a recommendation that the board has a solid understanding of some details regarding insurance, accounts, loans, rates, financial policy, etc.. There will be a training by Jonada next month to help frame some of these details for the board. Todd asked how the board might know which policies the board SHOULD have looked at, since they only see the policies that are presented to them. Andy would like to create a policy manual with a table of contents that is organized by types of policies. This may be a part of strategic planning. We also discussed hypothetical items related to board conduct and termination as well as contingencies in case of the loss of an administrator as an example of details that board members ought to know. Brittany would like to add a board member self-evaluation to next month’s agenda and reminded board members of their responsibility to read the charter (and bylaws). Paul pointed out a comment from the training about leadership being learned. He would like to see a little more time spent in board training about the code of conduct

		and the types of things that a board member should be paying attention to. Paul also brought up a few questions/items for concern from the training, including child molestation and board authorized spending from reserves. Andy recommended that when there are concerns or questions that they be put on the board agenda so that the board can discuss those things and get the perspective that may be offered by administration and staff, whether or not action results. When the board takes the time to pay attention to details, hear from stakeholders, and consider issues, it helps the board to function responsibly within its design. A takeaway mentioned by Brittany is that the board should continually be learning and increasing in understanding on all issues in order to act appropriately on the correct points of control.
Exhibit A	Andy Burt	Preface to this discussion included the reality that a charter should compare itself to its charter when evaluating efficacy and identity. Some key vocabulary from the PURPOSE section of Exhibit A includes competency-based instruction, interdisciplinary, performance-based, innovative teaching methods, new opportunities, collaborative, increasing choice, and opportunities for parental involvement in management. There was discussion regarding Gateway's meaning of the term "competency-based," as well as our reality in terms of execution. For our purposes, competency-based means broadly that students master content at their level and that their experience is personalized based on their needs. There is opportunity for us to create a unifying definition and develop this idea. Andy gave some explanation of each of the items in the Exhibit A document and how they are executed in our school.
Finance Report	Ada Munk	The board received the financial update from Jonada Munk for the month ending June 30, 2021. The significant item for this month was for the land purchase. The board also discussed ESSR funding.
Action Items:		
Early Literacy Plan	Andy Burt	Early Learning Plan has received two rounds of input from USBE and is in its final edit. It will be brought to the board for approval next month.
Strategic Planning:		
Calendar		See attached.
Facilities		See attached.
Executive Session: <i>to discuss the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual</i>		There was no need for an executive session.
Adjournment		Todd Petersen moved to adjourn. Paul Dail seconded. Gina Nelson, yes. Tiffany Scheuerman, yes. Matt Ogburn, yes. Paul Dail, yes. Jenna Behm, yes. Todd Petersen, yes. Meeting adjourned at 5:11 pm.

Strategic Planning

Calendar

A calendar is being developed which will organize the policies which the board should examine routinely. The calendar is divided into standing issues, financial operations, and board governance. Because the resource given to us by USBE regarding required policies does not contain time specific information, the administrative team will identify time frames on each policy and develop this calendar and bring it back to the board for review, discussion, and training.

Facilities

- Administration's approach to our new land is conservative and celebrates where we are now, while looking to the future for our expansion projects.
- Short term possibilities:
 - Athletic Center
 - Designated middle school space with Gym/Dance/Theater, usable for assemblies K-8
 - Enoch City, Surf Soccer, and other organizations would partner with us to use the facility
 - Could be done for under \$2m and shared with the entire school population with parking across the dirt road.
 - Outdoor Teaching Space
 - Move existing large playground to the current soccer field south end and replace it with an amphitheater, walking path, native plant-life, and possibly a pond.
 - Continue to apply for grants for outdoor classroom funding (our application was not accepted this year).
 - Discussion
 - Research shows that high quality recess time is beneficial to students. If we were to do this with our space, it would show that we value and recognize that benefit. We can back up that move with messaging, as long as we believe the message ourselves and are willing to prioritize outside time.
 - It is more difficult to make a compelling case for the idea that this would make us money, which may be an inadequate reason to undertake the project.
 - A possible avenue we can explore more would be adding an early childhood environment within the athletic building to feed our program (part of long-term planning). Early Childhood could act as an anchor to build our identity as a community center and really contribute to our community, as there are no Montessori Pre-K options widely available in our area.
 - This short term planning only really works if it feeds into and builds our long term plan.
- Long Term: Middle School Center
 - Possible Focus: Theater, Technology (Computer labs/maker space), Fine Arts?
 - Build on our existing program
 - What is our target growth, and what space will support that growth?
- NEXT Steps:
 - Press release & local announcement
 - Building Committee for the MS Center to assess needs through focus group and market research
 - Survey the community
 - Building Committee for the Short Term building (research, fine tune, RFP, timelines)



o Discussion:

- Sometimes people do not know what they want or need because it doesn't exist yet – community focus group could CREATE something based on unmet needs that is innovative.
- Parents often seem to be more interested in activities than academics. Art does not always lead to funding and careers, but STEM or making something typically does.
- It is important to build with growth in mind (how many MS kids do we want to attract? Will we have room for them?) and be realistic about the foundations we already have (CS, Art, Tech, Performance, SPED). Education is moving toward hands-on and authentic experiences. Our space will need to be flexible.
- There are some concerns about the pond being a safety issue; there is potential to design a space with special needs in mind, though. What people tend to fear will be dangerous is typically not where the most injuries come from. We will need some outside expertise to make sure our plan is safe. Let's be safe and neurodivergent.
- Could we add sensory equipment to the outdoor walk and the playground space and build with neurodivergence in mind? This values our extensive special education population and just what we know of children in general!
- Can we talk to the CHILDREN and find out what they would love in a play space?
- Performance spaces are often prescriptive and restrict the types of activities that can happen in them. We should consider the alternatives (smaller ensemble space, other spaces and ways that students can be creative).
- The issue of attracting and keeping students through middle school is ever-present. One solution is the concept of opportunities you build toward throughout your educational experience which you would not want to miss in middle school. Another is the increased autonomy to work toward a project of one's own design and making in eighth grade – this could be something they begin working toward in 6th grade and that the Art Tech classes (or others) build the students up for in elementary, too.
- The PR roll out for this expansion is important – we need to communicate goals and excitement for the future without committing ourselves to a plan which may be untenable. Framing should be in terms of opportunities we are exploring. Plan for PR roll out will happen in the next meeting.