

# GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY (GCA)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

**DATE:** May 21, 2019 | **TIME:** 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM; (Executive session begins at 6:00 PM – regular board meeting begins at 6:45pm)

**LOCATION: ROBBINS ROSS ALLOY BELINFANTE LITTLEFIELD LLC**

**500 14th Street, NW, Atlanta, GA 30318**

**CONFERENCE CALL DIAL-IN #: 1.515.606.5371 | ACCESS CODE: 675050#**

**Blackboard: <http://tinyurl.com/GCA-Board-Room>**

**Attendees:** Kenneth Tennyson Asher (Board Chair), Charlie Harper, Ben Brumfield, Andrew Lewis, Eric Cochling, Juliann McBrayer

**Board Employees/Contractors:** Angela Lassetter (HOS), Michael Kooi (Executive Director), Alexa Ross (General Counsel).

**Staff Attendees:** Melissa Komolafe (Admin), Julie Hawkins (Admin), Jennifer Mitchell (Admin), Rosie Lowndes (MS Admin), Maria Waters (ES Admin), Kristen Blanda (HS Admin), Aleksandra Berry (Admin), Maria Blencowe (Communications), Gentry Lowe (Admin), Michelda Watson (Admin), Joan Wilson (Admin), Michelle Gilyard (Admin), Trina Weaver (ES Admin), Amina Ross (Admin), Sherene Mueller (FAST), Michelle Blackwell (Admin), Crystal Adams (MS Admin), Natalie Williams (HS Admin), Andre Hopewell (CFO), Karen Miller (Admin), GCA\_ES\_Janet Wheeler (Admin), Brianna Carter\_ES (Admin), Susan Rudd\_ES (Admin), Stephanie Murphy\_ES (Admin), Jessica Greear\_ES (Admin), Ahoba Arthur (Admin), Shannon Spath\_ES (Admin), Brenda Messer (Admin), Jean Perpich (Admin), Tabitha Walker (Admin), Elizabeth Rose (Admin), Allison Griswold (Admin), Ellen Holland (Admin), Stacy Clendenen (Admin), Rachel Medina, Maura Salberg-Griffith (Admin), Ingrid Bailey (Admin), Daniel Keiger (Admin), Misty Kerr (Admin), Trish Eckberg (Admin), Lisa Clements (Admin), Catherine Margrave (Admin), Stacey Porter (Admin), Allison Godowns (Admin), Linda Duckworth (Admin), Melissa Lee (Admin), Courtney Hale (Admin),

**Parents:** Due to the large number of parents that dialed in to the call we were unable to get accurate detail

**Other:** John Kramer (K12), Mary Gutierrez (K12), Joy Branham (Emory law student/SCSC), Jodi Marshall (K12), Julie Overholt (K12), Beth McCamy (Parent)

### SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

	MOTION	SECOND	VOTE
Motion to move to executive session to consult and meet with legal counsel regarding pending litigation or other judicial actions brought against the school or employees	Charlie Harper	Eric Cochling	Unanimous approved.
Motion to approve the April 2019 Board meeting minutes	Charlie Harper	Eric Cochling	Unanimous approved.

Motion to amend agenda to include amendment of minutes from January 2018 to March 2019	Charlie Harper	Andrew Lewis	Unanimous approved.
Motion to amend minutes from January 2018 to March 2019 to include reasons for executive sessions	Charlie Harper	Eric Cochling	Unanimous approved.
Motion to adjourn Board meeting	Ben Brumfield	Andrew Lewis	Unanimous approved.

**I. Call to order**

II. **Motion** to move to executive session to consult and meet with legal counsel pertaining to pending or potential litigation, settlement, claims, administrative proceedings, or other judicial actions brought or to be brought by or against the school district or an officer or employee or in which the officer or employee may be directly involved, Motion by Charlie Harper, seconded by Eric Cochling. Unanimously approved.

**III. Review and approval of March 20, 2019 meeting minutes**

A. Motion to approve by Ben Brumfield, seconded by Andrew Lewis, unanimously approved.

**IV. Amendment of minutes from January 2018 to March 2019**

B. Motion to amend the agenda to include amendment of minutes from January 2018 to March 2019.

C. Motion to amend minutes from January 2018 to March 2019 to include reasons for executive sessions by Charlie Harper, seconded by Eric Cochling, unanimously approved.

i. Charlie explains for those who may be wondering what the board is doing- the Board has gone into executive session legally and appropriately. However, it also must be stated in the minutes as such. That is why the board is amending the previous minutes.

**V. Finance Committee Report-** including 2019/2020 Budget Discussion- Andre Hopewell

A. This is 1<sup>st</sup> introduction to proposed budget for 2019/2020 school year

B. Major input assumptions- enrollment, funding, staffing compensations

i. Enrollment – projecting a slightly higher October count date than last year but about the same

ii. Most of GCA funding based on count date FTE’s- hold harmless has student count at approx. 10699 students based on a rolling average

iii. Educational funding- state funding = about \$82million - Federal funding \$6.7 million 15% decrease in funding- net decrease of approx. \$500K (primarily Title I)

iv. Staffing and compensation- this year projecting approx. 697 staffers- approx. 50 people added- curriculum compliance, additional staff, counseling, Title IV, RTI- significant increase in teacher salaries- important to keep salaries competitive to garner more talent- 45% rate on benefits- liability for TRS and other benefits

v. P&L expenses discussed

vi. Kenneth asked question about new staff- total FTE’s

a. Andre- approx. 50 staffers, some are CTAE vocational learning program staffing which will yield a higher funding level; department will pay for itself. Amina Ross, Director of Counseling is building CTAE program- helps students not ready or suited for college-

helps them to enter workforce after graduating- also helps students with learning deficits- Amina provided pamphlets of programs for Board- additional six programs- CTAE, Pathways- received grant from state for grad rates.

- b. Large increase in SPED staffing - problems with SPED can shut down GCA- 19 additional staff needed- 12 teachers- will allow GCA to meet state required teacher to student ratio- next year audit- currently writing corrective action from previous years.
  - c. Ahoba Arthur, Director of Instructional and support programs- over RTI/504- there was not previously a separate department for these programs, so we need to staff up to meet the needs of these types of students.
- vii. Student and family services- school and admin governance, technology- P. 11 total funding down by approx. 5% - P. 14 total expenditures going down due to swapping out K12 curriculums which will enable GCA to fund other programs that serve our students.
- C. P. 11 Risk and Opportunities
  - i. Opportunities for funding- cost reduction- annual commission fee reimbursement

## VI. **Head of School Report**- Angela Lassetter

### A. Enrollment as of May 14<sup>th</sup>

- i. Have wait list for many of our grades- minimal seats left 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>-
- ii. K-2 - 3100 is potential number GCA can enroll according to charter- K-5 cap of 4,900- no Board enrollment caps in K-2.
- iii. We based all projection numbers on 2100 seats- GCA does not expect to get 3,100, but if K12 does marketing, we may get an additional 1,000- will discuss plan with finance committee.
- iv. K12 has not done any measurable marketing yet for K-2
- v. Charlie question- Are we paying marketing fee?
  - a. Mike- yes, pupil recruitment is listed as part of curriculum expenses currently paying K12. Charlie- So we are not receiving services that we are currently paying for?- Alexa question- Is there any marketing specific to GCA that we've seen? Angela- No. Mike- That has been a part of the back and forth with K12. K12 has, in the past, done marketing primarily for itself with the assumption that such marketing benefits GCA as a K12 school.
- vi. GCA staff has put up Google ads for enrollment marketing- Angela- K12 has not presented any marketing to GCA- We have made it known to K12 that I want marketing only for GCA and branding for GCA- Charlie question- have we gotten any communication as to why we are not getting marketing services from K12? Is there an issue with marketing for a general corporation or for GCA? Angela noted that another popular cyber school has done consistent marketing.
- vii. Kenneth – how were these enrollment numbers determined? Angela- we have tracked GCA's historical rate of attrition- typically about 1000 people don't show up for various reasons. We know that many of the current and newly enrolled students will either not show up or will leave shortly after the start of the year. We may not be perfect to the enrollment caps in the policy right at the start of the year, but we expect to be under them by the end of the year looking at historical data.

### B. **Governance dashboard**

- i. No changes- still must complete all training

### C. **Grad rate projection**

- i. Asked Amina and staff to assist in finding actual grad rate for GCA- 2018/2019 grads 776, 80% – 81% will graduate due to credit recovery courses- counseling staff- tracking score cards- talked to

DOE—efforts that went in- staff went extra mile- helped students earn HS diploma- took own initiative

#### **D. Milestones over 95% participation**

- i. Did not allow opt – outs- not allowed by state law- confirmed with DOE- Charlie would like to note for the record that this is a very different interpretation than we have had by previous HOS

#### **E. Still working on GCA processes and policies**

- i. Unforeseen things have derailed work to get policies for approval
- ii. Open records request- Alexa suggests assigning paralegal to help
- iii. DOE reports and on time submissions
- iv. HR report- Backfilling positions- staffing to 100% unlike previous HOS where not compliant with Board policies- did not have subject specific teachers in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>
- v. This year GCA will be in compliance with board policies- Charlie thanks Angela- noted that this sets different precedent since previous HOS- Angela- this was also possible by reducing balanced budget credits- we are spending a lot less money

#### **F. Student Performance data**

- i. See data breakdown on milestones testing developed by Daniel Keiger.
- ii. ES by levels - ES ELA had increases in all grades –
  - a. science and social studies had significant increases, social studies completely replaced K12 curriculum with different vendor- Gallopade- we have never had increases in history- up 6% by changing curriculum- Charlie question- approx. how much money saved- K12 is \$415 per student per course- Gallopade is \$15 per student per course- Charlie wants point made and on record that \$15 curriculum has outperformed \$400 curriculum.
  - b. Angela- K12 is very clear their curriculum includes materials- Charlie question- does materials mean computers made in 2009? Angela- no, but that’s a whole different conversation.
  - c. Kenneth question- what are the materials?- Angela- it depends, usually text books- we are currently verifying that with parents who have volunteered to give us their kits so we can see what the materials are that K12 sends- Ben question- why are we getting materials charges if there are no materials?- Angela noted in one class you get a book and an inflatable globe- Charlie- so we’re paying approximately \$390 for a beach ball? Mike- K12 total materials cost is \$5.9 million according to numbers provided by K12. That is more than the entire academic package Angela has proposed for next year that includes curriculum, platform and delivery tools.
  - d. 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade math also had increases while 3<sup>rd</sup> grade held steady
- iii. Score cards on Beating the odds comparison- all green except for one- that has never happened in history of school- Ben notes in past that GCA has had to tell charter commission that numbers are due to student population- charter commission refused to accept that- now we can see their point of view. Angela - we do not believe in student population as an excuse for poor academic performance- all students can be productive and grow academically – GCA has never seen these types of increases.
- iv. Explanation of CCRPI numbers – noted increases from 17-18 in all grade bands. In ES target was 50.5 scored 52.4- 1<sup>st</sup> time ever- reached it let alone exceeded it. Thanks to not just staff but parents too- why we needed so many tests- changed curriculum, org charts, board policies now demanded attendance- Ben notes GCA is a school that cares and does due diligence and actually does the work- sad that it has taken so long to change.

- v. GCA exceeded target in every grade band- math 3-4 grades went up- 3-4 even – Two deficient areas 7<sup>th</sup> grade math and algebra 1 and this is because the previous administration promoted students that should have been retained- Charlie notes that it is fair to also say previous admin ignored board directives to hire more math teachers- purposely lied to board and purported that it had been done for several months providing written explanation to Board that was complete fabrication regarding delayed hiring- everyone should now give themselves a pat on the back- finally confident that school going in right direction.
- vi. EOC/HS went down 3%- Alexa wants it noted members of Board serve for free, volunteering time. Charlie has served 4 years and confident in momentum.
- vii. MS & HS had to do significant amount of work- MS & HS does not use K12 ELA curriculum as K12 books not appropriate for grade level- Alexa question- to be fair, was there any K12 course that was successful?- Angela- trying to be honest, must go by teacher feedback- teachers have had to fix things, reorder things, etc.- teachers had to come in over summer to re-write curriculum to meet GA standards- GCA added science Iexcel- social studies was Gallopade- teachers rewrote every test- not just about alignment- quizzes and exams not aligned with what was being taught-DOK levels (depth of knowledge) not just standard but how retained- depth of knowledge is needed.
- viii. Alexa question- is the measure for alignment only a test result- Angela- most good curriculum is about 85% aligned- FLVS is different from K12 curriculum- they send all courses- we are able to add things, etc.- there are also supplements- K12 does not give access to everything- Gallopade has dashboards built in- Charlie- so we also get additional flexibility- Angela- platform- engagement, how much student will like it are all factors.
- ix. Alexa question- how do you know students like it- Angela- looking at other counties that are using it(big 5)- also have supplements to make 100% aligned- K12 is probably only 50% aligned- now they claim to be 100% aligned but programs have not been properly vetted and tested- they may have just taken bits and pieces and mashed them together- we don't know what it looks like- did not consult with Edgate- also integrated with SIS system- means feeds grades into system(IC)- commission requires school systems to speak to state programs- current curriculum and platform situation requires staff to do triple work- remedied parents complaints of different passwords and sign-ons- non K12 employees cannot go into LMS- learning management system- grading will be better in real time- Canvas most lively system in education community- colleges use it, etc. – thank you board members for allowing our staff to do what they had to do to make this happen
- x. We are doing retesting in summer for grades 3,5,8 and EOC- children who failed have five weeks of intense remediation- Charlie- what percentage will need remediation- Angela- approx.1/4th

## **VII. Next Board of Directors Meeting**

- A. June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- B. Meeting tomorrow with Commission to go over test results, changes made this year
  - i. Performance review with Commission end of next month- must submit responses to them- excited about results
- C. Public comments- none
- D. Charlie's last board meeting
  - i. Kenneth- thank you for your service- have been valuable- thank you for providing direction to the Board- glad to still have you as ally- Charlie will keep in touch- principals staff etc.- you are the world right now for our children- cynical but optimistic- renewal with charter commission last Feb- they notice things changing and hope GCA will be model for future of virtual school- GCA changes will be needed- time on board has not always been pleasant for virtual education- will remain advocate for GCA-believe GCA will be national model for virtual education- Angela commends Charlie for saying what many board

members wanted to say-Charlie would call out when answers not given- very grateful- fought to separate us from K12- state of GA requires Board to have control of school not vendors-Charlie helped GCA to honor commitment to commission and state- Ben- thousands of students better off because of you-GCA is better off- wish you all the best

**VIII. ADJOURN**

A. Motion to adjourn by Ben Brumfield, seconded by Andrew Lewis, unanimously approved.