

Approved by the Board of Directors on August 27th, 2026

George Washington Academy

Thursday, July 16, 2026

5:00 p.m.

Board Retreat Minutes

Board Members Present: Shannon Greer, David Stillman, Casey Unrein, Sharna Rowe, Ericka Ivie, Laura Pressley, Laura Snelson, Miguel Munoz, Brady Pearce and Blake Clark

Board Members Not Present: None

A quorum was established.

Others Present: Debbie Kauvaka, Steve Erickson, Sadie Carter

Retreat Welcome: Shannon Greer

Governing for Greatness was the theme. This information was from the book written by Brian L. Carpenter. His philosophies have been used by the Board for years. His information is National, not Utah based, so some information may differ. Now that a Strategic Plan has been established we have a great foundation, but we need to always be forward thinking. There needs to be continued education and training regardless of background and experience of the Board Members to ensure best practices. The training received tonight was focused on the acronym APPLE.

Ask Great Questions- Board members need to hold themselves and each other accountable by asking the right questions. For example, are we fulfilling our mission? How do we know our students are succeeding? Are we allocating resources and finances appropriately? What are we not asking? The questions need to be intentional. Ensure that the questions being asked are not only supporting your ideas and opinions but those that are best for the school as a whole.

Plan Strategically- The board will find success by staying focused on the future by monitoring progress and leading with vision rather than getting caught in day to day operations. Allow the focuses that need to be within certain departments and committees stay within their appropriate departments. This allows the focus of the Board to remain on its own priorities. Mr. Clark asked that questions about the board update be emailed to him prior to the board meeting. The board needs to make sure they are reviewing the board packet before the meeting so they can be prepared with appropriate questions and discussions. The Strategic Plan will help ensure that academics are being monitored throughout the year with detailed information and support from its core pillars.

Protect the Charter Agreement- It is the Board's responsibility to protect the school's Charter Agreement ensuring long-term sustainability. What is the Board's role in ensuring long-term fidelity to the Charter? Understanding the Charter is crucial, it was suggested that Board Members review this document, exhibit A in particular. The board needs to understand what all departments are doing so everyone is on the same page and can answer any questions that come our way. This is done by all of the reports at the Board Meetings. The board's job is to always envision the bigger picture and focus on a path to create it. What should be safeguarded at George Washington Academy? The kids and the future of their education. Supporting the executors of these things, teachers, admin, staff. High standard of education.

Lead through Governance- The Board leads through policy, not emotion. All decisions need to be made with this in mind. Board members and the admin team need to focus on their roles and trust that everyone is accomplishing what needs to be done. Accountability will be checked at board meetings. It was asked that the Board members review the section starting on page 55 in the Governing for Greatness book before the next board meeting. It was asked that each board member take a chapter out of the book that they feel comfortable presenting on. Shannon will send out an email and allow the members time to choose the topic they choose. They will need to report back with their choice.

Evaluate Student Success- Every decision made by the Bard should ultimately support better outcomes for students. This is done by the admin team reporting back to the Board at the meeting with appropriate data and reports. The topics of conversations should always focus on the students' success. We need to make sure that all the decisions made by the Board are consistently moving the needle forward with the school's academic success. As the Board members prepare for each meeting, they need to ask how this meeting and questions asked will do this.

The meeting was closed by Shannon stating that she wants the goal of the Board to be to build strong governance. This means coming prepared to the meetings and asking appropriate questions and always focusing on the betterment of the school.

A document will be sent to the Board from Shannon so the Board can choose which committees they would like to be involved and where they feel they would be most impactful. She will also be sending the Board Information for 26/27 via email.

Written by: Sadie Carter