

**These Minutes are Pending Board Approval**

**Mission Statement:** "ACADEMICS. LEADERSHIP. COMMUNITY."

## **George Washington Academy**

**Thursday, February 27, 2025**

**7:30 p.m.**

### **Board Meeting Minutes**

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

***Finance: Reading & Understanding the Budget/Funding Source 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:** TBD

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Amanda Mortenson

#### **GWA Year Goals Reviewed:**

- 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

Board Members Present: Amanda Mortenson, Kevin Peterson, Casey Unrein, Brady Pearace, Shannon Greer, Blake Clark, Deborah Odenwalder, Laura Pressley and Laura Snelson via Zoom.

Others Present: Spencer Adams, Steve Erickson, Debbie Kauvaka, Chance Manzanares, Christine Giles, Jenna Ayers, Lexi Toia, Hannah Gillespie, Todd Goodrich, McKenna via Zoom and Shelbi Kelly.

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

Deborah made a motion to approve the Minutes from the January 23rd, 2025 Board Meeting as outlined in the Board Packet. Laura P. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. All present voted in favor: Amanda Mortenson, Kevin Peterson, Casey Unrein, Brady Pearace, Shannon Greer, Deborah Odenwalder, Laura Pressley and Laura Snelson via Zoom.

Kevin made a motion to approve the Minutes from the January 24th, 2025 Board Meeting as outlined in the Board Packet. Amanda seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. All

present voted in favor: Amanda Mortenson, Kevin Peterson, Casey Unrein, Brady Pearace, Shannon Greer, Deborah Odenwalder, Laura Pressley and Laura Snelson via Zoom.

**Public Opportunity to Address the Board:**

Todd Goodrich wanted to say thank you to the board and the staff. He appreciates all the effort that is put into teaching his children. He brought up that his son that's in 4th grade was failing in math at the beginning of the year but that after Christmas they were able to get the math book and review it with him and that it really brought up his grade, now he is getting 90's. Todd brought up how during COVID the teacher would have a lesson, there would be a secondary component with the parents and Canvas, he wanted to know if there were any plans to implement something similar again. Todd also wanted to know if the field or other resources at the school could be rented out to the public. Shannon let me know that there is a Building Use Policy on-line that he could look at.

**Set time for adjournment:** Amanda set time for adjournment at 9:30.

**Teacher Reports:** Lexi Toia 1st grade

This is the first year that the first grade has had an increase from their beginning of the year to the middle of the year. Statewide there is a trend where there is a decrease. Their math fact fluency has increased from 6% growth in quarter 1 to a total of 14% growth in quarter 2. They had their field trip to the Utah Tech STEM outreach center at the beginning of February. They said it was great for students to get exposure to how STEM is used outside of school. They are currently hatching chicks in two of the classrooms. The kids are really enjoying learning about the life cycle and watching it happen in real time. The kindergarten also had a club date they had a couple of days ago. For fifth grade, they are using RACE which means restate, answer, cite evidence and explain. The kids have struggled with this in the past but they are seeing much more improvement using RACE writing. Vertical boards have been amazing. As a whole we are seeing so much more engagement during math lessons. We have even started implementing it during science, or reading. They took the RISE math interim in the middle of the year which was awesome. Last year the fifth grade average as a team at the end of year was 53% and our average from the middle of the year the RISE interim is 58% so we are above where we were in the middle of the year that we were at the end of the year last year.

**Administration Report:** Blake Clark, Executive Director gave the report. He gave an explanation of the lottery that GWA uses. The GWA application, when you go to the website to apply for enrollment this is the form that you fill out. It is very basic questions like, if you live in the city, do you have enrolled siblings, what is the current school, how did you hear about us (which is usually word of mouth) It's all very general information. Then it goes into the lottery system. Which is completely computer generated. Per our charter, the only preference that's given is if you have a current sibling at the school or an employee that works here then they go to the top. Everyone else is completely equalized of who makes it through that lottery system. Shannon asked if it was weighted at all, Blake said no. Casey asked if we buy the lottery program. Blake said yes, it's purchased. He next showed a handout that shows what is filled out once the child is accepted. One question that may be hard to understand is the McKinney-Vento eligibility which is just how the government defines homelessness. Deborah asked if this is the

same form that we fill out every year. Blake confirmed that the form is filled out for each child each year. Casey asked if this is standard to other schools in Utah, and it is unless a school has a different lottery which would be determined by the board. There are a couple of policies that are highlighted and talks about the charter and how expect parents to be highly involved in the academics of the school. Casey asked what the percentage of lottery vs acceptance percentage is. Blake wasn't sure what the exact percentage was but that they just did the lottery and the student count is 1,054 with 104 on the waitlist. Blake said that if there were more space to add more classrooms they could add a kindergarten, first, and second grade class if they dropped the amount of students to 25. There are currently 1,007 students. Attendance is great with kids getting here the majority of them on time. There are zero overtime hours. Fifth, sixth, and seventh grade students took the RISE interim. Last year they were at 46%. At the middle of this year we're already 5% above that. To clarify what this assessment is, the state has standards that teachers must teach and those standards are assessed. The interim assessment assesses every single standard, but we're only a little over halfway through the year. So there were standards that were assessed that haven't even been taught yet. So the teachers are able to break down their assessment data and look at it by standards, the standards we've already taught and maybe revisit. Casey asked if the MOI is more difficult than the BOI. Blake said when it comes to fluency and accuracy, no. The passage isn't more difficult, but the score in which you have to achieve increases. Blake said that they started using IXL this year, which is educational software, which follows the students by standards. So as all assessments that we take are standards-focused and not just curriculum, it's important that we have an educational software to push them through the standards. If the kids hop on the program, it's meeting them where they are, figuring out what standards they have deficiencies in or are already proficient in. This is available to all parents to use whenever they want, summer, weekends, after school. No matter where your kid is, push them even further. Shannon asked what kind of advertising was being done. They had a booth set up at the first student-led conferences. They can have teachers push it out more. Those that use IXL can track their scores by seeing how they are performing on the assessments after using IXL. Casey asked if they are actively using IXL. Blake explained that it is a supplement or an extension for the students but not part of the instruction. Laura spoke about the experience she had with her daughter and how much it helped her confidence in math. Casey also asked if they knew how much it was being utilized at home. Christiune said that she could send that information out later this week. Shannon asked when the EOI would be taken. This year they are doing it differently than last year. This year it will start in May, and it will be streamlined as to which tests and when the teachers do it. Kevin asked if the improvement in math scores was because they have a better idea of what the assessment now looks like, since we aren't in year one or two anymore with the new curriculum. Blake said that he, Christine, and Jenna have had to spend 2 years of professional development on how to teach math standards, then they brought it back and taught the teachers. The curriculum committee has spent time figuring out what works. Amanda asked that they share what the MOI or EOI scores are and how they are different between those that are doing vertical boards vs those that aren't. All the teachers have started dabbling in the vertical boards to some extent.

**Financial Report:** Spencer Adams gave the report. The budget report is as of the end of January, 58% of the way through the fiscal year. Not a lot of changes. More clarifying things to point out. There were a few more expenses than revenue this last month. The reason for that is that is when the HSA contributions are made to the employees all at one time. Looking at the

ratios, the unrestricted net income decreased, just under \$29,000. This is a product of the finance committee keeping the numbers as close to the forecasted numbers as possible, as opposed to having more cushion. We are still well above the goals even with the decrease. He said they will continue to monitor and start working on the initial budgets for next year. Kevin wanted to point out in the upper left hand corner you can see how far through the year they are. In the revenue/expense line July 1.1 million is the true-up we've talked about and the one in November true-up after the October 1 date.

#### **Committee Reports (3 min each):**

- **Policies Committee** – Nothing to report
- **Finance Committee** – Nothing to report
- **Audit Committee** - Nothing to report
- **Benefits Committee** – Nothing to report
- **Curriculum Committee** – Momentum of the vertical board learning is moving throughout the school. Today we celebrated the WIG goal for math, we exceeded the 8% goal we are now at 21%. The teachers feel it has much to do with the vertical boards. They are finished with the book study. Now they are starting a soft start tool kit for teachers who are not as experienced with the research.
- **Outreach Committee** – Nothing to report
- **Technology Committee** - Nothing to report
- **LAND Trust Committee** – Final report for the last year got approved and is in the board packet.
- **PTO Committee** – Glow Art Show starts next week. Parents are welcome to come on Tuesday 10-2. PTO is recruiting new members for next year. .
- **Board Development Committee** – Next month is SPED training. Longevity gifts this year will be presented in May. Kevin, Amanda and Deborah volunteered to help. The final meeting will be Friday May 16 at 1:30.
- **Campus Management Committee** – Nothing to report

#### **Discussion and/or Action Items:**

- Kevin made a motion to accept the Proposal for Additional Cameras in the amount of \$6,800 as outlined in the Board Packet. Deborah seconded the motion. Shannon wanted to make sure that zooming in is a possibility. Steve said that we can but it gets more blurry. Blake asked if its possible to put cameras on the light poles. Steve said it would be a possibility but that they would need to run the internet out there. Shannon said that with the expansion we will need to keep this in mind. Casey asked why there was only one bid, and it was because these are the same cameras that we ordered last year but because of the safety audit, which found some blind spots, they needed to get more. Amanda asked if the safety grant money expires. Steve said yes, the summer of 2026. The motion passed unanimously. All present voted in favor: Amanda Mortenson, Kevin Peterson, Casey Unrein, Brady Pearace, Shannon Greer, Blake Clark, Deborah Odenwalder, Laura Pressley and Laura Snelson via Zoom.
- Kevin made a motion to accept the proposal for the 2025 Mathnasium Summer Tutoring for in the amount of \$11,200 as outlined in the Board Packet. Brady seconded the motion.

Deborah wanted to know what they are doing to start recruiting since last year they announced it so late last year. Blake said not yet since they are waiting for it to be approved. That if it is approved tonight they will start announcing it next week. If 7th graders need it they can use it. This summer is going to be more flexible about when students go. Blake said that there are many students utilizing the after school program, which they pay for but the summer is free. All present voted in favor: Amanda Mortenson, Kevin Peterson, Casey Unrein, Brady Pearace, Shannon Greer, Blake Clark, Deborah Odenwalder, Laura Pressley and Laura Snelson via Zoom.

- Amanda made a motion to approve the Land Trust Plan for 2025-2026 as outlined in the Board Packet. Laura seconded the motion. Shannon asked if everything that is purchased is tagged as Land Trust. Blake said no, it's not mandated but they could. All present voted in favor: Amanda Mortenson, Kevin Peterson, Casey Unrein, Brady Pearace, Shannon Greer, Blake Clark, Deborah Odenwalder, Laura Pressley and Laura Snelson via Zoom.

**GWA Expansion:** Shannon Greer led the discussion about the expansion. The RFSQ was handed out to review. Ideally Shannon would like to submit on Monday. We should reach out to the groups that met with us and tell them we are ready to move forward. Shannon wanted to discuss if GWA should choose the architect that would work with the contractor or if it should be the contractor who chooses with input from GWA. Brady's opinion was that it should be the contractor. Kevin agreed and said it would help with streamlining. Blake asked about having a groundbreaking ceremony this year around May. Shannon said that she didn't think that that time frame would work but loved the idea and thought maybe it could be done in conjunction with back to school this summer. Casey asked about how the Trump tariffs would affect this proposed time frame. Brady said that prices are going to continue to go up. The contractors are going to be the ones to pay attention to the increased costs. They will give a quote that will be good for 30-60 days so the sooner we can lock it in the better. Shannon said that right now we are just identifying who we want to work with, then we will let them know what we want and what our budget is. Casey wanted to know if the proposed time line is reasonable. Brady said it was, even with the tariffs that are going to happen. Brady also said that it could take a long time for the contractor and engineer to come up with the design so it may be a year or more. Brady wanted to edit section 4 of the RFSQ to get an estimated schedule and find out who the architect would be and what their timeline would be. He also asked if an attorney has looked at the document. He highly recommended that one look at it, just so that we don't get locked into something we can remedy later. He also said to not use the contractors contract, they usually highly favor the contractor. Brady also said that if they don't use our contract then we should have the right to have our attorney look over the contract and write an addendum. Brady recommended Greg Hardman as an attorney. Laura P volunteered to help review and ask the right questions to cut down on the amount of time the attorney would charge us, she can also make a draft that would help cut down on time. Brady recommended that the RFSQ say that we reserve the right to review the contractors contract and if we don't find it acceptable then the contractor agrees to use ours. Casey brought up the design/build-CM fee and wanted to remove the whole calculator portion. Brady wanted to change the point system and it was agreed -

Team Identification= 10

Point of Contact information = 5

Resumes for Key Personnel= 25

Design and Construction= 25

Management Experience= 55

Design/build-CM fee= 30

For a total= 150

From section 5, Brady wanted to request all the bids for each trade so that we can see what each quote is and make sure the contractors aren't just recommending their friends. For number 7 regarding the retention, Brady recommended that we suggest 5-10%. Attorney's generally take several weeks. Since it is just an offer Brady and Laura volunteered to look over the document and bring up points of concern. Prior to anything being signed and accepted an attorney should be consulted.

**Review of Meeting with Freedom Prep:** Shannon Greer asked for a discussion on whether or not board members would like to collaborate and have discussions with Freedom Prep. Kevin voted No. He said that they are a FOR profit school and we are a not for profit school. He was concerned about what would happen with the funds. Shannon said she saw it as a stand alone school that it wouldn't be them and us, it would be a new entity. Kevin doesn't feel comfortable running a not for profit school here then joining a for profit. Deborah was concerned that they have so many other schools and that it felt like they wanted us to join so that our kids would have some place to go but not that it would be a continuation of view of education Blake felt that our focus on education is completely different and that it would be a benefit more to them than us. Our school board is run by volunteers, whereas they are all paid. Amanda said that there is school in Mesquite that is just about sports and academics. There may be an audience for it. Casey voted no. Deborah voted no. Laura P voted no. Brady voted no but does wish that his kids had a high school to go to that had the same standards as GWA. Laura S voted yes. She said that it is something that is worth discussing more, even if we don't do it now. Board members wanted to focus on the current expansion. Shannon said that there are currently 3 charter high schools in the area, one is at capacity the other two are not. Amanda voted no. Casey asked, who is excited to build a high school? Nobody from the admin team, not really anyone is excited. That gives us a good idea of how we're feeling. Shannon was interested in a stand alone school but not two schools merging.

**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 March 27, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.

**Adjournment:** 9:32 made by Deborah made a motion to adjourn. The board adjourned at 9:32.

**Written by:** Shelbi Kelly, Board Clerk