

GRS Minutes  
September 21, 2006

**Great River School**  
School District #4105



*“Reaching new heights in learning and leadership”*

Great River School is a junior high and high school community of caring parents, young adults, and teachers. It is a community where each member values every other member. A culture of civility frames the learning climate of Great River which is driven by inspiration and love of learning. The preeminent guiding principle of this community is a deep respect for and trust in young adults.

Great River School (GRS) is a Minnesota public charter Montessori school. GRS is one of four schools chosen by the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota to receive a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grant to create a small and educationally innovative high school. Hamline University sponsor’s GRS.

### **Our Mission**

Great River School is an urban-based public charter Montessori school that helps adolescents prepare themselves to create their place in our diverse society. Founded on leadership, service, and peace formation and shaped by the study of humanity and the environment, Great River School aims to meet the developmental needs and characteristics of adolescents. Great River School fosters independence, critical thinking, respect, and responsibility to self, to others, and to the earth.

### **Diversity Statement**

For Great River to be an outstanding school, it must be a community – staff and students – that reflects the diversity of St. Paul. Variety in race, religion, ethnicity, economic means, and sexual orientation strengthens and enriches the learning of the community. Great River strives to prepare adolescents to take a positive role in society by consciously

presenting a multi-cultural curriculum.

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**Great River School  
Board Meeting  
September 21, 2006  
6:30pm  
Minutes**

**Board Members Present:** Kelly Rodieck, Marita Bujold, Eryn Dewey-Carter, Michael Flood, Candy Husemoller, Connie Lepro, Stuart Mason, Judy Plante, Angela van der Puije, Alan Stache, Ron Wacks, Aaron Drevlow (Ex-Officio).

**Board Members Absent:** Tom Bailey

**Community Members Present:** Sara Nelson, Alyssea Chelberg Wacks, Beth Mercer Taylor, Lydia McAnerney, Ryan Schmidt, Natalie Potts, Kira Donnelly, Cindy Moeller

**Kelly Rodieck convened the meeting at 6:35 pm.**

**1. Welcome, introductions and one good thing that happened at GRS this week.**

- The high school woodworking club members built picnic tables for the patio area, and are taking orders as well.
- Four students and Sara Nelson participated in the Peace Jam in Denver, seeing 10 Nobel Peace Laureates along with 3000 youth.
- The Senior High trip to Lake Country land school was a successful event, and came in under budget.
- Lydia read a parent's email about the Great River experience.

**2. Consent Agenda**

C06092101 Approve August 24, 2006 Board Meeting Minutes

C06092102 Approve Student Directory Information Resolution

C06092103 Approve Limited Purpose of the School Directory

C06092104 Approve Employment Contracts for: Adam Kunz, JP Fitzgibbons, and Catherine Husemoller.

Consent Agenda Resolutions C06092101 to C06092104 were offered by Stuart Mason and seconded by Eryn Dewey-Carter, and approved by all GRS board members except Ron Wacks who abstained from voting.

### **3 Reports from Standing Committees:**

#### **A. Finance – Alan Stache**

Alan reports an unaudited fund balance for the end of the fiscal year of \$45,704. Alan and Aaron have worked together to balance the income expected based upon actual enrollment with the expenditures of the school. Some adjustments have been made in expense categories, including personnel. Attention was paid to assure minimal negative impact on programming. Currently, the working budget for expenditures is in line with anticipated income. Enrollment will continually be monitored to assure that this balance is maintained. A more formal revision of the budget will be done after 2-3 months of the school year is completed and enrollment numbers have stabilized.

Response to the trip ask has been positive and staff are optimistic that the entire amount anticipated will be received.

**Check register resolution** 060921701 was offered by Angela van der Puije, seconded by Connie Lepro, and was approved by all GRS board members except Ron Wacks who abstained from voting.

#### **B. Communications – Kelly Rodieck**

Lydia reports that the GRS Newsletter is going out, the web site is being updated, and the Student Directory is almost ready. The first week in October, the Communications Committee meets on a marketing plan. Eryn Dewey-Carter suggests a staff web site. New staff pictures will be posted soon. Students will be putting up information on the Denver Peace Jam trip. New signage will be created and posted on the school facing Energy Park Drive.

#### **C. Building Committee – Ron Wacks**

The computer lab opened for business on September 20<sup>th</sup>, thanks to the efforts of many. One of the first projects completed in the computer lab was the Peace Jam presentation.

Extensive painting is nearly complete. Aaron reports a large, positive impact from the space renovations and expansion. A Fire Department review has been completed.

#### **D. Fundraising and Development – Connie Lepro & Ron Wacks**

Connie reported that the trip ask was at roughly \$28,000 of an estimated \$38,000 total (based upon enrollment) as of the board meeting date, and the committee and staff were confident the full amount would be received. A grant request for \$2,000 has been submitted to Loewe's for greenhouse equipment. Lydia, Connie, Beth and Aaron met regarding grant possibilities. Aaron indicated the meeting went far in establishing a direction for fundraising, kudos to Lydia. The

first fund raising committee meeting will be held October 5<sup>th</sup>. The committee is looking for a co-chair.

Ron and Tom continued finalizing an agreement with Warner Stellian and another on venting, so the kitchen is coming together. Ron discussed the possibility of a visit on October 19<sup>th</sup> from possible funders. The purpose would be to hear what the funders have to offer charter schools regarding space expansion or building assistance. GRS has no plans to expand or build at this time. This would strictly be an exploratory discussion. Several board members will plan to attend.

#### **E. School Support – Marita Bujold**

An all-school parents meeting will be held on September 28<sup>th</sup>. Information on the Junior High trip will be available on that evening. The Board will have a spot on the agenda: Kelly will introduce board members present and explain the board – and committee opening – to parents, inviting their participation. Monica will be explaining volunteer opportunities as well.

#### **F. Strategic Planning – Kelly Rodieck & Aaron Drevlow**

The committee is hoping for a draft to come to the board in November. Aaron's next focus is the strategic plan and the charter agreement with Hamline, and making sure the documents coincide. Kelly hopes to have a working plan to send home with parents at the October conferences for reaction.

#### **G. Executive Committee – Conflict Report - Kelly Rodieck**

Kelly reviewed the conflict of interest process. First, a potential conflict is reported: the person with a possible conflict is excluded from discussion and voting on that issue; and the school looks for comparable bids. A possible conflict was identified by Ron Wacks; that conflict was examined and resolved.

### **6. Director's Report – Aaron Drevlow**

Aaron reported on the annual report draft. Highlights:

- 95.5 attendance
- Turnover dropped to 12%
- Board governance is reviewed
- Goals will be simplified for this next version
- GRS students doing well on test scores
- Significant improvement on math procedures scores (from 55 to 76 on Total Math)
- A dip occurred in 10<sup>th</sup> grade scores – same area where there was new student growth
- The higher grades had consistently upwards trends

Hamline would like the evaluation of student progress to track by students across years.

Lydia will check on what is available, and with what obligation, from Titles 2 and 5 of NCLB.

The IB application A is in. GRS will be the first IP Diploma Charter school.

#### **7. New Business**

- School Business Solutions will provide training to the board on October 26<sup>th</sup> prior to the start of the board meeting. All board members are expected to attend.
- The lawsuit is officially done.
- There will be a report on the land school at the next board meeting.
- Natalie Potts shared the Peace Jam presentation with the board.

#### **8. Adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:35 pm**

Consent Agenda  
September 21, 2006

The GRS Board approves the following Consent Agenda items:

C06092101 - Approve August 24, 2006 Board Meeting Minutes

C06092102 - Pursuant to Minn. Stat. Sec 13D, Great River School Board designates the following student information as Directory Information: [Student name, parents name\(s\), student/parent address, student/parent phone, parent email addresses, student email address, and student grade level.](#)

If the student or parent objects to the release of directory information, the information shall remain private. Each year students and parents will be given a “directory opt-out” form. Failure to return the form will result in the student and parent information being included in the Great River School Directory.

C06092103 – The purpose of the Great River School Directory is to facilitate communication within the school community. The Directory shall not be used for any other purpose.

C06092104 - Approve the following employment contracts:  
Adam Kunz, JP Fitzgibbons, and  
Catherine Husemoller.

Offered by Stuart Mason

Seconded by Eryn Dewey-Carter

Adopted this 21<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2006 by GRS Board vote. All Board Members voted in favor of this resolution except Ron Wacks who abstained from voting on this item.

Resolution 060921701  
Review Check Register

The GRS Board has reviewed the check register listing checks written on GRS's behalf from August 1, 2006 to August 31, 2006.

Offered by Angela van der Puije

Seconded by Constance Lepro

Adopted this 21st day of September 2006 by GRS Board vote. All Board Members voted in favor of this resolution except Ron Wacks who abstained from voting on this item.