

11-19 GCCS Board Meeting

Meeting Information

Date: 2025-11-19 19:23:58

Location: Virtual

Participants: Luke Copley, Martha Zornow, Nick Pozek, Joe Sparr, Kristan Norgrove

Meeting Notes

Minutes

- Agreement to amend current minutes per Kristen and Martha's comments and place approval on the next agenda.

Status of Prior Action Items and Follow-Ups

- About 20 action items identified; several are quick to close.
- Marketing consultant created a one-pager; revisions underway to match aesthetic.
- Advisory group recruitment open until end of week; selection of members and board/high school committee reps after close.
- Outreach to Adam Aponte sent a few days ago; no response yet.
- Letter to the lawyer (facilities) to be discussed later; KVAC and metrics revisions tied to facilities.
- Rating agency contacted; awaiting responses from bond investors; attorney Cliff is unresponsive; meeting pending required info.
- Withdrawal form attached but not revised due to current enrollment increase; revisit after holiday break.
- Social media consultant connected the team to a Harlem group; positive feedback on her work.
- State assessment data not yet released; schedules attached and to be finalized during the meeting.

Enrollment Update and Community Presence Strategy

- Enrollment increasing (e.g., from 410 to 414 due to new family arrivals).
- Typical decreases expected around end of December due to moves.
- Approximately five students with needs likely requiring placement in more supportive settings; working with CSC.
- Strategy: strong presence in ZIP 10039 and immediate neighborhood; focus on local awareness rather than broader geographic outreach.
- Common feedback: some did not know the building is a school due to scaffolding; increased local outreach is helping.

Community Initiatives: Ruby Bridges Day, Global Cares,

Weekend Bags, Friendsgiving, Holiday Gifts

- Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day held; aligned with school mission; video produced by social media/marketing consultant.
- Global Cares project: fundraising for three efforts:
 - Weekend bags: weekly food bags for families in need.
 - Friendsgiving on Thanksgiving Day: unexpectedly high interest (130 attendees); fundraising supports costs.
 - Holiday gifts: \$30 gifts for unhoused children; 100% of funds go directly to kids.
- Board members encouraged to circulate the initiative to networks; thanks noted for Nick's donation.

Facilities Issues (Middle and Elementary Schools) and Legal

Actions

- Middle school extremely hot; Con Edison and KVAC found Signature (original GC) installed piping with capacity 3x too low per engineer spec.
- Kristan is contacting Signature; searching for correct contacts; Wanda to pull contact from invoices.
- DEI (project managers) likely engaged in past; board suggested contacting Katrina Flora and DEI leadership.
- Elementary school has cold rooms; machines are old; awaiting KVAC report considering January regulation changes that affect repairs.
- Legal letter (drafted by Lisa, the lawyer) Expect landlord counteroffer; total claim is hundreds of thousands of dollars.
- Board preference: Kristen to send the final letter when ready; Martha (lawyer) can read it; management to handle details; share the letter after

sending.

Conclusion:

- Finalize and send demand letter within the next week.
- Engage DEI and Signature to resolve engineering capacity issues; await KVAC report for elementary.

Academic Metrics and Board Communication Goals

- Board seeks simple, communicable metrics for donors and authorizers.
- Proposed primary metric: difference between school proficiency rates (state assessments) and district rates.
- Discussion on adding state comparison and setting aspirational goals if gaps are small (e.g., within 3 points).
- Acknowledgment that state data release timing is often delayed; focus on district comparison for consistency.
- Annual board calendar item proposed to review “right fit” placement definitions and outcomes.
- Graduation/placement: school reports 100% of students placed into appropriate next settings for two years; consider setting a 100% board goal.

Conclusion:

- Use district comparison as the primary academic pulse; add an annual review of “right fit” outcomes; consider aspirational targets where appropriate.

Family Survey Goals

- Board discussed response rate goals and recommendation rate targets.
- Aspirational response rate: 75%.
- Target for families recommending the school: 80%.
- Need to estimate number of families (vs. students) to contextualize response rates.

Conclusion:

- Set aspirational survey goals: 75% response rate; 80% recommend rate. Collect family count to track progress.

Scheduling and Communication Preferences

- Aim for consistent Friday check-ins; schedules may adjust due to holidays.
- Deloitte email requested for communications to Ibrahim; similar requests from others to use work emails.
- Upcoming Friday availability discussed; brief check-in proposed; ensure calendar blocks.
- Request to circulate a monthly report; coordination ongoing.

Board Recruitment

- Need additional board members; preferences include commitment to meetings and local presence.
- Martha suggests a younger local lawyer; may be criminal law; community ties valued.
- Members to reach out to personal networks; seek balance of professions (not overly finance-heavy).

Next Board Meeting

- Scheduled for December 17 (Wednesday), remote due to holiday season.
- Plan future in-person meeting after December.
- Note: Ibrahim may have a scheduling conflict around birthday.

Next Arrangements

Finalize and send the facilities demand letter within the next week; share with the board after sending.

Confirm points of contact and reach out to DEI (e.g., Katrina Flora) and Signature; define escalation path if unresponsive.

Obtain KVAC report for elementary heating and January regulation implications.

Finalize attached schedules; confirm Friday check-in cadence post-holidays.

Revise the marketing one-pager to match the desired aesthetic.

Close advisory group recruitment; select members, board reps, and high school committee reps.

Estimate number of families to set the survey denominator; define a survey plan targeting 75% response and 80% recommend rates.

Use Deloitte/work emails for key communications per member requests.

Circulate the monthly report to the board regularly; assign ownership for sending agendas and reports.

Board members to propose and invite potential new board candidates; outline desired skill mix and local representation.