

Gateway Public Schools

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Wednesday, September 14, 2016 @ 5:00 -7:00 PM

Minutes

Board Members Present:

Therese Arsenault, Beth Berliner, Allison Thoreson Bhusri, Cynthia Billops, David Booth, Sapna Boze, Sharon Gillenwater, Lisa Kirkland, Annie Klebahn, Susan Masto, Joyce McMinn, Sharon Olken, Will Parish, Jackie Quella, Adina Safer, Suzanne Schutte, Laura Spivy, Phil Susser, Valerie Toler, Jennifer Tulley, Aaron White, Julie Wise

Board Members Excused: Susan Kase

Also present: Sarah Byrne, Mary Plant-Thomas, Eric Sarb, Chris Hero, Danielle Ciccarelli

Call to Order, Approval of Minutes from May 18, 2016

Beth Berliner welcomed the Trustees, and thanked everyone for coming to the first meeting of the 2016/17 school year. Beth talked about upcoming events. The Matters of the mind Luncheon, with guest speaker Bryant Terry, will be October 13th. Board Visiting Day at Gateway Middle School will be Tuesday, November 15th. Beth asked all Trustees to sign and turn in the Conflict of interest form.

Beth asked for approval of the May 18th meeting minutes. Danielle read one addition to the financial portion of the minutes. The minutes were approved without issue.

Public Forum

Beth opened the floor for an open forum. No further discussions or motions were introduced.

Committee on Trustees

Sapna gave the floor to Susan Masto, who recommended Sara Byrne as a new Trustee. Susan told the Board that Sara "gets stuff." She knows how to get things done. She has an intimate knowledge of the school, and served as co-chair for the Gateway Matters of the Mind Luncheon in 2014 and 2015. Sharon Olken then spoke about Mary Plant-Thomas, who is the prospective GMS representative Trustee. Mary ran for the position that Laura D'Amato occupied last year. Sharon read Mary's note to Sharon saying why she wants to be on board. To Mary, community and relationships are a priority. She understands what we are trying to do in the classroom and at the board level. Sharon also introduced Eric Sarb, a math and science teacher who is considering running as the Gateway Middle School representative. Jackie Quella proposed that we vote to approve Sarah and Mary's appointments to the Board. Sharon Gillenwater moved to approve. The appointments were approved without issue.

Student Voices

Sapna gave the floor to Sharon Olken. Keeping with tradition, she distributed "Dear Gateway" letters, written by Gateway middle and high school students. She noted that she likes to start the year off by hearing from the students, as a way of gaining inspiration. Trustees took turns reading the letters aloud. Students spoke about their evolving sense of self, school traditions, their appreciation for the school garden, looking outside the box for answers, and an appreciation of faculty. Sharon noted that the main themes are similar across schools. Sharon appreciates that she gets to see students evolve from their middle school selves to their high school selves.

Sharon welcomed a group of gateway middle and high school students who were invited to share their perspectives on the Gateway experience. The student panel consisted of Stephanie Thomas, Nadia Bourdoud, Precious Billops, Nella Woolgar, Daniel Ortega.

Sharon asked the panel what they liked best about Gateway, and why they think it is a good place for students. The students mentioned the positivity the teachers bring, their amazing energy and the academic and non-academic support that teachers provide. The students feel that the environment at Gateway is loving and healthy.

Sharon asked the students to talk about what teachers have done to help them as learners. The students mentioned that teachers help keep them on track and give them room to grow. They reach out personally and encourage students. The students feel confident that the teachers will look out for them. Sharon asked the students how they have changed as learners since coming to Gateway. The students talked about improving in essay writing, math, time management and organization. When the students struggled in subjects, their teachers helped them find the most effective ways to learn. One student mentioned that she was reluctant to ask for help in humanities, which she loves. Fortunately, her teacher noticed this and encouraged her to reach out so she could get the help she needed.

Sharon expressed to the students that Gateway cares about them as people, and asked them to talk about things they do outside of school. Some activities that the students mentioned are skateboarding, horseback riding, team sports, the Web Leadership program at Gateway Middle School, in which 8th graders help 6th grade students make the transition to middle school, internships at CPMC and remind.com. Students mentioned that their experiences at Gateway have helped them develop as people and decide on their future direction.

Sharon inquired what the students would change about Gateway. Students expressed a desire for more variety in classes, more languages, a psychology class, diversity in curriculum, more middle school extra curricular activities like music and theater and more sports. The students said that they have the academic tools they need, but they just want more variety. One suggestion was for more field trips that enabled students to get to know each other. Not enough food at lunch.

The Trustees asked how the students feel about the school garden. They appreciate having fresh food and enjoy preparing food in the garden. Students didn't know what to expect before the garden went in, but discovered that they really liked it. It expanded their horizons. The garden gives them a space to go that they didn't have before.

There was a discussion about the value that college counseling brings to the students. It has helped students determine what college is right for them and helped them explore career ideas. College Counseling has helped them to understand SAT scores, and learn a lot of things they didn't know about

colleges and universities. There is a feeling of camaraderie among seniors; they talk about SATs and goals.

Lisa Kirkland told the students that they are why we are here. They have made the Trustees really proud. Sharon and everyone agreed.

Committee on Trustees

Sapna passed the floor to Sharon Gillenwater to go over Trustee Guidelines and Process. She brought everyone's attention to the *Trustees Expectations* handout. She asked Trustees to please attend gateway events. Please tell Danielle if you cannot make it to the meeting. Sharon encouraged Trustees to attend the Luncheon and Board visiting days. Something that came up in the board survey was a question of what happens in committee vs. board meetings. Most of the heavy lifting gets done in committee. Committees typically meet in person once a month. Committees then come back and report to the board. She encouraged everyone to join one or more committees. It is a great way to learn in detail what goes on behind the scenes.

Jackie explained that if you want to attend a committee meeting to see what the committee is about, you are welcome. If a committee interests you, please let Sharon and Jackie know. You may also attend the meetings as a guest. Sharon and Sapna would be happy to discuss what the committees do.

Development

Sapna asked Susan Masto to talk about the upcoming luncheon, which is a wonderful way to introduce people to Gateway. Development is looking for more corporate sponsorship. Susan asked Trustees to think about ideas for reaching out. Laura Spivy offered to reach out to people who have sponsored tables in the past but haven't responded. Bryant Terry's talk will be a little different this year; he may do some cooking on stage, maybe some singing. Cooking is his way to bring about social change. Susan asked Trustees to think of those to whom this talk will be of interest. Mr. Terry's talk will be about nutrition, social justice, nutritious food as a human right. Commercialism and economics make it so not everyone has access to good food. He wants to change stereotypes around food. Jennifer Hocking, Development team are doing a great job organizing the auction.

Executive Director's Report

Sharon Olken began her report by talking about upcoming events. September 20th is the first ever Community Partner night. Rachel Kamen has been building partnerships and relationships and is piloting a Community Partner night to give them a sense of who Gateway is. It should be an informal and inspiring evening. Please come.

Sharon passed out a flyer for the Candidate Forum for San Francisco Board of Education. The Board of Ed has influence over some key issues concerning our school and over all the kids who attend SF public schools. There are four candidates this year. Charter schools in SF decided to host a candidate forum for SF charter school parents, and a broad coalition of groups who are interested in education and equity. This is an opportunity to get our voice heard, show the candidates that we care. She asked everyone to put it on his or her calendar.

Sharon discussed the 2016 Gateway Enrollment snapshot and our school's diversity, racial/ethnic demographics and the number of students going from GMS to GHS. Last night was the Gateway Open House for GMS students. We endeavored to show them how GHS is different from GMS, as kids are often looking for something different for high school. Someone asked if having many students going from GMS to GHS limits the number of kids from different middle schools. What Sharon feels the priority is enabling GMS kids to get a true idea of what GHS has to offer. There was a question about geography. More than half of our students come from far away. We have had an uptick in students from neighborhood schools. Therese said many students travel far to get here, and families are delighted that they are here. Our students share their experiences with those outside our schools and that is why we have so many applicants.

There was a discussion of how the lottery works, how it affects demographics, and how it compares to the district as a whole. The number of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch is 71% in middle school.

Sharon reviewed the 2016 College Data. We should feel proud. Our kids got into amazing schools; they were very decorated, and received scholarships. Last year was the biggest graduating class; there was less attrition. Those students who were struggling stuck with it. We held on to students.

Sharon thanked everyone for coming to the meeting, and for all they do to support the kids.

Adjourn Meeting

Sapna adjourned the meeting at 7:05 pm

Signed: Allison Bhusri
Allison Bhusri, Board Secretary

Date: 1/11/17