

Gateway Lab School

Citizen Budget Oversight Committee



Meeting Minutes

DATE: January 11, 2018
LOCATION: 2501 Centerville Road, Wilmington DE

Minutes

11-Jan-2018

CBOC Quarterly Meeting – Gateway Lab School

Convene @ 6:00 pm

Attendees:

- CBOC Members Present
 - Nate Schwartz (Parent)
 - Henry Clampitt (finance experience)
 - Denise Stouffer (DOE liaison)
 - Dorcell Spence (finance professional)
 - Tim Griffiths (ex-officio; GLS Executive Director)
- CBOC Members Absent
 - Pam Draper (finance expertise)
 - Richard Riggs (DOE liaison) → Denise Stouffer attended in his stead

As the meeting convened, Denise briefly mentioned how the DOE would be likely to deal with a Financial Framework score due to losses:

- Does the school clearly know why the target was missed?
- Has the school rectified the issue going forward? If not, when?

A draft of the October meeting minutes was reviewed and corrected to note approvals of earlier meeting minutes, then the October minutes were approved as corrected.

Dorcell reviewed the December financials. In addition to her Board Highlights summary (copy attached) she noted the following:

- The Northern Data Center costs run \$150K annually. The state will pay for \$75K and the remaining \$75K must be paid by participating districts and charter schools. The method for allocating the \$75K among districts and schools has not yet been determined.
- The CSD Settlement funds are lower than last year, this is only partly explained by the change in Christina resident students at GLS. Denise provided names of people at DOE to consult with for further explanation of the year-over-year change in these funds.
- Staff certification data is still being reconciled for GLS. Dorcell noted that certification generates 100% of state unit funds, whereas non-certified only generates 90%.

Denise spoke about the upcoming GLS board meeting and the plan for John Carwell's presentation. In addition to data on academic performance, John will introduce the concept of potential transportation

synergies among charter schools.

The CBOC undertook a general discussion of the GLS financial position outlook:

- Henry presented data showing that management's December outlook assumes that we will spend 45% of GLS' total unrestricted savings in FY2018. This is substantially the same outlook as September and October; it is more favorable than the November outlook which showed spending of 90% of savings this year.
- Expenses are on track as a percent-of-year for the first half through December. The challenge is with the second half of the year where costs will exceed the first half.
- CBOC discussed the need for a plan which reduces expenses below current income (i.e., a sustainable plan)

The group engaged in a broad discussion with Denise to clarify:

- Board financial goals
- Staffing/caseload benchmarks versus other schools
- Enrollment outlook for next year

The meeting wrapped up with this general understanding among the attendees:

- Tim will present an accountable plan at the Jan-16 board meeting which improves the net results for this year by \$450K, turning the outlook from its current negative result to a modest surplus in line with the annual surpluses which built the Strategic Plan fund.
- Weekly board updates on enrollment progress are typical for an under-enrolled school. Each update should show progress. The goal is to be fully enrolled (i.e., up to 105% of 226) -- with a wait list of additional applicants -- by the end of April.
- The general impression is that GLS has more staff than comparable schools (based on student/adult ratios and staff caseloads). This represents an opportunity for financial improvement, and Denise noted that plans for staffing changes should consider their effect on school culture.

Adjourn @ 8:30 pm

Minutes summarized by Henry Clampitt