



2024-25 GALS Denver Board of Directors February 2025 - Meeting Agenda February 27, 2025 | 6:00 – 8:00 pm MST

Virtual Meeting

Board Members Present

- Margaret-Ann Leavitt Burness
- Pam Horizny
- Michelle Hurt
- Kerry Lander
- Rebecca Leatherman
- Angie McPhaul
- Vivian Morales
- Emily Ragan
- Shannon Saviers
- Stephanie Sundberg
- Sara Taylor
- Allison Romagnoli

I. Welcome and called to order at 6:00

II. Approval of January Minutes

III. ED Update:

Fundraising

- GALS Fundraising Breakfast raised over \$80K with high attendance and energy.
- Strong programming and keynote speech by Jennifer Holliday.
- Consideration of a larger venue for next year.

School Updates

- Potential announcement by a NWSL at GALS field on March 18.
- PTA forming 501(c)(3), raised funds, planning additional fundraising events.
- Recent events include National Girls & Women in Sports Day, DCPA playwright honors, a Galentine's Dance, and Black Queen Alliance event.

Enrollment

- Middle School projected enrollment: 270 students.
- High School projected enrollment: 49 students compared to 58 students this year
 - Extensive outreach conducted citywide, but enrollment remains low.
 - Largest class (22 students) is graduating this year.

Financial Update

- January budget revision anticipates \$350K deficit.
- Federal grant delay (~\$40K) noted but not significant to current financials.
- Deficit driven primarily by Middle School transfer to support High School.
- Low HS enrollment remains a key issue.

IV. High School Sustainability Committee read out:

- The High School Sustainability Committee met weekly over a month to evaluate the viability of continuing the GALS High School.

- The committee consisted of 10 members, including both parent board representatives.
- Key areas reviewed included:
 - Financial projections
 - Academic performance
 - Enrollment trends
 - Potential alternative models (e.g., microschoools, partnerships)
- Input received from data analysis, teachers (HS and MS), staff, leadership, DPS, parents.
- Despite extensive recruitment efforts and creative brainstorming, no alternatives sufficiently addressed financial and programmatic concerns.
- Major concerns included:
 - Low enrollment/lack of interest from 8th grade students
 - Declining academic outcomes
 - Inadequate funding to maintain appropriate staffing levels
 - The committee also considered the broader impact on students, staff, and the GALS community.
- Based on this comprehensive analysis, the committee is recommending surrendering the GALS High School charter.
- The recommendation was made to ensure the long-term sustainability of the GALS Denver organization.

Board Discussion

- Board acknowledged the difficulty of decision and emotional weight.
- Consensus that the current model is financially and academically unsustainable.
- DPS was aware of the discussion and prepared to support transition if needed.

V. Public Comment

- Several current GALS teachers and founders expressed opposition to the High School closure. Key concerns included:
 - Recent renewal by DPS of HS points to our responsibility to continue
 - Short timeline for making the closure decision
 - Lack of transparency and communication from the board regarding the process
 - Board did not seek sufficient input from staff or school founders before voting
 - Closing the school would be especially harmful to transgender and LGBTQ+ students who benefit from the safe and supportive environment at GALS
 - Concerns about limited transition planning and potential disruption for students and families
- Speakers emphasized the emotional and cultural importance of the school and urged the board to reconsider or delay the decision.

VI. Board Vote – High School Charter Surrender

- Intro: Vote required 2/3 of the Board of Directors - 9 of 12 yes votes are required
- Resolution Proposed by Margaret-Ann Burness:

“I move that we close the Girl Athletic Leadership School High School (also known as GALS Denver High School) at the end of the 2024-2025 academic year which ends June 30, 2025, under the condition that Denver Public Schools continues to lease 750 Galapago Street in Denver to the Girls Athletic Leadership School Middle School (also known as GALS Denver Middle School).”

Motion seconded by Rebecca Leatherman



- All board members provided their vote along with a statement if they chose
- Vote Results: 11-Yay; 1-Nay
- Motion Passed as worded.
- Thanks to sustainability committee, finance committee, GALS leadership and staff, teachers, board members

VII. Meeting Adjourned at 7:45 pm.