
STATE OF INDIANA

DISTRESSED UNIT APPEAL BOARD



INDIANA GOVERNMENT CENTER NORTH
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Distressed Unit Appeal Board Meeting Memorandum

September 28, 2021

Call to Order: A meeting of the Distressed Unit Appeals Board (“DUAB” or “Board”) was September 29, 2021, at 1:30 p.m. EDT at the Indiana Government Center South Building, Conference Rooms 4 and 5, 302 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204. Members of the Board attending the meeting include Justin McAdam, Chairman, Wes Bennett, Tracy Brown, Paul Joyce, Rebecca Kubacki, Representative Jeff Thompson, and Senator Eddie Melton. Peter Miller, 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 that the August 3, 2021, minutes be approved as presented. Mr. Bennett seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0).

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item four – Public Comment. Due to technical difficulties, community members unable to speak were asked to submit written comment and to address the Board at the next scheduled meeting.

Ms. Krystal Swaim offered praise for the positive changes taking place at West Side Leadership Academy.

Dr. Tyneasha Banks thanked the Board for their support of STEM activities.

Ms. Sheleita Miller stated the importance of supporting strong academics and inquired how to have further conversation with the Board.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item seven – Gary Community School Corporation Manager Update. Chelsea Whittington introduced Denise Knight, a student at Gary West Side Leadership Academy, and Shelly Martin, Director of the Gary Area Career Center. Ms. Knight discussed what the career center’s welding program means to her and how it supports her career goals. Ms. Martin discussed the importance of offering hands-on programs and the opportunities they present for students. Chairman McAdam and Mr. Bennett asked about Ms. Knight’s future, and she stated that she would like to join the Army. Mr. Joyce noted that these are the types of programs that develop well-rounded people.

Dr. Paige McNulty provided updates on buses, student safety, hiring, and community partnerships. Chairman McAdam asked about the status of a student injured in a shooting earlier in the school year and Dr. McNulty stated that he is improving. Ms. Kubacki noted that she loves reading updates on the website. Sen. Melton asked for more information on student safety initiatives, partnerships, and funding. Dr. McNulty stated that a collaborative safety plan is being developed, ten new metal detectors have been purchased, grants have been applied for, and that they have been engaging with the Sheriff’s Office. Sen. Melton asked how students with reoccurring behavioral issues are being addressed and Dr.

McNulty noted that they are engaging with about 40 students and any further infractions eligible to attend night school. Sen. Melton asked about managing students cell phone use and Dr. McNulty stated that they need better policing in the hallways. Nathan Williamson noted that in addition to more observation, students need to be taught better behaviors and engaged more. Dr. McNulty stated that students currently have a 45-minute lunch and that they are looking at adding lunch clubs to engage the students during this extra free time. Sen. Melton asked follow-up questions about policies surrounding student safety and Dr. McNulty responded. Chairman McAdam asked how students are reintegrated from the night school and Dr. McNulty noted that they are working on a gradual process. Mr. Bennett asked if they were going to continue with night school or develop a separate facility to be run during the day. Dr. McNulty stated that she hopes to not need a separate facility. Mr. Bennett asked about the schedule for night school students and Dr. McNulty stated that they make up for the shorter day with online course work. She added that students are served dinner and given a sack lunch. Chairman McAdam asked about ADM and Dr. McNulty stated that they have 4,312 students, noting that is 50 less than last year. Chairman McAdam asked if that loss is consistent with what other schools are experiencing and Dr. McNulty confirmed that it is. Chairman McAdam asked if they have tracked where those lost students went and Dr. McNulty noted that some may have moved out of state. Eric Parish noted that more ADM information will be released in December. Mr. Bennett asked about truancy and Dr. McNulty noted that there are about 40 chronically truant students. She noted that they are working with the court system and directly engaging with the students. Sen. Melton asked if the lost students started the school year at GCSC and Kimberley Bradley noted that most did not. Mr. Williamson noted that enrollment has been increasing since the beginning of the school year. Sen. Melton asked about the fiscal impact of student loss and Dr. McNulty responded. Nicole Wolverton added that the five-year forecast factors in ADM and will be updated accordingly. Mr. Joyce asked if they will have to make adjustments due to the student loss and Dr. McNulty stated that they will not have to since they completed hiring after students numbers were confirmed. Mr. Bennett asked what the age of students lost was and Dr. McNulty noted that most were elementary students. Mr. Bennett asked if the student to teacher ratio was affected and Dr. McNulty noted that it was not. Mr. Bennett asked if there is a particular grade level or subject area where the ratio is an issue and Dr. McNulty stated that they need to hire a band director due to high demand. Chairman McAdam asked for an update on the air conditioning repairs and Dr. McNulty stated that they are complete and the system is working. She added that the tennis court fence is up and will be resurfaced in a week or so. Sen. Melton asked if the boiler is working. Dr. McNulty confirmed that they have tested the system and it is working.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item eight – Review of spring 2021 ILEARN Assessment Results. Dr. Charity Flores, DOE Chief Academic Officer, provided a state-level overview of the pandemic's impact on student achievement as well as an overview of GCSC's results. Chairman McAdam asked if the recovery time is based on a traditional school model and Dr. Flores stated that this would be above and beyond the normal school day environment. Mr. Bennett asked how these results compared to those of three or four years ago and Dr. Flores stated that there is no historical baseline for this test. Mr. Bennett noted that these numbers are tragic and he hopes there is a plan for the future. He asked if this shows online learning is not effective and Dr. Flores stated that they do have information on educational plans but not necessarily how they were carried out. She added that the pandemic's impact was lesser on students who received in-person learning. Mr. Bennett stated that he does not want to take away from the team's efforts over the past school year. Chairman McAdam asked clarifying questions on how to read the data and Dr. Flores responded. Sen. Melton asked how they can measure academic success outside of ILEARN and Dr. Flores noted that local districts have more student data than the state is provided. Sen. Melton asked if GCSC has formative assessments and Mr. Williamson provided an overview of their assessments. Chairman McAdam asked for recommendations of interventions and Dr. Flores provided some research based recommendations. Sen. Melton stated that although the Board was initially finance-focused they now need to turn their focus to academics. Chairman McAdam agreed that

academics are a serious issue. Mr. Bennett asked if the three- to five-year timeframe was specific to Gary or the impact no matter the school and Dr. Flores confirmed that it would be the timeframe for any school. Mr. Joyce asked if Ms. Knight enjoyed going to school and she confirmed that she does enjoy school. Mr. Joyce asked if other students do and she said they do not like school. Mr. Joyce asked why and Ms. Knight stated that things have been harder since the pandemic. She added that many students have to work or have families of their own to worry about.

Mr. Williamson and Ms. Bradley overviewed GCSC's plan to address academic shortages. Chairman McAdam asked for further information on the extended school day and Ms. Bradley outlined implemented activities. Mr. Williamson noted that the teachers have regularly scheduled trainings to strengthen their skills and make the most of their time with students. Chairman McAdam asked what is being done to support students in math and Ms. Bradley responded. Mr. Williamson noted that they now have licensed math teachers on staff. Sen. Melton asked a follow up question on the shortage of teacher and Dr. McNulty responded.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item nine – Consideration of GCSC Contractual Obligations and Purchases. Ms. Wolverton presented the Sodexo contract. Mr. Bennett made a motion to approve. Ms. Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0). Ms. Wolverton presented the KLF Enterprises contract. Chairman McAdam asked how they plan to keep the community informed and Dr. McNulty responded. Mr. Bennett asked what the property will look like after the demolition and Dr. McNulty stated that it will be greenspace. Sen. Melton stated that he was pleased with the inclusion of local hiring and Ms. Wolverton noted that they were the only vendor to include this. Chairman McAdam asked about environmental concerns and Ms. Wolverton addressed them. Mr. Joyce asked if any federal funds would be used and Ms. Wolverton stated that none would be used. Mr. Bennett made a motion to approve. Mr. Joyce seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0). Mr. Williamson presented the Network Solution, Inc. contract. Mr. Joyce asked who will install and if they will follow federal guidelines. Mr. Williamson noted that the installation was included in the contract and they are aware of federal guidelines. Ms. Brown asked for clarification on how the payments work and Mr. Williamson responded. Mr. Joyce made a motion to approve. Ms. Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0). Mr. Williamson presented the GAPS contract. Mr. Joyce asked if the teacher contracts will need to be amended and Mr. Williamson stated that they will not need to be amended. Ms. Brown made a motion to approve. Mr. Joyce seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0). Mr. Williamson presented the SAVVAS & McGraw-Hill contract. Chairman McAdam asked about the progression between grades and if other schools use this combination. Mr. Williamson and Dr. McNulty confirmed that it is common for schools to use these in combination. Mr. Joyce asked how long the curriculum materials will be available and Mr. Williamson stated that the license is good for six years. Mr. Joyce made a motion to approve. Mr. Bennett seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0).

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item six – Contract Authorizations by the DUAB Executive Director. Mr. Miller presented the contracts. Sen. Melton asked follow-up question on the contract with Catapult Learning and Mr. Williamson responded. Sen. Melton asked follow-up questions on the Budget Advertisement contract and Ms. Wolverton responded.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item ten – GCSC School Improvement Fund Claims Docket. Ms. Wolverton overviewed the claims docket updates. Mr. Joyce made a motion to approve. Mr. Bennett seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0).

Chairman McAdam asked if there was any other new business. Mr. Joyce congratulated the team on having the special education high risk designation by DOE removed.

Chairman McAdam adjourned the meeting.