



CORNERSTONE JEFFERSON-DOUGLASS ACADEMY

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Location: 6861 Nevada Ave, Detroit, MI 48234

Meeting Minutes

August 11, 2025

8:00 a.m.

1) BUSINESS ROUTINE

a) Call to Order (President)

The meeting called to order at 7:59 a.m.

b) Board of Directors Roll Call

Present: Patrick Nelson, Marla Thrower, Yvette Bing

Absent: David Felton, Robert Zawideh

Attendees: Grant Heugel, Director of Operations; Elizabeth Noa Carrion, Compliance Director; Joe Valentic, Chief Financial Officer; Mary Ann Johnson, Finance Director; Clark Durant, Chief Executive Officer; Taiwo Da-Silva, Superintendent; Doug Zloto, Chief Operating Officer; Clint McDaniel, GVSU Representative (virtual); John Kava, Legal Counsel (arrived at 8:05 am) T Clark Durant, Chief of Staff (virtual)

c) Adoption of Agenda

Nelson motioned to approve the agenda. Thrower moved, Bing seconded. All approved.

d) Approval of Previous Board Meeting Minutes

Nelson 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 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 – Clark Durant & Doug Zloto

Our goal remains to develop the strongest readers in the city. Jefferson-Douglass Academy will be implementing the Abeka curriculum for the next three years, in contrast to the Success for All (SFA) program being used at our other schools. This approach will create a healthy competition to evaluate which program delivers the strongest reading outcomes.

Elijah, along with several Cornerstone alumni, volunteered their time to clean and beautify the campus grounds.

We are pleased to announce the hiring of Mr. Isaac London as Director of Childcare. Mr. London holds a Master's degree in Child Development and brings extensive school-based experience to the role. Under his leadership, we are progressing with Child Care Licensing and preparing to launch the *Dawn to Dusk* program on September 15.

b) Academic Update - Taiwo Da-Silva

We saw a decrease in math scores, while we saw a 3-point increase in reading. The academy's reading proficiency goal is 35%, with a target of a 7% annual increase. The upcoming school year will mark the second year of implementing the Abeka program. We are also trying to perform better on our state assessments. We will continue to pull out students for interventions. The staff will receive PD training on Abeka on August 25-28. We will continue using the MMH math program and Discovery ED for Science and Social Studies.

c) Enrollment Update – T Clark Durant

At Jefferson-Douglass Academy, our enrollment strategy is focused on maximizing classroom capacity in sections that are not yet full. From an economic standpoint, this allows us to make the most effective use of our greatest resource—our teachers. We anticipate enrollment growth of 10–15 students, with the potential to increase by as many as 30 students. To align with this strategy, we will also be reducing the number of sections offered.

d) Finance - Joe Valentic & Mary Ann Johnson

The ongoing challenges with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) continue to create uncertainty around funding and reimbursements, which has made it difficult to finalize budget projections. When comparing the originally presented budget to the audited results, there were a few key variances: grant revenue closed out approximately \$87,000 lower than anticipated, and an additional payroll cycle at year-end increased expenses by \$220,000. These factors contributed to a net deficit of approximately \$305,000.

To help offset this shortfall, Cornerstone Education Group (CEG) will forgive roughly \$295,000 in management fees and accounts receivable. Even with this contribution, the district remains about \$495,000 short of the 5% fund balance target. Additional funding is being pursued, including \$155,000 from CSA, which would reduce the shortfall to approximately \$300,000. This remaining deficit will be absorbed from the existing fund balance, which will remain positive but below the 5% threshold.

The long-term plan is to restore the 5% fund balance through revenue from the Latchkey program and budget reductions already identified. While no amendment to the budget is being requested at this time, final audit results will determine if adjustments are needed for FY25–26. The finance team noted that despite the shortfall, the district does not anticipate the need to borrow funds this year, which reflects a more stable financial position compared to the prior year.

Kava, Heugel, and Carrion reviewed the minor changes and updates to the handbooks and Technology User Agreement.

4) BOARD POLICY WORK

a) Board Meeting Dates for 2025-2026: All on Mondays at 8:00 a.m.

1. October 20, 2025
2. January 12, 2026
3. March 16, 2026
4. May 18, 2026
5. June 22, 2026

5) ACTION ITEMS

- a) Approval of the 25-26 Student Handbook as presented.
- b) Approval of the 25-26 Athletic Handbook as presented.
- c) Approval of the Student Technology Use Agreement.
- d) Approval of MHSAA Resolution as presented.
- e) Approval of the 25-26 Employee Handbook.
- f) Approval of the Curriculum purchases as presented.
- g) Approval of Food Service Contract Renewal for 25-26

Nelson moved to combine and approve Action Items 5a-5e. Bing seconded. All Approved.

Nelson moved to approve Action Item 5f. Thrower seconded. All Approved.

Nelson moved to approve Action Item 5g. Bing seconded. All Approved.

6) CONSENT ITEMS

- a) Approval of the resolution identifying the Chief Administrative Officer Designee - Doug Zloto
- b) Approval of the resolution authorizing the appointment of the Freedom of Information Act Coordinator - Elizabeth Noa Carrion
- c) Approval of the resolution authorizing the appointment of Legal Counsel - John Kava
- d) Approval of the resolution authorizing the appointment of the School Safety Liaison - Grant Heugel

Nelson moved to combine and approve Consent Items 6a-6d. Thrower seconded. All Approved.

7) AUTHORIZER COMMENTS – McDaniel

The 2025–26 virtual board training calendar has been finalized and sessions are open for registration through the GVSU CSO website. All training hours count toward the governance requirement under the academic grant. A new component this year includes a personalized, in-person board training session tailored to each board’s self-assessed needs.

Schools were reminded of updates to emergency response planning, including new legal requirements related to sudden cardiac arrest preparedness and mandatory training for emergency response teams and high school athletic coaches. Boards are also encouraged to include GVSU in their response plans to ensure timely communication and support.

Several new laws will take effect this fall. Beginning October 1, schools must annually provide families with firearm safety notices—materials will be supplied by MDE in multiple languages and must also be posted on school websites. In addition, charter schools must publicly post the average salaries of teachers (new and veteran) and support staff.

MAPSA has raised concerns regarding Wayne RESA and Oakland ISD proposals to include GSRP program details in charter contracts, which could create funding inconsistencies statewide.

Schools are encouraged to stay in contact with MAPSA regarding any developments.

MDE announced that federal Title funds were expected to be released the week of July 28, though schools are cautioned not to rely on these funds long-term, as allocations may decrease in the future. The state school budget remains under negotiation and may not be finalized until late September.

Key upcoming events include the Board President’s Leadership Retreat on October 16 in Grand Rapids, and school celebrations/socials scheduled for May 4–5 in both Grand Rapids and Detroit. Details on event locations will be shared later this fall.

Grand Valley is also launching Innovation Grants—valued at \$5,000, \$15,000, and \$30,000—to support creative school initiatives. Up to ten grants will be awarded at each level, with full details to be released in September.

Through the *Charter Through College* program in 2024–25, 35 Grand Valley charter schools participated in campus visits with over 1,900 students attending. Among the class of 2025, 515 graduates (40% of charter high school seniors) were admitted to GVSU. In total, \$292,000 in scholarships were awarded to charter scholars enrolling at GVSU, and \$73 million in scholarships were awarded overall to graduates from Grand Valley-authorized high schools.

8) ANNOUNCEMENTS

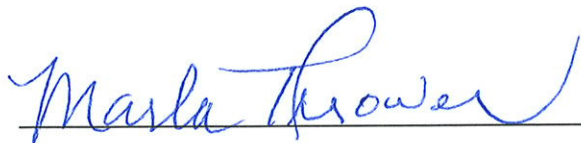
a) Next Meeting: October 20, 2025

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

There was no public comment.

10) MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING

Motion to adjourn meeting at 9:00 a.m. by Nelson. Bing seconded. The above minutes were duly adopted on 10/20/25 by the Cornerstone Jefferson-Douglass Academy Board of Directors at a properly noticed meeting held at which a quorum was present.



Submitted by Marla Thrower, Secretary