

**Woodlands School  
Board of Trustees Meeting**

**Woodlands School Mission**

Creating the character of the community through diverse education.

**Vision External**

The best of what an urban education can be.

**Minutes  
Jan. 17, 2024**

<p><b>Attending:</b></p>	<p><b>Officers:</b> Chair – Jones-Sutton, Keesha – Y Vice Chair —MacKenzie Menefee - Y Treasurer-Miller, Amy-Y Secretary-Knox, Nicole-Y</p> <p><b>Trustees:</b> Adams, Kenge – N Dawson, LaTasha-N Rubio-Cockroft, Heather - Y</p> <p>Ex-Officio – Ms. Vickie Brown-Gurley Executive Director - Y</p> <p>Staff Appointees –Diana Sokolewicz - Y, Bluemound Campus Ms. Ariel Huber - Y, State Street Campus Appointee</p>
<p><b>Approval of the Meeting Minutes</b></p>	<p>Trustee Sutton called the meeting to order at 6:16 pm.</p> <p><b>MOTION</b> by Trustee Menefee</p> <p>Move to approve the minutes of November and December 2023 meetings.</p> <p>Seconded by Trustee Rubio-Cockroft and carried without dissent.</p>
<p><b>1. Board Updates—</b> Keesha Jones-Sutton, Chair</p>	<p>Trustee Jones-Sutton discussed the board working on current year financials, school budget, facility updates, and board recruitment and training.</p>
<p><b>2. Finance Committee Report –</b> Karen Obukowicz, Woodlands, Dir. Of Business Services</p>	<p>1. Finance Report -Trustee Miller provided an overview of school finances and introduced Ms. Obukowicz for a more detailed review.</p> <p>2. -Ms. Obukowicz presented the board with the following:</p>

	<p>2022-23 Budget Report - Final  2023-24 Budget Report - Quarterly  Enrollment Impact Summary  Past Financial Challenges  Financial Planning Calendar  Business Office Management  2022 Auditor’s Report Review</p> <p><b>MOTION</b> by Trustee Miller</p> <p>Move to approve the 2022 Audit findings.</p> <p>Seconded by Trustee Knox and carried without dissent.</p> <p>.</p>
<p><b>3. Fund Development Report</b></p>	<p>Trustee Miller provided an overview on upcoming plans for fundraising and partnership with Forward Communications to help with fund development, engagement, and planning for the future success of Woodlands.</p>
<p><b>4. Governance Report</b></p>	<p>Trustee Menefee gave an update on the upcoming board and committee interviews and presented the draft mission and vision statement to be sent to the community for feedback before voting it in during the March 2024 meeting.</p>
<p><b>5. Staff Report-</b> Ms. Vickie Brown-Gurley, Executive Director;  Ms. Elizabeth Kayzar, Bluemound Principal;  Ms. Amy Fare, State Street Principal</p>	<p><b>Ms. Brown-Gurley gave updates on little family activities at both campus, elimination of revenue deficit, implementation of Skyward financial software, staffing updates and past and planned professional development for staff.</b></p> <p>Ms. Fare gave updates on the State Street Campus as well as providing a deep dive in the Forward Exam and MAP Assessment.</p> <p>Ms. Kayzar gave updates on the Bluemound Campus as well as providing a deep dive into the Wisconsin State Report Card, Woodlands Performance, and the achievement gap at both campuses and the solutions to close these gaps.</p>

<p><b>6. Public Comments/Questions</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the two different types of testing listed on the report?  Answer: <b>The achievement gap and math proficiency. The scores represent all students that were tested. The results are broken down per school as follows:</b>  -51.1% (Bluemound)  -44.9% (State Street)</li> <li>2. Special education services?  <b>Special education is provided for students at both campuses. We use the service delivery model at both campuses. There needs to be at least 20 students tested for the score to be reflected on the report. The sample size is too small to be reflected in the report.</b></li> <li>3. How to locate the reenrollment form?  <b>The school principals will email the re-enrollment forms to their families with all of the directions for returning the documents.</b></li> <li>4. Why there is so much staff turnover?  <b>The staff turnover fluctuates from year to year. There is a great deal of movement in the education industry, much like other industries, at this time. Sometimes the market offers a better opportunity for staff and they decide to seek other employment. We offer exit interviews for all staff that decide to move on from Woodlands. Many staff that are leaving cite personal changes in their lives that led the make to decision to leave Woodlands.</b></li> <li>5. How can the board make a good financial decision with fractured information?  <b>The information we now have is not fractured. Our current director of business services has worked diligently to take the financial information from the past three years and put it into an organized manner. For the past three years Woodlands has had financial audits done by an external auditor. Since 2020, Woodlands audits have improved greatly. Prior to 2022 Woodlands lacked a consistent business manager. Therefore, our financials have been handled inconsistently. Now with the new financial processes we have put in place, including the implementation of new financial software our financial data is in much better shape. Each year school organizations do a revised budget based on enrollment (September and January count). The Woodlands revised budget will be presented at the March Board meeting. The facilities conversation was always about giving students the opportunities necessary to succeed in the space given.</b></li> <li>6. Is the State Street campus failing so bad that the Bluemound campuses is being merged with State Street to raise State Street numbers?  <b>No. We are not merging based on numbers. The merger is occurring due to the need for better space for our student learning activities,</b></li> </ol>
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increased staff and administration productivity and collaboration. A positive outcome of the merger will be that we can utilize staff more efficiently.

7. Are we currently in a deficit?

No.

8. I am concerned with our class sizes? How many classes will be for the kindergarten class?

We have decided to allow our class sizes to be increased again this year to help secure our finances for the organization. Class sizes will not exceed 28. We have space for all our current students. The number of kindergarten classes will depend upon enrollment at each campus.

9. How can both campuses be thriving when there is a wait list?

We currently do not have a waitlist at either campus. Since the pandemic, we have had very few waitlists at either campus. A waitlist occurs when we have reached 28 students in all classes in a grade unit. If one campus has reached capacity in a unit, the other campus is recommended to prospective families.

10. Have we identified the cause of the enrollment issue?

There are a number of reasons including declining birth rates, movement of students to private or homeschooling, Schools across Wisconsin are facing a decline in enrollment, especially in kindergarten.

Why would we jump into a 20-year investment when we have not identified the cause of our enrollment issue?

In prior years, Woodlands was attempting to grow more than our ability. The enrollment was over projected. For the last year, we have more accurately projected the enrollment at both campuses. The plans for the merger allow for room for the current number of students, not the number of students that we have had in pre-COVID years.

Are we saving money by combining the schools?

Our goal for combining the schools is for non-financial reasons which will allow us to provide a better student experience. A small amount is saved, but that number will depend on many factors.

11. Will Woodlands' reputation be the same when the class sizes will be bigger?

Woodlands reputation is about the learning experience we provide for students and families. Our goal is to continue to provide those experiences. The current larger class sizes allow Woodlands to financially stabilize to ensure that we can continue to provide the solid learning experiences for our students and families in the future. The goal is to not keep the classes larger. We are doing this for the short-term. Our plan is to reduce class sizes in the future once things have stabilized.

<b>7. Adjourn</b>	Meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm.  <b>The next Board Meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2024.</b>
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Prepared and submitted by: Nicole Knox