

GATEWAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18TH, 2015 @ 5:00 – 7:00 PM
MINUTES

Board Members Present:

Therese Arsenault, Beth Berliner, David Booth, Sapna Boze, Allison Thoreson Bhusri, Laura D'Amato Contreras, Sharon Gillenwater, Sam Kary, Susan Kase, Lisa Kirkland, Annie Klebahn, Susan Masto, Joyce McMinn, Sharon Olken, Will Parish, Jackie Quella, Sue Schultes, Suzanne Schutte, Laura Spivy, Jennifer Tulley, Aaron White, Julie Wise

Board Members Excused: Adina Safer, Valerie Toler

Board Members Not Present: Deundra Hundon, Cynthia Billops, Phil Susser

Also present:

Chris Hero, Anna Heidinger, Megan Orciari, Danielle Ciccarelli, Aaron Watson, Suzanne Herko

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Approval of Minutes from October 28th, 2015

Beth called the meeting to order at 5:43. She called for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 28th meeting. They were approved without issue.

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

3. Executive Director Report (INFO): Sharon asked those who came to Board Visiting Day at the middle school to share about their experience. Board members commented on the amazing progress at the middle school and the vibrancy of classrooms and how it was fantastic to talk to 8th graders. The attitude of the students was mentioned; guests found them to be earnest, open, enthusiastic, and comfortable.

Sharon introduced Aaron Watson, the Principal of the middle school. Sharon noted that, under Aaron's leadership, the school has been solid from the beginning. Aaron will talk about how the middle school helps to develop student agency, and he will illustrate a couple specific practices that support that work.

Aaron passed around research on student agency factors in middle grades, and asked everyone to take a few moments to skim through and think about how it is relevant to Gateway's mission. Trustees had time to discuss what they read and teachers discussed the rewards and challenges of teaching student agency.

Aaron presented a Process of Learning Self-Assessment rubric, which is a way to help name the things that impact us all as learners. Student-lead conferences help students to evaluate their progress and take responsibility for their learning. The student does a lot of work to prepare for conferences. Therese Arsenault shared classwork and assignments that ask students for weekly and daily reflections and self-analysis. Therese teaches mindfulness every day. One of the challenges is that not every child has the language to explain how they feel or express if they are confused. Many students come in with the idea that they are not a learner, and the challenge is to slowly change that mindset.

There was further discussion around the topic of student agency. Discussion touched upon showing the relevance and purpose of schoolwork, and helping students to feel that they belong. Sam Kary talked about the POL rubric and how it is easier to give feedback in the higher part of the rubric, but it gets more challenging further down. Suzanne noted that giving feedback can be a challenge because factors change throughout the year and from project to project. Aaron mentioned that teachers analyze the content and POL skills within each academic unit.

4. Finance Committee (INFO and VOTE)

Sapna gave the floor to Chris to talk about how we can use one-time funding to best invest in our kids. He passed out a sheet, titled "2015-2016 Incremental Surplus Options," which shows how GPS would like to invest the one-time funds. He asked everyone to look it over and note any questions or anything that stands out. The goal is to focus on whether or not these projects meet Gateway's overall mission.

The allocation of funds was designed to support our teachers, help develop a 21st century model (e.g.: space for STEAM center), support Gateway Impact Labs, and make operational improvements. It was noted that teacher compensation is separate from the 2015-2016 Incremental Surplus Options.

A discussion of the plan followed. Laura Spivy asked for a motion to approve the proposal. Susan Kase moved to approve and Lisa Kirkland seconded the motion. The proposal was approved unanimously.

Sapna reminded everyone of the first Conversations for Impact event on 11/19.

5. Adjourn meeting Sapna adjourned the meeting at 6:55.

Signed: Alison Bhusri
Alison Bhusri, Board Secretary

Date: 3/16/16