

Approved by the Board of Directors on January 25, 2024

**Mission Statement:** *“We are a community of learners. We will do whatever it takes to learn. We are building a strong foundation by believing we can, working our plan, then feeling the power of success.”*

## George Washington Academy

Thursday, November 16, 2023

7:30 p.m.

### Board Meeting Minutes

**Location:** George Washington Academy  
Library  
2277 S 3000 E,  
St. George, UT 84790

*The Board Training was held at 7:00 p.m. prior to the Board Meeting.*

*The Board meeting convened at 7:30 p.m.*

**Board Welcome:** Shannon Greer, President

**Roll Call:** Shannon Greer, President

**Prayer:** Joshua Serrano (Public)

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Shannon Greer

Board Members Present: Amanda Mortenson, Holly Myers, Kevin Peterson, Casey Unrein, Shauna Mahoney and Blake Clark. Shannon Greer attended via Zoom.

Others Present: Christine Giles, Spencer Adams, Deborah Odenwalder, Debbie Kauvaka, Jenna Ayers, Brady Pearce, Chance Manzanara, Jocelyn Larkin, Jaxynn Smith, Ben Pressley and Joshua Serrano.

**Approval of Minutes:** Amanda motions to approve the October 26, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes as outlined in the board packet. Casey seconded. The motion passed unanimously. All present voted in favor: Shannon Greer, Amanda Mortenson, Holly Myers, Casey Unrein, Shauna Mahoney, and Kevin Peterson.

**Public Opportunity to Address the Board:** None.

**Set time for adjournment:** Shannon Greer set time for adjournment at 8:30 p.m.

**New Board Member Oath of Office** Brady Pearce took the Oath of Office and became a member of the GWA Board.

**Teacher Reports:** Jaxynn Smith reports that the 5 Kindergarten classes had a Special Celebration Moment on Friday because they reached their Reading goal. The students clapped

for each other and went through a tunnel of bubbles. They then received their own bubble wand and blew bubbles outside! They loved it and were so proud of themselves! Kindergarten celebrated achieving the School wide WIG. They measured First Sound Fluency and scored well above the 10% growth goal for September. We celebrated by having the students create a cheering tunnel with bubbles to congratulate the progress. Each student was given a mini bubble wand. The students seemed to have fun!

1st grade:

We just celebrated our second annual Pumpkin Day! The students loved being dressed all in orange and learning everything about pumpkins.

1st grade was able to celebrate their reading WIG. We had a cheering tunnel and let the students enjoy the large playground. The students are excited to work on their math WIG.

We just celebrated our second annual Pumpkin Day! The students loved being dressed all in orange and learning everything about pumpkins.

3rd grade:

Our team has really focused on improving our students' Math Acadience scores and will soon have the Middle Of Year Assessment--we have seen great improvement in our practice scores and anticipate great scores in the next assessment!

We have been working on learning about the systems of the human body! We have also been putting a major focus on learning our math facts. We are having class competitions to encourage all students to master their addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts, as having this mastered gives the foundation for later math success. We have a field trip to do STEM activities at the Atwood Innovation Plaza and also get to attend the Southwest Symphony at Utah Tech University on Thursday!

Jocelyn reports that recently in 7th ELA we have been reading text selections around the topic of nature. We read a memoir about a man named Eddy who took a solo canoe ride on the Mississippi River and got caught in a storm. He followed his intuition and was able to survive in challenging conditions. In addition to identifying metaphors, similes and personification, students shared with each other stories about times they had been caught in difficult weather and how their adventures ended.

This week we are reading a story about a girl named Lucy who loves the color green. As readers we discover how both her mother and father taught Lucy how to care for plants. She and her mother cared for the garden during a severe drought. Her father once protested the building of highways and now plants trees in medians. We identified imagery in the story and discussed how the strong images help build her argument for taking care of green spaces. Some of the students felt that Lucy's fervor for green may be a bit extreme, but ultimately agreed that her argument is sound, plants are important to the survival of people.

Music K-5: Kinder, 1st, 4th and 5th had a great choral experience when they shared their songs with Veterans, family and community members at the Veteran's Day Assemblies on Nov. 10th. They communicated their appreciation for the Veteran's service and brought tears to many in the audience.

The 6th-grade science classes just returned from exploratory adventures in the Solar System, where they gathered data about the characteristics of the Kuiper Belt, Oort Cloud, asteroids, meteors, and exoplanets. The research teams met together on the International Space Station, where they debriefed by sharing their knowledge and expertise of the objects they visited.

4th grade just had our first field trip. We were able to attend Desert Hills High School's Beauty and the Beast musical. The students (and teachers) absolutely loved it! We're very excited to compare notes with GWA's version in the spring.

**Administration Report:** Blake reports that all reports that are due have been submitted on time. Student count is 1007 and we continue to receive new students. We have one of the highest attendance rates in the state. We have many events coming up including a meeting with a Legislator tomorrow starting at 7 am. Sean Covey and Paul Walker event is coming up. The Veteran's Program went very well. Blake listed the different things that the school did for the program. Kevin seconded Blake's comments and reports that several parents indicated that they felt that it was what was missing and needed.

**Financial Report:** Looking at the Budget as of the end of October and it is still looking good. We're still waiting for the True up numbers from the State Revenue but hopefully we see them by the November allotment. If so, they will be on the next Budget report. The 600s and 700s numbers are still showing high but again that's because of the beginning of year purchases. Ratios look good and we're above where we want to be on the Unrestricted income so we have a little wiggle room. We'll continue to monitor this as we go through the year. All reports are done. Spencer gave highlights of the 2022-23 Final Audit Report that is found in the Board Packet.

#### **Committee Reports:**

- **Policies Committee** – Nothing to report.
- **Finance Committee** – Nothing to report. Audit will be discussed in the next Finance committee.
- **Audit Committee** – Nothing to report.
- **Benefits Committee** – Nothing to report. One thing in the Board Packet.
- **Curriculum Committee** – Continuing our Deep Dive in the Amplify ELA. Next month will dive into another program that has been vetted by the state and approved called Into Literature from the HMH family of curriculum. We also are finalizing our Instructional Vision that will be voted on as a committee to be utilized when looking at new curriculum.
- **Outreach Committee** – Nothing to report.
- **Technology Committee** – Nothing to report.
- **LAND Trust Committee** – Had first meeting. Will meet again in January. Nothing to report until then.
- **PTO Committee** – Nothing to report
- **Board Development Committee** – Next scheduled Board Training was switched for the one done tonight. Due to the likelihood of not meeting in December, Shannon asked if Blake will take the training that was supposed to be in December and make it a handout/cheat sheet that could then be handed out in the next board meeting. Spencer will conduct the Finance training in January. Laura Snelson and Laura Pressley will swear in

during January and then we'll arrange for their onboarding training. Casey asked if there could be a school tour for Board Members. So the next training will start at 6:30 PM instead for Board Members.

- **Campus Management Committee** – Nothing to report.

**Discussion and/or Action Items:**

- **Expenditures over \$5,000**
- **Revised Special Education Contractor Agreement for OT, 2023-24 (Board Packet Pg. 11)** This was updated via email that was sent out yesterday. Shannon made the motion to accept the newest contract that was sent out to the Board members that was sent out yesterday. Shauna seconded. Blake gave background on the reason for the change from the previous OT. Blake also highlighted the changes in the contract and answered questions. All present voted in favor: Shannon Greer, Amanda Mortenson, Holly Myers, Casey Unrein, Shauna Mahoney, Brady Pearce, and Kevin Peterson.
- **Solution Tree PD (Board Packet Pg. 17)** Shannon motioned to accept the Solution Tree Professional Development in Las Vegas as outlined in the Board Packet. Holly seconded. Blake gave background on Solution Tree and the request in the Board Packet for Solution Tree PD on June 4th-6th. Admin would like to make this a every 3 year tradition. The Stipend that admin would like to still pay the teachers would be so that the teachers could collaborate outside of this PD regarding what they learned. Holly asked about accountability. Blake and Chance gave examples of how that would work. Blake recommended that some Board members could go. Amanda asked Blake to give examples of where he saw the teachers utilizing the PD that they attended. Blake gave examples and stated that we see these types of things every time teachers go to one of these conferences. Jenna seconded Blake's words. Casey asked about transparency on this request and Shannon and Blake were able to address those questions. All present voted in favor: Shannon Greer, Amanda Mortenson, Holly Myers, Casey Unrein, Shauna Mahoney, Brady Pearce, and Kevin Peterson.
- **2024 Benefits Insurance Renewal Packet (Board Packet Pg. 27)** Amanda made a motion to approve the 2024 Benefits Insurance Renewal as outlined in the Board packet. Holly seconded. Blake explained the advantages of changing to the new company and highlights of the new plan. The Insurance broker will meet the teachers to explain the new insurance. If the rate with the new company was incentivized and the renewal rate would be much higher next year. Casey asked if we need to increase the GWA deductible stipend. It's been discussed to increase the stipend by \$500 and that request will be brought to the Finance committee. All present voted in favor: Shannon Greer, Amanda Mortenson, Holly Myers, Casey Unrein, Shauna Mahoney, Brady Pearce, and Kevin Peterson.
- **2022-2023 Final Audit Report (Board Packet Pg. 35)** Casey had a couple of comments. They spent 10-15 hours creating the report. We're 2-3 years into this audit template which allows us to compare. The opinion of the auditors is that the transition to this type of audit is hard in the charter school world. However this audit will help tease out where our restrictive assets are going.
- **Determination of next Board meeting** It is agreed that the next meeting will be held on January 25th. Deborah will update the Public Notice Board website.

**Closed Meeting** – *none*.

**Reconvene** — Take all appropriate action in relation to closed session items.

**Next Meeting:** The next regular Board Meeting will be held on January 25th, 2023 at 7:30 pm.

**Adjournment:** Amanda motion to adjourn. The board adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Written by Deborah Odenwalder, Board Clerk