

December 10, 2025

Regular Meeting Minutes

1. **Chair Katie Gerski-Keller called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.**
2. **Roll Call –**
Board Members Present: Katie Gerski-Keller, Meredith Willsen, Ekaterina Khmelniker, Stephen Quadro, James Stark, Jessica Crew
Guests: Brittany Galles, Jennifer Hoover, Becky Page (remote), Upekkha Evans (remote), Tavia Pagan, Ryan Sutton, Midy Kiel

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. **Stephen Quadro read the Reverence Virtue Card.**

5. **Public Comment –**
There were no public comments.

Chair Katie Gerski-Keller closed public comment at 5:05.

6. **Minutes Approval –**
It was moved by Ekaterina Khmelniker and seconded by Stephen Quadro that the Board approve the November 12, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes.

(Ayes: 6, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

7. **2025-2026 First Interim Budget Report, GVOS –**
Susan Lefkowitz presented the First Interim Budget for Golden Valley Orchard School (GVOS).

Susan reviewed the adopted budget for GVOS was based on enrollment of 319. First interim budget is based on enrollment of 311, resulting in ADA at 93%. LCFF revenues were reduced by \$41,000 due to lower enrollment. The biggest change is total increase in federal revenues of \$518,996 at first interim. Other state revenues have increased by \$68,667 at first interim. Local revenues reduced by \$42,450 at first interim. In total, increasing total revenues by \$504,096. Susan reviewed expenditures including increased certificated salaries in total by \$20,000, non-certificated salaries by almost \$85,000 and associated benefits.

In the original budget, GVOS showed a projecting surplus of \$134,011. At First Interim, GVOS is now projecting a surplus of \$822,078. As a reminder, the beginning fund balance for GVOS

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overall was at -\$233,000. GVOS is now projecting an ending fund balance of \$588,940 at the end of the year, as well as showing the 5% reserve of \$218,316.

The Board explained looking into the differentials on budgets in previous years, a lot of consulting money was pre-spent, as well as buying out contracts, resulting in being at this point in the year having already spent money and knowing that there would be even additional spending needed. That is not happening any longer. Expenditures will be one area that changes budget to budget, with this being a bit of a flux year.

Susan pointed out for the 2026-2027 year GVOS is currently projecting a surplus of \$76,573 and for the 2027-2028 year a projected surplus of \$130,843. Overall, Orchard started this year in a negative surplus and now is at a positive.

Susan and Jennifer communicated that the next ERC payment will be split 70% for GOVS and 30% for GVRS, as well as splitting the fee the same way.

It was addressed that the books for January do not close until mid-February. The Board discussed possibly scheduling a Special Finance Committee Meeting as well as a Special Board Meeting in late February, possibly February 25th, to work more on the budget with Susan due to the Second Interim Budget needing to be submitted to San Juan Unified School District (SJUSD) on March 10th, 2026.

It was moved by Stephen Quadro and seconded by James Stark that the board approve the 2025-2026 First Interim Budget for Golden Valley Orchard School (GVOS).

(Ayes: 6, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

8. 2025-2026 First Interim Budget Report, GVRS –

Susan Lefkowitz presented the First Interim Budget for Golden Valley River School (GVRS).

Susan reviewed the adopted budget for GVRS was based on enrollment of 334. First interim budget is based on enrollment of 320, resulting in ADA at 94%. LCFF revenues were reduced by \$104,356 due to lower enrollment. Other state revenues have increased by \$77,367 at first interim. Local revenues reduced by \$4,237 at first interim. In total, increasing total revenues by \$468,738.

Susan reviewed expenditures including increased certificated salaries in total by \$91,000, non-certificated salaries by \$23,000 and associated benefits are \$30,615.

In the original budget, GVRS showed a projecting surplus of \$379,000. At First Interim, GVRS is now projecting a surplus of \$747,122. As a reminder, the beginning fund balance for GVRS overall was at \$787,795. GVRS is now projecting an ending fund balance of \$1,534,917 at the end of the year, as well as showing the 5% reserve of \$212,803.

Susan pointed out for the 2026-2027 year GVRS is currently projecting a surplus of \$110,925 and for the 2027-2028 year a projected surplus of \$155,866.

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Meredith Willsen asked what other state revenue GVRS received that we weren't expecting. Susan explained prior year Prop 28 funds that did not get spent that were pulled in for this year.

It was moved by Stephen Quadro and seconded by James Stark that the board approve the 2025-2026 First Interim Budget for Golden Valley River School (GVRS).

(Ayes: 6, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

9. 2024-2025 Financial Audit Report, GVCS –

Jennifer Hoover went over the 2024-2025 Audit Report for Golden Valley Charter Schools (GVCS).

Stephen Quadro explained how the audit numbers are different than budgets from last year regarding what was expected and what was actually spent compared to previous budgets. He gave credit to Susan, Jennifer and the staff for their detailed work and avoiding what could have been an even bigger issue in last year's total change in net assets. Stephen highlighted the situation pointing out on page 14 of the audit where you can see the cash and investments on June 30th consisted of the following: \$90.00 in GVOS's bank account. The Board reiterated how much good work has been done this year and the positive aspect of now having a surplus for GVOS and cash reserves.

There were no significant findings in the 2024-2025 Audit Report for GVCS.

It was moved by James Stark and seconded by Stephen Quadro that the board accepts the 2024-2025 Financial Audit of Golden Valley Charter Schools (GVCS).

(Ayes: 6, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

10. Orchard 5th Grade Class Field Trip Quote –

This item was removed from the agenda and was not discussed nor voted on by the Board.

11. California School Dashboard Review, GVCS –

Jennifer Hoover presented the status of Golden Valley Charter Schools (GVCS) on the California School Dashboard. The information presented are last spring's test assessment data.

Jennifer reviewed GVRS on the California School Dashboard. Jennifer showed state indicators as well as standard indicators. She went over science assessments showing in the green and are located in the informational purposes. Jennifer explained specifics and percentages of teachers with both multiple subject credentials and single subject math credentials to be able to teach math. She reviewed academics highlighting English language arts (ELA) in yellow and mathematics in orange. Jennifer also presented numbers on all student group details, subgroups and performance levels showing where they met on standards.

Jennifer explained that if there is no performance color and appears grey, it is usually because there are not 11 or more students in that category. In certain categories, if there are fewer than 30 but more than 11 students, there will not be a color assigned to that subgroup, however it will show their score for that category and if they improved, maintained or declined.

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GVRs can use verifiable CAASPP data for the recharter timeline. Parsec will be able to review data and incorporate in GVRs data story if it benefits GVRs to include in the recharter document.

Jennifer continued to review GVRs mathematics indicators as well as all student group details, subgroups and performance levels. She then showed the Parsec dashboard for overall ELA and mathematics state test results average distance from standard by grade. For ELA all grades besides 3rd grade were above proficiency. Mathematics results are lower, however overall GVRs has been improving from pandemic years. Jennifer reviewed ELA and Mathematics results on average year over year growth as well as an overall view of both ELA and mathematics results.

Meredith and Jennifer clarified that teachers have access to FastBridge data and state testing data. Parsec dashboard statistics will be brought to faculty meetings via school principals.

Jennifer reviewed GVOS on the California School Dashboard. Jennifer showed state indicators as well as standard indicators. She went over science assessments showing in the green as well as GVOS also showing in the green for suspension rate. She reviewed academics highlighting ELA in yellow and mathematics in orange. Jennifer also presented numbers on all student group details, subgroups and performance levels showing where they met on standards. She reviewed the progress placement report and Parsec's dashboard for GVOS, showing overall the same results trends as GVRs.

Parsec will be building the data story for GVRs's recharter. They will be looking at FastBridge, CAASPP, and verified data. Jennifer can share the Parsec meeting with the Board.

GVOS is in the red for chronic absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more of instructional days whether they are excused absences or not. GVOS needs to get below 20% the best they can aim for is to be in the yellow for next year. Attendance recovery will not affect chronic absenteeism. Suspension rate is in the green and broken down by student subgroups. GVOS 6th and 7th grades are doing well in math, however ELA results are lower compared to GVRs. Jennifer showed distance from standard and distance from standard average year over year growth. She reviewed contiguous enrollment and average percent toward proficiency for GVOS as well as for GVRs.

12. Intra-CMO Charter Loan –

It was moved by Stephen Quadro and seconded by James Stark that the board approve revoking the resolution documenting an intra-CMO charter loan from Golden Valley River School (GVRs) to Golden Valley Orchard School (GVOS) for the 2025-2030 school years.

(Ayes: 6, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

13. Executive Director Evaluation Policy (First Read) –

Katie Gerski-Keller reviewed the revised Executive Director (ED) Evaluation Policy.

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Ekaterina had questions on goals setting and the timeline. The executive committee is the chair and vice chair. The discussion at the end of the year drove the next set of goals.

The Board would like to add building upon previous evaluations. During the Board Retreat, the Board can discuss goals setting. The Board would also like revisions to the ED Policy to include when the goals are actually scored or benchmarked in a June timeframe. The ED is evaluated annually. If goals are set in June for the next year, then the ED has time to prepare and influence the budget to achieve these goals.

The Board discussed it might be beneficial to build in some face-to-face interviews with personnel versus just surveys. Feedback from the Central Office staff could also be considered as they work so intimately with the ED. James Stark mentioned checking in with stakeholders. Tavia mentioned previously, faculty chairs were included in closed session for ED evaluations and principal evaluations. The Board recognized interviewing the faculty chairs and possibly interview with Susan Lefkowitz. As needed, the executive committee can consult.

James stated goals should be published. Jennifer recommends consulting Human Resources on this matter since it is something that would be in a personnel file.

Having more checkpoints throughout the year will give more data versus only doing a survey at the end of the year. The Board liked the idea of using the QR code that the BOT had at preservice and registration. It was discussed to possibly put out the survey in February.

Stephen Quadro left at 6:49 p.m.

TABLED. NO ACTION.

14. Student Code of Conduct Policy (Third Read) –

The Board reviewed the revised Student Code of Conduct Policy.

The Board and Jennifer made note of the following minor grammatical edits needed:

1. Under Behaviors and Interventions, first referral, in parenthesis, after ParentSquare should be a comma not a period.
2. Reference SST fully spelled out in the first reference of the document.

It was moved by Ekaterina Khmelniker and seconded by James Stark to approve with the modification on SST that the Board approve the revised Student Code of Conduct Policy.

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

15. Student & Parent Handbook for GVCS (First Read) –

The Board reviewed the revised Student & Parent Handbook for GVCS.

New policies include templates from CSDC from the California Education Code (Ed. Code).
Field trip administration regulation has been updated.
Defined fundraisers are separate from festivals.

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Changes are correct on the Student & Parent Handbook that Jennifer emailed, the hard copy at the meeting was the older version, but Board members had obtained it in email.

The Board discussed editing the following:

1. Fundraising committee: spell out chain of order – from the site level to the principal, the principal would then bring it to leadership to talk through including Marlene; this mainly pertains to big organization-wide fundraising where GVCS would have to have more coordination.
2. Consistency in fundraising and festival policies – example: Winter Gathering is not a festival, it is a gathering but there is fundraising at the gathering (strawberry shortcake, other food sales, etc.).

TABLED. NO ACTION.

16. 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.

17. 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.

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

19. Chair Katie Gerski-Keller adjourned the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Brittany Galles.

Katie Gerski-Keller, Chair

Date