

GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

DATE: May 17, 2017

TIME: 6:00pm-7:30pm

LOCATION: 999 Peachtree St. NE suite 1120, Atlanta, GA 30309
Conference Call: 1 (888) 824-5783 Passcode: 55777021#
<https://sas.illuminate.com/m.jnlp?password=M.B13C42A8FA554FCB761F0087965B36&sid=559>

Board Attendees: Ryan Mahoney (Board Chair), Erica Fener-Sitkoff (Vice Board Chair), Angela Lassetter, Jemelleh Coes, Ben Brumfield, Charlie Harper, Jeff Gates

Staff attendees: Matt Arkin (Head of School), Veronica Clemons (Deputy Head of School), Keisha Simmons (Board Liaison), Staci Kimmons (District Academic Administrator) Andre Hopewell (Finance Manager)

Other Attendees: Alexa Ross (Board Attorney), Mark Middleton (K12 Lobbyist), Karen Ghidotti (Southern Region Vice President)

Board Member Absences: Christy Thomas

Summary of Actions:

	Motion	Second	Vote
Approval of Board Minutes	Angela Lassetter	Jeff Gates	Unanimous approval
Approve Bambo Sonaiké, CPA, LLC as Auditor	Recommendation of Finance Committee	NA	Unanimous approval
Adjourn at 7:59pm	Charlie Harper	Ben Brumfield	Unanimous approval

1. **Board Meeting Call to order** 6:17pm

2. Head of School Report

- Matt Arkin, Head of School, gave updates on the following items:
 - Graduation update- graduation will occur on 6/2/2017 starting at 12:00pm and ending at 2:00pm. Tony Lowden, Commissioner for the Georgia State Charter Commission, has agreed to be the commencement speaker for the 2017 graduating class. Tanya Cobb, Director of Guidance, will provide logistic information for the full board.
 - The board posed the following questions related to Graduation:
 1. What is actual number of students expected to participate in graduation this year?
 2. What is the actual graduation number reported to the state? When is that number determined?
 - Testing update- Head of School, explained that the state gave special permission this year to allow for the writing portion of the Georgia Milestones End of Grade test to be given on the first day of testing, instead of the second day (which has occurred in years pasted). It was explained to the board how giving the writing portion of the exam on the first day of testing allowed for the shortest test to occur first and it also translated into fewer technology issues at testing sites. GCA had a 98% participation rate for End of Grade testing and a 80% participation rate for End of Course testing.
 - Staff will meet to discuss positives and negatives of testing this year and to also determine which testing sites should not be used in the future.
 - Re-registration/enrollment- GCA is on track to meet enrollment numbers for the 2017/2018 school year. Currently we have 96% response rate for re-registration and 80% of current students have committed to returning next school year.
- State Charter Commission Presentation update- GCA, along with all state charter commission schools presenting, was required to completed a questionnaire ahead of the presentation date. GCA was able to submit answers to that required questionnaire ahead of the 5/24 due date. The PowerPoint to be used for the presentation will be submitted by 6/21 (after feedback from GCA Board Chair and Vice Chair). GCA will present on 6/28 at 12:30pm in the Georgia State Charter Commission conference room.
- Follow up Items:
 - Provide the full board with the questionnaire and GCA responses to questions
 - Provide the full board with a copy of the PowerPoint that will be used for the presentation

- Ask Andre Hopewell to attend State Commission presentation, along with GCA staff and board members.

3. Board Committee Reports:

Finance Committee

- Christy Thomas, Finance committee chair, was unable to attend the meeting, but Ryan Mahoney (board chair and finance committee member) reported out in her absence.
- Finance committee met on 5/11 to discuss auditor selection and to begin the review of the FY18 budget. After attempting to complete interviews with 2 state approved auditors and after reviewing previous schools both auditors worked with in the past it was determined that the committee would recommend Bambo Sonaik, CPA, LLC to the full board.
 - Finance Committee made the following recommendation:
 - Recommend GCA use Bambo Sonaik, CPA, LLC to complete the FY17 audit- unanimous approval to use
- Initial hearing for the FY18 Budget- board meeting occurring on 5/17 will service as the initial hearing for the FY18 budget. This hearing was advertised in the Fulton Daily Reporter, this publication was determined to be acquaint based on guidance and conversations with Sarah Beck, Business and Operations manager with Georgia State Charter Commission. Guidance was received by phone with Keisha Simmons, School Board Liaison, and through email.
- Andre Hopewell (K12 Finance Manger) reviewed the budget summary for the full board, this portion of the budget gives a brief review of proposed changes to the FY18 budget
 - Question posed by board based on budget review:
 - What are merit bonuses based on?
 - Follow up items to provide before the next finance committee meeting:
 - Analysis of salaries (to also include bonus information), and details on technical services, school admin/governance services and curriculum development
 - Additional information on student/teacher ratios (specifically the number of students each teacher is assigned)
 - Current draft of budget to be placed on website (once approved by the board)

4. Testing Computer agreement

- The Head of School, Matt Arkin, describe that since there was confusion, the board was presented with a testing equipment and support services agreement; this item was presented to serve as an amendment to the current agreement. As it stands the current budget contains a line item to cover the cost of testing equipment and services needed to remain compliant with the current state testing requirement. The current budget does not assign this service to any current vendor, the agreement presented would amend the current contract so that those services would be provided by K12.
- Alexa Ross (board attorney) felt that after reviewing the current contract the current language states that K12 will provide all needed equipment and services for testing so an amendment to the current agreement is unnecessary. The board agreed to allow the newly recommended auditor, Bambo Sonaike to review letter drafted by Alexa Ross, board attorney, invoice from K12 showing expense, and current K12 contract to determine if a finding would occur.
 - The following question was posed by the board related to the testing computer agreement:
 1. If an amendment was not signed would this cause a finding in the upcoming audit?

5. Board Development- GCA Approach to Ga Milestone End-of-Course Testing

- Matt Arkin, Head of Schools, presented to the board the mastery based method to testing taken by the school this year. Mr. Arkin presented that in years past students took their EOC exam (which is considered the final exam for those courses that have them) before they could complete course work, because of this some students are not able to reach a level of mastery that would allow them be successful in passing the course. Not completing course work also lead to low attendance at testing in the spring.
- The current threshold to determine if students could still earn credit for the class after taking and passing the EOC is 70, it was decided to lower that threshold to 65 (this is the lowest possible grade a student could have and still earn credit for the course, it would occur if they scored a 100 on the exam)
- Student that did not meet that threshold for completion will continue to complete work in the course and were automatically scheduled for July testing. That means those students are automatically enrolled in summer school so that work can continue in their course

- The following guidance was used to make this decision: DOE student assessment handbook (page 62) and applicable Georgia law and SBOE Rule (O.C.G.A § 20-2-281 and SBOE Rule 160-3-.07)
- The board, once presented with this new information, directed the school that course grade should not be used as a Milestone eligibility criterion.
 - The following questions were posed by the board on the topic of GCA's EOC testing:
 - What happens if students do not show up for testing in July?
 - What resources will students have access to complete assignments and course work?
 - What is the school's definition of failing a course to qualify for July testing?
 - When is the cutoff date for course work to be submitted to determine a student's final grade? When will, this information be report to their transcript?
 - At the time of the May testing date were students that had the correct amount of calendar dates, but did not complete course work still assigned to July testing?
 - What laws were used to make this determination?
 - The following directives were posed by the board:
 - The school must use every avenue available to the school to contact each student who should test in July (examples personal phone calls, emails and certified letters)
 - The school must provide transportation to sites if parents are unable to take students and make sure testing sites are within 45 minutes of affected students homes.
 - Each student who fails to show up for July testing will have the right to test at the next possible testing
 - Follow up items to provide before the next board meeting related to testing:
 - Examples of communications sent to families of affected students throughout the semester

- Draft letter, developed by Alexa Ross (board attorney,), Veronica Clemons (Deputy Head of Schools) and Erica Fener-Sitkoff (Vice Board Chair) that will communicate that students that did not test in May will be scheduled July testing. Letter should also include school's definition of course completion, what that means to students, and ways school will attempt to accommodate those students.
- A map of July test site locations
- Mileage between each affected student's residence and the closest testing site
- An affidavit executed by the Head of School, confirming that a certified letter and email has been sent to each student and his or her parent or guardian, as specified above in the minutes
- A list of those students who will need transportation and how the school is going to meet that need
- A list of students contacted that will be unable to participate in July testing, citing the reason and what month each will be tested
- Details on who will proctor each alternate EOC Milestones examination and the plan for tutoring and support given to each student prior to the July administration of the test.
- Matt Arkin, Head of School, will edit presentation to remove the inaccurate bullet point on the last slide.
- **Other Board Discussion**
 - Staff Rotation- Scott Dorsey (Special Programs Manager) will be leaving GCA at the end of the school year.
 - Jeff Gates will be stepping down from the board at the end of his 3-year term. He has agreed to stay through transition as needed.

AGENDA

Board and Staff Arrive 6:00pm

- Call to Order 6:15pm
- Review and Approve Minutes
- Head of School Report 6:20pm

- Rotating Committee Reports: Finance Committee 6:30pm
 - Item for Action: Auditor Selection
 - Budget Hearing – Initial FY17 Budget for Initial Discussion
- Item for Action: Testing Computers Contract 7:15PM
- Executive Session
- Confirm next Meeting Date/Time
- Adjourn 7:30pm