



Board Members Present

Jill Robinson Kramer (Vice-Chair)

Virginia Calvin

Janet Rummel

MaryAnn Ruegger

Ellis G. Dumas III

Beth Bray

Board Members Absent

Michelle Gough

Gretchen Gutman

Staff

James Betley

Bridgett Abston

Ryan Preston

Nicole Hornyak

Sherie Scott

NOTICE OF VIRTUAL MEETING

May 21, 2021 at 11 a.m. EDT

Meeting Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZqtwzEXDcw>

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Agenda

I. Call to Order/ Board Meeting Minutes Approval

- a. Vice-Chair Jill Robinson Kramer called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. EDT
- b. Approval of Board Minutes (03/24/2021)
 - i. Vice-Chair Kramer opened the floor for comments on the previous board meeting minutes. Hearing no objections, Board Member Calvin motioned to approve the minutes. Board Member Rummel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with members Virginia Calvin, Janet Rummel, MaryAnn Ruegger, Ellis G. Dumas III, and Vice-Chair Kramer voting aye.
- c. Request to Change the Order of Business
 - i. Due to Board Members joining the board meeting late, it was requested to change the order of business and begin by discussing the Appointment to Authorizer Committee first. Member Calvin motioned to begin discussion with the Appointment to Authorizer Committee. Board Member Rummel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with members Virginia Calvin, Janet Rummel, MaryAnn Ruegger, Ellis G. Dumas III, Beth Bray, and Vice-Chair Kramer voting aye.

II. Board Business

- a. **Excel Center Elkhart – Charter Application**
 - i. Presentation of staff recommendation (5-7 minutes)
 1. Executive Director, James Betley, described the background of the Excel Center Elkhart Application submission. Mr. Betley explained that this is a welcomed addition to the community and that this organizer has several other ICSB-authorized Excel Centers in Northern Indiana. Mr. Betley explained rationale for the staff recommendation.
 - ii. Presentation of request by organizer (8-10 minutes)
 1. Deb Coble, President of Goodwill Industries of Michiana, addressed the board providing additional information regarding the demand for an Excel Center Elkhart.
 - iii. Question and answer period
 1. No questions were presented by the Board.
 - iv. Board decision
 1. Board Member, Calvin motioned to approve the staff recommendation to grant the request of the Excel Center Elkhart to open. Board Member Rummel seconded the motion. Vice-Chair Kramer recused herself from the vote. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with members Virginia Calvin, Janet Rummel, MaryAnn Ruegger, Beth Bray, and Ellis G. Dumas III voting aye.
- b. **Gary Middle College – Combination Request**
 - i. Presentation of staff recommendation (5-7 minutes)
 1. Executive Director, James Betley, described the background of the Gary Middle College Combination Request recommendation. Mr. Betley explained that this merger will not be a material change at the

school level and would minimize costs for similar processes already in place at both schools.

- ii. Presentation of request by organizer (8-10 minutes)
 1. Arlene Colvin, Board Chair of Gary Middle College West and Gary Middle College, addressed the board by sharing that this merger is seen as an opportunity to provide more resources directly to the students.
- iii. Question and answer period
 1. Board member Ellis asked whether the West Campus also served students from East Chicago and asked for confirmation that this combination request is not due to capacity issues or need. Board member Ellis also inquired about the financial gain for this merger. Ms. Colvin clarified that this merger is not due to a capacity issue. She confirmed that the West and East campuses will continue to service their respective student population. Further, she mentioned that through analysis their team identified an approximate \$100,000.00 cost-savings for the schools if they merged.
 2. Board member Ellis also asked if there was solicitation for community feedback regarding the merger. Board member Ellis requested more information regarding where the public meetings were held and to what extent there was opportunity for public comment. Ms. Colvin said the community is aware of the merger application submission. Their Board has provided opportunity for comment and they have not received any negative feedback regarding the merger. Dana Teasley, GEO Foundation General Counsel and Chief Financial Officer, shared the board meeting information is publicly available on the school websites.
 3. Board Member Ruegger asked if this were a school district merging, how would the process work? Mr. Betley said he is unaware of the process school districts would follow in the event of a merger.
 4. Board members Ruegger and Ellis recommended a public hearing for mergers as best practice in the future. Mr. Betley offered to meet with Board Members to further discuss merger procedures.
 5. Board Member Bray sought clarification on the two charter agreements, specifically if the Ball State Gary Middle College charter agreement would be dissolved. Mr. Betley confirmed the Ball State Gary Middle College charter agreement would be dissolved.
 6. Board Member Bray asked if the school bylaws allow GEO Foundation to add or replace board members at will. Ms. Teasley clarified that the Board and GEO Foundation are completely independent of each other.
 7. Vice-Chair Kramer asked if Ball State Office of Charter Schools had a merger procedure. Ms. Teasley explained that Ball State Office of Charter Schools did not have a merger process in place.
- iv. Board decision
 1. Board Member, Calvin motioned to approve the staff recommendation to grant the request of GEO Academies, Inc. to merge Gary Middle College and Gary Middle College West. Board

Member Rummel seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote with members Virginia Calvin, Janet Rummel, MaryAnn Ruegger, Beth Bray, and Vice-Chair Kramer voting aye. Ellis G. Dumas III voted no.

III. Other Board Business

- a. Appointment to Authorizer Committee
 - i. Executive Director Betley detailed the Authorizer Committee and ICSB's role in the committee.
 - ii. The Board Members agreed to bring recommendations for possible committee appointees and to discuss in a special meeting.
 - iii. A motion to take nominations from the Board and schedule a time to meet again after Board Members have had an opportunity to provide names was motioned by Member Dumas. Board Member Rummel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with members Virginia Calvin, Janet Rummel, MaryAnn Ruegger, Ellis G. Dumas III, Beth Bray, and Vice-Chair Kramer voting aye.
- b. Introduction of New Board Members
 - i. New Board Members, Beth Bray and Ellis Dumas III, introduced themselves to the board.
- c. Extension of Charter Amendment Flexibility
 - i. Mr. Betley has recommended to the Board an extension through the 2021 – 2022 school year to the flexibility given to the Executive Director and ICSB Staff to approve temporary amendments to their Charter Agreements so there is flexibility to modify education plans as necessary to address learning loss, a return to in-person learning, and other changes related to the pandemic.
 - ii. The motion is made by Board member Bray. Board Member Calvin seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote with members Virginia Calvin, Janet Rummel, Ellis G. Dumas III, Beth Bray, and Vice-Chair Kramer voting aye. MaryAnn Ruegger voted no.
 - iii. Board Decision: An extension has been granted to allow ICSB charter schools to submit temporary amendments for the 2021 – 2022 school year relevant to flexibility in modifying education plans as necessary to address learning loss, a return to in-person learning, and other changes related to the pandemic. Temporary amendment requests must be submitted to ICSB Staff by November 1, 2021.

IV. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

- a. Vice-Chair Kramer thanked the new Board Members and current Board Members for their participation.
- b. Mr. Betley offered to meet with new Board Members, Beth Bray and Ellis Dumas III, to discuss the Board, including its history.
- c. The meeting ended at 12:59 p.m. EDT.