

**These Minutes are Pending Board Approval**

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

## **George Washington Academy**

**Thursday, March 27, 2025**

**7:30 p.m.**

### **Board Meeting Minutes**

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

*The Annual Review Indicators 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:** Josh Serrano

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Laura Pressley

#### **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

Blake said that they met with Talk Space about usage. There has been much higher usage with this program than the last. They are about to see how the students are learning with assessments coming up. Shannon asked about leadership opportunities. Blake said that a group is teaming up with the Best Friends Animal Sanctuary for GWA gives back. 7th Graders are a part of a new program, the Legacy Project. 7th graders come up with different skills they want to leave behind for other students. Examples range from a picture taken from space with a message that said "we can have a lasting impact on the universe." Another student presented an idea about how to be better with recycling. The winner will be invited to come and present their idea to the Board.

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

Kevin made a motion to approve the Minutes from the February 27th, 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 Pearce, Laura Pressley, Shannon Greer. Laura Snelson via Zoom.

Board Members Present: Amanda Mortenson, Kevin Peterson, Casey Unrein, Brady Pearce, Laura Pressley, Shannon Greer. Laura Snelson via Zoom.

Board Members Not Present: Deborah Odenwalder

Others Present: Steve Erickson, Christin Giles, Spencer Adams, Deborah Kauvaka, Josh Serrano, Rachel Richins, Jenna Ayers, Lexi Toia and Shelbi Kelly.

**Public Opportunity to Address the Board:**

None

**Set time for adjournment**

Blake set the time for adjournment at 8:20.

**Teacher Reports:** Lexi Toia the Teacher Representative gave the report. She said that 6th grade is beginning their early drafts for their descriptive writing essays. The theme of their writing will be focused on describing their experience as a sixth grade student. Then they're going to develop their final drafts. They're collaborating with Student Treasures Publishing in order to begin the publishing process of their own classroom book. As of November 12, IXL shows that students gained 54%. This estimates that student IXL ELA scores have increased by half a grade level. As of March 25th IXL data shows that students have gained 145 increase. Students have surpassed the ELA rate of 90% increase within IXL by the end of the school year. Their RISE benchmark assessments show they need support in analyzing informational texts. With implementation of vertical learning through trial and error, she is discovering how to teach this method and how she's learning how it can be cross-curricular with ELA. For math in 6th grade, they said they just wrapped up module 13 which is area of triangles and special quadrilaterals. The average score for the end of the unit test was an 87%. Their math IXL scores are continuing to grow with a portion of weekly leadership hour designated for students to work on their skill gaps. IXL shows an average growth of 75 points. 100 points representing one grade level of growth. 39 students have exceeded a growth of 100 points thus far. With 5th grade they have been using IXL to spiral review. They noticed at the end of last year, while preparing for the RISE tests that they were reviewing things from the beginning of the year and it was hard for the kids to remember. Now, with IXL, they have been reviewing all year long. They do it for bell work Monday through Thursday and for a fun break. They are able to pass off their skills throughout the week. The teachers are able to choose which skills they want to use. They've been doing 2 math skills and 2 ELA skills, usually 2 older and 2 newer skills. Using IXL in the classroom to spiral review has made it an actual review instead of needing to reteach the concepts that were learned at the beginning of the year. IXL is not used to teach, it's used as supplementary work. Casey asked about the usage report that Christine sent at the end of the last meeting. It has said that the older grades use IXL more than the younger. He wanted to know if it was just because they are more capable of grabbing their computers and logging in. Blake confirmed that it had a lot to do with it. Lexi said that her class understands the expectation of what to do they get to class for the day. They grab their chromebook and get to work. Kevin asked if they need to make sure the new computers they are buying with the Land Trust fund have cameras. Steve said they do. Amanda asked how the Give Me Liberty Program is going. Lexi said it's be going great. There has been so much participation, mostly because of the amazing parents that are helping this year. They had

a booth at Meet the Teacher which helped get everyone excited. Seeing their name on the posters with stickers on it helps the kids get really motivated. The last day to do it is April 4. The parents who did it this year said they are willing to do it again next year.

### **Administration Report:**

Blake Clark, Executive Director gave the report. Today was the fourth grade Utah Program and the third grade math calculator competition. The Math competition is 25 questions of all operations in math. They follow a calculator and it will give them a random multiplication fact they have to answer. In the first round it's 3 minutes, the second round it's 2 minutes and the last one is one. It goes off the percentage that they get correct. Last year we only had four or five students to make it to the final round, this year there were 12 students. It's really important for 4th graders to know these facts so this has been a great way to prepare them and have them embedded in their brain. From the board update that was sent out, the attendance is 93% and tardies are 95%. Current enrollment is 998 with 0 overtime hours. Blake said that there are families that are interested in coming in the future. He will send out the projected enrollment numbers for next year. If we had the new building we would be able to take two kindergarten classes and one first and second grade, which would be an additional 100 kids. Jumping to retention, the outreach committee met this week, retention numbers are looking really really good. In the past several years our retention has been at 75% for our fifth graders going into 6th. That number has gone up. From 6th to 7th, 93% are staying. In some of our grades we literally only have 2 kids that are leaving. Overall as a school we're at 95% retention rate. Teacher retention is at 90% which is the highest it's ever been. A lot of those leaving are part-time or college-age students. There is always something that happens, where a spouse gets a job and someone leaves. When that happens there are 25 applications sitting on his desk to pull from. Casey asked that with the high retention, will there be new students able to get in. Blake said that the maximum number of students for sixth and seventh grade is 120. That's 30 per class which per charter they can do. Historically there are more sixth and seventh graders wanting to get in during the summer. They give quite a few tours in the summer for sixth and seventh grade families. He said that based on the historic number of 75% retention of 5th graders going into sixth grade, that's one of our goals with expansion is to bump up that number. So although Casey make think that the retention numbers are scary high, to Blake, it's a great accomplishment of what the teachers are doing and the culture of the school which shows that people want to stay. He said that he was talking to an employee who's family member toured a school that's goals were attendance related. They have buses bringing their students to them. Our school has parents picking up and dropping off, they are so dedicated to getting their kids to the school that we are able to focus our goals on academics. It's sad when a school's overall goal is attendance. All reports that are listed have been completed.

### **Financial Report:**

Business Administrator, Spencer Adams gave the report. The budget report is as of the end of February. About 66% of the way through the fiscal year. We are trending on track across the majority of the major categories. There has been a big emphasis as a finance committee to try and get as close to reality as we can, especially the forecasted column there, which is a bit of change from years past. Ratios continue to look great. Operating margin, about 6.5%, overall we are in a healthy spot and will continue to monitor things as we go throughout the rest of the year. I mentioned in the finance committee meeting that we do have some of the federal requests into

our grants department. Hopefully in the next month or two we'll start seeing more than just the lunch funds in the federal category in the revenue. We just started the preliminary budget for next year and everything from the legislative session came out positive. Obviously, we'll have more details on that but just kind of giving you a little bit of what came out of that. There was a 4% increase to the WPU and then a 9% increase to the local replacement fund. So great increases there. They also increased the educator salary adjustment again, positive news for the teachers in that regard. Kevin asked if from a federal standpoint, any of the changes being made are causing delays in reimbursements. Spencer said he hasn't seen anything yet but that the sooner we can get them in the better, now is better than June or July. His understanding is that the state has the funds and they are the ones that will be releasing the funds, everything is managed through Utah Grants. Casey asked how the funds will continue with the dismantling of the Federal Department of Education. Spencer hadn't heard, Shannon said we will still get the funds that we've received, it'll just come through the state. The question is about the SPED funds, where is that going to come from. The good thing is that the state of Utah is very pro-education, Governor Cox is pro-charter particularly so she doesn't think our students will suffer. There may just be a learning curve. Kevin said that Utah gets 7.5% of its total budget from federal funds, other schools are as high as 22%. We can figure this out.

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

- **Policies Committee** – Nothing
- **Finance Committee** – In the packet there is the reimbursement resolution. It was dated for March 19. With the tariffs kicking in, we don't know how much prices will be going up. We will be voting on it later.
- **Audit Committee** - Nothing
- **Benefits Committee** – We met on Talk Space, we had one question that was asked to talk space and they were able to get back to us so it doesn't seem like that will change anything.
- **Curriculum Committee** – Just a successful implementation of the vertical boards.
- **Outreach Committee** – Laura Pressley said they have been brainstorming 20th anniversary celebration ideas and ways to celebrate as a community and as a school as well as ideas for an expansion announcement, a groundbreaking type even and some things to get buy-in and excitement going. The PTO is up for letting us join with them in the fall event and instead of calling it a Fall Fest it will be a 20 year anniversary celebration,.
- **Technology Committee** - Nothing
- **LAND Trust Committee** – Nothing
- **PTO Committee** – Josh Serrano gave the report. The Glow Show was a huge success and the PTO is planning on doing it again next year. The PTO is working hard to fill positions for the PTO positions that are open. The election was moved to April to give parents time. Rise Snacks are almost completed. The PTO is funding the Legacy Program of \$250 for up to 12 participants. Next year they are willing to donate \$500 up to 12 participants. Funds will be deposited into a 529 account. PTO will sponsor the dinner. Judging is end of April. Family appreciation event is being moved to the gym to avoid issues with weather and so it doesn't need to start so late. Moving it to the gym it can be dark enough to watch. The movie will be Wild Robot with free pizza and popcorn. The

PTO is talking about changing the fundraising to two different categories, one for the PTO events the other for the school expansion.

- **Board Development Committee** – Shannon Greer said that the legislative update will be on the 28 of next month. May will be board evaluations. Shannon will not be here so Laura Snelson will lead that portion of the discussion during training. In the month leading up to the May board meeting we will be sending out board evaluations and review. June is conference. If you're interested in coming, we encourage you to come. There will be a board specific strand that will be very valuable to all board members. If you're interested in going, let Jessica know ASAP. Hotel rooms need to be reserved before they run out of space. Hopefully many teachers will be joining us. There will also be an opportunity for anyone who is interested in developing relationships with districts.
- **Campus Management Committee** – Nothing

At 8:20, Kevin made a motion to continue the board meeting. Brady seconded the motion.

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

- Expenditures over \$5,000
- Kevin made a motion to approve the Reimbursement Resolution in the amount of 18 million as outlined in the Board Packet. Second made by Amanda. The motion passed unanimously. All present voted in favor: Amanda Mortenson, Kevin Peterson, Casey Unrein, Brady Pearce, Laura Pressley, Shannon Greer. Laura Snelson via Zoom.
- Amanda made a motion to approve the 2025-2026 Mathnasium Partnership contract for \$92,000 as outlined in the Board Packet. Laura Snelson seconded the motion. Blake said it's the exact same as last year, except they added December. Christine said that they have already extended the invitations and have a backup list for who to invite next based on data. Shannon confirmed it was full. The data was sent by Blake in the update. Casey asked why the numbers, particularly the 5th grade are lower in total sessions. Christine confirmed they have had a lot of movement with either students being identified as need that support and some that are doing just fine and can go back to their patriot time to do math. So the kids that were going haven't been there consecutively based on the movement from their needs. The motion passed unanimously. All present voted in favor: Amanda Mortenson, Kevin Peterson, Casey Unrein, Brady Pearce, Laura Pressley, Shannon Greer. Laura Snelson via Zoom.
- Amanda made a motion to approve 2025-2026 CKLA Curriculum Materials in the amount of \$29,520.53 as outlined in the Board Packet. The second came from Laura Pressley. The motion passed unanimously. All present voted in favor: Amanda Mortenson, Kevin Peterson, Casey Unrein, Brady Pearce, Laura Pressley, Shannon Greer. Laura Snelson via Zoom.
- Casey made a motion to approve the 2025-2026 HMH Curriculum Materials in the amount of \$31,849.70. The second came from Kevin. The motion passed unanimously. All present voted in favor: Amanda Mortenson, Kevin Peterson, Casey Unrein, Brady Pearce, Laura Pressley, Shannon Greer. Laura Snelson via Zoom.
- Kevin made a motion to approve the Financial Systems as outlined in the board packet for the amount of \$5,900. The second came from Brady. Casey asked if this is every year. Blake explained it is, you just don't usually see it. The motion passed unanimously. All

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

- Laura made a motion to retain the services of Snow, Jensen and Reese being led by Gregory Hardman at the rates listed in the packet for services relating to our construction contracts for our school expansion. Kevin seconded the motion. Casey asked if he gave a scope of hours. Kevin explained that he didn't, it's hard to know but that he does have experience. It's important to have a layer of protection for us especially when contractors contracts heavily favor them. This way we have someone looking out for us, someone who knows what to look for and what to avoid. Shannon talked about how we will vet things ourselves then have him look at things after we have know all we can do to review things. Casey asked if these fees will be reimbursed with the bonds. Kevin said he would be shocked if they weren't. But he doesn't honestly know. Casey also asked if need to approve invoices from above \$5,000. Kevin is hopeful that we won't be using too many hours of the attorney's time because we will be vetting everything thoroughly before it goes to him. The motion passed unanimously. All present voted in favor: Amanda Mortenson, Kevin Peterson, Casey Unrein, Brady Pearce, Laura Pressley, Shannon Greer. Laura Snelson via Zoom.

#### **GWA Expansion:**

Shannon Greer said she waiting for the date to close for the RFSQ. Then we will review those. We need a committee of at least 3 in addition to the admin team to take a look at those. We don't have dates yet. Be thinking if that is something you want to be part of.

#### **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 April 24, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.

**Adjournment:** Amanda made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:40.

Written by Shelbi Kelly.