

Approved by the Board of Directors on January 24, 2025

Mission Statement: "ACADEMICS. LEADERSHIP. COMMUNITY."

George Washington Academy

Thursday, December 12, 2024

7:00 p.m.

Board Meeting Agenda

Location: George Washington Academy
2277 South 3000 East
St. George, Utah

The Board meeting convened at 7:00 p.m.

Board Welcome: Shannon Greer, President

Roll Call: Shannon Greer, President

Prayer: Kevin Peterson

Pledge of Allegiance: Kevin Peterson

Board members present: Shannon Greer, Amanda Mortenson, Blake Clark, Kevin Peterson, Casey Unrein, Austin Reber and Laura Snelson and Deborah Odenwalder joined Via Zoom.

Board Members Not Present: Laura Pressley and Brady Pearce.

Others Present: Chance Manzanares, Christine Giles, Steve Erickson, and Shelbi Kelly.

GWA Year Goals:

- Expanding student Leadership opportunities for ALL students
- Ensure ALL students are learning at High Levels
- Focus on Employee Mental Health with Better and Quicker Access

Approval of Minutes:

Kevin made a motion to approve the November 14, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes as outlined in the packet. Austin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. All present voted in favor: Shannon Greer, Amanda Mortenson, Kevin Peterson, Casey Unrein, Austin Reber and Laura Snelson and Deborah Odenwalder joined Via Zoom.

Public Opportunity to Address the Board:

None

Set time for adjournment Shannon set the target time for one hour.

Teacher Reports: Lexi Toia talked to Mrs. Willits and she reported that the third graders recently held their Rome Day celebrations. They had 5 different rotations of activities that related to ancient Rome. They had Roman numerals, catapults, civic crowns, Roman foods and mosaics. The kids were allowed to dress up and they had a lot of fun. She also gave a shout out to Sarah Eliason who teaches 5th grade. Their class goal was to get 85% on their dividing fractions test. Their class got a 93% average. To celebrate they did a conga line around her classroom. Hannah Gillespie said she spoke with Lauri VanWagoner for reading. They're still doing testing right now but she said they're working on the essential standard of finding a main idea and key details in text. She says it's going well. She said our school wide goal of increasing math fact fluency is also going well. October shows that they increased their fluency by 3% and the goal is to increase by at least 2% each quarter. They are also in charge of the Leader in Me assembly tomorrow. They're singing Think Win Win and performing a skit that the kids came up with on their own. The school choir will be performing tomorrow too.

Administration Report: Executive Director, Blake Clark gave the update. He said that the total student count remains at 1,018. He said that he and Christine will be working on the math data tomorrow and he will send that to the board before January. He said that they set some pretty high goals at the beginning of the year and have made strides to reach them, which is awesome. Blake said that they talked about having the teachers go to the Solution Tree Conference in Las Vegas, they have different speakers on all different content which is amazing that they won't be hearing the same thing. They need to pinpoint it down to June and within driving distance. They will come up with a survey and see what the teachers think. He said that there is more incentive now that they are allocated their hourly rate. All State reports are done.

Financial Report: Spencer Adams the Business Administrator gave the report. He said the biggest thing to pay attention to is that they received some of the true-up and some of the forecast columns in the state revenue have been adjusted, some have gone up and others down just a little bit based on what we will be receiving. Overall it was an increase of about \$326,000. So a really good update as far as that goes. You'll notice some of the adjustments that were done in the Finance Committee meeting to some of those other forecasts. The mindset and strategy is to really adjust that forecast to what we're anticipating, in years past we've kept it inflated, just kind of cushioned. Ratios are looking great. We're well above our goals in each of those and continue to trudge along throughout the year. We'll just continue to watch each of the line items and adjust as needed. Shannon mentioned that we're trying to be realistic with our budget so that as we look for financing for our expansion, we've got real numbers and it looks accurate.

GWA Expansion : Shannon Greer led the discussion to prepare board members for the State Charter School Board meeting that will be held January 16. She went back and listened to questions that were asked last January and compiled several components and questions that were asked or that she thought might be asked. Shannon said that what she would like to do tonight is talk briefly about these questions, identify who from the board wants to take the questions and own them, and maybe put together some thoughts so that if they are asked you have something formulated. Blake asked if it was only the board members that could speak. Shannon said that it will only be board members around the table, board members and Blake but that if a member of his team can better answer something they can defer to them. Shannon left it up to Blake, which

members of his team he will be bringing. Shannon also said that they will be looking to make sure everyone is invested. They don't want to hear from just one person, they want to hear from many people. Shannon will make sure everyone has the application. Make sure to read it so you are aware of what they have, so you'll know what they know. Casey brought up that many of the supplemental information are links, so be aware of that. Speaking to the academic component, Shannon asked Blake how our current academic performance warrants an expansion? Shannon went on to clarify that year one and two we're not really expanding beyond our charter numbers, what our goals is, is that we will be able to fill the seats that we've already agreed to and then at year three, move past what we currently have to be able to add additional students. To be clear, we need building space. To answer, Blake said that he would put together some numbers just like we did in the proposal of us against the neighboring district also against the state. He wants to show the positive trajectory we've had since the pandemic where other school are still climbing out of it, we're soaring above those post-pandemic levels. Shannon asked if Blake would make a powerpoint and if anyone can send him their information to make sure it's all cohesive. Blake agreed to do that. They are anticipating the ability to use the powerpoint, Shannon will double check, they can also bring copies to hand out if they need. Shannon also answered the question about the set up. There will be a table set up similar to the set up of our board meetings where the State Charter Board Members as well as the school Board Members will be seated. Behind them there will be the other schools that are waiting to participate. Everything is recorded and put up on YouTube, each expanding school will have 30 minutes to present and answer questions. Since it is in a State building, everyone will need to show an ID. Blake said that he is comfortable with taking on the whole Academic section. He said that the last question: what programs or practices will you replicate or improve in the expanded school?, since we are built on a collaborative model where our teams work together, having a sixth teacher on that team or more teachers teaching that same content or grade level doesn't change anything for us, it just gives more brains to collaborate with. Blake will be able to explain that the systems won't change. Shannon said that the Financial Stability component will rely on Kevin and Casey to talk about. They said they feel comfortable with that. Shannon asked if they feel comfortable with explaining where funding will be coming from. Kevin said they would be bonding for additional portion that it would be, we've met with individuals to discuss in terms of what rates terms and conditions and also verified with that that no current bonds would jeopardize the bonds we already have. Casey just wanted to mention cash on hand. Kevin said again, it's all ratios, cash on hand, debt service income. Kevin also things it's important to explain to them that we will increase enrollment but we are not basing these terms and conditions off of immediate increase in enrollment. We're basing all this on additional again, re-emphasizing, the additional building is to serve the current student body that we have here because we've outgrown our space with the desire to add additional students at the right time and right place as we grow into it. Blake set a deadline for January 10th to get him the bullet points for the powerpoint. Laura S, asked how Blake would answer the question about the academics. Blake said that he would talk about the data that they track. How our school compares to the state averages and other charter schools or even other Washington County schools in our area to make sure we continue to be a school of choice. Shannon reiterated that this section would be covered by Blake and his team, and to make sure that we aren't putting other schools down or being disrespectful in anyway. Casey said that we should mention that we are having to use non-standard spaces in order to continue to serve our population. Blake agreed and said that the question about diversity in the facility and logistics, we have had to cut the library in half but also our numbers, proficiency and growth continue to

increase while having our ELL and SPED population and Title I increase which is really unheard of and important to point out. Shannon thinks we should be aware that we may be asked about the low math scores. We can show that we've been innovative by bringing in Mathnasium. Offering help during the day, summertime and after school. I think if they ask the question, it gives us the opportunity to be reflective of our student population and our practice and what we're doing to support them. Blake said that the math data showed us a blind spot with our sixth graders. He said they changed the entire instructional framework around math and now they're seeing better results than they ever have. The next section, Enrollment and Community Demand, Shannon said she would have Laura P take charge of this section. Blake said that the more space we have our demand increases. He said that the wait list in the spring and late winter show a tremendous need for the services that we provide at our school because we can't take that many students that populate the other schools around us. Shannon agrees that the parents want to go with the sure thing, where they can start school from the beginning of the year. Kevin said that if they bring up demographics around the school, he has that information but he said it doesn't matter because we are still drawing students from all over, more of a destination rather than an option. Shannon said that there will be a lot more students with all the new homes in the area and with kids being able to walk to school now. Steve said that if they can support the powerpoint we can print it out. Blake said he would make it look more professional by putting it into a folder with the 3 pillars and the 20 yr logo on it. Shannon said that there are different ways that they vote, sometimes it's one school and vote other times it's talk to all the schools and vote at the end. Last year Valley Academy went and they were only there for about 10 minutes, they didn't have many questions. Next section, Operational Capacity. Shannon said that this gets into how will the school be recruiting, where are we going to be pulling our teacher from? Blake said the partnership with SUU has been amazing and will continue. Casey said that we will be adding 6-7 new teachers over the next 5 years. Kevin said that we don't need additional students in order to fund what we are trying to do. We aren't adding 30 new teachers and 150 kids year one. We are bursting at the seams, we want to do the expansion and we'll grow into it as we need to. Shannon said that Beehive Academy will be there, that she read through their proposal and it's very powerful. They will be replicating a whole new building in a different location, they have a lot of great things going on. They have funding sources that are going to help them build their whole building. Shannon said that about 10 years ago she spoke with Rebecca Cisneros who is now a State Charter School Board Member she said that research shows that if an A school replicates or expands, historically they are a B school until, it takes a couple of years and they get back to the A school standards. She said to be intentional to retain the good quality. Blake said that to maintain the school culture with a larger student body that it's important to him that the school connect. He doesn't want to manage two schools to maintain just one culture. Amanda said a strength that our school has is that we are going to start integrating more kindergartners and the new students will be integrated into the current school and culture from the beginning. Shannon asked Amanda to be ready to speak to this point if asked at the meeting. Shannon does not foresee the need for any governance changes, the board is already at 9 members. She asked Blake if he thought there were any operational changes that will need to be made. He said that with the other space he will need to have another instructional coach. Blake said that he thinks that it's going to need to be specific to a secondary model and then to have one specific to an elementary model like we had before. Just based on the footprint of our school its currently working but even our current instructional coach is saying there are times where there's just no way to reach every teacher in a month to provide them the feedback and necessary time with

them. The next section Shannon talked about is Facility and Logistics was added even though we already have a building but we have met with contractors not to engage in contracts which is going to be important that they know because that will be a question. We have not engaged in a contract with anybody, but we have met with them to understand the process and our options. It will be important for them to know we have done our homework. We aren't just waiting for them to approve us then working on it, we've been doing it. Blake said that there are several of the contractors that are excited to work with us because we are a strong school. Shannon said that she spoke with several of the people who built the original school and they are excited by the growth and success as well. Shannon said that one of the questions that has come up, is what are we doing to recruit diverse populations? What are we doing to make sure all populations are interested and have access and are aware of our school? Blake said he feels like we have every system in place for special education to ELL to social and emotional supports. That has changed our population tremendously in the 7 years he's been here. Word of mouth and also advertising those supports. Marketing has changed to say that we support all students no matter where they are at. Kevin said that many of the contractors he works with are Hispanic and they are ecstatic that they are going to be at this school because they don't speak English but their kids do and they bring them to meetings and they are excited that they won't have to sell their businesses but that their kids will be able to take over and run their businesses. Amanda asked if we have statistics or how much ELL has expanded. She has spoken to a mom in Korean here, she knows there are Chinese families but can we get a break down of those numbers. Blake said yes. Shannon asked where are we going to market to the people who don't speak English. We have a lot of word of mouth and social media but what are we doing to attract everyone, including those that speak a different language. Blake said that there are many teachers and employees that reflect the diversity of the students, that if there is a language barrier they can help with that. Shannon brought up that the board intentionally expanded from 7 to 9 and that they sought after people with skills that were needed like in construction, a lawyer, and academic and data experience. Shannon said that a question that came up last year was how do you plan to supervise the project? She said that we will have a CGM that we will meet with in weekly meetings. We will have board members that will be in a tight relationship with them. It will be consistent and tight but the people with the experience will be doing the work. The next section is Long-Term Vision. Shannon said that this is something that has already been laid out in the application. Kevin said we want to grow, in order to grow we need a new building to expand. Blake said that we see that students and families want to participate in the things we do here. Kevin said, we've come to the conclusion that we want to accept more kids at kindergarten and get them started early on with the programs and the skill sets early on for the early intervention rather than waiting until it's longer. We aren't trying to go K-12. We are trying to educate these kids at the earliest age possible so they can be successful going forward. Shannon said that that is key point to talk about. We want to be able to provide an opportunity for the students to move through our program and get that concentrated effort very strategically designed. We want them in kindergarten and the only way to do that is to expand our numbers so we have space. Blake said that with the 7th graders consistently for the past few years have been leaving us at 99% on grade level in reading and math, it's honestly easier if they start with us and go through our program. Shannon wants to talk about that in our marketing. She said maybe we can pull out the statistics and say so many percent of students who have been with us since kindergarten are achieving these outcomes. Kevin said that looking at the data that was provided tonight, the difference between kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd grade and the ability to consistently be with some

of the students for an extended period of time just gives us that many more touching points. Blake said those are the grades where our retention is the highest. Kevin said that studies have proven that K-3 is so important for reading and math, after that it's just going to get harder and harder no matter what intervention you do. Blake asked if it was fine that the rest of his team participate remotely and stay in the school while he is the one that travels for the meeting. Shannon confirmed it was up to him which team members if any would attend. Casey said regarding the long-term vision, most schools have a capacity of 1200. That is what we want to try and get to. Get to our maximum and perfect the model. Kevin said that based on the building size, based on the traffic flow and based on the ability to draw, there are only so many hours in a school day that if you have more than that, you just don't have enough touches. Blake said he feels that what draws people to our school especially new 6th and 7th graders. They love that their teacher knows their name, their not just a number in a pool of 1,200 6th and 7th graders. We don't want to lose that. The conversation moved to different experiences with how students feel seen and cared for because the teachers and the staff know their names. It's very personable and the teachers and staff remember past students which is meaningful. Shannon went on to discuss the members of the Board that we will be meeting with.

Brian Bowles - He's been a charter school person for years, he was a district superintendent before that and then he's been on higher ed boards and teaching at the higher ed level.

Stephanie Spiker - Higher Ed with the University of Utah. She likes innovation and is a risk taker and a literacy person.

Clint Beesinger - Newest member of the board, finance and building expansion guy. He asked about a plot graph. He is very aware of what we are doing here.

Cynthia Phillips - Private school director, probably won't be there, this should be her last meeting. She is a turnaround specialist.

Eric Olsen - Rep from State Board of Education may also be changing, he is very reflective and thoughtful. He listens and asks questions. Similar to Matt Hafen.

Crystal Bassett - Works for the Juab County School District. She is innovative so she will be excited to hear about Mathnasium. She is just finishing up her Doctorate. She was appointed.

Rebecca Cisneros - She was the director of the staff. She was the one that helped us make our first exhibit A. She is very knowledgeable. She has helped as a mentor until she got on the board. She was on the UAPCS Board for a while. She is in the realm of High school so she will be looking at things from that perspective. She is very funny.

In addition to the board there is the staff. Paul Kramer, Marie Steffensen, Lisa Cooper and one they just brought on as a remote working from Richfield. They won't be talking much. They are the ones who vetted our paperwork. They make sure the readers read the paperwork, they are the ones who collect any questions the readers might have and then they share it with the state charter school board. Paul Kramer will do the talking in the beginning but other than that they don't usually speak, they just sit there on the side. There are 3 schools meeting in the morning for approval of brand new schools and 4 expanding schools but there could be additional ones, this is all Shannon knows at this time for what to expect. Make sure to bring ID. The conversation led to whether or not the group should drive or fly. The money for travel would come from board development. They will look into the cost/time ratio with who will be traveling to see what the costs would be. Shannon asked that we run the proposal by Spencer. We don't want to be frivolous. We don't want to take less people just to save money. The plan is that

everyone who goes will have a voice to show that everyone is involved. Austin asked what everyone should wear. Shannon said professional attire, she would like to see a button up shirt or a sweater. Shannon asked Austin to think about the construction component or the parent component and be prepared to answer anything they ask to those points.

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 23, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned at 8:18.

Written by Shelbi Kelly.