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# STATE OF INDIANA

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**DISTRESSED UNIT APPEAL BOARD**



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## **Distressed Unit Appeal Board Meeting Memorandum**

**December 17, 2020**

**Call to Order:** A meeting of the Distressed Unit Appeals Board (“DUAB” or “Board”) was held December 17, 2020, at 2:00 p.m. EDT via WebEx. Members of the Board attending the meeting include Justin McAdam, Chairman, Wes Bennett, Tracy Brown, Paul Joyce, Rebecca Kubacki, Senator Liz Brown, Representative Vernon Smith, and Representative Jeff Thompson. Courtney Schaafsma, Executive Director, was also in attendance.

Chairman McAdam called the meeting to order and recognized compliance with the Open Door Law.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item three – Approval of Minutes. Mr. Joyce moved the minutes be approved. Ms. Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0).

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item four – Public Comment. Chairman McAdam reminded the Board of the public comment protocol.

Ms. Trina Davis thanked GCSC for the continued meal service that her children are receiving as well as the Thanksgiving basket.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item five – Executive Director Update on School Corporation Fiscal Indicators. Ms. Schaafsma presented background information on the review process and the committee’s suggested recommendations.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item six – Gary Community School Corporation (“GCSC”) Manager Update. Dr. Paige McNulty presented updates on teacher negotiations, GCSC’s federal audit for title funds, when students are expected to return to in-person learning, and the sale of GCSC’s buildings. She also addressed her plans to have continued community participation and thanked Rep. Smith for his work. Chairman McAdam also thanked Rep. Smith for his service and stated that he looks forward to working with him in the future. Rep. Smith stated that he has enjoyed working with Dr. McNulty and thanked Chairman McAdam and Ms. Schaafsma for engaging with him and his concerns.

Ms. Kimberly Bradley presented the background on and data from the most recent formative assessment.

Mr. Ricardo Cepin presented updates on the dashboard data currently available and noted that more data is forthcoming.

Mr. Eric Parish presented background information and updates on the Path Forward.

Mr. Rob Tanner presented updates on the School Improvement Fund Plan including the newly constructed playground, West Side Leadership Academy track, and keycard access to buildings.

Mr. Darrell Riddell presented updates on GCSC connectivity. Chairman McAdam asked if there is visibility into student connectivity and Mr. Riddell said he has reached out for that information and will include it in the next report. Chairman McAdam asked if it is fair to say that the vast majority of students are not experiencing connectivity issues and Mr. Riddell confirmed that is true.

Mr. Joyce asked about the root cause of the lack of information retention in students and Ms. Bradley stated that they have identified a pattern of students coming to GCSC at a deficit. She added that they are working to help teachers focus on differentiated instruction and that the teachers are receptive to this change. Dr. McNulty noted that there is a disconnect between the curriculum of the elementary and middle schools.

Chairman McAdam asked how teachers are being equipped to use the data and what is expected of them. Ms. Bradley stated that they have instructional coaches to provide support individually and with the principal and to help focus on the differentiation of schools and students to make sure they are on the correct pathway. Dr. McNulty added that they have started late start Wednesdays to offer a dedicated weekly time to support teachers through initiatives.

Ms. Kubacki asked if there are supplemental materials available for students with an identified deficit and Ms. Bradley responded that there are existing materials and that they are working to bolster tier one learning to combat incoming deficits.

Rep. Smith stated that the community is concerned about the selection process for members of the oversight committee and that they do not want GCSC or MGT to make the selections. Rep. Smith thanked Mr. Bennett and Mr. Joyce on behalf of the community for their interest and support of the schools. He asked about the money generated from the sale of buildings and how the funds will be used. Dr. McNulty answered that the information was posted on the website and she could get it to him. Nicole Wolverton stated that the funds will be placed in the operations account. Rep. Smith asked how the impact of students continuing e-learning will impact resources. Dr. McNulty answered that it shouldn't impact the teachers since they will be coming in and teaching like they have been the whole time. She stated that they will teach to the students in the classroom while the camera is running for the remote learners. Rep. Smith asked Ms. Bradley to go over the academic goals. Ms. Bradley reviewed the goals. Rep. Smith noted that the current improvement goals seem to be much too low for the year. Ms. Bradley provided context for the goals. Rep. Smith added that even dealing with the pandemic, he thinks the goal is too low. Rep. Smith suggested catering to different learning styles, specifically those students who learn through music. He also suggested making the goals and dashboard more accessible to the public. On behalf of the community, Rep. Smith asked Dr. McNulty why they are going back to the classroom. She responded that the best place for students is in front of teachers and the Lake County superintendents have collectively decided to open in January. Rep. Smith asked if there has been instruction provided to the principals in regard to running an advisory board and Dr. McNulty confirmed that they have been provided guidance. Rep. Smith asked about identifying strengths and weaknesses and Ms. Bradley confirmed that they have at district, school and grade levels. Rep. Smith asked about enrollment data and Dr. McNulty provided information. Rep. Smith asked about debt reduction and Mr. Parish provided information.

Mr. Bennett noted that he also would like to see the growth goal set higher and congratulated the team on their federal audit. He asked Dr. McNulty to speak about GCSC's discussions with the city on the remaining buildings. Dr. McNulty noted that the communication has been open, and the conversations have been positive and productive. Mr. Bennett asked clarifying questions about connectivity. Mr. Parish, Mr. Riddell and Dr. McNulty provided answers. Mr. Bennett asked Mr. Tanner if there were any surprises during projects so far and project specifics were provided.

Ms. Brown congratulated the team on how well they handled the federal audit.

Ms. Kubacki moved the claims docket be approved as presented. Mr. Joyce seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0).

Chairman McAdam acknowledged the movement toward transparency and thanked the team for this work.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item seven – Consideration of the Issuance of Tax Anticipation Warrants for GCSC. Ms. Schaafsma and Ms. Wolverton provided background information. Chairman McAdam noted that this is a fairly common practice. Mr. Bennett moved the resolution be approved. Mr. Joyce seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0).

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item eight – Consideration of Performance Incentives for Gary Schools Recovery, LLC. Ms. Schaafsma and Mr. Cepin provided background information. Ms. Kubacki moved the performance incentives be approved. Ms. Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0).

Chairman McAdam asked if there was any other new business. Rep. Smith addressed the Board and thanked them for working with him. He encouraged them to really look at the academics and raise the goals. Chairman McAdam thanked Rep. Smith for his work. Mr. Bennett requested more discussion on curriculum at the next meeting.

Chairman McAdam adjourned the meeting.