

MINUTES

Of the Board of Directors of Grow Public Schools

(A California Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation)

I. PRELIMINARY

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Directors of this corporation, held their meeting at the time, on the day, and at the place set forth as follows:

Time: 4:05 p.m.

Date: August 30, 2021

Meeting held via teleconference

2. DIRECTORS PRESENT

The following directors, constituting a quorum of the Board, were present at the meeting held via teleconference:

Present: Tom Mestmaker, President; Ernie Unruh, Kern County Superintendent of Schools Representative; Dr. Jean Fuller, Grimm Family Education Foundation Representative; and Matt Look, Star Parents of Grow Academy (SPGA) and Parent Representative

Absent: Manuel Pantoja, Secretary and Arvin Community Representative

Grow Public Schools Staff Present via teleconference: Casey Yeazel, Chief Executive Officer; Michelle Lumis, Executive Assistant; Mike Romero, Chief Operating Officer; Adam Alvidrez, Director of School Operations; Dr. Monica Jara Guerra, Director of Community Initiatives; and Melody Castillo, Accounting Manager; Michael Bobadilla, Branding and Communications Manager; Daisy Rodriguez, Marketing and Communications Associate; Elizabeth Ramos, Operations Specialist (interpreter); Isabella Villanueva, Senior Human Resources Generalist; Dr. Wendy Creek, Chief Academic Officer

Grow Academy Staff Present via teleconference: Hurshel Williams, Principal, Grow Academy Arvin and Brook Webb, Principal, Grow Academy Shafter; Zulema Ela, Vice Principal of Academics, Grow Academy Arvin

Grimm Family Education Foundation Staff present: Evelyn Steed, Office Manager

Others Present via teleconference: Wayne Strumpfer, Young, Minney & Corr, LLP, attorney, Cindy Franz, EdTec, Back Office Provider; Elia Sagasta, Assistant Superintendent, Richland School District; and Emma Pereida-Martinez, Assistant Superintendent, Arvin Union School District; Toni Franz, parent; Jill O'Brien, parent, Karina Esquivel, parent; and Paloma Perez, parent

3. *FLAG SALUTE*

4. *APPROVAL OF MINUTES – check for attendance*

A motion was made by Jean Fuller, seconded by, Matt Look, and passed, to approve via roll call the minutes of the Board meeting dated June 28, 2021.

Board Member	Yay	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Tom Mestmaker				X
Manuel Pantoja			X	
Ernie Unruh	X			
Matt Look	X			
Jean Fuller	X			

Resolved further, that the Secretary of the Corporation is authorized and directed to insert a copy of these certified minutes into the book of minutes of this Corporation and to see that a certified copy of these minutes is kept at the Home Office for the transaction of business of this Corporation.

A motion was made by Matt Look, seconded by, Jean Fuller, and passed, to approve via roll call the minutes of the Board meeting dated July 26, 2021.

Board Member	Yay	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Tom Mestmaker				X
Manuel Pantoja			X	
Ernie Unruh				X
Matt Look	X			
Jean Fuller	X			

Resolved further, that the Secretary of the Corporation is authorized and directed to insert a copy of these certified minutes into the book of minutes of this Corporation and to see that a certified copy of these minutes is kept at the Home Office for the transaction of business of this Corporation.

A motion was made by Matt Look, seconded by, Jean Fuller, and passed, to approve via roll call the minutes of the Special Board meeting dated July 29, 2021.

Board Member	Yay	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Tom Mestmaker				X
Manuel Pantoja			X	
Ernie Unruh	X			
Matt Look	X			
Jean Fuller	X			

Resolved further, that the Secretary of the Corporation is authorized and directed to insert a copy of these certified minutes into the book of minutes of this Corporation and to see that a certified copy of these minutes is kept at the Home Office for the transaction of business of this Corporation.

II. COMMUNICATIONS

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

One non-agenda item was shared with the board. Casey Yeazel read an email addressed to the board, from Grow Academy Shafter parent, Toni Franz. Toni shared her appreciation for Grow Academy Shafter being one of the first schools to re-open and work through the many changes that came with the re-opening.

As a parent, Toni shared that every school year, parents make a mutual promise with the school to be involved and committed to academic performance and wellness. High expectations are expected of students, parents and staff. Toni asked for a creative approach to mask mandates for children and school policies for families. Some examples of a creative approach included peaceful non-compliance and family choice, along with a recommitment to the Wellness Policy and social emotional health. Consideration of having parents back on campus instead of cancelling events. Toni shared that as schools in more urban areas return to outdoor masking, parents and scholars at GA Shafter are worried they will be once again, be masked for eight hours a day. Throughout the pandemic, children's voices have been silenced, and as a parent, Toni is her children's voice. Toni asked if is this the best that Grow Public Schools can do? It is becoming increasing distressing and disturbing to hear that there is nothing that can done. Per Grow Public Schools mission statement, you ask parents and scholars to expect more from Grow Public Schools. Toni asked for children's and parents' choices to be respected and heard and to do our best to work together.

LEADERSHIP REPORT

Casey Yeazel, Chief Executive Officer, shared both campuses opened August 2nd with campuses buzzing with excitement. Staff and scholars were happy to be on campus again. Some of the unique challenges Grow Public Schools are facing in the new school year are fluctuating enrollment and attendance, which are impacting the budget. Cindy will share more on the budget updates later in the meeting.

Casey shared the updated CDPH guidelines for schools. All school employees must provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination. Unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated staff are required to undergo diagnostic screening testing. Grow Public Schools has until October 15th to be in full compliance; however, the Operations team has already created a secure email for submitting vaccine verification to the COVID Liaison. COVID 19 testing kits have been distributed to both sites, and school site nurses have been trained in administering them.

Grow Public Schools is once again providing COVID vaccinations on our campuses for both employees as well as a mobile clinic to offer the vaccine for families.

Casey shared the COVID dashboard from the Kern County Department of Public Health and Grow Public Schools' overall total positive cases from March 2020 to August 2021. As the Delta variant has begun to spread in Kern County, an unexpected high number of scholars had to quarantine due to an exposure since the beginning of the school year. Isabella Villanueva, Senior Human Resources Generalist, provided the protocols set forth by the state for scholars who need to quarantine. The students who are exposed and must quarantine at home are experiencing learning loss, which impacts apportionments and staff who may have also been exposed and must also quarantine if they are fully vaccinated and symptomatic.

Board member, Jean Fuller asked about special characteristics regarding attendance patterns. Casey shared that each principal would share attendance patterns during their presentation.

Board member, Ernie Unruh asked if Grow Public School can capture any of the quarantine time for students via independent study. Casey shared the operations and academic teams are working on recapturing the learning loss from students who have been quarantined, by offering an Independent Study program, which will also help avoid losing apportionments. The Independent Study program is limited to no more than 14 days to students who are quarantined, have an illness or physical impairment that prevents students from attending school– which will require a documentation from a physician, or any other health order from local, state or federal governments. Casey shared this is not a distance learning program. The board will be presented with the Independent Study program later in the meeting.

Mike Romero, Chief Operating Officer, provided the Operations and Human Resources updates. Over the course of the first four weeks of school, an average of 4-5 certificated substitutes are used per day due to the numbers of positive cases and exposures. On average, substitute costs are \$3,750 per week, per site.

The GA Arvin Learning Commons remodel has been pushed back three weeks due to the shipping delay for the door and hardware items. Colombo Construction has received the electrical inspection from the City of Arvin and is awaiting the final walk through which is scheduled for the beginning of October.

Colombo Construction has completed preliminary design, staging, measurements, and underground utility scanning for Shafter's shade structures. Colombo is preparing to start the afterhours concrete work, which is to be scheduled from 4pm-midnight, in the coming weeks. A safety walk-through will be completed to ensure appropriate accommodations for the construction crew and student and staff.

COVID testing provider (VIPMd), provided an on-site vaccine clinic to staff in Spring 2021. A number of employees took advantage of this on-site clinic, so Grow Public Schools has partnered with VIPMd again to offer vaccinations in the coming weeks.

Additionally, any staff member interested in a vaccine can receive it at the VIPM location on Buck Owens Blvd.

On-site COVID testing kits have been secured through Vault Health for the Fall. The saliva-based tests will be offered at no charge to any staff or student requesting a COVID-19 test. These tests will cost \$50 each, which is one-third of the cost charged last year.

Ernie asked if Grow Public Schools had a policy in place, that pays substitutes a higher rate, based on the number of days the substitute has worked. Mike answered that Grow Public Schools has a long-term substitute rate that kicks in after 30 days of consecutive work and is retroactive to day one. Ernie also asked if the expense has been accounted for in budget and suggested that if continues to be a challenge to find substitutes, then a review or modification of the substitute rate should be considered to ensure Grow Public Schools remains competitive.

Dr. Wendy Creek, Chief Academic Officer, shared the preliminary CAASPP data by site. Both sites are currently finishing Fall NWEA testing, which will be shared next month. This data is being used to group students for Literacy Block, which will be starting soon, and will also help guide small group and individual work in the Learning Labs. One area of instructional focus this year will be to become fluent in assessing student needs. Three major instructional initiatives that will work together: The California Reading and Literacy Project, under the direction of Cal Lutheran, will support teacher training in student literacy, particularly diagnosing and supporting student needs in reading. Thinking in Common, under the direction of Catherine Wilson, will support our co-teaching partners as they learn to work together to support special education and general education students in a shared learning environment. Discovery Learning Partners, under the direction of Dr. Anita Kreide, will support STEM teachers in diagnosing student needs and support student learning in math and science.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT-Grow Academy Arvin

Hurshel Williams, Principal, shared Grow Academy Arvin had a successful start to the school year. Staff were excited to transition to in-person instruction and even more excited to receive such an overwhelmingly positive response from Grow Academy Arvin stakeholders. The transition to a middle school model incorporated the hiring of four additional teachers, while also hiring seven Special Education instructors to incorporate the co-teaching model in grades K-8.

GA Arvin's total enrollment count is averaging about 800 scholars since the start of the 2021-2022 school year, but with the need to quarantine certain students periodically, the average daily attendance has been slightly impacted by the pandemic. Since the start of the school year, the overall average daily attendance is approximately 90.25%. Due to the impact that periodic quarantines have had on ADA, GA Arvin has been monitoring students' daily absences in order to mitigate chronic absenteeism. Efforts in tracking students' enrollment and attendance patterns include formal mitigation strategies that will be established and maintained by our SFA Governance Solutions

Attendance Team. Lack of transportation has been an identifying factor for students leaving GA Arvin.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT-Grow Academy Shafter

Brook Webb, Principal of Grow Academy Shafter, shared the school year is off to a great start. Scholars celebrated Homecoming week and had fun with dress up days, which included popular mixed matched pattern day, PJ's, college spirit wear, formal attire, and sports fan gear.

STAR assessments have begun, and the Data Dashboard has been updated to prepare for the year. Staff will be focusing on the implementation of Individualized Learning Plans, goal setting, and growth analysis.

Current enrollment is 787 scholars and an average of 92% ADA. This summer a total of 58 families left Grow Academy Shafter. The main reasons were transportation and attending a school closer to home, as many families do not live in Shafter and were commuting from Bakersfield.

Since August 2nd, 47 scholars have been enrolled from the waitlist. A soft campaign utilizing social media, storefront flyers, and parent square announcements will help GA Shafter rebuild their waitlist. Staff are actively calling families who have left GA Shafter due to transportation to help provide possible solutions. In addition, staff are working with surrounding community schools and the Shafter Recreation Center to facilitate afterschool sports opportunities for middle school scholars. Volleyball and football season was missed, but it is the school's hope to make basketball season a reality.

GROW ACADEMY STAFF REPORT -NA

GROW ACADEMY PARENT REPORT

SPGA President Matt Look, shared the first meeting of the school year took place and over thirty parents participated via Zoom.

FISCAL REPORT

Cindy Franz from EdTec (back-office provider) shared the August 2021 financial update. The audit process will continue through the Fall of 2021, with the 20-21 unaudited actuals being shared with the board by December. One-time funds increased both schools' strong net income.

For GA Arvin, Cindy shared the forecasted net income is currently \$760,087, a \$15,000 decrease from the previous forecast.

For GA Shafter, the forecasted net income is currently \$1,050,650, a \$110,000 decrease from the previous forecast.

For the home office, the forecasted net income is currently \$354,400, a \$92,000 increase from the previous forecast.

Cindy shared the importance of having an updated Independent Study program in place to recoup ADA that is lost from students quarantining due to COVID. A recap of the new funding grants and programs, along with the timeline of each funding plan was provided to the board.

Cindy shared the updated ADA for each school is 90%, which is conservative, but will result in a reduction in approximately of \$500,000 in LCFF funding. This adjustment will more than likely end up higher but planning conservatively is important in uncertain times.

III. ACTION ITEMS

1. The Directors were presented with the approval of the Purchase Orders and Warrants and Credit Card Register for July 2021 that were considered and discussed. On a motion duly made by Jean Fuller, seconded by Matt Look, and carried, the Board approved via roll call the Purchase Orders and Warrants and Credit Card Register for June 2021.

Board Member	Yay	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Tom Mestmaker	X			
Manuel Pantoja			X	
Ernie Unruh	X			
Matt Look	X			
Jean Fuller	X			

2. The Directors were presented with the approval of the Thinking in Common Proposal (SPED Co-Teaching Professional Development) that were considered and discussed. On a motion duly made by Ernie Unruh, seconded by Matt Look, and carried, the Board approved via roll call the Thinking in Common Proposal (SPED Co-Teaching Professional Development).

Board Member	Yay	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Tom Mestmaker	X			
Manuel Pantoja			X	
Ernie Unruh	X			
Matt Look	X			
Jean Fuller	X			

3. The Directors were presented with the approval of the Revised CSUB Intern Program Agreement that were considered and discussed. On a motion duly made by Jean Fuller, seconded by Ernie Unruh, and carried, the Board approved via roll call the Revised CSUB Intern Program Agreement.

Board Member	Yay	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Tom Mestmaker	X			
Manuel Pantoja			X	
Ernie Unruh	X			
Matt Look	X			
Jean Fuller	X			

4. The Directors were presented with the approval of the Amended Board Resolution Concerning Measures to Address the Organization & Educational Impacts of the COVID-19 Virus that were considered and discussed. On a motion duly made by Ernie Unruh, seconded by Matt Look, and carried, the Board approved via roll call the Amended Board Resolution Concerning Measures to Address the Organization & Educational Impacts of the COVID-19 Virus.

Board Member	Yay	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Tom Mestmaker	X			
Manuel Pantoja			X	
Ernie Unruh	X			
Matt Look	X			
Jean Fuller	X			

5. The Directors were presented with the approval of the Independent Study Policy that were considered and discussed. On a motion duly made by Matt Look, seconded by Jean Fuller, and carried, the Board approved via roll call the Independent Study Policy.

Board Member	Yay	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Tom Mestmaker	X			
Manuel Pantoja			X	
Ernie Unruh	X			
Matt Look	X			
Jean Fuller	X			

IV. CLOSED SESSION

The Board went into closed session at 5:16 pm to discuss the employee performance evaluation of the Chief Executive Officer.

V. RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION – ACTION ITEMS

The Board reconvened to open session at 5:31 pm and reported that the employee performance evaluation of the Chief Executive Officer had been discussed in closed session. There was no action taken in the closed session.

Attorney Wayne Strumpfer shared the compensation comparability study with the board.

6. The Directors were presented with the Ratification of Compensation Comparability Study for Chief Executive Officer that were considered and discussed. Wayne shared the range of the compensation study with the board. On a motion duly made by Ernie Unruh, seconded by Jean Fuller, and carried, the Board approved the Ratification of Compensation Comparability Study for Chief Executive Officer.

Board Member	Yay	Nay	Absent
Tom Mestmaker	X		
Manuel Pantoja			X
Ernie Unruh	X		
Matt Look	X		
Jean Fuller	X		

President, Tom Mestmaker read the mandatory announcement regarding the approval of the Chief Executive Officer contract.

7. The Directors were presented with the Ratification of Chief Executive Officer Contract that were considered and discussed. Wayne shared the range of the compensation study with the board. On a motion duly made by Jean Fuller, seconded by Matt Look, and carried, the Board approved the Ratification of Chief Executive Officer Contract.

Board Member	Yay	Nay	Absent
Tom Mestmaker	X		
Manuel Pantoja			X
Ernie Unruh	X		
Matt Look	X		
Jean Fuller	X		

Ernie shared his appreciation for CEO, Casey Yeazel and the partnership he has with KCSOS, along with his mentoring to new CEOs to other charters in the County. Ernie thanked the board chair in procuring a three-year contract. Tom also shared his appreciation of Casey and his dedication to Grow Public Schools.

VI. ADJORNMENT

On a motion the board adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY

I certify that I am the duly elected Secretary of the Grow Public Schools, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation; that these minutes, consisting of nine (9) pages are the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors held on August 30, 2021.



Secretary

