

New Hampshire  
**State Board of Education**  
Department of Education  
Londergan Hall, Room 100F  
101 Pleasant Street  
Concord, NH 03301  
Minutes of April 11, 2019 Meeting

**AGENDA ITEM I. CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the State Board of Education was convened at 9:27 a.m. at the State Department of Education, 101 Pleasant Street, Concord, NH. Drew Cline presided as Chairman.

Members present: Kate Cassady, Cindy Chagnon, Drew Cline, Chairman, Helen Honorow, Ann Lane, and Phil Nazzaro. Sally Griffin was unable to attend due to another commitment. Frank Edelblut, Commissioner of Education, and Christine Brennan, Deputy Commissioner of Education were also present.

**AGENDA ITEM II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Cindy Chagnon led the pledge of allegiance.

**AGENDA ITEM III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following individuals provided testimony to the State Board in support of the Spark Academy Charter School charter application:

- Boe Woulfe, NH (*submitted written testimony*)
- Bart Fromutz, NH
- Hailey Chapman, NH

The following individuals provided testimony to the State Board in support of Gate City Charter School charter renewal:

- MaryAnn McHugh, NH
- Alyjah McHugh, NH
- Jennifer Blanchette, NH
- Cheri Gratton, NH
- Nicolle Souza, NH
- Sarah Thibeault, NH

The following provided testimony to the State Board in opposition to the Learn Everywhere (Ed 1400) program:

- Megan Tuttle, National Education Association of New Hampshire (*submitted written testimony*)
- Jerry Frew, New Hampshire School Administrators Association (NHSAA) recognized the work of the NHDOE and stakeholders on Learn Everywhere (LE). The NHSAA supports the current system and believes it serves students well and acknowledged it could be improved. They have concern that the LE proposal will negatively impact resources and the budgets of the local school districts.

Oliver Carter, Student, The Founders Academy (TFA) - Mr. Carter attended the TFA orientation and looks forward to attending next year.

Matt Mercier, The Founders Academy (TFA) – Mr. Mercier thanked the State Board for their work regarding the TFA charter renewal. As the business owner of a small technologies business, he also supports the mission of the Spark Academy.

Patrice Benard, Manchester, NH - Ms. Benard feels there is work to be done for charter schools. If The Founders Academy charter renewal is approved, she requests that the term “classical education” be removed from the school description. Regarding the Spark Academy she opposes the competition with the Manchester School of Technology and New Hampshire Career Academy. She also feels that bussing of Spark Academy students will cause a rise in transportation costs in Manchester.

#### **AGENDA ITEM IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

##### A. Meeting Minutes of March 14, 2019

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made a motion, seconded by Kate Cassady, to approve the minutes of March 14, 2019, as amended.

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the State Board with the Chairman abstaining.

##### B. Withdrawal Student/Farmington School Board -SB-FY-19-02-011

The State Board acknowledges receipt of the withdrawal. A vote is not needed.

#### **AGENDA ITEM V. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

A. Technology and Engineering Teacher (Ed 507.05, Ed 612.31 and Ed 612.36 through Ed 612.39)

The public hearing opened at 9:34 a.m. and closed at 10:02 a.m. with no public testimony.

B. Custodian of Record (Ed. 502.03)

The public hearing opened at 10:02 a.m. and closed at 11:02 a.m. with no public testimony.

**AGENDA ITEM VI. ADJUDICATIVE APPEALS**

A. Student /Rye School Board Re-Hearing - SB-FY-18-02-011

The parents of the student chose to have the hearing held in non-public session.

MOTION: Phil Nazzaro made the motion, seconded by Helen Honorow to move into non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(c).

VOTE: The motion was approved by roll call vote at 11:02 a.m. by State Board of Education members, Ann Lane, Kate Cassady, Cindy Chagnon, Drew Cline, Phil Nazzaro and Helen Honorow.

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made the motion, seconded by Phil Nazzaro to leave non-public session and return to public session.

VOTE: The motion was approved by roll call vote at 11:40 a.m. by State Board of Education members, Ann Lane, Kate Cassady, Cindy Chagnon, Drew Cline, Phil Nazzaro and Helen Honorow.

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made the following motion, seconded by Ann Lane that the State Board of Education seal the minutes of the non-public session.

VOTE: The motion was approved by roll call vote by State Board of Education members, Ann Lane, Kate Cassady, Cindy Chagnon, Drew Cline, Phil Nazzaro and Helen Honorow.

No motion was made in the non-public session and the State Board requested certified verbatim transcripts of all the hearings held regarding this matter. Upon receipt of the transcripts, they will be sent to the State Board as well as the parties.

B. Student/Gorham Randolph Shelburne Cooperative School Board - SB-FY-19-09-002

Dennis Tupick, introduced himself and his wife, Sara, to the State Board. Mr. Tupick explained that last August they submitted a letter to the Gorham School Board requesting that their daughter be allowed to attend White Mountain Regional High School under Manifest Educational Hardship in order to participate in their animal sciences program, a program which Gorham High School does not offer. The Gorham School Board denied their request. They appealed this decision, which led to several hearings and a Hearing Officer's decision. The parents believe the original denial of Manifest Educational Hardship by Gorham was based on setting a bad precedent and not their daughter's educational needs and requests that the State Board not accept the Hearings Officer's recommendation; thereby overturning the Gorham School Board's decision.

David Backler, Superintendent of SAU 20 greeted the State Board and stated the school district wants what is best for every student, but he reiterated that in this case the family did not demonstrate Manifest Educational Hardship.

It was asked if an animal sciences program has ever been offered or considered at Gorham High School. Superintendent Backler responded that extended learning opportunities (ELOs) are available to students and noted that a student received credit by working with a local veterinarian. There is no specific program because of the small school size.

A question was asked if the current State Board is bound by previous State Board decisions. Chairman Cline explained that a party could appeal a State Board decision to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court would refer to previous rulings; therefore, it would be difficult to appeal a decision that deviates from past Supreme Court rulings.

Chairman Cline noted that the Learn Everywhere program would provide opportunities outside the local offerings and acknowledged the family's frustration of the situation; however, it is not for the State Board to decide on the curriculum of a local school district.

**MOTION:** Cindy Chagnon made the motion, seconded by Ann Lane, to accept the Hearing Officer's report and adopt the Hearing Officer's recommendation.

**VOTE:** The motion was approved by a 4 to 1 vote of the State Board, with the Chairman abstaining.

**AGENDA ITEM VII. REPORTS, NEW BUSINESS and/or DEPARTMENT UPDATE****A. Spark Academy of Applied Technology Charter School Application**

Sarah Shakour Carter introduced the team from Spark Academy and distributed their resumes and credentials. She told the story about the origin of the name “Spark” and how it exemplifies the school’s vision. The work to create the school started in 2017 with a mission to provide students with hands-on educational experiences as well as providing high school students the opportunity to take community college courses and graduate high school with an associate’s degree.

Spark students can earn certificates or associate’s degrees through Manchester Community College (MCC). Courses include advanced manufacturing, robotics, mechatronics, computer science, cybersecurity, electrical technology, HVAC, and welding. Spark students cultivate skills at workshops involving robotics, woodworking, laser cutting, 3D printing, CAD and other tools at MCC. They concentrate on human advancement in trades and technology through their humanities courses. They are encouraged to develop business ideas through their entrepreneurship and economics courses. They develop life and career skills through internships and apprenticeships. Spark students will embrace technology and work at their own pace. Giving students a purpose is also a major focus of Spark, which is why the courses are individualized to each student.

In addition to Spark using MCC and a designated restricted donation to the school to cover facility cost for 2 years, Dan Larochelle, Professor and Department Chair for Advanced Manufacturing and Robotics at MCC, described sustainability and resources. Spark is launching security protocols, fire drills, and bus routes to ensure safety of the students. He explained that very few schools in the state teach manufacturing skills, despite 10% of the workforce being in manufacturing, so the intent of Spark is to start students off on skills-based classes. Then in their junior/senior years they can move to whatever pathway they choose. In New England alone there are 2,500 job openings in manufacturing for mechanical/electrical technicians. He explained his work with Spark and supports their mission 1) math, sciences and humanities are interconnected, and 2) growing up in a family of tradesmen who did not want to learn new techniques of their trade and were left behind, which greatly impacted their families. Spark empowers students by connecting technology with the world and making education exciting.

Gary Thomas, owner of North Point Construction spoke to the State Board in support of Spark. Skilled workers are in great demand in his industry. He gave an example of a job opening for a skilled laborer that after 2 weeks only had six responses.

A question was asked about a fifth year of high school (referring to a table in the report) and asked how it would be paid for. It was explained that the table refers to a 5-year budget, not school year. The school will be a 4-year high school.

There was discussion around discipline being enforced by the students through student government. Denis Mailloux, Director of Spark Academy, explained that there will be no student disciplinary council; however, students could provide feedback on disciplinary cases. Chairman Cline referred to the report that states "student government will be empowered to develop a code of student conduct." In addition, discipline being enforced by faculty is unclear in the report. Mr. Mailloux stated students will participate in developing an honor code and expectations of students. Ms. Carter stated a student handbook will be ready before the fall school start, but students will immediately take ownership for being responsible and behaving in class. Discipline rather than punishment, is a true understanding and internalization of what the school is trying to teach through its behavior codes. Therefore, student input will be sought out in all matters. Perhaps the wording needs to be improved to clarify the intent.

Ms. Honorow asked if students would move freely between Spark and MCC as a class or individually. Mr. Mailloux explained that students will not freely move throughout MCC classrooms in their immediate years at Spark, especially ninth graders. The initial cluster of classrooms they will use will be relatively compact compared to a typical high school. Other than moving to the cafeteria, they will only move to MCC's library accompanied by a faculty member at a designated time.

Ms. Honorow asked if Spark students could take classes at any New Hampshire community college and how that would work. Students indeed can utilize any NH community college, but the current focus and offering is programs at MCC. Hence, very little outside travel is expected. If a student wants to take an early college class, he or she would be responsible for transportation. The school will pay for the MCC classes as part of their public funds and fundraising. Transportation for Manchester students taking MCC or Running Start courses will be paid for by the school district. Chairman Cline asked how the community college courses in year two would work. The first two years will stick to the Running Start model where Spark Academy teachers will teach the college-level classes. This encourages students to work together, which is what you see in industry. At level three students could transition to junior-level Running Start classes.

There was a concern about finances. Since 80% of funding comes from state revenue relying on head count, if student count is below the projected 60, costs could surpass revenue. Spark has a restricted donation up to \$350,000 that will offset costs related to the facility, guaranteed for the first 2 years.

Regarding recruitment, Mr. Mailloux has experience with recruiting and marketing using online presence, printed materials and presentations. Spark will utilize all these methods to recruit students beyond the Manchester School District to become a regional school as much as possible.

There was also concern about capturing students at the secondary level for the trade programs. It was explained that parents will see Spark as an opportunity to save money by taking college courses at no cost up to 2 years while in their students are in high school. Students see Spark as an opportunity to get started on their careers before starting college. Ms. Carter stated they are more concerned with having to turn students away. Chairman Cline agreed that from what they have seen in the past with another charter school, 60 students are achievable.

Ms. Chagnon asked how Spark is different from the Manchester School of Technology (MST). Mr. Laroche works with MST and explained that MST's program is more focused on engineering, rather than a technician program, which is very different. Currently there is a demand for a workforce of technicians in Manchester.

Another concern was raised regarding the lack of communications courses. Mr. Mailloux explained that the integrated humanities program begins with an overview of elements of history. There are rigors of research, organization, writing, and documentation assembled in a way that communication determines how one progresses through the program. Writing will be an important part of the humanities program. In addition, Chairman Cline pointed to the lack of a civics requirement. Mr. Mailloux responded that the intent is for civics, history, and social studies to be rolled into the humanities program.

Spark included a document regarding gifts and contributions. The foundation will hold the money from the donations until the school is approved and in need of funds up to \$350,000. The community college will increase the rent after year one (rent schedule is not yet available), but that number will also increase if enrollment increased and more classrooms are needed. Salaries in the first year are for one head of school and one contracted guidance counselor, which are included in the report. Increase of support staff costs will depend on the increase of student numbers. Health insurance will start year three due to the high expense.

**MOTION:** Cindy Chagnon made the motion, seconded by Ann Lane, to approve the Spark Academy of Applied Technology Public Charter School Application.

**VOTE:** The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the State Board with the Chairman abstaining.

Helen Honorow left the meeting at 1:00 PM due to a prior commitment. She was not present for any of the following agenda items; therefore, did not participate/vote in any of the motions.

#### B. The Founders Academy (TFA) Charter Renewal

Maureen Mooney, Dean of School at The Founder's Academy (TFA) noted that the school began in 2014 with their first graduation ceremony in June 2019. She acknowledged the dedicated staff as a reason for the school's success. In addition to Ms. Waterhouse's report, a large amount of information related to the school has been provided to the State Board. The school's mission statement focuses on four key areas: leadership, liberty, character building, and U.S. history. TFA is the second largest brick and mortar charter school in the state with 340 students coming from multiple communities around the state. TFA's website ([www.thefoundersacademy.com](http://www.thefoundersacademy.com)) is a comprehensive, transparent website posting all class descriptions and syllabi. TFA is seeking a five-year charter renewal.

Ms. Chagnon pointed out that the initial charter goal was to meet or surpass state standards in testing and asked what is being done to address the challenges with TFA's math scores? Ms. Mooney explained that one of the challenges is parental rights and an extraordinarily high opt-out rate of standardized testing, but that opt-out rate seems to be declining the longer the school has been running. Much of the hesitation is due to computer-based testing and suspicions of data mining and privacy issues. TFA's scores are better on SAT/ACT tests (where the participation rate is higher) than the state standardized tests.

Mr. McKenzie, TFA Registrar, checks test results for trends, and has seen improvement. Sixth grade scores are going up and the goal is that by grade 11 they can take the SAT and move on to college if desired. Current grade 11 scores are above state and national averages for English, but not where they want them to be for math. However, math scores for current grade 10 students are above state average. Participation rates were provided to the State Board.

Ms. Chagnon felt the small numbers despite low participation could represent a snapshot of all students in the school. Mr. McKenzie looked at a breakdown of the scores, and found that half of grade 8 students taking algebra I, opted out. This could swing the numbers significantly since the total number of students is small to begin with. Teacher-led internal committees address student concerns around standardized testing on a case-by-case basis, but TFA is open to suggestions on how to encourage students to take the tests. Last year was the first year TFA had 11th graders, and they all took the SAT. None of them were in the lowest quadrant for math scores and all 15 met the college benchmark for English. Ms. Chagnon stated that her local board looks at the results to find out what students are missing to help them attain an adequate

education. Ms. Hayes, Director of Faculty, working with the chairs of the departments and the curriculum committee breaks down the data, which is then brought to the individual departments to make sure all the concepts are covered in accordance with state standards. It was explained that the math department is restructuring when they teach math elements so that algebra can start being taught in the middle school.

Ms. Lane asked for past enrollment numbers as well as enrollment projections for the future. There was concern over upper grades having a sustainable enrollment. It was noted that enrollment information is on page 8 and 9 of Ms. Waterhouse's report and the accountability report is on page 44. This year's applications are up by 100 over this same time last year. Upper grades are between 35 and 40 students per grade with the current ninth grade being the largest TFA has ever had.

Ms. Chagnon noted that special education can be a challenge for charter schools because of relationships with local school districts and asked what TFA's challenges are in this area and how they are mitigating them. Ms. Mooney said that TFA has a Student Services Department which is overseen by the Director of Student Affairs who has a counseling background. The director and her department oversee students with 504 Plans and Individual Education Plans (IEPs). The Director of Student Services and the Director of Faculty work in conjunction to ensure that the faculty has what they need in order support their students. Ms. Mooney noted that TFA has great working relationships with other school districts related to special education. Assistant Dean Lavallee added that it is challenging in a charter school to provide special education services and noted that TFA was very fortunate this year to have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Manchester School District to reimburse TFA for the cost of hiring a special education teacher to support and provide student services. Having someone on-site at TFA has enabled them to hire three full-time paraprofessionals and is in the process of interviewing for additional paras for next year. This is a great benefit to the TFA students. Ms. Lavallee also noted that students can take high-level classes if his or her IEP allows for it; the curriculum would be modified to what is needed.

Ms. Chagnon brought up concerns the State Board received about students being barred from certain classes. Ms. Mooney noted that they have had challenges with misinformation being channeled through social media and/or personal emails. Mr. McKenzie, as the person that creates student schedules, noted that he does not leave a student out of a class because they have a 504 plan or an IEP. He also has never had a teacher request a student be moved from a class because of the need for accommodations. Ms. Chagnon asked if students are encouraged to take difficult courses to challenge themselves. Mr. McKenzie explained that because of TFA's smaller size it only has two or three multiple level courses. Ms. Mooney emphasized that they encourage students to try classes that challenge them.

**MOTION:** Ann Lane made the motion, seconded by Cindy Chagnon, pursuant to Ed 318.12 and Ed 318.13 that the State Board of Education authorizes the renewal of the charter of The Founders Academy Public Charter School.

**VOTE:** The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the State Board with the Chairman abstaining.

#### C. The Founders Academy Charter Amendment

Ms. Mooney explained that charter revisions occur naturally as part of the charter renewal process and are based on current practices. An executive summary of proposed revisions is provided, as well as two additional edits related to language at the State Board's recommendation. Parent Steering Committee has been changed to Parent Advisory Committee. A complete revised charter will be provided to the Board.

**MOTION:** Cindy Chagnon made the motion, seconded by Ann Lane, pursuant to RSA 194-B:3, XI that the State Board of Education authorizes the amendments to The Founders Academy Public Charter School's charter.

**VOTE:** The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the State Board with the Chairman abstaining.

#### D. Granite State Arts Academy (GSAA) Charter Renewal

Anthony Polito, Head of School, states GSAA spent the last year in a self-study to see what would be effective in improving the school. He agrees with recommendations made by Ms. Waterhouse in her report to the State Board. They are requesting that the GSAA charter be renewed for 5 more years.

Ms. Chagnon asked what can be done to improve state standardized test scores in math and sciences. When Mr. Polito came to the school, many students opted out of the SAT, but the scores were above average for those who did take it. After that, he really encouraged students (and parents) to take the test, and this year all eligible students took the SAT. They did significant work with curriculum, instruction, and improving rigor of their assessments and worked on student interventions for students struggling with math and science. He also noted that there were changes in staffing.

One recommendation in the report was for more rigorous data collection. Mr. Polito explained that with students coming from many different communities, it is difficult to construct the program of studies. They now do PSATs in addition to the SATs, as well the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test for 9th graders given in

October. As a result, they now have Algebra I over two years for students who have had little pre-algebra. The only other information they have on 9th graders is what the sending school provides, which often is just a transcript. Some districts send standardized test scores, but not all. For students on IEPs, the testing helps the school make sure they are getting the proper triage for extra services. GSAA has a special education coordinator who is available to answer questions.

Chairman Cline would like to see students tracked more than 2 to 3 years in order to see a bigger picture over time of how students were doing at their previous school and how GSAA changed their trajectory. Mr. Polito explained that many students transfer in after freshman year, so most will not be tracked from 9th grade.

Renia Radziszewski, Executive Administrator, note that the miscellaneous \$98,000 in the budget refers to incoming fundraising/company matching, and public support. Chairman Cline felt since GSAA is doing well in fundraising, it would be helpful if that figure could be broken down into categories. Ms. Cassady agreed. This section of the report comes from their most recent audit, but they do have an itemized list of contributions.

Ms. Lane asked about collaborations with other districts. Deidre Smith, IEP/504 Coordinator explained that she works with 8 to 10 school districts; some hire tutors to work with students, while others require students to be bussed to the local school for services, which is up to 30 minutes away. She has guidance studies with students to make sure they get what they need. They do not make any demands of the sending district.

Ms. Chagnon asked about bullying in the school. Mr. Polito states GSAA has a rigorous bullying policy, but they do have the common internet bullying that walks the line of requiring intervention. Many students come to GSAA as a refuge from bullying at their previous school. There is camaraderie between students due to their artistic endeavors, which is the focus of the school. Their bullying policy follows state law, but they also try to triage earlier. Ms. Cassady appreciated the recognition of the low scores and changes made as a result.

**MOTION:** Ann Lane made the motion, seconded by Phil Nazzaro, pursuant to Ed 318.12 and Ed 318.13 that the State Board of Education authorizes the renewal of the charter of the Granite State Arts Academy Charter School.

**VOTE:** The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the State Board with the Chairman abstaining.

#### E. Gate City Charter School for the Arts (GCCSA) Charter Renewal

Rebecca Frederickson, Director of Operations at GCCSA introduced herself as well as her fellow administrators, Suzanne Wheeler, Director of Student Services and Dr. Betty Mulrey, Director of Curriculum and Instruction. Ms. Frederickson noted that GCCSA's charter was approved in 2013 and its first year of operation was 2014. She shared positive feedback about the school from one of the middle school teachers and one of the kindergarten parents. The school has zero debt and will continue to hold fundraisers with the goal of purchasing a building in the future. There are 171 students enrolled, with full enrollment of 180 students expected for next year. Overall, the school has a solid track record and they are committed to continual growth and improvement.

Ms. Chagnon asked about the school's low math and science standardized test scores. Ms. Frederickson noted that they have the same challenges that Founders and Granite State mentioned earlier. Students come to GCCSA from many districts with different levels of starting points. Additionally they are coming to GCCSA because they are already struggling. Dr. Mulrey stated they had launched iReady this year, which provides them a snapshot of where students stand grade-wise as well as what they need to learn next, and tracks student progress over time. For example, kindergarten went from 28% to 78% proficiency from fall to winter, first grade from 0% to 24% and second grade from 47% to 58%. These scores give GCCSA confidence that they are moving in the right direction to truly access student academic growth. She noted that teachers meet weekly and review the iReady information to help determine what will be taught next. This allows them the flexibility to change the curriculum as needed. She also spoke of other assessments they use which provides them with multiple ways to look at student growth.

Ms. Chagnon asked about special education students. GCCSA has two special education teachers and works with many school districts. School districts send their own case managers and their own therapists for occupational, physical and speech therapies. Ms. Astrid Alvarado, mental health counselor at GCCSA, spoke about the positive evolution of special education at the school. GCCSA works with school districts to try to figure out what does and does not work for students. This year GCCSA has a behaviorist on staff. If a student has an issue, there is always someone available.

Ms. Lane asked about GCCSA's methods of communicating with parents. Ms. Frederickson explained that they use a remind system that sends out daily important news of that day to parents. This goes out daily at noontime. They also use a text system that sends out more significant need-to-know information and gave an example of a power situation with their building that occurred last week. In terms of student progress, GCCSA's holds parent conferences twice a year or by appointment at the request of a parent. Teachers also have secure communication websites that they use to keep parents informed of their student's

progress. GCCSA also sends out school newsletters. Ms. Frederickson noted that GCCSA's teachers are very good at communicating with parents. Three times a year GCCSA has celebrations of learning for parents to come and see what the students are doing. GCCSA tries to respond to parent communications the same day as they are received. Dr. Mulrey spoke about GCCSA having a very caring capable group of teachers and explained that they work closely; meeting regularly to plan curriculum so what they are teaching in one class ties into or enhances understanding in another.

Ms. Chagnon asked about the retention of faculty. Ms. Frederickson explained that faculty retention/turnover has improved over the past three years. GCCSA does what it can within its budget to support teachers to make sure the teachers feel valued and have the opportunity for professional development and growth. The biggest retention challenge is the lack of health insurance available for their faculty; however, this is something they are actively working on. Dr. Mulrey noted that GCCSA tries to empower its teachers and have them present at conferences. She also mentioned one of their teachers taking intensive "how to teach" math training this summer and bringing back that knowledge to share with her colleagues (i.e., in-house professional development). This is one way they are proactively responding to their low math scores.

Ms. Lane, referencing a reviewer's report, asked about low enrollment and the recommendation to increase local partnerships. Ms. Frederickson responded by explaining that GCCSA is within their budget projection for enrollment. They are authorized to have up to 180 students and they are currently at 171 students. She sees their enrollment as very healthy and does not see them growing beyond 180 until they are in a different facility. It was noted that moving to a larger facility is one of the charter goals. As for partnerships, GCCSA has a strong relationship with the YMCA, which is across the street, and with many of the after-care facilities. They have a relationship with City Arts Nashua and worked with them on the revolving museum. GCCSA does an interactive art walk each year where the public is invited to attend and see the students' art displays. Community outreach includes students participating in the downtown Nashua parade, the New Hampshire Symphony, a poetry open mic night at a local café, partnerships with Nashua and Merrimack Parks and Rec for summer programs, the Nashua Public Library, the Merrimack Police Department which provides a community resource officer that participates on their bullying task force, participated in a sock drive to benefit children in foster care (obtaining over 600 pairs of socks) as well as participating in the children's hospital toy drive. Mr. Frederickson does see more community partnerships and community involvement in the future.

Chairman Cline brought up the concerns that were consistent amongst the reviewers which included: poor data collection and measuring of progress, high turnover of staff and the administration/organization model that does not lead to solid accountability. He noted that in the charter renewal application, GCCSA's

response to the reviewers suggested areas of improvement were not in alignment, which is typically the case. Ms. Frederickson was not clear where on the report the Chairman was referring to and asked for clarification. Ms. Jane Waterhouse, Charter School Administrator for the department, noted that because these concerns were raised by the State Board at a previous meeting, GCCSA was provided a list of concerns and asked to address and resubmit to the State Board. That resubmission was received and provided to the State Board in their meeting materials.

Mr. Nazzaro and Chairman Cline brought up concerns regarding GCCSA's lack of responsiveness to specific requests from the State Board; in particular, the bullying report and bullying data. Ms. Wheeler noted that when she started in her current position, she was mandated by the GCCSA's board of trustees to develop a definition of bullying and a bullying policy, which she did. In addition to that, GCCSA also formed a bullying task force comprised of administrators, parents and students as well as a community resource officer. It was acknowledged that bullying data collection from previous administrators was poor and the current administration is reviewing their current policy and practices with their attorney to make sure they are doing it correctly.

Ms. Chagnon asked if GCCSA's updated response to the reviewers' recommendations addresses the concerns brought forth by the chairman and asked why it was not provided to the State Board. Commissioner Edelblut noted that the updated response materials are located at the end of the State Board's GCCSA's meeting materials. Ms. Frederickson confirmed these amendments were put in a single document as well as inserted into GCCSA's revised charter renewal document that was provided to the State Board.

Mr. Nazzaro asked Ms. Waterhouse if the requirement for promoting student attainment of prospective knowledge and skills, based on the amended responses, moved GCCSA from approaching the requirement to meeting it. Ms. Waterhouse responded that the requirement was still in the "approaching" stage. Mr. Nazzaro then asked Ms. Waterhouse how the department and the school are collaborating to move this requirement forward. Ms. Waterhouse explained that the school is in its first five years of operation and throughout those five years they are discovering: how their students learn; is the curriculum working; are the assessments working; and are they analyzing data correctly. In response, the school has made a lot of modifications to their program and has implemented many supports to ensure that they are able to follow student progress and student performance and the results will be seen in the future, but as of the date of the report and the review, they were "approaching". Ms. Waterhouse explained that "approaching" is not considered a failure; it means that from this point on, they are moving forward. Commissioner Edelblut noted that item #32 on the resubmission, the school provides how they are using iReady data to measure student growth; demonstrating that they are making more data driven decisions on whether or not progress is being made toward academic attainment.

Ms. Ann Lane asked what a reasonable amount of time would be needed to amass information from iReady to see how students are doing. Dr. Mulrey responded that they are already using iReady information from the fall and winter to see areas where there has been improvement and where more work is needed. Commissioner Edelblut explained that iReady is a good tool already being used in other public schools and allows schools to look at the short term to figure out where to immediately modify instructional practices in the strands where students might be struggling as well as student progress longitudinally from year to year. Ms. Lane asked if the State Board could receive an update on the spring iReady data at its June meeting. Mr. Nazzaro asked from the department's perspective, if the GCCSA amendments are executed well, will they move from approaching to meeting. Ms. Waterhouse responded yes, absolutely.

Ms. Alvarado spoke to the State Board about GCCSA moving from a single person administration model to the current three person model to better serve the needs of their students.

There was discussion about GCCSA's revenue and expense budgets as well as fundraising opportunities. In the future, it would be helpful to include quarterly financials and a fundraising plan as well as the revenue and expense budget figures. Chairman Cline expressed concern there was no fundraising plan and noted it should be submitted in response to where the renewal application asks about sustainability. GCCSA's Board of Trustees Vice-Chair Jennifer Hitzeman explained that they have multiple fundraising opportunities during the year, such as a 5K run, a holiday fair and are at the beginning stages of planning a fundraising gala. Ms. Hitzeman assured the State Board there is a team actively exploring fundraising opportunities.

Chairman Cline noted that the renewal application did not appear to draw from the five years of experience the school already has and seems more like an initial application from a school that is just starting. The State Board discussed the charter renewal process and the options available to them: deny, renew for 5 years, extend current charter, or ask for a hearing.

Attorney James O'Shaughnessy from Drummond-Woodsum introduced himself as GCCSA's attorney. He has been working with them on the renewal process; trying to help them get their "side of the fence" in order so that the renewal process could go through smoothly. He asked what the hearing process would be as he was not able to find it in the rules. He did note that anything that is not a renewal or an extension of some sort would jeopardize GCCSA's operation and be very detrimental to the families. Chairman Cline assured everyone that the State Board has no intention of closing the school or jeopardizing their operation. The State Board heard a lot of positive things today about GCCSA and wants to make sure those are acknowledged and wants to work with GCCSA to have their concerns addressed in shorter time span than a five year renewal in order to make the school stronger. The State Board wants to

make sure all their concerns are addressed, and Chairman Cline recommended a charter extension where the State Board will work closely with the school and provide a list of concerns for GCCSA to address. Mr. Nazzaro asked that this process be focused so as not to be an administrative burden for the school and the department. There was discussion about time-frame for the renewal and status updates. It was asked if GCCSA could provide the State Board with a status update at the June meeting.

Attorney O'Shaughnessy asked what GCCSA's legal status would be. The report from the department recommends renewal; that GCCSA has attained all of the renewal standards and based on this recommendation, believes the State Board can renew the charter. The school is working hard on continuing to improve. He believes the State Board can renew the charter and also ask them to provide status updates.

The administrators at GCCSA ask that the extension not be any less than two years so as to provide job security for the teachers that currently work at the school.

It was agreed that a two-year extension with the option to renew before the end of the two years would be optimal. GCCSA would work with the department to provide the State Board with updates.

**MOTION:** Ann Lane made the motion, seconded by Phil Nazzaro that the State Board of Education pursuant to Ed 318.12, Ed 318.13 and RSA 194-B:3, X, XI and XII to extend the Gate City Charter School for the Arts charter through the end of the 2020-2021 academic year.

**VOTE:** The motion was approved by a 4 to 1 vote with the Chairman voting.

There was discussion about the GCCSA providing an update to the State Board at the Thursday, July 11, 2019 meeting.

## **AGENDA ITEM VIII. OPEN BOARD DISCUSSIONS**

### **A. Learn Everywhere (LE) Discussion and Update**

Commissioner Edelblut addressed the State Board about the Learn Everywhere (LE) proposal and noted that it had undergone quite a few revisions since the last meeting. The State Board's mission and vision statements include language about change and a shift in the traditional delivery systems and the involvement of entire communities and their citizens. The learning community of

teachers and facilitators will create an environment that allows and encourages innovation and risk. Citizens must play an active role to help break down barriers that prevent the sharing of knowledge. Learning will be continuous, accessible and flexible. Tom Brennan in 1993 stated, "If we can change our delivery system, we will change education."

Actions have been made to continue to meet these aspirations, including harnessing all resources to engage each student; commissioning a report on ELOs to ensure opportunities to all students; adopting a vision statement that includes language about harnessing community resources in a flexible, innovative learning environment that promotes engagement; producing a video in support of learning by design; creation of Vision 2.0; and adopting rules for LE. The equity gap is real and unchanged throughout the nation and the disparity is growing. Students, particularly those that are socioeconomically challenged, are falling farther behind in the current system.

Schools were recently asked to provide the department with their ELO data, which ranged anywhere from 2-to-5-day career exploration opportunities and community service to awarding ELO credit for participation in school athletics, band, choir, driver's education, concurrent enrollment, honors courses, online courses, and VLACs course. The data was sorted by school enrollment and what stood out was one school reporting 700 ELOs (but not identifying what they were) for 483 students and another school reporting 315 ELOs (mainly 2-day explorations) for 158 students. If a school did not define what an ELO was, it was considered incomplete and put in the "blank" category. Pinkerton Academy was noted as having an exemplar ELO program with more authentic ELOs in the state than all the other schools combined and has relationships with numerous companies throughout the state.

As for the department providing support to ELOs, Commissioner Edelblut noted that the [ELO: Beyond Classroom](#) website is continuously updated with different types of resources on ELOs.

The State Board watched a YouTube video filmed by student Grace Griffin. It demonstrates a young woman who found an opportunity outside of school and as a result of that experience was more successful when she returned to the school environment. Ms. Griffin completed all her graduation requirements in 11<sup>th</sup> grade and spent her senior year writing a book.

Commissioner Edelblut spoke of the responsive changes that were made to the LE proposal, which included:

- Better defined its purpose.
- Expanded the scope
- Clarified definitions
- Added an insurance section and an indemnification statement

- Added a new section establishing a LE review committee with assistance from ELO network members and NH licensed educators
- Added consequences if an LE program fails to comply with approval requirements
- Added an on-site monitoring section for LE program renewal
- Added a section to better spell out the process for coordinating a student's IEP and services
- Added language to the "Program Completion Certificates" section to require department evaluation before issuance of a student certificate and added two certificate types to clarify a pass/fail competency-based system.
- Changed the minimum total number of credits student can earn from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$  and will not negatively impact a student's GPA
- Added an onsite monitoring process by the department

Commissioner Edelblut summarized the LE process explaining that a program completes an LE application, the LE program review committee evaluates the application; if approved, the commissioner recommends it, and a public hearing is conducted at a State Board meeting, after which the State Board makes a decision. Once an LE program is approved, the monitoring process will begin.

The State Board then watched a video with past NH education leaders speaking about the future of education and supporting moving in a similar direction as LE.

Commissioner Edelblut explained that changes were made to the proposal to address the concerns expressed about local control. The LE proposal now states that schools must accept as much as one-third of credits (about 7 credits) across the scope of minimum standards, but they may accept up to 100% with the superintendent's permission. ELO coordinators would be responsible for making sure there is a 360-degree look at the LE competencies. There are rules as to where the credits will apply (core or elective), but a school can devise a program to meet competencies to count towards a certain credit. Student employment could be structured to count for credit. There is no restriction by school year, thereby making it easier to award credit for summer programs.

Ms. Chagnon would still like more local control and asked about grades for LE. It was explained that LEs, like ELOs, are pass/fail dependent on meeting competencies and so they would not affect a student's GPA, but would be included on a student's transcript.

Ms. Chagnon questioned whether LEs would affect the equity gap at all. Chairman Cline disagreed, sees LEs as a way for high school students to take classes at community colleges creating opportunities for students who are seeking skills-based education. There are tons of summer camps and

afterschool programs offered on a sliding scale in Manchester that can work as a LE program. It was noted that LEs will provide a benefit and contribute to reducing the equity gap, but will not close the gap altogether. Mr. Phil Nazzaro also noted that employers, if they have the educational structure, could also be eligible for LE and sees this as a benefit to children who have to work.

Ms. Chagnon asked how LEs would appear on student transcripts especially as they pertain to college admissions. Commissioner Edelblut responded that they would appear on student transcripts the same way ELO credits already do.

Ms. Cassady compared the LE program to a program that is already happening between White Mountain Academy and White Mountain Regional with the Mountain View Grand Resort and Spa. All the education happens at the resort. She sees this program and LE as “charter schools on wheels”.

Chairman Cline remarked on one of the requests made by stakeholders was for the State Board to incorporate a much more robust system of evaluating LE programs and having certified educators and ELO coordinators having more input when approving programs.

Ms. Cassady sees this as a good program. It will have its kinks, but everything new does, we will live and learn; we have to change and move on.

Chairman Cline explained that Learn Everywhere needs to be finalized before the June board meeting so an extension has been requested. Should the extension be denied, the date of the June boarding meeting may need to be moved up a week.

#### **AGENDA ITEM IX. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

#### **AGENDA ITEM X. NONPUBLIC SESSION**

**MOTION:** Phil Nazzaro made the motion, seconded by Cindy Chagnon to move into non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(I).

**VOTE:** The motion was approved by roll call vote at 10:20 a.m. by State Board of Education members, Ann Lane, Kate Cassady, Cindy Chagnon, Drew Cline, Phil Nazzaro and Helen Honorow.

**MOTION:** Cindy Chagnon made the motion, seconded by Phil Nazzaro to leave non-public session and return to public session.

VOTE: The motion was approved by roll call vote at 10:50 a.m. by State Board of Education members, Ann Lane, Kate Cassady, Cindy Chagnon, Drew Cline, Phil Nazzaro and Helen Honorow.

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made the following motion, seconded by Ann Lane that the State Board of Education seal the minutes of the non-public session.

VOTE: The motion was approved by roll call vote by State Board of Education members, Ann Lane, Kate Cassady, Cindy Chagnon, Drew Cline, Phil Nazzaro and Helen Honorow.

No motion was made in the non-public session.

MOTION: Ann Lane made the motion, seconded by Phil Nazzaro to move into non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(c).

VOTE: The motion was approved by roll call vote at 5:20 p.m. by State Board of Education members, Ann Lane, Kate Cassady, Cindy Chagnon, Drew Cline, and Phil Nazzaro.

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made the motion, seconded by Phil Nazzaro to leave non-public session and return to public session.

VOTE: The motion was approved by roll call vote at 5:27 p.m. by State Board of Education members, Ann Lane, Kate Cassady, Cindy Chagnon, Drew Cline, and Phil Nazzaro.

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made the following motion, seconded by Phil Nazzaro that the State Board of Education seal the minutes of the non-public session.

VOTE: The motion was approved by roll call vote by State Board of Education members, Ann Lane, Kate Cassady, Cindy Chagnon, Drew Cline, and Phil Nazzaro.

No motion was made in the non-public session.

### **AGENDA ITEM XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: Phil Nazzaro made the motion, seconded by Cindy Chagnon, to adjourn the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous vote of the State Board with the Chairman abstaining.



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Secretary