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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

February 25, 2021

**Call to Order:** A meeting of the Distressed Unit Appeal Board (“DUAB” or “Board”) was held February 25, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. Eastern via WebEx. Members of the Board attending the meeting included Justin McAdam, Chairman, Wes Bennett, Tracy Brown, Paul Joyce, Rebecca Kubacki, Senator Liz Brown 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. He noted that they will be holding agenda item six – Consideration of GCSC Transportation Contract.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item three – Approval of Minutes. Mr. Bennett moved the minutes be approved. Mr. Joyce seconded the motion. The motion passed (4-0).

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

Ms. Darian Patton-Straughter, a middle school math teacher with GCSC, thanked the Board for a smooth return to in-person learning. She noted that the return has not been stressful and that the school has been very clean.

Mr. Robert Buggs, the president of the GCSC advisory board, brought concerns to the Board over not being allowed to participate in a meeting with a student’s family and Dr. McNulty. He also expressed frustration over previous concerns not being addressed.

Ms. Angela Davis noted that she was pleased with the measures taken to get students back to in-person learning and encouraged all parents to send their students back to school.

Mr. DeEryl Henderson thanked the Board for a safe return to learn and noted that a phenomenal job has been done to make sure everyone feels safe.

Councilman William Godwin stated that he is happy about the return to school. He noted that he is not supportive of charter school expansion but would support universities partnering directly with GCSC. He also shared his excitement for basketball sectionals being hosted in Gary.

Ms. Telethia Barrett brought her concerns about a lack of transparency and lack of ways to make a formal report. She stated that she is being denied an investigation and due process. She also expressed her frustration at concerns being ignored since the beginning of the state takeover.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item five – Gary Community School Corporation Manager Update. Dr. Paige McNulty updated the Board on students’ return to in-person learning. She informed the Board that neighboring school districts will be working with GCSC to utilize their CTE programs and that they will be hosting the upcoming basketball sectionals. Chairman McAdam asked what the biggest challenge to reopening was and Dr. McNulty answered that the snow was a large challenge specifically for the busses. Ms. Kimberly Bradley noted that the students and teachers were excited to be back. Mr. Bennett congratulated Dr. McNulty on the successful return to in-person learning and asked how the buildings are holding up in the extreme weather. Dr. McNulty answered that the boilers are running and there have been some minor roof leaks but not major issues. Mr. Bennett asked about the new track and Dr. McNulty answered that it is coming along well. Mr. Joyce asked what percentage of students have returned and if they will be able to keep them spaced properly as that number grows. Dr. McNulty answered that 46 percent of students have returned and they will be able to continue social distancing as that number grows. Mr. Joyce asked if certain age groups are harder to keep spaced out. Dr. McNulty answered that middle schoolers and preschoolers take more attention to keep separated. Ms. Kubacki asked if the 46 percent is what was anticipated, and Dr. McNulty confirmed that it was. Chairman McAdam thanked the teachers and staff for their efforts. Mr. Bennett asked for an update on the Roosevelt building and Dr. McNulty answered that they are continuing to meet with interested parties. She noted that there was interest but no viable plans. Mr. Eric Parish added background information on the search process.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item seven – Consideration of GCSC E-Rate Contracts. Mr. Darrell Riddell presented the contract. Chairman McAdam asked about the connectivity in the school buildings and Mr. Riddell answered that they have not had any issues so far. Mr. Joyce made a motion that the Board approve the contract as presented and Mr. Bennett seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0).

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item eight – Consideration of the GCSC Student Information System Contract. Dr. McNulty gave background information on the benefits of switching to this new system and the downsides of the current system. Mr. Riddell noted that it will help with state reporting and that it is very user friendly. Dr. McNulty added that this would allow them to pull reports as needed, add transparency, and prevent them from having data spread out on different systems. Chairman McAdam said that it is nice to see the benefits of the new system since it is more expensive. Mr. Bennett asked when this program would be used full time and Mr. Riddell answered within 30 days. Ms. Kubacki made a motion that the Board approve the contract as presented and Mr. Joyce seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0).

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item nine – Consideration of the GCSC Mechanical Contract. Mr. Rob Tanner presented the contract. Chairman McAdam asked if any local contractors submitted bids. Mr. Tanner noted that there had been local contractors but their bids were significantly higher than the others. Chairman McAdam asked what percentage higher and Mr. Tanner answered 20 percent. Mr. Bennett asked about the timing and possibilities for change orders. Mr. Tanner noted that there is about a 5 percent contingency build in and that it will all be done at the same time. Mr. Bennett asked what they are doing to keep disruptions to a minimum and Mr. Tanner answered that the location alone will keep disruptions down. He added that most of the work will be done over the summer. Mr. Joyce made a motion the contract be approved as presented and Mr. Bennett seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0).

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item ten – GCSC School Improvement Fund Update. Mr. Tanner updated the board on the roof bid process. Chairman McAdam asked how they are running compared to the plan and Mr. Tanner answered that they are ok where they are although the playground at Beveridge was built to a higher level than originally planned. He added that the mechanical work was a bit more

expensive than anticipated. He stated that overall they are pretty close. Ms. Kubacki stated that she is happy about the upgraded playground and noted that it is a great visual commitment to the community. Mr. Tanner overviewed the claims docket. Mr. Bennett made a motion that the claims docket be approved as presented and Ms. Kubacki seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0).

Chairman McAdam asked if there was any other new business and, seeing none, adjourned the meeting.