

March 11, 2026

Regular Meeting Minutes

1. **Vice Chair Meredith Willsen called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.**
2. **Roll Call –**
Board Members Present: Meredith Willsen, James Stark, Jessica Crew, Ekaterina Khmelniker
Board Members Absent: Stephen Quadro, Katie Gerski-Keller
Guests: Brittany Galles, Jennifer Hoover, Bernard Benito, Becky Page, Tavia Pagan, Nikki Freitas, Mindy Kiel, Ryan Sutton (remote)
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 just cause exceptions per SB 707?
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 Fairness Virtue Card.**
5. **Public Comment –**
Bernard Benito made a public comment regarding current school climate, student safety, and the availability of emotional support services at Golden Valley Orchard School.

Vice Chair Meredith Willsen closed public comment at 5:09 p.m.
6. **2025-2026 Second Interim Budget Report, GVOS –**
Brian Lara from CSMC presented the 2025-2026 Second Interim Budget Report for Golden Valley Orchard School (GVOS).

Brian first reviewed the slide deck showing a summary of changes between first interim and second interim for GVOS highlighting an increase in total revenue by \$347,000. Personnel expenses have gone up slightly by \$23,000. Operational expenses have increased by \$74,000 projecting a surplus of \$1.071 million. GVOS beginning fund balance was the \$233,137 deficit, but with combining that with the ending surplus of \$1,071,323, that puts the final fund balance at \$838,186. As requested by the Finance Committee, Brian also provided a forecasted breakdown of fiscal year 26-27 and fiscal year 27-28 as well as enrollment numbers. He explained if enrollment remains the same, then the surplus for fiscal year 26-27 will be around \$72,000, and for fiscal year 27-28 it would be around \$113,000.

Consolidated LCFF revenue increased by \$114k, primarily driven by slightly higher enrollment and ADA projections at Orchard and although River slightly decreased, they did have more TK/K students this time around. (TK Add-on rate is \$5,545; previously only \$3,077).

March 11, 2026

Federal revenues increased by \$551,048 overall, primarily driven by receiving the ERC Tax Credit amounts for Orchard who received an additional \$357,485 and River who received an additional \$153K when compared to the First Interim budget. There were also minor adjustments to recent Title fund allocations and receiving prior year revenue amounts. (Through January 2026, GVCS has received a collective amount of \$1,879,410 in ERC Tax Credit).

It was moved by Ekaterina Khmelniker and seconded by James Stark that the Board approve the 2025-2026 Second Interim Budget for Golden Valley Orchard School (GVOS).

(Ayes: 4, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

7. 2025-2026 Second Interim Budget Report, GVRS –

Brian Lara from CSMC presented the 2025-2026 Second Interim Budget Report for Golden Valley River School (GVRS).

Brian reviewed the summary of changes showing the variance between first interim and second interim for GVRS, highlighting an increase in total revenue of \$39,000. Total personnel expenses increased by \$128,000 and books and supplies and services together increased by \$60,000, projecting a surplus for the end of the year of around \$564,000. Brian presented enrollment numbers and ADA projections as well as the forecasted breakdown of fiscal year 26-27 and fiscal year 27-28. He also reviewed revenue assumptions as well as a breakdown for total revenue. The breakdown for total revenue for GVRS included the following: LCFF \$3,669,482. Federal \$749,841. State \$547,699. Local \$42,979; totaling \$5,010,001 with a variance from prior of \$39,839.

Shared cost allocations are mainly evenly split amongst both locations. Personnel expenses collectively increased by \$152k after updating wages, related benefits, and new hires to more accurately reflect the current staff roster.

GVRS beginning fund balance was \$787,794. Combined with the ending surplus of \$564,741 puts the final fund balance at \$1,352,535. The consolidated total for GVOS and GVRS is \$2,190,721.

The Board discussed a projected timeline for a third interim budget would be in May.

It was moved by James Stark and seconded by Ekaterina Khmelniker that the Board approve the 2025-2026 Second Interim Budget for Golden Valley River School (GVRS).

(Ayes: 4, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

8. Employee Handbook (Second Read) –

Nikki Freitas reviewed the revised Employee Handbook for GVCS. Nikki reviewed the list of changes that were applied based on feedback and suggestions from the Board during last month's first read.

Items discussed for revision are as follows:

1. Page 50 – Volunteer Civil Service Leave and Volunteer Civil Service Leave/Training sections are similar. Possibly edit into one section and eliminate redundant verbiage.

March 11, 2026

2. IT policies – James suggested consulting Datacate for guidance on what should be included in GVCS IT policies. James will compose and send a list of questions that GVCS will reference to Datacate.
3. Page 74 – Solicitation Policy within the 3rd paragraph change to “the executive director or their designee must approve any postings prior to posting.”

(TABLED. NO ACTION)

9. Golden Valley Orchard School Safety Plan –

Jennifer Hoover explained revisions on the GVOS Safety Plan and noted that immigration procedures have been attached.

Items discussed for revisions are as follows:

1. Update the Table of Contents to include child abuse reporting and school-wide dress code prohibiting gang-related apparel.
2. Include in appendix: allergies and administering medication. This will reference policies within the GVCS Student and Parent Handbook.
3. Include in appendix: emergencies during a field trip off campus. This will reference policies within the GVCS Student and Parent Handbook.

(TABLED. NO ACTION)

10. Golden Valley River School Safety Plan –

Jennifer explained revisions on the GVRS Safety Plan and noted that immigration procedures have been attached.

The Board discussed approving the GVRS and GVOS Safety Plans simultaneously to streamline the approval process. Both plans will be presented for approval at the next Board meeting.

(TABLED. NO ACTION)

11. Minutes Approval –

It was moved by Ekaterina Khmelniker and seconded by James Stark that the Board approve the February 11, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes.

(Ayes: 4, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

12. 2026-2027 School Calendar –

Brittany Galles presented a revised 2026-2027 school calendar draft based on direction from SJUSD 2026-2027 school calendar, GVCS faculty input and GVCS Leadership input. The SJUSD 2026-2027 school calendar was provided for reference.

GVOS and GVRS faculty agreed to compromise and move the Teacher Workday from October 9th, 2026, to January 4th, 2027. They also agreed to hold the conference week during the week of October 19th-23rd 2026 due to events including Festival of Light and Eagle Chase.

March 11, 2026

It was moved by James Stark and seconded by Jessica Crew that the Board approve the 2026-2027 School Calendar for GVCS.

(Ayes: 4, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

13. 2026-2027 Instructional Minutes –

Brittany presented a 2026-2027 Instructional Minutes draft based on the proposed 2026-2027 school calendar for GVCS. Highlights included noting 130 regular days, 45 minimum days with a total of 175 instructional days along with corresponding minutes broken down by grades.

It was moved by Ekaterina Khmelniker and seconded by James that the Board approve the 2026-2027 Instructional Minutes for GVCS.

(Ayes: 4, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

14. Governance Policies & Procedures (Second Read) –

Meredith presented the revised governance Policies & Procedures from the first read. Brittany provided a Table of Contents within the packet of policies. Meredith did make edits to the Conflict of Interest Policy to be more streamlined pertaining to the Board versus for the Board and for employees. It was also noted that the Conflict of Interest Policy is included in the Employee Handbook. The Board encourages any comments pertaining to revisions to the Governance Policies & Procedures to be emailed to the Executive Committee. Meredith also explained that these policies and procedures included are based off CSDC's Policy Checklist.

(TABLED. NO ACTION)

15. Fiscal Policy (Third Read) –

The Board reviewed the revised Fiscal Policy for GVCS. James reviewed revised areas of the policy that the Finance Committee has helped influence from the previous read including credit card limit management, additional payroll controls and procedures and language pertaining to contracts.

It was moved by James Stark and seconded by Ekaterina Khmelniker that the Board approve the Fiscal Policy for GVCS.

(Ayes: 4, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

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 Vice Chair, Meredith Willson, presented items of interest to the board.

March 11, 2026

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

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

19. **Vice Chair Meredith Willsen adjourned the meeting at 6:33 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Brittany Galles.

Meredith Willsen, Vice Chair

Date

DRAFT