



Board Meeting Minutes

April 27, 2020 - 6:00pm

The mission of Grand Peak Academy is to develop students of great character, who are culturally aware, accepting of diversity, appreciators of history, arts, mathematics, and sciences, and are prepared to meet the challenges of the world today. We value parental partnership through direct involvement in classroom and school activities and community stewardship through our support of local charities and hosting of community events.

The Board shall use the Mission and the Plan for Success (Academic Success, Economic Sustainability and Character Growth) as the filter for all decision making.

1. **Call to Order** (6:00pm) –
2. **Roll Call** (6:00pm) – Chris Dempsey (President), Jen Reishus (Treasurer) Brandon Henry (Communications), Steven Teague (Secretary), Mike Philipich (Vice President) (arrived at 6:03pm) Scott Hunter (Middle School Principal), Valerie O’Brien (Business Manager)
3. **Approval of April 27, 2020 Board Agenda** (6:01pm) – Brandon Henry motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Jen Reishus seconded the motion. Brandon would like to add two topics to the agenda, graduation for 8th graders and communication strategy idea from the marketing meeting. Brandon motioned to approve the agenda as amended to add items E & F. Jen seconded. Motion passes 4-0
4. **Approval of March 30, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes** (6:02pm) – Brandon Henry motioned to approve the board meeting minutes as presented, Jen Reishus seconded the motion. No discussion was needed. Motion passes 4-0
5. **Comments from the public** (6:03pm) - None
6. **Board Dashboard/Principals Report** (6:04pm) – Serena recapped that we started e-learning on the 16th of March. We are learning this week more from D49 about contingency plans for the end of the year and fall. We are planning for yearend activities including 8th grade virtual graduation. There is a virtual kindergarten roundup video that was finished today and will be sent out. Teachers are working on videos to put on the website to give it a personal touch. Teachers are targeting having their videos done by the end of the week. Nicole Parker is joining us as Dean of Students in July. The interview team has completed the process and have hires some really great new teachers for 4/5, Spanish. We hired three middle school teachers for science, humanities and math. The teacher for 4/5 will end up being placed once we have a better idea of enrollment in this grades. We have started working on curriculum inventory and ordering. Chris asked about the plan to have people in the building to get items, Serena said her and Scott will organize it once D49 has given guidance in that regard. Our teachers have been so amazing with PD and webinars through this process. Teachers are sharing ideas and things they are doing. Eureka Math is in the works for an online PD through the fall to get our teachers up to speed on math. All the team leads have been given the teacher editions to hand out and look at through the summer. There are a number of webinars they can look at through the summer to become familiar as well. We picked a book for a teacher book study in the fall called the Art and Science of Teaching. Scott highlighted that we are planning for cuts to funding for next fall as well as navigating how much money may be left in MLO for this year. Enrollment wise, our waitlist is not as large as we typically see at this time of year. Our 6th grade is on the larger side; however, our kindergarten is much smaller than normal. Brandon said possibly we may never see the waitlist size again like we used to see with the number of schools that have opened recently in the area. Mike noted that with military moves on hold that could be impacting

our waitlist as well. Mike noted that he would like to have the meeting with Melissa Andres rescheduled to discuss student count. Serena is optimistic that the kindergarten will grow before the start of the year.

7. **Treasurer/Business Manager Report on Trend (6:20pm)** – Valerie commented that March was as expected with no surprise expenses. WE are still looking to have a good end to the year financially. However, it has become evident that funding will be negatively impacted for next school year. At this point there is no clear indication exactly how much funding will be reduced. Legislators are scheduled to meet next week and are hoping to have a budget out by early June so we will have a better idea of the funding picture. They are trying to hold funding through June 30th at this point but that is not guaranteed. CDE has suggested planning for a 0-10% cut to funding, D49 has suggested a possible cut by 2-4% and the League has suggested contingency planning for flat funding, as well as a loss of 3%, 6% and 10%, which is the approach Valerie has taken. At this point we are committed to paying all staff through the end of this school year as originally budgeted. Contracts are finished and will go out this week. Serena noted that we are keeping paras engaged by having them put packets together and engaging with families. They are on google meet with teachers. We are being as creative as we can with giving them things to do. They continue to do interventions with Marilyn Shapiro.
8. **Marketing Update (6:30pm)** – Brandon commented that since the lockdown we halted all FB ads. We did continue to run radio ads through the end of this month. A couple of people he is connected with in radio have said radio listening is up right now. We also have sponsored shows such as weather or traffic so our name is continuing to still be mentioned. Digital marketing did stop, Brandon stated that pretty much all of his clients stopped that with the exception of restaurants advertising for pick up/carry out. We have a print ad in the education guide. That will be produced in the middle of May. We are pricing out some billboard advertisements, looking at targeting the Woodmen corridor area. Possibly producing political type yard signs for families “proud GPA family”. Brandon has a call this week concerning specific restrictions and will discuss with the marketing committee. Now that we have all the photos and videos of teachers, we are going to start incorporating more of those to show the culture of GPA. Brandon noted that all the teachers seem more comfortable with doing videos now that they have been on elearning for a little while. We are beginning to push the kindergarten round up video on social media. Chris said a D49 ad about classical education is out there and staff has said they would be at a loss to explain how we are still considered classical education. Brandon said that is a broader discussion for the marketing team over the summer about what is our identity now. Are we classical, how? What are we if we are not? If the teachers don’t know it than it would be hard for anybody to sell it. Important to make sure our message is right.
9. **Discussion Items**
 - a. **Contingency Plan for 20-21 SY (6:38pm)** – Scott said the discussion is really about scenario planning. Possible scenarios include: what if we go back full time, what if the county/state say its okay to go back but we have a number of families not comfortable with that, choose to take their kids out but want to still be affiliate with a hybrid e-learning. What if there are spikes in cases with in and out of e-learning. How do we adapt our elearning so that it works best for kids and families? Chris commented that we have a strong district and state to follow so it’s nice that we are not doing this alone. We just need to be prepared to be flexible. Brandon commented that on a technology perspective, we have the means for the teachers to be able to do a white board and give instruction through the day for students. Secondly, looking at the survey and talking with parents and thinking about what do parents think about covid and maybe they can homeschool vs sending students back. Brandon noted that this may have opened peoples eyes that they could explore homeschool instead, and that may impact our enrollment. Mike said we need a

standardized process across all the classrooms to make this easier for teachers and parents. It is all over the place with different teachers and it makes it difficult for those with multiple children. We need to make sure these tools are trained on and implemented by all the staff to insure standard technology across the board. Teachers have done a great job, but now that we know better and know what works we need to streamline our e-learning. Five weeks in, do not implement a new tool. It's a lot to go through all these different websites and tools. Its overwhelming for parents with multiple kids trying to keep it all straight. Not just front end with planning, but learn to give constructive feedback in a remote learning environment. What was once an easy task is a bit more mundane when attempted from distance learning. We just need to be consistent. It can be frustrating to the children otherwise. Mike asked how much direction was given to teachers on how much interaction was expected with the students. Serena said they have office hours in the afternoons and setting up google meets for students to pop in and visit with them. Some kids are doing small group interventions. It really depends on the child, grade level and some parent's requests for extra help. Mike asked if there has been any guidance on actual instruction. Some teachers get on and record a 15 min video to walk through a science lesson to discuss the topic, others it seems give out busy work with no actual lesson or instruction from the teacher to supplement the work. Maybe the teachers need some guidance on how to tie in the work and how much interaction should be happening. Serena noted that the iConnect Zone never guided us to do every lesson as a virtual lesson or to even do it every day, but to maybe do them a couple times a week and provide help as needed. Scott noted that in middle school they are doing 2 days a week for office hour instruction, each subject is staggered. A number of the teachers are creating videos, there are some who are not. For instance, one teacher is struggling because she has 3 younger children to take care of constantly and cannot put in an 8 hour day of work. Mike wondered if there is any effort by the team leads to work together to tackle this jointly to align and perhaps cut down on some of the extra work that each teacher is doing, by sharing the lessons across the grade level. Scott agreed there is probably a good opportunity to leverage the teams and possibly create more content in a more efficient way. That is a great plan going forward, we do not want to just glide out of this year, we need to be on the right trajectory going into the fall if we have to continue elearning in some way. Serena pointed out that we do have differentiation in math right now but that will end with Eureka math in the fall. Chris commented that this was a great discussion that we will grow on as we move towards the new school year.

- b. PreK Plan for 20-21 SY (6:58pm)** – Michele noted that we have not charged tuition for April and May, however Prek did send out packets twice to carry them through the end of the year as well as videos to teach the lesson 4 times a week plus zoom meetings twice a week. The parents are very happy with it. Her main concern is next year and where they are financially. Michele is concerned about the fall with no tuition coming in. She noted that the license is actually a daycare license, not preschool. With a daycare license you can have 8 hours of care, however a preschool license only allows for 4 hours per day. Since we are technically a daycare facility, we can be considered mission essential and can be opened on a case by case basis. This may allow us to open the preschool in August regardless if the main school is allowed to open. However, in order to accomplish this, the Board would need approval from D49, and then approval from the state. Chris will draft something by Wednesday, to send to Eric hopefully by Friday. He is hoping to be able to send it over to Andy by early next week to start this discussion. Chris commented that we will make sure the preschool is protected for the foreseeable future. The

preschool is financially stable for right now but if this continues beyond June they will not be financially viable unless there is a way to find funding or open the preschool.

- c. **Phase II Construction Update (7:19pm)** – Chris wanted to let everybody know that we decide to halt further construction of phase 2 indefinitely. We did not get bond financing because it is not a stable market right now. All of the architect fees will need to come out of our budget, so Chris is looking into taking that from the original construction budget that is left over. It was not prudent to continue with the current state of the economy. Mike will meet with D49 to building a business proposal to get our bonds for the future addition. Brandon commented that it is smart considering we do not know what the funding looks like or the ramifications of what this looks like with the markets or families for that matter. Next summer is the first buy out option to refinance bonds. It makes more sense to refinance and ask for phase 2 money at that point.
 - d. **Gymnasium Update (7:23pm)** – We still have a healthy amount of phase one money left over, so we are planning to add locker rooms to the gym. There will be no plumbing, strictly a locker room to change clothes and have teams meet. We can only use that money for upgrades to the facility. We will move forward with adding 4 more hoops as well. Serena mentioned possibly adding more small group spaces with shelving etc. We need to find an AD that is capable of handling the tasks related to the job. We are looking at not having an athletic program on a league for 20-21 but plan to for 2021-2022.
 - e. **Graduation (7:31pm)** – Brandon said if we need to do a virtual graduation for 8th grade, kindergarten and preschool, we have the technology to handle it. We have options and it's really important that these kids get to celebrate and remember their time at GPA. Brandon is on board to help in any way to make that happen, even if it needs to wait till June or early July. We have lots of options to make it similar to how the Academy handled the graduation. Serena said there is a meeting tomorrow concerning these ideas. Mike wondered if it would be worth sending a survey to 8th grade families to see if they would want to be involved. Chris said it's worth it for us to do it even if it's just 3 families that join in. We could do Prek in the morning, Kinder in the afternoon and then 8th grade after that. Scott commented that no district schools are planning to hold graduations and he does not want to lead the pack on it if other schools are not also holding them. Serena commented that D49 did send out a survey for ideas on graduation. Marcia commented that D49 is planning to hold a ceremony, if it's in June it will be held with no spectators, if its later in July its possible spectators can attend depending on the situation of covid at that point. Scott commented that the last day of school in the building he did not feel that kids were taking the coronavirus seriously; however, he does acknowledge that a lot has changed since that time. He is concerned that it will be hard to keep kids social distancing.
 - f. **Communication Strategy (7:41pm)** – Brandon would like to standardize the tools we use to communicate. For instance, a standard email like news@GPA where all our newsletters are sent from rather than just an email from Chelsea's email. We are not being clear how we want parents to engage. Brandon would like to develop a plan to make that more clear. He feels that folks do not necessarily know how to use the website. He would like to send a tutorial of sorts to explain to families how we want to communicate.
10. **Board Member Communication (7:45pm)** – Mike commented that PTO is going to do an electronic gift for the staff and Emily will be reaching out for the most updated email listing. Mike also asked about bylaws and parent representative requirements. Since Mike is a board appointed member he was wondering when his final day would need to be once his kids are pulled from the school. Brandon noted that he could serve as a community member. Mike will continue to serve until he

moves with his PCS. Mike said he is working on recruiting for new board members.

11. **Other Business** (7:48pm) – Chris commented to the staff that were attending the meeting to please pass on to all the staff that the board understands and are appreciative. The board is doing everything we can to continue to make this a smooth transition and to hopefully not negatively affect anybody. Please bring up anything you need so we can work to address it. Mike commented this might be a good opportunity to put out a board newsletter to update staff and keep that connection up. Chris will draft something and send it Brandon this week to communicate. Brandon commented that it might be something to think about as a cute funny thing next year to do an “I survived e-learning in 2020” marketing campaign.
12. **Adjournment** (7:50pm)