



WASHINGTON-PARKS ACADEMY

A Cornerstone School

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Location: 11685 Appleton, Redford Charter Twp, MI 48239

Meeting Minutes

June 30, 2025

3:00 pm

1) BUSINESS ROUTINE

a) Call to Order (President)

The meeting called to order at 3:07 p.m.

b) Board of Directors Roll Call

Present: Steve Londo, Marcia Kreger, John George, TeShayla Coates (virtual)

Absent: None

Attendees: Grant Heugel, Director of Operations; Elizabeth Noa Carrion, Compliance Director; Joe Valentic, Chief Financial Officer; Clint McDaniel, GVSU Representative; Taiwo Da-Silva, Superintendent; Doug Zloto, Chief Operating Officer; John Kava, Legal Counsel; Devon Graham, Building Principal; Christina Gaines, K-5 Principal; Maggie Durant, Chief Strategy Officer; Clark Durant, Chief Executive Officer

c) Adoption of Agenda

George moved. Kreger seconded. All approved.

d) Approval of Previous Board Meeting Minutes

George moved. Kreger seconded. All approved.

e) Pledge of Allegiance

Board and attendees said the pledge of allegiance.

f) Sharing of 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 - Doug Zloto

A walkthrough of Washington-Parks Academy was completed last Thursday. The consultant assigned to the school is finalizing her report for submission to the state. Once approved, Washington-Parks will be the first site licensed, enabling parents to apply for the Child Care Scholarship. This development is expected to convert the current Dawn to Dusk program into a revenue-generating opportunity for both Washington-Parks and the broader CEG network. The team is working toward achieving a five-star quality rating for the program.

b) Academic Update - Devon Graham & Christina Gaines

Reading proficiency levels declined slightly from the previous year. Students reading three or more grade levels below increased from 21% to 23%. Those two grade levels below increased from 15% to 18%. Those students on grade level dropped from 14% to 13%, the students above grade level declined from 16% to 12%. Leadership attributes these changes in part to chronic tardiness, causing students to miss the morning reading block.

A new reading intervention, Success for All (SFA), is being implemented for grades K–5 in Fall 2025, with expansion to grades 6–8 planned for the following year. Features of SFA include: 90-minute instructional blocks, leveled groupings, scripted direct instruction, bi-monthly assessments with regrouping, and consistent coaching. Staff will receive three days of training, ongoing coaching, and attend the New Leaders Institute held in Baltimore in July.

Performance in math was “flat overall,” with slight declines at higher proficiency levels.

Students who are three or more grade levels below increased from 23% to 27%. Students who are two grade levels below rose from 16% to 18%. Students who are one grade level below slightly decreased from 45% to 43%. Students who are above grade level fell from 10% to 6%.

Math instruction improvements include:

K–2: Daily number sense routines, centers with manipulatives, early intervention groups, and math storybooks.

3–5: Continued support from Lawrence Tech tutors, small group reteaching, daily math fluency, and student math journals.

6–8: Focus on problem-solving workshops, peer tutoring, tech tool integration, and spiral review using IXL and IReady data.

We will be standardizing math support across all grades with Lawrence Tech, replacing a split-model with Wayne State. We will emphasize on grouping students by proficiency level in both reading and math to better target instruction. Teachers are being encouraged to shift control to students, allowing more discussion, exploration, and ownership of learning. There are plans to increase coaching support and provide consistency across classrooms in instructional methods and vocabulary. Although we have many unseasoned teachers, we have focused on professional development and coaching supports. We have also focused on full-time academic support staff which has been critical in sustaining progress. There has also been a strong positive shift in staff culture, which has fostered collaboration and improved morale.

c) Finance - Joe Valentic

i. EOY 2024-2025 Budget Update

ii. State Aid Note Resolution

Core revenue was close to projections, there were no major surprises. Private Sources total \$644,000, which were planned contributions from CEG, the management organization. We intend to ensure a 5% fund balance at year-end, this is contingent on the resolution of the legal issues with MDE. In expenditures we were \$800,000 over budget. This is attributed to the expansion of MAP programs, additional staffing to support school growth, and an extra payroll (\$140,000) not included in the initial forecast. A transfer is being made to cover a deficit in the food service fund, which is under review for restructuring (possible in-house operations in the future).

MDE initially withheld ESSER funds from Lincoln-King Academy. Washington-Parks Academy (WPA), supported by CEG, transferred ~\$4M to Lincoln-King to keep it afloat. The U.S. Department of Education (USED) has sided with Lincoln-King and WPA multiple times, ordering MDE to release funds. MDE responded by withholding ~\$3.8M from WPA, refusing to release state aid or approve budgets. There is a Federal case pending on whether WPA's transfer of funds to Lincoln-King was lawful. USED granted a temporary order requiring MDE to release \$1.3M to WPA and resume federal fund access. The final ruling is pending; next court filing was

due Wednesday, July 2. The outcome could impact CEG's ability to make good on the \$644K contribution. MDE has not accepted WPA's audit, blocking all state aid payments since November 2024. WPA has only received \$1.9M out of \$7.5M owed. CEG has fronted all operating expenses in the meantime (e.g., payroll). This is not a loan, CEG is advancing funds on WPA's behalf and awaiting reimbursement once funds are released. In addition to reimbursement, CEG pledged \$644K as a contribution to help WPA meet its 5% fund equity goal. CEG is experiencing cash flow strain due to supporting multiple schools (Madison-Carver, Jefferson-Douglass, Lincoln-King, and WPA).

(Close regular session & Open Budget Hearing)

At 4:31 p.m. Londo motioned to close the regular session and open the Budget Hearing. Kreger moved, George seconded. All approved.

iii. 2025-2026 Proposed Budget

We are anticipating a decline of ~23 students which has been factored into the revenue projections. The 2025-2026 Budget uses the most conservative estimate of \$10,000 per pupil. There are two higher funding levels still under state debate. The local revenue is \$705K, which includes the Latchkey program income (CEG is the certified provider and revenue flows through them). We have secured a \$100K Success for All grant which will be spread over two years. There will be no Pre-K funding this year due to incomplete certification, this is deferred until next school year. Under expenditures you will find the staff salaries which include a 2.5% across-the-board raise for all returning staff. We have reserved an additional 0.5% for a merit-based pool for high performers or retention flexibility. This year there will be an ~8% raise in the healthcare cost premium. The cost will be split 50/50 between CEG and staff. The impact to staff is expected to be small (\$8-\$10 more per paycheck). There was a 15% increase to all of our policies for our commercial insurance. Only one of five potential insurers would quote us due to a tight insurance market and a pending case involving a sexual harassment allegation against a former security guard at one of our schools. The lawsuit appears to be directed toward the security company, not the school.

(Close Budget Hearing & Open the regular session)

At 4:43 p.m. Londo motioned to close the Budget Hearing and open the regular session. George moved, Kreger seconded. All approved.

Kava reviewed the State Aid Resolution for the Board.

4) BOARD POLICY WORK

a) Board Meeting Dates for 2025-2026: All on Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m.

1. August 5, 2025
2. October 21, 2025
3. January 13, 2026
4. March 17, 2026
5. May 19, 2026
6. June 23, 2026

5) ACTION ITEMS

- a) Approval State Aid Note Resolution as Presented
Londo motioned to approve Action Item 5a. George moved, Kreger seconded. All approved.
- b) Approval of 2024-2025 Amended General Fund Budget Resolution
- c) Approval of 2024-2025 Amended Food Service Fund Resolution
Londo motioned to approve Action Item 5b & c. George moved, Kreger seconded. All approved.
- d) Approval of 2025-2026 Proposed General Fund Budget Resolution
- e) Approval of 2025-2026 Food Service Fund Resolution
Londo motioned to approve Action Item 5d & e. George moved, Kreger seconded. All approved.
- f) Approval of Board Meeting Dates for 2025-2026
Londo motioned to approve Action Item 5f. George moved, Kreger seconded. All approved.
- g) Approval of the proposed Lease Extension Agreement
Londo motioned to approve Action Item 5g under the current terms until 2028. George moved, Kreger seconded. All approved.

6) CONSENT ITEMS

None

7) AUTHORIZER COMMENTS – McDaniel

Emergency Response Plan Updates

- Schools must implement new emergency response plan requirements for the 2025–26 school year.
- Changes stem from Public Acts 36 & 37 (2024), which include:
 - Training for emergency response teams
 - Sudden cardiac arrest protocols
 - Additional requirements for high school athletic coaches (not applicable to all schools)

Legislative Updates

- U.S. Supreme Court Decision: A 4-4 deadlock leaves the Oklahoma Supreme Court ruling intact, blocking the establishment of religious charter schools.
- The Charter School Office will monitor related developments.

Section 97c Safety Grant

- \$2,000 per school building available for comprehensive safety and security assessments.
- Application deadline: June 20, 2025.
- Contact: Gretchen LaHaie (AIEGR@gvsu.edu) for support.

2025–26 State School Aid Budget Proposals

- Proposals vary:
 - Governor: \$10,000/pupil; \$8,000 for cyber charter schools
 - House: \$10,025/pupil (both types)
 - Senate: \$10,008/pupil; \$8,006 for cyber schools
 - One proposal includes \$12,000/pupil, with \$2,000 earmarked for unspecified purposes

Staff Appreciation

- Thanks extended to board members and leaders for attending year-end school celebrations.
- Record attendance in Grand Rapids and Detroit.

Professional Development & Certification Support

- Scholarship funds available for:
 - Professional Innovators in Teaching (PIT) Program
 - #Lead Program (admin certification path)
- Covers up to 50% of costs for approved candidates.
- Contact: Jayme Lesperance at the Charter School Office.

Upcoming Events

- Leadership Forum:
 - Date: August 6, 2025
 - Time: 12–4 PM
 - Location: GVSU Allendale Campus
 - Includes lunch, networking, tours, and updates for 2025–26

Continuing Education Scholarships

- Now available to all full-time employees with a bachelor's degree.
- Up to 80% tuition reimbursement.
- Application window: June 3 – August 8, 2025

"30 for 30" Innovation Grant

- In honor of GVSU's 30 years of charter authorizing:
 - \$3,000 Mini-Grants (10)
 - \$10,000 Mid-Level Grants (10)
 - \$30,000 Full Grants (10)
- Supports innovative learning strategies led by students, educators, or school leaders.

Michigan Teacher of the Year Nominations

- Nominations due: September 24, 2025, by 11:59 PM
- Link available in CSO June Newsletter

Charter Through College Engagement

- Record number of charter students connected to GVSU this year.
- Special recognition to Cornerstone for student participation.

8) ANNOUNCEMENTS

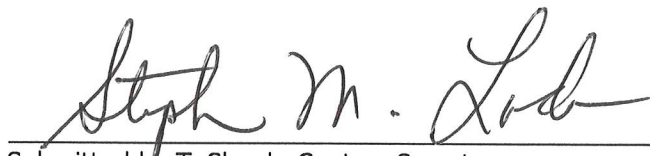
- a) Next Meeting: August 5, 2025

9) PUBLIC COMMENT (related to non-agenda items)

The need to replace TeShayla Coates on the Board was discussed.

10) MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING

Motion to adjourn meeting at 5:05 p.m. by Londo. George moved, Kreger seconded. The above minutes were duly adopted on 8/14/25 by the Cornerstone Washington-Parks Academy Board of Directors at a properly noticed meeting held at which a quorum was present.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steph M. Londo". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Submitted by ~~TeShayla Coates, Secretary~~

Stephen LONDO, BOARD Pres.