



GOODWIN UNIVERSITY MAGNET SCHOOL SYSTEM, INC.

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday, January 30, 2025 at 4:00 PM

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by Jackie Jacoby.

Members present: Jackie Jacoby, Megan Mehr, Todd Andrews, Eddie Meyer, Lee Housley, Merilee DeJohn, Mark Scheinberg

Staff present: Sal Menzo, David Daye, Dan Moleti, Sarah Burke, Jessica Gomez-Bedosky, JT Foster, Jenna Toner, Kimberlee Matthews, Meaghan Freeman, Kevin Skrodzki, Gina Juliano, Ali Rossi

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Consent Agenda

Minutes of October 24, 2024, were reviewed by the Board as a group. Lee Housley motioned to approve the minutes. Eddie Meyer seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Business Requiring Action

a. GUMS Resolution 25-01 – Corporate Resolution to Approve Goodwin University Magnet School System Policy

i. Presentation and approval of the following Goodwin University Magnet School System Policy: New Policy 4023-Artificial Intelligence

Megan Mehr motioned to approve Resolution 25-01. Todd Andrews seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Jessica Gomez-Bedosky explained that this policy is being instituted because there are biases and misinformation that can result when using Artificial Intelligence (AI). Most importantly, GUMSS wants scholars to learn how to think critically and use primary sources. While this is still the district's philosophy, this policy encourages reminders for the effective use of AI in order to keep up with

the modern technological landscape. The policy further proposes that the district may develop an AI Advisory Committee in the future.

b. GUMS Resolution 25-02 – Corporate Resolution to Approve the 2025-2026 Goodwin University Magnet School System Academic Calendar

i. Presentation and approval of the 2025-2026 Goodwin University Magnet School System Academic Calendar

Eddie Meyer motioned to approve Resolution 25-02. Megan Mehr seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Sal Menzo acknowledged the attendance of Union President, Gina Juliano, and Vice President, Ali Rossi, and thanked them for their work with Dan Moleti, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Talent, in collaborating on the Academic Calendar. He extended additional thanks to administrators and Central Office members, as this calendar was a collaborative effort.

Dan Moleti explained that the biggest shift in the 2025-2026 Academic Calendar is the number of instructional days, as the new technical high school requires 182 instructional days rather than 180. Staff have agreed that adding instructional time will benefit scholars' growth. Teachers and staff are still required to work 188 days. With respect to conference dates, the Calendar accommodates the differing schedules among the schools, being that CTRA operates on a quarter-based schedule and RMS runs on trimesters. Accordingly, fall conference dates at the schools have been adjusted to better support scholars and families; the spring conference dates at the schools align with one another. Lastly, Dan reminded the group that June 11th and June 12th are both early dismissal days, and he noted that the Calendar includes more information than in prior years, including bell times and delayed opening times, to help make that information more accessible to scholars, staff, families, and caregivers.

5. Superintendent and Staff Updates

Sal Menzo acknowledged that the landscape is changing very quickly, and the district needs to pivot quickly in response. There is potential for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to come to a school. Sal has spoken with the district's attorney and security team, and he has explained the appropriate processes and procedures for office managers and other employees who are the first points of entry to the schools. The district's Multilingual Learning Coordinator will reach out to families if/when it is appropriate. At this time, GUMSS will not be sending mass communication to families. The concern is that, at any level, and especially the middle level and high school level, it is not appropriate to assume that everyone is of the same political stance, and the district

does not want to unintentionally set up scholars for retaliation or invite disruption at a school unnecessarily. Sal added that many scholars and staff members have experienced trauma in their lives, and by calling attention to the situation, which some might find helpful, might actually cause greater anxiety among those individuals. The district is therefore pursuing a balanced approach. If the landscape changes, GUMSS is ready to pivot as well, and the Central Office team will be continuing to review the district's process.

Next, Sal announced that RiverTech is the new name of the new technical high school. The name change is a result of the "Nex" name being owned by a multimedia company, which was recently brought to the district's attention by the State Department of Education. RiverTech will be the new member of the "River" community, as the district has Connecticut River Academy, Riverside Magnet School, and now RiverTech at Goodwin University. Advertising is rolling out, and billboards on the highway are going up. RiverTech is the "tech'ed" out high school! Jessica Gomez-Bedosky will be reshooting her commercial for Telemundo, and Sal will be reshooting his commercial for Fox to account for the name change. Sal thanked David Daye for all of his work surrounding the name change and the marketing efforts.

Sal added that the lottery closes next Friday, February 7, and the district is in a crunch to increase enrollment in their programs. This has been a full effort on the part of administrators and the Central Office Team. There was a Regional School Choice Office (RSCO) fair this past Saturday, January 25, and the team is hopeful that the lottery first-round selections with GUMSS schools as students' first choice will continue to increase.

Lastly, Sal explained that the budget is a moving target given news of what will and will not be funded in the future. The budget is being planned conservatively. Now that GUMSS has been its own district for six months, opportunities have been identified to decrease staffing without impacting scholars. Grants are also being looked at differently, being that certain grants that GUMSS has received in the past will no longer be available. The budget will not be additive, in that the district will not be adding significant programming or resources, rather the district plans to maintain what it already has. Sal thanked Eddie Meyer and his team for offering support in the budget development. Simultaneously, Sal and his team are building a new series of budgets for the new technical high school, analyzing what the state will and will not fund and turning to grants, especially the MSAP grant, in response. Sal thanked Anja Pennell and Michelle Strawder for their help in that space. The team is doing work to ensure the district is not in a position where they did not identify or use the money available to them before it runs out.

a. School Facilities Survey

David Daye shared that on an annual basis, school districts are required to perform a uniform inspection and evaluation of indoor air quality within each school building using the Environmental Protection Agency Tools for Schools Checklist. In order for GUMSS to comply with state law for the indoor air quality inspection, the district conducted the required inspections and evaluations using the Checklist, which focused on building and grounds maintenance, waste management, ventilation, a walk-through inspection, integrated pest management, and food services. This project was required to be completed and posted on the GUMSS website by December 31, 2024, and David is pleased to share that working with the Goodwin University Facilities Team and food service consultants, they were able to meet the deadline. The Checklists for these items are located on the GUMSS website, including the district website as well as the schools' websites, as required. Additionally, GUMSS was required to submit an indoor air quality annual report form to affirm submission, and this document was also submitted by the appropriate time. GUMSS will work with the Goodwin University Facilities Team to ensure it is prepared for the five-year heat and ventilation air-conditioning report that is slated to start July 1, 2026. At that time, the district will be required to perform a uniform evaluation and inspection of the heat, ventilation, and air-conditioning systems within each school building. The requirement is that 20% of a district's schools have to be evaluated on an annual basis, and GUMSS benefits from this being a small district with four buildings. One building could be evaluated per year, beginning with RMS. It was required to share this information with the Board.

b. Update on Focus Groups with Scholars

Jessica Gomez-Bedosky provided an update on the focus groups she has been conducting at the recommendation from the last Board meeting. She has interviewed forty-five scholars from Pre-K through 12th grade, including two groups of 4th and 5th grade scholars at RMS, two groups of 8th grade scholars at CTRA Middle Level, and three groups of 9th and 10th grade scholars at CTRA High School. She worked with the Instructional Coach at RMS to identify culturally and intellectually diverse scholars, she pulled students from Unified Arts classes at CTRA Middle Level, and she utilized advisory classes at CTRA High School. A full presentation on the data she has collected will be created by the end of the school year to ensure that she can reach a diverse pool of scholars.

Jessica noted that she asks the same seven questions to groups of four to fifteen scholars, though sometimes has to rephrase the questions to the younger scholars. The questions were inspired by Dr. Marzano's sixteen indicators of successful schools. For example, the question of whether scholars have hope for their future is important because their answer drives their actions and what they feel capable of doing. The good news is that 97% of

scholars thus far reported that they do have hope for their futures. There is also a question about whether a scholar believes that *most* educators believe in them. This is important because when educators believe in their students, they are more likely to encourage them, provide quality assessments, and adhere to their professional responsibilities, as belief systems drive behavior. Currently, 98% of the scholars reported that they believe *most* educators believe in them. Next, with the question about feeling physically safe in school and in the classroom, Jessica found that scholars often do not feel safe when there are substitutes in the classroom. She is taking this as an opportunity to ask what GUMSS can do for its substitute teachers, from providing training on classroom management skills to better introducing the processes and protocols of the particular school. Jessica noted that it has been a true pleasure meeting with these scholars, especially since they understand that the reason she is conducting focus groups is so that GUMSS can be a better district for them.

In response to Jessica's comment on substitute teachers, Sal Menzo announced that GUMSS is going to remove its partnership with Kelly Services and manage its own hiring pool of substitutes. This will allow those individuals to better understand the GUMSS community, staff, and procedures. This decision is not based on financial savings, but rather quality for the sake of scholars.

Sal Menzo added that tomorrow, January 31, administrators will be conducting instructional rounds at RMS, and it is great to be able to see staff and scholars in action.

Jackie Jacoby added that the staff have been doing great work, and she appreciates the attendance and participation of both staff members and Board members at this meeting.

6. Reminder of Next Meetings

- a. April 24, 2025
- b. June 18, 2025

7. Adjournment

Eddie Meyer motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:47 p.m. Todd Andrews seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- Meeting minutes recorded by Lexi Kaider.