

October 8, 2025

Regular Meeting Minutes

1. **Chair Katie Gerski-Keller called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.**
2. **Roll Call –**
Board Members Present: Katie Gerski-Keller, Meredith Willsen, Ekaterina Khmelniker, James Stark, Jessica Crew
Board Members Absent: Stephen Quadro
Guests: Brittany Galles, Jennifer Hoover, Upekkha Evans (remote), Tavia Pagan, Mindy Kiel, Eileen Worthing, Briana D’Agostini
3. **Board Member Exigencies and Remote Attendance –**
Action: Shall the board approve any board members to participate in this board meeting from a remote location due to unexpected emergencies per AB 2449?
Information: Members must publicly disclose at the meeting before any action is taken, whether any other individuals 18 years of age or older are present in the room at the remote location with the member, and if so, the general nature of the member’s relationship with any such individuals; and ensure their meeting participation using both visual and audio technology.

TABLED. NO ACTION.
4. **James Stark read the Moderation Virtue Card.**
5. **Public Comment –**

There were no public comments.

Chair Katie Gerski-Keller closed public comment at 5:05 p.m.
6. **Minutes Approval –**
It was moved by Ekaterina Khmelniker and seconded by Meredith Willsen that the board approve the September 10, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes.

(Ayes: 3, Noes: 0, Abstain: 2, K. Gerski-Keller and J. Stark)
7. **Minutes Approval –**
It was moved by Meredith Willsen and seconded by Ekaterina Khmelniker that the board approve the September 14, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes.

(Ayes: 5, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)
8. **Executive Director Search for GVCS –**
The board would like to continue discussing an executive director search for Golden Valley Charter Schools (GVCS). The board explained different models of management seen at other charter schools including an executive director, a CMO, an EMO (Educational Management

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Office) as well as a principal at each site. The board continued to explain if GVCS were a bigger CMO, it would be beneficial to have a back-office provider managing finances.

Jennifer Hoover made a comment stating it is good practice to have an in-house representative for finances.

Meredith Willsen identified things to consider including the upcoming recharter year, having Jennifer Hoover in an interim role for years on end is not necessarily fair, and how the expenditure of an executive director search could impact with rechartering.

Eileen Worthing explained the importance of getting the word out sooner than later for finding prospective candidates. The longer timeframe the job is posted, the better. Human Resources would prefer at least two months to recruit, resulting in about a three-month time frame all together. The ideal time to find someone that's in search of the new contract would be around January or February. Eileen suggested possibly holding interviews at the end of February.

When conducting the executive director search, the board would like to use GVCS human resources for utilizing internal resources. They specifically would like assistance for considering aspects such as benefits, contracts, and interview questions.

Eileen explained that even though there are a lot of nuances, a search like this has been done before and is achievable. This will be the first executive director search GVCS has done in ten years.

It was moved by Meredith Willsen and seconded by James Stark that the board approve to conduct an executive director search for the 2026-2027 school year for Golden Valley Charter School internally by using Golden Valley Charter School's in house Human Resources.

(Ayes: 5, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

9. **Recharter Committee for GVCS –**

The Board discussed establishing a recharter committee for Golden Valley Charter Schools (GVCS) and gave some examples of what serving on the committee would entail. The overall goal of the committee is to build more parent support. Examples could include writing letters, attending San Juan board meetings, and participating in other areas where GVCS needs more support. The committee would be held by the Board of Trustees but would focus on making an effort to include more educational partners to be engaged.

To comply with the Brown Act, it was noted that no more than two GVCS board members shall attend a San Juan board meeting.

Katie Gerski-Keller stated Jennifer Hoover, Marlene Laughter and Parent Circle (PC) members would be ideal personnel to conduct the recruiting of recharter committee members. Katie is also meeting with GVEF and will check in to see if they would like to have any involvement in the committee as well.

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It was moved by Ekaterina Khmelniker and seconded by James Stark that the Board approve to establish a recharter committee for Golden Valley Charter Schools (GVCS).

(Ayes: 5, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

10. Student Code of Conduct Policy –

This will be the first read of the Student Code of Conduct Policy. This policy will be brought back to the board at the November regular meeting for a second read, and again at the December regular meeting for the final read.

Jennifer Hoover explained main areas of the policy revision include bringing it up to date with the correct Education Code, suspension policy specifics, and implementing more points of intervention. Within the policy, there was also added language for referrals and record retention in accordance with FERPA and the California Education Code requirements.

The board stated they would like a two-step verification process for contacting or notifying parents regarding suspensions and expulsions. It was proposed that ParentSquare could be a consideration and a helpful option due to the fact of being able to see when a notification is read and received.

Meredith Willsen would like items #4 and #6 under expulsion to be clarified for steps as part of the narrative.

Jennifer Hoover clarified that the suspension and expulsion policy was approved last year and was a template from Charter Schools Development Center (CSDC). The board would like copies of both the Suspension and Expulsion Policy and the Bullying Policy to reference at the next regular meeting.

Because this is the first read of the revised Student Code of Conduct Policy, this item was discussed only.

TABELED. NO ACTION.

11. Policy Committee for GVCS –

Katie explained governance policies were integrated into GVCS's bylaws, but because of the rechartering, some of those policies need to be pulled out and placed into specific board governance policies such as code of conduct of a board member and norms, conflict of interest, policies surrounding gifts, annual organization meetings, procedure for policy adoption, code of ethics, uniform complaint procedures, etc.

It was moved by Meredith Willsen and seconded by Ekaterina Khmelniker that the board approve Jessica Crew as a member from the Board of Trustees to the Policy Committee to update agency-wide policies for Golden Valley Charter Schools(GVCS).

(Ayes: 4, Noes: 0, Abstain: 1, J. Crew)

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It was moved by Ekaterina Khmelniker and seconded by James Stark that the board approve Meredith Willsen as a member from the Board of Trustees to the Policy Committee to update agency-wide policies for Golden Valley Charter Schools(GVCS).

(Ayes: 4, Noes: 0, Abstain: 1, M. Willsen)

It was moved by Meredith Willsen and seconded by Ekaterina Khmelniker that the board approve Katie Gerski-Keller as a member from the Board of Trustees to the Policy Committee to update agency-wide policies for Golden Valley Charter Schools(GVCS).

(Ayes: 4, Noes: 0, Abstain: 1, K. Gerski-Keller)

12. Fiscal Oversight Updates for GVCS –

James Stark presented updates on fiscal oversight for Golden Valley Charter Schools(GVCS). He explained that the Finance Committee has recognized in some of their first meetings that the budget for 2025-2026 is not accurate to the level of quality they want and that the numbers did not make sense. Since then, there has been progress made in the revenue aspect, and they will continue to review the actuals. At this time, the committee is focused on the first interim budget because that needs to be turned in to San Juan Unified School District in December.

13. Updated Specialist Positions –

Eileen Worthing explained to the board that at the previous meeting approval of the updated specialist positions, factoring in all the breaks for the non-exempt positions that specialists were moving over to was not accounted for. When calculating all the breaks, the Range 10 that was originally approved was not sufficient for the current specialists. Eileen explained that at the last meeting she acknowledged she would not be lowering anyone's salary. Therefore, she is proposing to move Specialist I for Range 11, Specialist II for Range 12 and Specialist III for Range 13. Eileen is updating the job description and focusing on qualifications for the specialist: Specialist I having 1-3 years of experience, Specialist II having 3-5 years of experience, and Specialist III having 5 years or more of experience. Range 11 would start at \$28.00 and end at \$38.76 per hour; Range 12 would start at step 1 \$25.00 to step 12 \$40.14 per hour; Range 13 would start at \$30.00 and end at \$41.50 per hour.

It was moved by James Stark and seconded by Jessica Crew that the Board approve the updated Specialist positions to Specialist I, Specialist II, and Specialist III to coordinate with the exempt salaries of current Specialists when moving to non-exempt schedule at 180 days of work.

(Ayes: 5, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

14. Retro-Salary Schedule –

Eileen explained to the board that the GVCS salary schedule was not updated last year. In preparation for 2026 minimum wage laws, Eileen discovered 2025's salary schedule should have been updated in 2024. Eileen explained for 2025 this does not affect many employees, however leading into 2026, this will affect employees because the 2026 minimum wage is going to be \$58,933 for a 10-month employee.

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Jennifer clarified with Eileen that by law, if you're exempt, you must make double the minimum wage. In 2026, when that 10-month salary is going to be at minimum \$58,933, that is very close to the salary calculator for GVCS employees with a clear credential at Step 2, which is \$59,000. Eileen explained due to this, GVCS will have to adopt increase in Step 1 as well as increase in Step 2 to make it fair. The cost implications for 2026 alone are estimated at \$109,800 in salary adjustments, and that does not include the additional impacts of employer-paid contributions. Eileen had reached out to CSMC and will update the board as soon as she gets a response regarding how the employer contributions are going to affect. James would like those numbers brought to the next Finance Committee meeting to comprehend those into GVCS spending.

*See attachment in the board packet for the faculty salary difference for the 2026 year.

It was moved by Ekaterina Khmelniker and seconded by Meredith Willsen that the board approve the retro-salary schedule (exempt) change for 2025 and upcoming salary schedule (exempt) for 2026 to coordinate with minimum wage laws.

(Ayes: 5, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

15. Faculty Reports –

Faculty Chair Report, Orchard: Orchard Faculty Chair, Jennifer Evans, presented items of interest to the board.

Faculty Chair Report, River: River Faculty Chair, Tavia Pagan, presented items of interest to the board.

16. Executive Reports –

Board Chair Report: Board of Trustees Chair, Katie Gerski-Keller, presented items of interest to the board.

Executive Director Report: Interim Executive Director, Jennifer Hoover, presented items of interest to the board.

17. The Board recited the Motto of the Social Ethic.

18. Chair Katie Gerski-Keller adjourned the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Brittany Galles.

Katie Gerski-Keller, Chair

Date