

APPROVED



**GROW**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Grow Public Schools

### Minutes

#### Grow Public Schools Board Meeting

---

**Date and Time**

Monday November 14, 2022 at 4:00 PM

**Location**

GA Shafter - 471 W Los Angeles Ave., Shafter, CA 93263 - Classroom 18

Or

Grow Academy Arvin - 901 Nectarine Ct., Arvin, CA 93263 - Learning Lab

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/96729084926>

Or call: (669) 444 - 9171 Meeting ID: 967 2908 4926

---

#### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRESENTATIONS TO THE BOARD BY PARENTS AND CITIZENS**

Grow Public Schools welcomes your participation at the School's Board meetings. The purpose of a public meeting of the Board of Directors ("Board") is to conduct the affairs of the school in public. Your participation assures us of continuing community interest in our School. To assist you in the ease of speaking/participating in our meetings, the following guidelines are provided:

1. Agendas are available to all audience members.

Email [kheilman@growpublicschools.org](mailto:kheilman@growpublicschools.org) for an agenda.

2. Individuals wishing to provide public comment at this Board meeting may send their comments in writing to [kheilman@growpublicschools.org](mailto:kheilman@growpublicschools.org) or provide comments during the Oral Communications of the meeting, or prior to the discussion of the Agenda item during the meeting –comments received after that point in the meeting will not become part of the record. In your email, please include whether you are commenting on non-agenda items or a specific agenda item (reference the agenda item number). Comments submitted by email will be read aloud during the Board meeting for up to three (3) minutes. If comments are in Spanish or another language, they will be translated to English and such comments will be limited to six (6) minutes. The Board of Directors may limit the total time for public comment to a reasonable time.

---

3. With regard to specific agenda items, you may specify that agenda item in your email and you will be given an opportunity to speak for up to five (5) minutes when the Board discusses that item. When addressing the Board, speakers are requested to state their name and adhere to the time limits set forth. Any public records relating to an agenda item for an open session of the Board which are distributed to all, or a majority of all, of the Board members shall be available for public inspection at 5080 California Ave. Suite 100, Bakersfield, California 93309.

***In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and upon request, Grow Public Schools may furnish reasonable auxiliary aids and services to qualified individuals with disabilities. Individuals who require appropriate alternative modification of the agenda in order participate in Board meetings are invited to contact the School's office.***

---

### **Directors Present**

Ernie Unruh, Kristen Watson, Manuel Pantoja, Tom Mestmaker

### **Directors Absent**

Matt Look

### **Guests Present**

Alan Blandon, Alfonso Valenzuela, Allison Fenton, Signa-Terra, Barbara Grimm Marshall, Bridgett Rubio, Diana Guillen, Doc Ervin, Don Passion, Signa-Terra, Dylan Wilson, Elia Sagasta, Elma Rodriguez, Elysa Vargas, Eric Mendez, Jenny Bard, Kari Heilman, Lacie Harris, Maddison Contreras, Mike Romero, Pedro Rodriguez, RJ Valentino, Raj Cheshire (remote), Ricardo Esquivel, Rick Phillips, Savina Reyes, Tanya Kelley, Tatia Hunter-Jennings (remote)

---

## **I. Opening Items**

### **A. Call the Meeting to Order**

Tom Mestmaker called a meeting of the board of directors of Grow Public Schools to order on Monday Nov 14, 2022 at 4:04 PM.

### **B. Record Attendance**

### **C. Flag Salute**

Paisley Harris, Student Council Treasurer led the flag salute.

### **D. Public Comment**

No Public Comments.

## **II. Announcements**

### **A. Reappointment of Matt Look, SPGA Representative**

Tom Mestmaker, Board President shared that Matt Look, Star Parents of Grow Academy (SPGA) representative has accepted another one-year term, serving as the parent representative on the Grow Public Schools Board.

### **III. Grow Public Schools Executive Team Leadership Report**

#### **A. CEO Report**

Doc Ervin shared his CEO updates. He reminded the Board that on Monday, January 30, 2023 there will be a Board Workshop from 1:00pm to 4:00pm (location to be determined). He presented four different training topics and invited each member to give their input.

The Grow Public Schools Leadership Team is working on finalizing the Emerging Goals and Entry Plan Report. A draft will be included in December's Board Packet for review.

Our December Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 19, 2022. We are asking the Board to move up the meeting date to Monday, December 12, 2022. Dr. Kristen Watson responded that she will not be able to attend on December 12th. The remaining Board members shared that they are available. We will reach out to absent Board member, Matt Look to see if he can attend.

#### **B. COS Report**

Dr. Ric Esquivel, COS presented his updates starting with announcing the new school leadership in GA-Arvin. Jenny Bard, is the Interim Principal and Madison Anderholt, previously the Intervention Coordinator in Shafter, is now the Interim Assistant Principal in Arvin.

The first School Leadership Team (SLT) meeting will be held tomorrow evening. This group's focus will be to review SLT roles & responsibilities and to be grounded on a unified purpose.

We wanted to give the Board an update on the GA- Arvin LCAP. After a review of the LCAP, it was determined that it meets all of the criteria, as outlined in Education Code 52070, and is approved. The GA-Shafter LCAP has already been completed and it was also approved.

Dr. Ric Esquivel presented the ELA & Math CAASPP Year over Year Comparison charts sharing that the State released data regarding current test scores throughout California. Data was also analyzed from neighboring districts for benchmarking purposes. This data helps identify baselines to help set goals. The data clearly shows there are similar trends across the board of how neighboring school districts are performing after the pandemic. Math is a primary area of focus.

Dr. Kristen Watson asked if there are differences in the scores by grade level? Dr. Esquivel replied, yes there are. 3rd and 4th grade are above average, however, the gap widens in 7th and 8th, particularly in math. As we launch Q3, this data combined with the 90 Day Entry Plan and Emerging Goals, will help us determine the right level of ambition for continued growth year after year.

To assist with improving math scores, the Consortium on Reaching Excellence in Education (CORE) program has launched at both school sites. Teachers, along with CORE Instructors, have been working on identifying student challenges and are currently assessing what we have in place and what needs to be built upon.

#### **C. COO Report**

Mike Romero, COO presented his report starting with a Charter School Program (CSP) Grant update. The CSP grant was awarded to the CMO in 2019. We received \$6 million dollars for growth and expansion. We were able to achieve the first part of the grant commitment by expanding to 7th and 8th grade. However, due to the pandemic, we are requesting a grant modification for the second half of the grant. In this modification, the request is to include two K-8's instead of a high school. Doc Ervin shared the reason behind this is there needs to be a pipeline of scholars to attend the high school. But the modified two K-8 plan will depend on how our test scores look in the spring. If we don't have progress, the recommendation would be to hold off on the K-8's.

A requirement of the grant is an Annual Project Report (APR) which is due later this month. On November 1st and 2nd, four CMO staff members participated in the *2022 CSP Project Directors' Convening* in Washington, DC. This gave our staff the opportunity to interact with eight other grantees that all had the same obstacles due to the pandemic.

Mike shared a facility improvement update with the Shafter project. The temporary classrooms are on track and the pricing is around \$20,000 less than originally quoted.

There was a quarterly Kern Charter Collaborative meeting held on November 7th with Cathie Morris, Charter School Consultant with KCSOS. We will meet with her again in January to coordinate the timing of our spring oversight visits.

#### **IV. Division Reports**

##### **A. Operations**

Rick Phillips, Director of Operations gave his update. He shared that the new student information system, Aeries is set to go live in June and is currently working on coordinating the implementation schedule and trainings. Professional development for site managers continues to be a priority and he is bringing the Wellness Committee back. More information to come at the next Board meeting.

##### **B. Human Resources**

Eric Mendez, Director of Human Resources, presented his update sharing that the team has been focused on creating a Total Compensation & Benefit Study. This study will help us continue to have competitive salaries and will also help with the new California transparency laws.

The Director of Community and Family Engagement position is moving forward. We will be scheduling interviews later this month and estimate to have the position be filled by January.

Recruitment season is upon us, there will be a recruitment event in Shafter on Thursday, November 17. The main positions are Substitutes, Small Group Instructors. and Instructional Aids.

##### **C. Business Services/Fiscal Report**

Alan Blandon, Director of Business Services presented his updates. To add to what Eric Mendez was mentioning about the Total Compensation & Benefit Study, the benefit analysis compares seven school districts and one charter. The goal is to work on retention and ensure we have comparable salaries and benefits.

Once we are able to clearly communicate to future employees what is offered, it can be helpful in bringing them over.

Dr. Kristen Watson commented that having comparative data is important but to also consider including teacher testimonials about why working at Grow has impacted their lives.

Eric Mendez responded that Human Resources has those videos and they are also creating a virtual tour for potential candidates.

Ernie Unruh added that in his previous district, the biggest recruiters were the teachers because they knew the program the best.

#### **D. Learning & Innovation**

Elysa Vargas, Director of Learning and Innovation introduced her newest team members; Pedro Rodriguez, Coordinator of Teacher Residency and Alfonso Valenzuela, Academic Data Coordinator.

Individual Learning Plans (ILP) are currently being evaluated to determine the efficiency of the process and the possibility of it being automated. This will be relaunching in January.

School Leadership structure, in the upcoming months both sites will be adding a Dean of Culture. This will ensure that Principals can be completely focus on academics.

We will soon be launching the Coordination of Services Team (COST). Right now we are in the process of reviewing referrals and making sure that scholars are receiving the needed services.

#### **V. Grow Public Schools Leadership Report**

##### **A. Grow Academy Arvin**

Jenny Bard, Interim Principal of Arvin presented her updates. In her newly appointed role, she has met with every grade level and introduced a new reward system for scholars who demonstrate "super star" core values. These rewards include campus events and fieldtrips.

Several parent meetings have taken place and several events are in the works. More to come at the next Board meeting.

##### **B. Grow Academy Shafter**

Lacie Harris, Principal of Shafter presented her updates. GA-Shafter hosted their annual Veteran's Day Celebration with 20 veterans and their families. Administration, student body officers, kindergarten, 2nd grade, and 5th grade scholars all presented special words and songs of gratitude.

A team of 10 staff members attended the PLC + Conference sponsored by Corwin Press in Anaheim. All who attended shared it was a valuable learning development event focused on teacher learning.

#### **VI. Grow Public Schools Parent Report**

##### **A.**

**SPGA**

No report.

**B. POGA**

Bridgett Rubio, POGA President presented her updates. The Trunk or Treat event sold 45 spots and students were thrilled with the creative trunks. There is an upcoming fundraiser for grams children can send their friends and there are two upcoming dances: mother/son and father/daughter.

**VII. Grimm Family Education Foundation Report**

**A. Buena Vista Edible School Yard**

Dylan Wilson, ESY Executive Director presented his updates. He shared that professional development is ongoing with continued testing and piloting of new strategies. He also shared that he has a new educator starting in Shafter within the next couple of weeks and then both sites will be fully staffed.

Barbara Grimm Marshall expressed appreciation and gratitude. She added that she enjoys being on campus and seeing the children thriving. She thanked Doc Ervin and Dr. Ric Esquivel for the successful transition.

Doc Ervin, CEO, shared the goal is to work collaboratively and ultimately everyone wants what is best for the kids. He thanked the Foundation for their ongoing support.

**VIII. Consent Agenda**

**A. Approval of October 24, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes**

Manuel Pantoja made a motion to approve the minutes from October 24, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes.

Kristen Watson seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**IX. Closing Items**

**A. Adjourn Meeting**

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Tom Mestmaker