

Britt Despenza  
Principal

## Orlando Gifted Academy

1121 North Fern Creek Avenue  
Orlando, FL 32803  
(407)897-6410

<https://orlandogiftedacademy.ocps.net>



February 25 @5:00pm  
SAC Meeting Minutes

### 1. Call to Order / Determination of a Quorum (51% of members)

- 5:05pm called to order by SAC Chair, Jennifer Vose
- Attendance
  - Quorum was established

Member Name	Position	Attendance
Jennifer Vose	SAC Chair	Present
Jeremy Siegel	SAC Vice Chair	Present
Raegan Smythe	SAC Secretary	Present
Sarah Courtney	SAC Parent member	Present
Jenn Mandelion Chrisman	SAC Parent member	Present
Martha McCormick - Watson	SAC Parent member	Present
Melonie Sexton	SAC Parent member	Present
Jami Valentine Miller	SAC Parent member	Online
Melissa Vaughan	SAC Parent member	Online
Annmarie Cherolini	OGA Secretary	Present
Ericka Scheid	OGA Behavior Specialist	Absent
Britt Despenza	OGA Principal	Present
Theresita V.	Community Representative	Absent

### 2. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

- Change in January minutes.
  - Martha McCormick - Watson was present at the January meeting.
- Sarah Courtney moved to accept minutes with amendment. Seconded by Martha McCormick-Watson.
- Passed unanimously

### 3. Principal's Report

- Magnet Seat Offers will be released on Friday, 2/26
  - Parents have until March 12<sup>th</sup> to accept.
  - Ms. Despenza will have numbers for the next SAC meeting.
- Comments from the School Based Climate Survey
  - Trends – groups of comments have been compartmentalized into Trends
    1. LaunchEd Parents

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- a. Parents are disappointed overall.
  - b. Parents want notification when there is a substitute teacher
  - c. Parents believe that teachers seem unprepared
  - d. Ms. Despenza asked that any concerns about specific teachers need to be emailed to the main office. This includes personality conflicts, feelings and any personal information.
  - e. Parents feel that communication is not consistent.
    - i. Ms. Despenza reminded the group that teachers are not required to send newsletters or use Dojo. Teachers are only required to use emails and should respond in a timely manner. Emails are used because that data is saved on servers and can be tracked.
  - f. PE – parents hope that there has been a change
  - g. MS Teams chat – staff is not sure what the issue is with Chat. When teachers turn off the chat feature, kids cannot ask questions to the group but they can directly message the teacher.
    - i. Martha McCormick – Watson has personally witnessed that the students have exploited the chat feature.
  - h. Parents feel that the current administration is unresponsive
  - i. Instructional feedback – there was a website that parents didn't find appropriate and asked it to be blocked. It was blocked.
2. Face to Face Parents
- a. Want more hands on learning instead of computer-based learning.
  - b. Complaint about the focus on iReady
    - i. iReady is a requirement of OCPS and cannot be removed.
  - c. Question about the strengths and weaknesses of new vs old teachers.
    - i. Each teacher's experience provides a completely different perspective. A new teacher comes in with fresh ideas, an

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older teacher has more knowledge on what works in a classroom. OGA has a mixture of both and benefits from viewpoints on all sides.

- Communication seemed to be a consist issue and appears to be lacking.
  - For communication at the administrative level, Ms. Despenza offered the following changes.
    1. Weekly messages
      - a. It was agreed that the weekly calls need to consistent and will happen every Friday.
      - b. Weekly Friday messages will be sent via email as well as the original phone call.
      - c. There is a newsletter posted on the OCPS OGA website.
      - d. Ms. Despenza will include a reminder about the newsletter in her weekly message.
      - e. Weekly messages are generally 1-2 minutes.
  - For communication with individual teachers, that will remain up to the teacher.

#### 4. Old Business

- Survey Results
  - Communication
    1. Parents asked that curriculum is updated monthly and broken down by grade level. They want to know what is going to be covered in advance, not after the fact. Important dates should be noted. They also asked for an explanation of assignments, not just the title.
  - LaunchEd
    1. Everyone agreed that COVID is a mess. LaunchEd was completely made up to fill the gap and is different by state, county and school. OGA is doing everything it can to handle this temporary situation.
  - Parent Engagement
    - What is the OGA differentiation, how are we different from a regular school?

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1. Curriculum should be the focus.
2. Smaller classrooms, more teacher time.
- Community, communication, curriculum
  1. There needs to be a focus on these 3 areas and how OGA is different from other schools in each of these areas.

### 5. New Business

- Schedule of April / May meeting dates
  - Leaving them open for now. Will decide at next meeting.

6. **Next meeting:** March 25, 2021 @5pm

### 7. Public Comments

- Chris Pratt - How is OGA different? Why is OGA the best place for my child?
  - Ms Mullen – teacher representative.
    1. OCPS standards still apply to OGA students. Testing still applies. Kids are gifted in many ways. At OGA, students are all over the map in the classroom. Some read at the college level and some need help with phonics. Teachers have curriculum plans, but sometimes the fundamentals are lacking and need to be fixed first. Teachers have to adjust to the kids, despite teaching plans.
- Suggested grouping kids together by level. 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders could work together at the same level.
  - How does that work?
    1. Grade compacting, look to resources to make this happen next year.
- Create Subcommittee on Community, communication, curriculum (CCC)
  - Raegan Smythe moved to create the CCC Subcommittee. Seconded by Martha McCormick-Watson.
    1. Sarah Courtney volunteered to be the Chair.
      - a. She ran unopposed
      - b. Passed unanimously

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2. If you want to be a part of the committee contact Sarah at  
Sarah.Courtney.BCBA@gmail.com

- Back to survey results – what can we improve today?
  - PE update. Students need to turn on their cameras and need to respond to chats from the teacher. Any specific questions please come directly to Ms Sharpe.
  - White board usage – LaunchEd students can't see the board
- A final reminder that if parents have any questions or concerns about a specific subject or teacher, please contact that teacher. If you do not receive a response, then please contact Ms. Despenza.

### 8. Important Dates

- Wednesday, March 3 – No Early Release
- Thursday, March 4 – PTA Meeting
- Tuesday, March 9 – Mental Health Course (middle school only)
- Thursday, March 11 – End of 3<sup>rd</sup> Marking Period
- Friday, March 12 – Student Holiday / Teacher Workday
- Monday, March 15-19 – Spring Break

### 9. Adjournment

- Raegan Smythe moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Martha McCormick-Watson.
  - Passed unanimously
- Jennifer Vose, SAC Chair, closed the meeting at 6:40pm.

*The Orlando Gifted Academy School Advisory Council (SAC) is a team of individuals from various segments of the community: parents, teachers, students, administrators, support staff, business/industry people, and other interested community members. The sole purpose of the SAC is to "assist in the preparation and evaluation of the School Improvement Plan." [Florida Statute 229.58]*

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