

# CORNERSTONE JEFFERSON-DOUGLASS ACADEMY

## Meeting of the Board of Directors Public School Academy Corporation

6861 Nevada Ave. Detroit, MI 48234

### Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2025

8:00 a.m.

#### **1) BUSINESS ROUTINE**

##### **a) Call to Order (Chairman)**

The meeting called to order at 8:02 am.

##### **b) Board of Directors Roll Call**

**Present:** Yvette Bing, Marla Thrower, David Felton

**Absent:** Patrick Nelson, Robert Zawideh

**Attendees:** Andy Anuzis, President; Clint McDaniel, GVSU Representative; Grant Heugel, Director of Operations; Elizabeth Noa Carrion, Compliance Director; Joe Valentic, Chief Financial Officer; Wanesha Daniel, HR Director; Candace Murray, Instructional Coach; Jennifer Morris, Compliance Coordinator (arrived at 8:45 am)

##### **c) Adoption of Agenda**

Bing moved to adopt the agenda. Thrower seconded. All approved.

##### **d) Adoption of Previous Meeting Minutes**

Bing moved to approve the previous meeting minutes. Thrower seconded. All approved.

##### **e) Pledge of Allegiance**

Board and attendees said the pledge of allegiance.

##### **f) Sharing Gratitude**

Board and attendees expressed their gratitude's.

#### **2) PUBLIC COMMENT** (Limited to agenda items)

There was no public comment.

#### **3) PRESENTATIONS**

##### **a) Organizational Update - Andy Anuzis**

We are making network wide improvements in all departments. While recent financial audits included some findings, most were attributed to prior administration. The current team has shown significant improvement in financial operations. HR has made substantial strides under the leadership of Wanesha Daniel. The district has gone from starting the year with approximately 40 vacancies to now having only a few, district-wide. There's been a notable reduction in reliance on temporary staffing. Compliance and HR documentation has also greatly improved, with submission rates increasing from 50% to over 90%. Operational systems have strengthened, with core functions becoming more efficient and reliable. Remaining delays are largely due to legacy

financial issues still being resolved.

**b) Academic Update – Candace Murray**

Ms. Murray shared her extensive background using the program and highlighted its impact on early literacy development. Key points included:

Development of Confident Readers:

ABEKA follows a systematic, step-by-step approach that begins with phonemic awareness and builds toward fluency and comprehension. It promotes word attack skills over memorization and supports independent reading development.

Effectiveness for All Learners:

The program is especially effective for students with learning differences such as dyslexia or ADHD due to its repetitive and structured design, aligned with the science of reading.

Teacher-Friendly Curriculum:

The scripted, easy-to-follow lessons save teachers time and offer strong support, making it suitable for both new and veteran educators. Ms. Murray emphasized its empowerment of teachers and ability to secure student buy-in.

Parental Involvement:

Materials are accessible for families, fostering home-school collaboration. Parents reported feeling empowered to support reading at home.

T Clark added that ABEKA's evidence-based, phonics-first approach contrasts with previous methods influenced by trends in education. T Clark emphasized the goal of becoming the top reading school in Detroit within five years, and in Michigan within ten.

**c) Enrollment Update - Joe Valentic**

The team is seeking board approval to launch Pre-K as early as this fall, pending state licensing and final approvals from Wayne RESA. If not this year, the launch would take place the following year. There are educational benefits which include early intervention for students to begin learning before kindergarten, improved readiness and long-term academic performance, and stronger student retention from Pre-K through 8th grade. Parents have expressed high interest in keeping siblings at one location. Pre-K would allow families to remain together and participate in more school programs. A quick interest survey yielded 16–17 family responses within 48 hours. Forecasting supports two Pre-K sections based on anticipated demand. Recruitment pipeline includes existing family networks and community engagement events. Conservative estimate shows profitability in year one with ~\$46K net revenue. Break-even point is approximately 12 students per section. Long-term financial projections show significant positive impact due to student retention and ongoing enrollment growth. Pre-K receives a higher per-pupil allocation than K–8, helping offset startup costs. Each Pre-K classroom requires one teacher and one assistant, both at lower salary scales than typical K–8 staff. Certification for child care licensing is in process, we foresee no major issues, but we are subject to bureaucratic timelines.

**d) Financial Update - Joe Valentic**

Current expenditures are tracking under budget. Year-end budget planning is underway.

A new Assistant Controller has been hired to support financial operations, bringing experience from auditing public school districts.

Wanesha Daniel gave an overview on the status of HR and the improvements they have made over the past year through strategies that have decreased vacancies and increased teacher retention network wide.

**4) BOARD POLICY WORK**

**a)** Board meeting dates: All meetings are at 8:00am.

5. June 23, 2025

**5) ACTION ITEMS**

a.) Approval of the 2025-2026 School Calendar

b.) Approval of the Pre-K addition

- c.) Approval of Abeka as the core K-5 ELA curriculum purchase
- d) Approval of the 2025-2026 Professional Development Advisory Committee members

Bing motioned to combine and approve Action Items a-d. Felton seconded. All approved.

## **6) AUTHORIZER COMMENTS – McDaniel**

### Board Training and Academic Grant Eligibility

- One board member (Ms. Bing) has completed a required training.
- At least one additional board member must complete training for the school to qualify for the \$10 per pupil academic grant.
- Final training opportunities:
  - May 22: *Best Practices Using an Efficient Governance Committee Structure*
  - June 2: *Effective Charter School Governance: Evaluating Your Performance*
  - Trainings are virtual, held from 4:00–5:00 PM.

### New Compliance Requirement – School Signage

- Effective April 1, charter schools must include authorizer and management company names on:
  - Website footers
  - Enrollment applications (digital or printed)
  - Advertisements (TV, radio, billboard, online)
  - Exterior school signs that are voluntarily erected, modified, or repaired

### FY 2025–26 State Budget Proposals

- Senate Proposal:
  - 50% of foundation allowance increases must be directed to educator compensation
  - Up to 30% of at-risk funds may be used to reduce K–3 class sizes
- Per Pupil Funding Proposals:
  - Governor: \$10,000 (brick & mortar), \$8,000 (cyber) – 20% reduction for cyber
  - House: \$10,025 (all schools)
  - Senate: \$10,008 (brick & mortar), \$8,006 (cyber)
- No changes to the foundation allowance structure specified yet

### Teacher Training & Certification Support

- Programs available for staff pursuing certification or endorsements:
  - Teachers of Tomorrow
  - Professional Innovators in Teaching (PIT)
  - #LEAD – for aspiring administrators via National Charter Schools Institute
- Funding (starting July 2025):
  - Covers up to 50% of program cost
  - Contact: Jayme Lesperance for details and application support

### Leadership Forum

- Date: August 6, 2025
- Time: 12:00–4:00 PM
- Location: GVSU Allendale Campus
- Event includes lunch, networking, campus tours, and school year kickoff overview
- Optional evening social activity



## Continuing Education Scholarship (Fall 2025)

- Open to any GVSU charter school staff with a bachelor's degree
- Covers a variety of graduate degrees and endorsements
- Reimbursement Tiers:
  - 0–5 years of service: 50%
  - 5+ years: 80%
- Contact: Jayme Lesperance for application info

## 7) ANNOUNCEMENTS

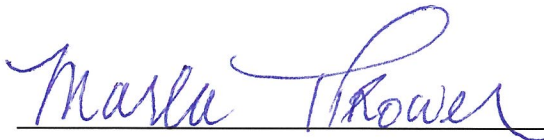
a) Next Meeting: June 23, 2025, at 8:00 a.m.

## 8) PUBLIC COMMENT (related to non-agenda items)

There was no public comment.

## 9) MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING

Motion to adjourn meeting at 9:00 a.m. by Bing. Thrower seconded. The above minutes were duly adopted on 06/30/25 by the Cornerstone Jefferson-Douglass Academy Board of Directors at a properly noticed meeting held at which a quorum was present.

  
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Submitted by Marla Thrower, Secretary