



Board Meeting Minutes

August 16, 2021 – 6:30pm

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** (6:30pm) –
2. **Pledge of Allegiance** – (6:30pm) -
3. **Mission Statement** – (6:30pm) – Chris Dempsey read the mission statement
4. **Roll Call** (6:31pm) – Chris Dempsey (President), Brandon Henry (Vice President), Jen Reishus (Treasurer), Anthony Hall (Board Member), Nicole Parker (Principal), Caitlin Casai (Assistant Principal), Amanda Ralston (Dean of Students), Valerie O'Brien (Business Manager) and Marcia Billingsley (Registrar)
5. **Approval of August 16, 2021 Board Agenda** (6:31pm) – Brandon motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Anthony seconded the motion. Add E. Board Meeting Dates, 12C action item for E. Board Meeting Dates. Brandon motioned to approve the amended board agenda as presented. Anthony seconded the motion. Motion passes 4-0.
6. **Approval of May 17, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes** (6:32pm) – Brandon motioned to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Anthony seconded the motion. Motion passes 4-0.
7. **Public Comments** (6:33pm) - None
8. **PTO Update** (6:33pm) – Alicia Mertz updated that the concrete for the outdoor classroom was poured last week. Phase 2 will be adding the structure by the end of 2021. We have an idea to add heat to the structure. The silent auction for the parking spot is currently in process and we have raised almost \$700. First official PTO meeting will be Wednesday night at 5:30pm; we will have pizza for the families. The 27th will be the Luau dance in the gym for families. Last but not least, Birdcall night will be September 2nd.
9. **Board Dashboard | Principals Report** (6:37pm) – Nicole shared that we started the year off with Back to School week for teachers with catered breakfast from Cracker Barrel. It was nice to welcome everyone back with some fun. The admin team spent time this summer focusing on leadership and communication styles, which was shared with staff during the training. We created binders for the staff loaded with information, including schedules, forms and other information. The staff has communicated how useful and effective this has been for them. We tried to be intentional about the staff time during that first week back. Back to School night was an excellent turnout with families. The curriculum committee has not officially met yet, but unofficially all of the work that was done last year has already been rolled out. The first staff meeting is this Thursday and we will have an official update at that time. Met with the SAC committee last week and they approved our UIP. The first part of the process is the SAC approval, followed by Board approval and then District approval. First week of school with students was successful. First week was half days for kindergarteners to get to know them better and place them in classrooms accordingly based on how they responded to different teachers/environments. We added a 4th kindergarten class as of today. This allowed us to accept more waitlist students as well as siblings.

Grades 1-8 joined us on Tuesday of that week with full days. Focused on adding structure in the lunchroom and playground. As of Friday, we hired a Spanish teacher, which will start on August 30th. She will spend a few days with the current sub to transition smoothly. We have hired a parent to help with lunch/recess a couple hours a day. We are still hiring for the kindergarten para position and then will be full staffed. Finally, CMAS results came in. As you can imagine, it is not pretty but that is reflected across the state. The participation was so low that it is hard to pull any information from it. Our participation rates are even lower than the district and the state. This year that was accepted due to COVID, normally that is frowned upon. We will be looking at the data but not making any massive plans. Our focus and plans will be driven by the testing we completed last week. Amanda discussed PBIS, which was rolled out at the end of last year. A committee was created to provide valuable feedback on the system. Added incentives and focused on incentives that middle school will be excited about as well. Built a matrix that will be used school wide. Completed a school wide tour sharing the common language and expectations. Behavior support has been streamlined, provided documentation ideas for teachers so that they feel supported with higher-level behaviors. Caitlin discussed the school wide grading policy. Coming into the school year it appeared there was no grading expectation so admin spent a lot of time looking at the WHY and what we want reflected in the grading system. Presented the plan to staff, spent quite a bit of time on expectations for teachers. We included the expectations for teachers, students and parents in the family handbook.

10. **Treasurer | Business Manager Trend Report (7:01pm)** – Valerie shared that the trend was prepared based on enrollment of 595, however that number is changing daily. At that number we are looking at a loss of about \$230K after a few reductions have already been made by cutting a contract with a consultant and not hiring an either teacher in middle school. The district has seen enrollment down by about 500 and is expecting a \$4 mil shortfall, so our school is not the only school dealing with lower than expected enrollment. The number could continue to fluctuate until count day. We are pursuing a refinance of the building as well, which could potentially save \$200k annually and will cover most of the shortfall. We are still in the early stages and do not have the exact figures, but should have them by count day.

11. **Discussion Items**

- a. **Board Member Resignation (7:10pm)** – Erika Craig resigned on May 26th so that she could become an employee of the school. All three of her children are at the school now so she has decided to take a position at the school as a para professional.
- b. **UIP (7:11pm)** – Unified Improvement Plan must be turned in to the District and State. It is public information that can be checked at any time. This covers the school/staff goals and priorities. One of the goals is to refine our MTSS process, which has not existed prior at GPA. What are we doing to help our students both academically and behaviorally, Tier one. When students begin to need extra support, what are we doing beyond that in Tier two. Layer foundational piece for all students. Most of the time this involves math or reading intervention. PBIS is a school wide program that is a Tier One support. If extra accommodations are implemented and they are still struggling (smallest portion of students), the most support is provided in Tier Three. If none of these are working, this is when a child is referred to special education for extra testing to determine if there are learning concerns. This is a process that has not been in place in the past, however it is not being rolled out in our weekly PLC meetings that happen during plan time with teachers. There are formal plans that can be written and shared with parents. This data is tracked accordingly. The trend for our academic achievement and growth over the past 3 years was decreasing. It was clear we need to focus in the ELA and Math achievement and growth. During PLCs math is a topic one week, ELA is

the next week. We have added a math interventionist and para this year, in addition to the reading interventionist and para. Accountability is happening through consistent walk thrus to hold teachers accountable. The admin team wants to be in classrooms, supporting and coaching the staff to reach these goals. The curriculum committee is another root cause to make sure that teachers are aligning the curriculum with Colorado State Standards. We have learned that CKLA does not hit all the standards, therefore we are supplementing the curriculum to make sure all standards are being covered. CMAS testing is based on the standards, therefore if we do not fully teach these standards there will continue to be a gap. We are not focusing all of our energy to teach to the test but to make sure the standards are covered. We are teaching core knowledge and state standards. We are making sure that professional development aligns with all of our goals. Teacher evaluations are being re-implemented. We are using the Colorado system called Randa. This will be rolled out at the next staff meeting so that staff can create goals in the process.

- c. **Marketing Lead Change** (7:24pm) – Anthony will take over the marketing functions so that Brandon can focus on his Vice President role. Anthony has already started crunching the data and coming up with plans. This will better utilize Anthony’s skills. We did get permission from the HOA to add a sign on Black Forest Rd, however the county has denied it. Brandon is going to continue working avenues to see if he can get this approved, to try to drive traffic to the school.
- d. **Open Board Seat(s)** (7:28pm) – We have an open board appointed seat. We will send out a communication tomorrow letting families know, to look for interest. Jen commented that her term will be finished in April as well. We are looking for a treasurer to take over her spot in the future.
- e. **Board Meeting Schedule** (7:30pm) – The planned board meetings will be held on: Aug 16, Sept 20, Oct 11, Nov 15, Dec 13, Jan 24, Feb 28, Mar 21, April 18, May 16. If any changes are needed this will be communicated as needed.

12. Action Items

- a. **Board Member resignation acceptance** (7:33pm) – Brandon motioned to accept the board resignation of Erika Craig. Jen seconded the motion. Motion passes 4-0.
- b. **UIP** (7:34pm) – Brandon motioned to approve the UIP as presented. Jen seconded the motion. Motion passes 4-0.
- c. **Board Meeting Schedule** (7:36pm) – Brandon motioned to approve the meeting dates as presented, understanding that the dates may need to be adjusted in the future. Jen seconded the motion. Motion passes 4-0.

13. **Other Business** (7:38pm) – Member of the audience asked if the school had exhausted all options at reducing the budget before pursuing a refinance of the building. Chris and Valerie discussed the fact that the refinance came up in connection with the plan to build an addition onto the building and was independent of the low enrollment. Once we realized there is a potential cost savings of approx. \$200k per year with a refinance the school decided to pursue that option to help the finances going forward. The addition has been put on hold indefinitely at this point due to the low enrollment. Valerie shared that in a school the majority of expenses are staffing and curriculum, which is purchased over the summer. At this point in the year we are limited with areas we can reduce once curriculum has been purchased. Other options are reducing staff or cutting salaries, both of which we want to avoid at all costs. Refinancing the building will put us into a more favorable position for years to come so that we can handle a smaller enrollment if needed.

14. **Adjournment** (7:43pm) – None