



Georgia Charter Educational Foundation
For Coweta Charter Academy
MEETING MINUTES FOR 11.18.25 BOARD MEETING
Location: 6675 E., GA-16, Senoia, GA 30276

I. CALL TO ORDER

Pursuant to public notice, the meeting commenced at 6:01pm with a Call to Order by GCEF Board Director, Jennifer Hughey. Roll call was taken, and quorum established.

Attendees:

Jennifer Hughey - Board Chair

Christine Criscillis - Board Director

Jacob Cole - Board Director

Trina Weaver - Director of Coweta and Compliance

Terence Washington - CFO

Pam Alfieri - Finance & Federal Programs

Felicia Greir - Human resource and Operations Administrator

Gina Relford - Special Education Instructional Support Programs

Hannah Anderson - Family Engagement and Volunteers Coordinator

Ashley Fields - Technology Administrator and Support Specialist

Michelle Stamps - Facility, Before/ After School, Closed Lunch

Maggie Peters - Fundraising, Community Partnerships and Events

II. AGENDA APPROVAL

A. The agenda is adjusted to include PTO payouts under section five: Financials

MOTION: Motion was made by Jacob Cole to amend the agenda to include the items above and seconded by Christine Criscillis. Motion passed unanimously.

III. GOVERNANCE

A. **10/28/25 Board Meeting Minutes**

B. **FY26 SCSC Board Training**

- i. It was confirmed that the training is scheduled for April, and all board members are set to attend.

IV. POLICY

A. Policy Updates

- i. The new dress code policy was discussed, which includes relaxed requirements for logoed items and shoes.

MOTION: Motion was made by Jacob Cole to approve the dress code policy and seconded by Christine Criscillis. Motion passed unanimously.

- ii. The updated grading policy was presented which simplifies kindergarten grading and allows more teacher autonomy in late work submission and retests.

MOTION: Motion was made by Jacob Cole to approve the updated grading policy policy and seconded by Christine Criscillis. Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Motion was made by Jacob Cole and seconded by Christine Criscillis to remove Angela Lassetter as a signer on the bank account and add Jennifer and Trina as new signers. Motion passed unanimously.

V. FINANCIAL

A. FY25 October Financials

- i. Terence Washington reported a net profit of approximately \$100,917 for October, significantly above the budgeted expectation.
- ii. Income was around \$723,907, about 4% higher than budgeted, with a surplus resulting mainly from increased local funding and conservative spending.
- iii. He explained the importance of maintaining high net profit in anticipation of a likely downward adjustment in state funding due to lower enrollment.
- iv. Cash on hand was about \$1.7 million, with a recommendation to amend the budget quickly once final allotment sheets are received.
- v. Emphasis was placed on controlling and reducing expenses, especially through reviewing contracts and recurring costs.

B. Grants Update

- i. Pam Alfieri confirmed the finalization of Title I grant funds, with Title II and Title IV funds also being utilized to support the budget.
- ii. A new \$47,000 security grant was reported, part of which is being used for security cameras; other items, like potential SRO costs, are still being considered.
- iii. An application for a \$250,000 PE grant was in process, and efforts to pursue additional grant opportunities were emphasized.

C. Federal Programs Update

- i. All federal reports had been completed and signed off without outstanding compliance issues.
- ii. An upcoming cross-functional monitoring review is scheduled for spring, covering curriculum, student assessments, and financial practices to ensure ongoing improvement.
- iii. Previous participation in the McKinney-Vento program was discussed, but the school did not qualify for funds this year due to enrollment and coded-student counts.

D. Fundraising Update

- i. Maggie Peters reported fundraising totals to date of \$42,548.96, noting successful events such as the book fair and a food drive.

- ii. Proceeds from events helped support student participation, especially for those in need.
- iii. The upcoming Winter Gift Market was mentioned as the next major fundraising event.
- iv. Discussion also included detailed accounting for events and a focus on net proceeds after expenses.

E. Bond Reporting Update

- i. It was reported that all required quarterly and annual bond reports had been submitted to investors and bondholders.
- ii. No major construction or deviations impacting the bond project fund were noted.
- iii. Updates on the ongoing gymnasium project were provided elsewhere in the meeting.

F. PTO Payouts

- i. The board discussed an incentive for teachers who had not taken time off, resulting in a \$250 bonus per teacher; currently 11 teachers qualified for a total payout of \$2,750.
- ii. The program is structured to encourage regular attendance and is paid out by semester.
- iii. There was also discussion around possibly revising the policy to make the incentive more flexible or prorated.

VI. OPERATIONS

A. Enrollment Update

- i. The school welcomed one new student and had 13 additional students in the process of enrolling.
- ii. Four students withdrew since the last board meeting; reasons included transportation difficulties, administrative turnover, and concerns about the gifted program.
- iii. New enrollment initiatives were discussed, such as updating volunteer training requirements, introducing a volunteer of the month program, and establishing a new PTO to encourage family involvement.

B. Staffing Update

- i. The school is seeking a gifted and ESOL teacher, either as one dual-role teacher or two part-time teachers.
- ii. There is also an open position for a part-time occupational therapist and a continual need for substitute teachers.
- iii. Efforts are underway to find permanent staff members and ensure stability for students.

C. Technology Update

- i. Ashley Fields provided a report noting continued use of Canvas for upper grades and Clever for K-5, with top platforms including A to Z and Prodigy.

- ii. There was a nationwide outage affecting some platforms, but services were restored the same day.
- iii. Technology staff handled 308 support tickets for the year, mostly minor issues such as sound or charging problems.
- iv. The school website was updated with staff photos and titles, the Veterans Day program was recorded and shared, and social media presence/analytics showed increased engagement, especially on Instagram and Facebook.
- v. Only 15 families had not linked their accounts to Canvas, showing strong overall adoption of technology tools.

VII. ACADEMIC

A. Cursive Handwriting Initiatives

- i. The school is working toward the John Hancock Award, which recognizes schools where 90% of students can write their name in cursive, with an additional level for writing the preamble.
- ii. Grades 4–8 are able to write their names and are progressing on the preamble; K–3 students are also advancing, with even first graders beginning some cursive instruction.
- iii. The art teachers and classroom teachers are integrating cursive practice to enhance student participation.

B. Testing Update

- i. The school recently administered the “Amira” screening, required by the state to assess for dyslexia.
- ii. This was the first time using Amira, as state requirements had changed; results did not raise notable concerns.
- iii. The school will no longer use “Write Score” or other formalized writing assessments – writing assessment responsibilities are shifting to individual teachers.
- iv. There will be increased teacher autonomy regarding assessments, particularly from the second semester onward.

C. School Calendar

- i. The number of professional development (PD) days was reviewed, with a comparison to other districts.
- ii. The school currently has more PD days than typical; changes were proposed to remove required PD on certain early release days and at the end of the year.
- iii. For the remainder of this year, two remaining early release days (Feb. 13 and Apr. 3) will not include mandatory PD, and several end-of-year PD days may be changed to "flex" days.
- iv. For next year, pre-planning days are under review to align more closely with regional norms.

MOTION: Motion was made by Jacob Cole and seconded by Christine Criscillis to amend the school calendar. Specifically, changing May 27 and 28, 2026, to flex professional development (PD) days and removing May 29, 2026, as a PD day. Motion passed unanimously.

D. Classroom Highlights

- i. Technology use is a key part of the school's charter, but there is also strong emphasis on hands-on, active learning.
- ii. Recent curriculum updates include improved resources for fifth grade and flexible lesson plan deadlines for teachers.
- iii. The middle school band, orchestra, and chorus gave a well-received Veterans Day performance, and students participated in Red Ribbon Week with school-wide activities and contests.
- iv. Special training in safety management ("Mindset" training) was provided to special education staff.
- v. Teachers are encouraged to highlight classroom achievements with photos and updates.

VIII. FACILITIES

A. Building Maintenance Update

- i. There is an ongoing issue with a leak in the teachers' lounge; the problem had been repaired before, but the roofing company is returning to fix the recurring leak at no additional cost.
- ii. The elevator inspection initially failed because the service technician did not leave the required tag. The technician is scheduled to return to place the tag, and the elevator remains safe and operational in the meantime.

B. HVAC Update

- i. With the change in seasons, some classrooms were running too hot or too cold.
- ii. Maintenance is scheduled to return to adjust the dampers to regulate classroom temperatures.
- iii. If certain rooms remain uncomfortably hot or cold and cannot be fixed right away, teachers may be offered the option to move rooms.

C. Personal Items

- i. Teachers are not required to take home all of their personal items at the end of the school year.
- ii. This change is intended to reduce the burden on teachers, as in previous years all items had to be cleared from classrooms.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Comments:

- i. Concerns were expressed about the high percentage of the budget allocated to administration payroll, lack of school leadership, and the composition and credentials of the administration team.

- ii. There was a strong call for hiring a principal or assistant principal, emphasizing the need for stable, credentialed school leadership to improve staff and student retention.
- iii. Parents offered positive feedback about recent improvements in school climate and leadership, expressing gratitude to teachers and staff for their dedication and hard work.
- iv. Several attendees asked how parents could better support the school – suggestions included volunteering, increasing positive engagement on social media, and promoting the school within the community.
- v. Questions were raised about restoring parent volunteer requirements and improving communication channels for volunteer opportunities. Suggestions were made to centralize volunteer sign-ups and enhance outreach.
- vi. Attendees discussed potential technology solutions (like Remind or Class Dojo) to strengthen parent-school communication.
- vii. A former leader offered to return in an interim or permanent leadership role, highlighting their knowledge of the school and commitment to helping rebuild.
- viii. Comments emphasized support for the new PTO and encouraged more parent involvement in both school and extracurricular events.

B. The board responded to public comments by:

- i. Acknowledging concerns about administration size, payroll, and the need for credentialed leadership, and confirming that leadership hiring would be done carefully, with parent participation in the selection process and a timeline for principal recruitment starting next school year.
- ii. Thanking staff and parents for their dedication and support, and affirming appreciation for feedback on both challenges and improvements.
- iii. Emphasizing the board's commitment to transparency, responsible financial management, and community collaboration.
- iv. Encouraging parents to get more involved in volunteering, positive social media engagement, and the PTO.
- v. Agreeing to review and potentially revise policies around parent communication, volunteer coordination, and event participation.
- vi. Listening to suggestions for improved communication technology and processes, with board members and staff confirming they are open to new tools and strategies.
- vii. Directly addressing individual comments and extending invitations for ongoing dialogue, showing a willingness to work closely with all stakeholders to improve the school's climate and outcomes.

X. NEXT BOARD MEETING Date/Time Confirmation (December 16th, 2025 - 6 pm)

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Motion was made by Jacob Cole and seconded by Christine Criscillis to adjourn the board meeting at 7:42 PM on Tuesday, November 18, 2025. Motion passed unanimously.

Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, December 16, 2025