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# STATE OF INDIANA

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DISTRESSED UNIT APPEAL BOARD



INDIANA GOVERNMENT CENTER NORTH  
100 N. SENATE AVENUE, 9<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR  
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204  
PHONE (317) 234-2273

## Distressed Unit Appeal Board Meeting Memorandum

August 3, 2021

**Call to Order:** A meeting of the Distressed Unit Appeal Board (“DUAB” or “Board”) was held August 3, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. EDT at the Indiana Government Center South Building, Conference Room D, 302 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204. Members of the Board attending the meeting in-person included Justin McAdam, Chairman, Wes Bennett, Tracy Brown, Paul Joyce, Rebecca Kubacki, Representative Jeff Thompson, and Senator Eddie Melton. 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. Ms. Kubacki made a motion that the June 29, 2021, and July 6, 2021, minutes be approved as presented. Mr. Joyce seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0).

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item four – Public Comment.

Ms. Kendra Johnson thanked the Board for utilizing WebEx and allowing for greater transparency. She expressed frustration with feeling shut out since Covid. She noted that she has moved to Indianapolis but still plans to serve and advocate for Gary and its students.

Dr. Vanessa Nichols stated that the registration process was very family oriented and hosted many community organizations.

Mr. Robert Buggs shared his frustration that the advisory board was not invited to registration and a lack of transparency. He shared specific staff and hiring concerns.

Representative Vernon Smith thanked Dr. McNulty and her team for the well-done registration. He expressed community concerns about how stimulus dollars will be spent and requested transparency, and questioned the addition of administrative staff. He also asked when the Board plans to bring their meetings to Gary.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item five – Consideration of Appointment of DUAB Executive Director. The Board and members of the management team thanked Ms. Schaafsma for her time at DUAB. Chairman McAdam introduced Pete Miller and made a recommendation that Mr. Miller be appointed as DUAB Executive Director. Ms. Kubacki made a motion and Mr. Bennett seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0). Mr. Miller addressed the Board. Chairman McAdam overviewed the transition process. Senator Melton welcomed Mr. Miller and stressed the importance of transparency.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item six – Contract Approvals by the DUAB Executive Director. Ms. Schaafsma overviewed the contracts. Senator Melton asked about the project timelines and Chairman McAdam asked Dr. McNulty to provide that information later.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item seven – Gary Community School Corporation (“GCSC”) Manager Update. Dr. Paige McNulty and Chelsea Whittington introduced Cammay Brown, West Side Leadership Academy, Class of 2021 Valedictorian. Ms. Cammy Brown shared her experience as a GCSC student. Mr. Joyce asked what the biggest challenge to receiving an education is for the kids in Gary and Ms. Cammay Brown responded that the biggest challenge was fitting in. Mr. Joyce and Mr. Bennett asked follow-up questions and she responded. Ms. Kubacki noted that she is a wonderful role model. Senator Melton thanked her for speaking with the Board.

Dr. McNulty provided updates on the career center, registration fair, summer school, volunteer mentors from the community, referendum committee progress, and orientation. Mr. Joyce asked what metrics will be used to track student success and Dr. McNulty offered specifics on testing and tracking. Senator Melton noted that he spoke with DOE and they mentioned that they will be doing another round of grants and encouraged them to apply. He also asked about the readiness of the facilities and Dr. McNulty provided updates on HVAC improvements. Ms. Kubacki asked for specifics on PTAs and Dr. McNulty responded. Mr. Bennett asked how the accelerated learning grants are monitored and utilized, and Dr. McNulty responded. Chairman McAdam clarified that a comprehensive plan will be presented to the Board next month and Dr. McNulty confirmed. Dr. McNulty added that they have been participating in a coalition with other schools and Chairman McAdam asked if that was bringing new ideas. Dr. McNulty confirmed that it has been productive. Senator Melton asked questions about recruitment and enrollment. Dr. McNulty noted that she is positive and expecting an uptick in registration. Senator Melton recommended conducting an exit survey for students and asked what the bidding process for contractors is like. Nathan Williamson provided an outline of procurement. Senator Melton asked about his previous employment and Mr. Williamson explained his role at DOE. Chairman McAdam asked for clarification on the number of administrative staff and Dr. McNulty stated that they have not increased the number administrative staff noting that there are some new faces.

Nicole Wolverton presented an update on insurance policies. Chairman McAdam confirmed that the Board does not need to approve anything at this point. Senator Melton asked for more information on the rubric used and Ms. Wolverton responded.

Kimberley Bradley and Mr. Williamson presented information on student assessments and professional development plans going forward. Mr. Joyce asked about funding for inclusive programming and Mr. Williamson responded that they just submitted a grant for after school programming and added that they are trying to be good stewards of the money they already have. Mr. Joyce stressed the importance of students feeling a sense of belonging and Ms. Bradley agreed. Chairman McAdam asked what kind of analysis is planned for the testing data and Ms. Bradley noted that they will use these results as a baseline. Dr. McNulty and Mr. Williamson added further detail on how the data will be utilized. Senator Melton asked if there has been an improvement in teachers’ morale and Ms. Bradley confirmed that there has been improvement. Dr. McNulty added that there has been trauma and that they are now moving through it. Mr. Williamson noted that the recent pay increase has been a contributing factor. Senator Melton asked how they are dealing with the widespread teacher shortage. Ms. Bradley and Mr. Williamson responded. Tracy Brown asked a clarifying question about the grant Mr. Williamson referred to and he responded. She encouraged them to follow through with the preliminary planning mentioned for its use.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item eight – Consideration of Memorandum of understanding with GCSC Paraprofessionals. Dr. McNulty overviewed the memo. Chairman McAdam asked how the new

pay level compares with neighboring districts and Dr. McNulty responded. Mr. Bennett asked for clarification on the updates made to the job description and the master contract. Dr. McNulty provided details. Ms. Kubacki made a motion that Board authorize GCSC to enter into the memo as presented. Ms. Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0).

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item nine – GCSC Path Forward Update. Ms. Bradley provided an update to the Board.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item ten – GCSC School Improvement Fund Plan Update. Ms. Wolverton presented the claims docket. Due to technical difficulties Mr. Williamson presented the update in place of Barry O’Quinn. Dr. McNulty provided an update on roofing as well as building demolition. Senator Melton asked what the plan is for the land remaining after building demolition and Dr. McNulty stated that they would be put up for sale. Senator Melton asked for more details on the projects at West Side and Dr. McNulty provided them. Chairman McAdam confirmed that the capital plan will be presented next month. Mr. Bennett asked how the community is reacting to the improvements and Dr. McNulty noted widespread interest in sports programs. Mr. Bennett asked Senator Melton what he is hearing from the community. Senator Melton noted that he has received positive feedback. He added that the challenge will be fighting the legacy and perception of the projects. Dr. McNulty shared how GCSC is trying to reach the larger community. Senator Melton noted the importance of Gary getting a pool, specifically from the safety standpoint of learning to swim. Mr. Bennett made a motion the claims docket be approved as presented. Mr. Joyce seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0).

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item twelve – GCSC Financial Updates. Ms. Wolverton presented the update. Chairman McAdam, Mr. Bennett and Senator Melton asked clarifying questions and Ms. Wolverton responded.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item thirteen – Consideration of GCSC Custodial and Maintenance Contract with Alpha Building Maintenance Services, Inc. Ms. Wolverton presented the contract. Mr. Joyce asked if they put together an analysis on whether it makes more sense to outsource or go in-house. Ms. Wolverton noted that they will look at all options going forward. Mr. Bennett made a motion the contract be approved as presented. 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.