

Gateway Lab School

Citizen's Budget Oversight Meeting Minutes

Special Meeting



DATE: May 19, 2015, 5:30 pm

LOCATION: 2501 Centerville Road, Wilmington DE [Main Office]

I. Come to Order and Attendance:

5:40 pm

In Attendance: Nathan Schwartz, Linda Smith, Dorcell Spence (call in), Pam Draper
Absent: Catherine Dolan (on leave) and Ray Pendley

New Business

II. Review of April Budget Highlights and financial reports. (D. Spence)

- A. Dorcell Spence reviewed the April 30th Budget Highlights (see attached). The Budget Highlights assumes that all bills are paid to date. [7](#)
- B. The OEC's reflect a bit of a salary savings.
- C. The contingency items under review include Legal expenses. An invoice of \$7,000 to be paid in May will increase the \$10K overage to \$17K. Ms. Draper was not aware of any additional legal billing to date. Ellen Cooper, the school attorney is attending tonight's board meeting to present recommended policies.
- D. Ms. Spence expects that the contingency will cover any additional overages through the end of the fiscal year.
- E. Additional contingencies include the Summer Pay contingency and the Strategic Plan contingency.
- F. There were no specific questions on the Account Code report. Ms. Smith inquired as to whether there had been any change to the areas that were over budget, and Ms. Draper confirmed that there were no changes.
- G. The web report reflects the same percentage as the account code report since there were no encumbrances.
- H. Ms. Spence asked Ms. Smith if there any legislation being considered with regard to the increase in special education lawsuits. Ms. Smith had not heard of any legislation in the works.
- I. Ms. Smith commented that the Special Ed department of DOE has increased

funding for IEP facilitation and mediation at the University of Delaware. The department is aware that the main law firm bringing lawsuits is expanding their offices to Sussex County.

- J. Ms. Draper noted that it appears that by the time lawyers become involved, they are not interested in mediation, rather they are looking for a settlement.
- K. A discussion ensued about consulting with another charter school that has been able to minimize legal challenges. Mr. Schwartz recommended setting up a quarterly meeting with the school. The committee discussed whether the Delaware Charter School Network (DCSN) had taken up the increase in litigation with the legislature. Mr. Schwartz felt that schools and parents had more direct influence.
- L. Ms. Smith shared some of the challenges that schools are facing, including the pressure to settle to avoid the potential expense of a due process hearing.

III. Pupil Accounting Update - (P. Draper)

- A. Ms. Draper shared that current enrollment for the May 1st count was 199. Ms. Spence pulled the latest numbers prior to the meeting which reflect 193. Ms. Draper commented that letters of intent to return had been sent home to parents and so those numbers are being adjusted weekly. In past year's the school has continued to enroll a good deal of students over the summer. The goal is to reach the maximum enrollment. The 2015-2016 budget is being built on an enrollment of 208 students.
- B. Ms. Spence noted that there were only seven 3rd graders currently enrolled. Ms. Draper said that the Administrative Assistant was still working through the waiting list and with Ms. Dolan on leave, that student interviews were running behind.
- C. Marketing will continue over the summer. There are a number of ideas being discussed to address the low third grade enrollment.
- D. Ms. Spence asked if the current level of staffing would stay the same with any changes made to third grade. Ms. Draper confirmed that there were no plans to reduce teaching staff but the number of paras might be adjusted depending on the need.
- E. Ms. Draper confirmed that any resigning staff would be paid their remaining salaries over the summer out of the FY2016 budget.
- F. Ms. Draper confirmed that the school was over the 80% enrollment requirement.
- G. Ms. Spence shared that based on her conversation with the Charter School Office, our approved enrollment is 226. Ms. Draper commented that the 226 is GLS' 105% enrollment number. The school initially filed a modification to increase enrollment for

the upcoming school year, however the decision was made not to move forward. Ms. Draper will check to see if the DOE Charter School Office had sent a letter with the new total.

H. Action Item: Ms. Smith will check to see what number is DOE considering our 100 percent of enrollment.

IV. Staffing Update - (P.Draper)

- A. Ms. Draper shared that there are currently 8 positions to be filled. The Principal,, Stacy Solomon has taken another position. She will remain at the the school though mid June.
- B. The Delaware Academy of School Leadership (DASL) is assisting the school in screening applicants and interviewing them with a group of teachers, parents and administrators. Ms. Draper shared the vacancies with the group, including contracts that are not being renewed, and special circumstances around an employee who routinely did not take lunch.
- C. Appointment of Interim Treasurer - Ms. Draper discussed that the Board would be voting on her assuming the role of Interim Business Administrator while Ms. Dolan is on leave. Mr. Schwartz has agreed to become the school's Interim Treasurer. Ms. Draper will continue to attend Board meetings as a non-voting member.
- D. A letter has gone out to parents and students explaining the administrative changes and that Ms. Dolan is expected to return at the beginning of the upcoming school year. Ms. Draper and Board President, Joyce Henderson met with teachers and staff three weeks ago to bring them up to date on the changes.
- E. Ms. Smith inquired about the teachers and staff that not returning, and Ms. Draper discussed the various reasons for each person's departure.
- F. During the meeting Ms. Spence confirmed that the school's 100% enrollment number is 216.

V. Preliminary Budget Presented - For Approval (P. Draper)

- A. Ms. Draper inquired whether there were any questions about the preliminary budget that has not changed since it was presented at the April meeting.
- B. A motion was made by Ms. Draper to approve that the preliminary budget be presented to the Board for approval. Mr. Schwartz seconded, and CBOC approved the recommendation for the full board to approve the budget.
- C. Ms. Spence asked Ms. Smith if she had heard anything about the upcoming budget bill and whether she had heard anything that would increase the budget or a salary

increase for teachers. Ms. Smith said that she was not aware of any decision but would follow up to let the committee know if there was any news.

V. Strategic Plan Update - (P.Draper)

- A. There is nothing new to report since the April meeting. The Board is scheduled to meet on July 11th with the team from DASL. They are estimating that the Board will need two additional meetings to complete the strategic plan.
- B. Ms. Spence asked if a timeline will be included with the strategic plan. Mrs. Draper said that time lines would be added to each phase. The team will meet with Ms. Spence to tag the funding to each phase of the plan.
- C. Ms. Spence noted that the \$195K contingency was currently being used to fund the preliminary budget.

VI. Discussion of CBOC Meeting Dates for 2015-2016

- A. Mr. Schwartz discussed scheduling training with Ms. Spence and Ms. Draper to go over school finance and his duties as Interim Treasurer. **Action Item: Mr. Schwartz, Ms. Spence and Ms. Draper will meet on June 9th at 8am to review the monthly financials and the responsibilities of the Treasurer.**

B. The upcoming CBOC dates will be:

- July 21, 2015
- October 20, 2015
- January 19, 2016
- April 19, 2016

C. In addition there will be another special meeting between April and July 2016.

D. Ms. Spence will put together her presentation on the funding timeline for the training with Mr. Schwartz.

V. Other News

- A. The Board will vote tonight on the Operation and Sustainability Committee's recommendations from the teacher Incentive Pay Nominations received. Four staff members were selected from the nominations to receive a total of \$4,500.00 in incentive pay. The payouts range from \$100 to \$3,250.00.

B. Ms. Spence inquired as to whether Mr. Schwartz understood the process of determining incentive pay. He shared that he was a part of the selection process, which involved using a rubric to determine the value of the contribution made by each teacher nominated.

C. Ms. Draper shared a copy of the rubric used to determine Incentive pay with the members of the CBOC. Most of the nominations received were self-nominations.

Meeting Adjourned:

6:33 pm

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Gateway Lab Budget Highlights:
For the Month Ending April 30, 2015

- 83.3% of the year is complete, while the Expenditure Detail Report reflects 76.3% of the budget for all funding sources has been expended. The Web Report reflects 76.3% of the budget for all funding sources has been obligated and expended.
- 21 of 26 payrolls have been expended for a ratio of 80.8%
 - State and Local Payrolls—based upon the time period completed 80.0% and 78.0% of salary and OEC have been expended.
- Expenditure Areas under review based upon current and future activity:
 - Legal (55020)—potential for new litigation
 - Building Maintenance (55507)
 - Building/Grounds/Repair (55500)
 - Sanitary Services (55692)
- Contingencies
 - 2% Contingency \$ 85,147.47
 - 55020 Legal \$10,165.00
 - 55000 Auditors 650.00
 - 55507 Building Maintenance 1,153.52
 - 57002 Computer Tech Plan 2,058.52
 - TOTAL \$14,027.04 – 16.5%
- External Contingencies
 - Summer Pay \$394,395.00
 - Strategic Plan 195,664.00
 - Total \$590,059.00