



Regional Board Meeting
September 25, 2024

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approve Minutes: May 22, 2024
- IV. Public Comment
- V. Presentation from the Instrumental Music Department
- VI. Closed Session
- VII. Reports
 - a. Financial Report.....Dr. Cihak
 - i. Revenue
 - ii. Expenditures
 - b. School Report.....Dr. Cihak
 - i. Opening Day 2024 and Celebrations
 - ii. 2024-2025 Enrollment Update
 - iii. Recruiting and Audition Plan
 - iv. Performance Calendar
 - v. Introduction of New Staff
 - c. Foundation Report.....Foundation Representative
- VIII. Unfinished Business
- IX. New Business
 - a. Personnel Actions
 - b. Revision to Overnight Field Trips
 - c. Approval of Foundation Board Member(s).....Foundation Representative
- X. Items by Board Members
- XI. Adjournment

REGIONAL BOARD MEETING May 22, 2024

MINUTES

The Regional Board of The Governor's School for the Arts met in hybrid format at the SECEP offices and virtually on May 22, 2024. Attending the meeting were:

Regional Board Members in Person

Ms. LaChanda Parker	Franklin
Mr. Carlos Clanton	Norfolk
Ms. Karen Jenkins	Suffolk

Regional Board Members Virtual

Ms. Kim Melnyk	Virginia Beach
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Superintendents In Person

Dr. Jared Cotton	Chesapeake
Dr. Sharon Byrdsong	Norfolk
Dr. Nicole DeVries, Chief Academic Officer	Portsmouth
Dr. John Gordon, III	Suffolk
Dr. Donald Robertson	Virginia Beach

GSA Staff In Person

Dr. Shelly Cihak	Executive Director
Ms. Deborah Thorpe	Assistant Director
Ms. Kristen Outlaw Hartman	Office Manager

GSA Instructors and Students In Person

Mr. Donovan Mitchell	Theatre & Film, Chair
Tremayia Dotson, Chesapeake	Theatre & Film
Ms. Laina Courts	Visual Arts, Chair
Mr. Ben Wright	Visual Arts, Associate Chair
Ava Terry, Virginia Beach	Visual Arts

Call to Order The meeting was called to order by Mr. Clanton at 10:59 a.m.

Roll Call As Board members introduced themselves, attendance was taken by Dr. Cihak.

Approval of Minutes There were no corrections to the minutes of March 27, 2024. The minutes were approved as presented by unanimous consent.

Public Comment None.

Presentation by Theatre & Film and Visual Arts Departments Dr. Cihak introduced the students and staff that came to the Regional Board meeting to share their GSA experiences. Donovan Mitchell, chair of Theatre & Film, along with Liana Courts, Visual Arts Chair, and Ben Wright, Associate Visual Arts Chair, came. They were joined by Theatre & Film student, Tremayia Dotson, and Visual Arts student, Ava Terry.

Tremayia Dotson shared a monologue from George C. Wolf's *The Colored Museum*. Tremayia is a 2nd year junior from Western Branch High School in Chesapeake on the performance tract in the Theatre & Film department.

Dr. Byrdsong asked Tremayia how she was inspired by the monologue. Tremayia said she felt that it told her to be yourself, live your own truth, and that our ancestors are part of who we are today.

Dr. Gordon asked Tremayia about her takeaways from the piece. She said that the characters, like Nat Turner, Eartha Kitt, Malcolm X, Burt Williams, Aunt Jemimah, and Angela Davis, could be troubled, let loose, be brilliant, and are all important to American culture.

Ms. Jenkins said that it was worth being in traffic to see how she became the character. She will remember this performance.

Dr. Cihak then introduced Ava Terry from the Visual Arts Department. Ava is a 4th year senior from Kellam High School in Virginia Beach. She shared that she participated in the Virginia Beach gifted arts program, then GSA. Ava brought two paintings and Wearable Art Fashion Show pieces from her 1st and 4th years. She shared that the wearable art, especially, taught her collaboration and life skills. She had won first place both her 1st and 3rd years.

Ava shared that her senior solo exhibition, titled "One Tough Bloom" was held at Summit Point. She had known the title and theme, climate activism, for three years. Her best work from the past four years was displayed. As part of the solo exhibition process, she found the show space and created the show cards and posters. Her art included the painting "Giant" which shows where food comes from and how immigrant workers are part of the process. Ava also shared that she partnered with Trashie as a

service project associated with her show. People brought in 450 pounds of clothing for recycling.

Mr. Clanton asked Ava what her plans were. Ava shared that she planned to attend American University to major in Journalism and Studio Art.

Dr. Robertson asked what pulled her art together. Ava said that art can be used to effect change and that art connects people.

Mr. Clanton asked Ava for her takeaway from GSA. Ava answered that the environment at GSA and in the Visual Arts department allows ideas to develop and come to fruition. Ideas are embraced with enthusiasm and even wild ideas can come to life.

Dr. Byrdsong how she became interested in climate. Ava shared that an AP History class touched her heart.

Ms. Jenkins found Ava's talent amazing and noted that the painting made her hungry for strawberries. Ava shared that Giant shown in the painting is a sustainable farm.

Closed Session None

Reports

Financial

1. **Revenue:** Referring to the May 14, 2024 revenue report, Dr. Cihak noted that it reflects the additional state entitlement funds allocated at the March 27, 2024 meeting, and all tuition has been received from localities.
2. **Operational Budget Expenditures:** Dr. Cihak shared that the May 14, 2024 expenditure report includes encumbrances to cover costs necessary for operating the facilities through the end of the fiscal year. Dr. Cihak explained that GSA is on track to finish the year on budget.

School Report

1. **Fourth Quarter Review and Celebrations:** Dr. Cihak shared that students are engaging in numerous master classes through partnership with the Virginia Arts Festival and Virginia Symphony, receiving valuable feedback from world-renowned artists such as Jessie Montgomery, Lara Downes, Dance Theater of Harlem, and Martha Graham Dance Company. Dr. Cihak also shared the success of Theatre & Film's *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, along with the annual Film Festival (which all students viewed), and the Dance Department had a phenomenal spring concert. The Vocal Music Department produced their

senior capstone recital, as well as capstones in both Instrumental Music and Visual Arts (17 senior music recitals and 25 solo art exhibitions). Visual Arts opened the 36th Annual Juried Exhibition, and there was a successful weekend at Stockley Gardens Spring Art Festival, where GSA students took Best in Show and 1st Place. There are numerous events on the horizon to include the Technical Theatre Escape Room, Musical Theatre's *Something Rotten*, the Spring Jazz Concert, and the Instrumental Music Spring Concert. GSA Graduation will be June 5th and New Student Orientation is June 10th, followed by a summer full of camps and workshops.

2. **Recruitment Activities 2024-2025:** Dr. Cihak shared that the Dance faculty led a week of master classes for students at Old Donation School, with the goal of recruiting future students. Additionally, GSA will host numerous camps and workshops throughout the summer (i.e., art camp; woodwind/brass camp; community dance classes; vocal music workshops) and serve as the host for TRSKids, Virginia Stage Company, Coastal Broadway Collective, and the Richmond Ballet Summer Intensive. Virtual Meet GSA Nights have been scheduled for each school division in the Fall and GSA will continue to host open house events for school staff, as well as the community.

Mr. Clanton asked how many seniors GSA had this year. Ms. Thorpe told him that there are 104.

Foundation Report

Ms. Thorpe shared that the Foundation raised over \$450,000 this year. The funds were used for every department, facilities, and student assistance. She also shared that the foundation was able to purchase a harp which allowed two students to take lessons.

Unfinished Business

None

Ms. Parker moved to accept the reports. It was seconded by Ms. Jenkins and passed unanimously.

New Business

1. **Personnel Actions:** Dr. Cihak presented the proposed personnel action of Keith Smith to fill the position of Technical Director, explaining that he was the overwhelming selection by both the interview committee and the students. Ms. Parker moved to accept the personnel action and Ms. Jenkins seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.
2. **FY25 Budget:** Dr. Cihak presented the proposed FY 25 Operational Budget, explaining that it was built on a state entitlement from 382 students (as anticipated enrollment is submitted a year in advance to VDOE) and local tuition amounts based on an enrollment of 400. If all accepted and current students attend in the fall, enrollment will be at 420, representing an increase in state entitlement funds from what is budgeted. The anticipated expenses were presented with step increase for staff, in line with the proposed budget of Norfolk

Public Schools. Expenses also included the cost-of-living increases for rent and utilities, as well as increased compensation to cover the previously approved increase for part-time wages that will go into effect January 1, 2025. Dr. Gordon confirmed that the budget had the support of the Superintendents. Ms. Parker moved to accept the FY25 budget and Ms. Jenkins seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. **Overnight Field Trips for 2024-2025:** Dr. Cihak presented proposed overnight field trips for the 2024-2025 school year with one correction to remove the October trip to the film festival in New York City. The trips include Fall Plein Air weekend, a dance concert and workshops in Washington DC, trips to New York for Instrumental Music, Visual Art, and Theatre, and All-Virginia Orchestra events. Ms. Parker moved to approve the field trips. Ms. Jenkins seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.
4. **Committee Meetings for 2024-2025:** Dr. Cihak shared the dates coordinated with SECEP for 2024-2025 meetings [September 25, 2024; January 29, 2025; March 26, 2025; and May 28, 2025] and requested approval to keep GSA meetings aligned with SECEP. Ms. Parker moved to accept the meeting schedule and Ms. Jenkins seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
5. **Foundation Board Members:** Ms. Thorpe reported that there were no new members to the foundation board, but that there should be two in September, 2024.

Items from Board Members

Ms. Parker expressed her excitement for the GSA graduation. Dr. Cihak confirmed the date as Wednesday, June 5, 2024.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:38 by Mr. Clanton.

THE GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

**FY25 Operational Budget
Summary of Revenue**

September 17, 2024

Revenues	FY25	YTD
Anticipated State Entitlement*	\$2,034,479.00	\$339,079.84
State Technology	\$26,000.00	\$0.00
Fund Transfer	\$0.00	\$0.00
Tuition**	\$1,820,800.00	\$0.00
Education Stabilization Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$3,881,279.00	\$339,079.84

*Based upon enrollment of 382.

**Funding 400 students for FY25.

**The Governor's School for the Arts
Operational Budget Expenses for FY25
Financial Report As Of September 17, 2024**

OBJECT CODE	DESCRIPTION	FY25 BUDGET ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION	REVISED EST REV	ACTUAL YTD	ENCUMBERED TO DATE	AVAILABLE BALANCE	% EXPENDED ENCUMBERED AS OF 9/17/2024
1110	Administrative Salary	\$ 245,323.00	\$ 245,323.00	\$28,931.59	\$0.00	\$216,394.41	11.80%
1120	Teachers: Contracted	\$ 755,000.00	\$ 755,000.00	\$73,819.68	\$0.00	\$681,180.32	9.80%
1121	Teachers: Hourly Salary	\$ 880,000.00	\$ 880,000.00	\$0.00	\$3,750.00	\$876,250.00	0.40%
1150	Clerical Salary	\$ 90,196.00	\$ 90,196.00	\$10,763.22	\$0.00	\$79,432.78	11.90%
1621	Stipends	\$ 14,800.00	\$ 14,800.00	\$1,027.28	\$0.00	\$13,772.72	6.90%
2100	Social Security	\$ 152,578.00	\$ 152,578.00	\$8,708.07	\$0.00	\$143,869.93	5.70%
2210	VRS Retirement	\$ 80,145.00	\$ 80,145.00	\$8,123.56	\$0.00	\$72,021.44	10.10%
2220	VRS Retirement - Hybrid	\$ 100,361.00	\$ 100,361.00	\$8,226.92	\$0.00	\$92,134.08	8.20%
2300	Health Insurance	\$ 150,759.00	\$ 150,759.00	\$6,501.22	\$0.00	\$144,257.78	4.30%
2400	VRS Group Life	\$ 13,048.00	\$ 13,048.00	\$1,351.62	\$0.00	\$11,696.38	10.40%
2510	VLDP Disability-Hybrid	\$ 7,441.00	\$ 7,441.00	\$258.14	\$0.00	\$7,182.86	3.50%
2750	VRS Retiree Healthcare	\$ 11,391.00	\$ 11,391.00	\$1,385.93	\$0.00	\$10,005.07	12.20%
2800	Terminal Leave Payment	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,000.00	0.00%
3000	Contracts	\$ 396,013.00	\$ 396,013.00	\$24,536.17	\$117,719.33	\$253,757.50	35.90%
3117	Equip Maint Contract	\$ 700.00	\$ 700.00	\$24.40	\$0.00	\$675.60	3.40%
5110	Electricity	\$ 38,450.00	\$ 38,450.00	\$2,303.32	\$34,146.68	\$2,000.00	94.80%
5120	Natural Gas	\$ 3,334.00	\$ 3,334.00	\$93.42	\$1,369.24	\$1,871.34	43.90%
5130	Water	\$ 4,620.00	\$ 4,620.00	\$312.85	\$1,340.55	\$2,966.60	35.80%
5250	Postage/Courier	\$ 800.00	\$ 800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$800.00	0.00%
5260	Telephone	\$ 24,100.00	\$ 24,100.00	\$3,575.74	\$19,711.83	\$812.43	96.60%
5300	Insurance	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 10,149.00	\$10,149.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	100.00%
5400	Leases/Rentals	\$ 696,720.00	\$ 695,026.00	\$184,200.00	\$384,187.72	\$128,332.28	81.80%
5501	Local Travel	\$ 28,000.00	\$ 28,000.00	\$709.00	\$0.00	\$27,291.00	2.50%
5550	Staff Development	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$3,000.00	0.00%
6000	Supplies	\$ 129,000.00	\$ 129,000.00	\$1,548.42	\$0.00	\$127,451.58	1.20%
6040	Technology	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18,000.00	0.00%
8200	Equipment Additions	\$ 26,000.00	\$ 26,000.00	\$2,145.83	\$0.00	\$23,854.17	8.30%
		\$3,881,279.00	\$3,881,234.00	\$381,695.38	\$562,225.35	\$2,942,010.27	24.20%

Enrollment Data with Comparison

Locality	2023-2024 Enrollment	2023-2024 Allotment		2024-2025 Enrollment*	2024-2025 Allotment
Chesapeake	102	90		106	96
Franklin	0	1		2	1
Isle of Wight	22	23		27	25
Norfolk	62	60		65	66
Portsmouth	22	24		26	24
Southampton	7	7		4	7
Suffolk	41	35		42	37
Virginia Beach	140	142		145	144
Totals	396	382		417	400

*Enrollment Data as of 9/12/24

GSA ENROLLMENT 2024-2025 year		Totals												
City	Total	American Indian	Asian	Black/African-An	Hispanic	Pacific	Isia	White	two or mor	Total POC	Percentage POC	Gender F	Gender M	Non-Binary
GSA Chesapeake	106	1	7	21	8	0	55	14	51	48%	77	29	0	
Chesapeake	13317	122	443	4,311	1,629	35	5,603	1,174	7714	58%	6,427	6,777	36	
Chesapeake Quota	96													
GSA Franklin	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	100%	2	0	0	
Franklin City	299	0	1	235	10	39	14	260	87%	937	962			
Franklin Quota	1													
GSA Isle of Wight	27	0	2	5	2	0	17	1	10	37%	19	8	0	
Isle of Wight	1,840	6	20	506	115	3	1,066	124	774	42%	885	953	2	
Isle of Wight Quota	25													
GSA Norfolk	65	0	4	11	6	0	37	7	28	43%	43	21	1	
Norfolk	7500	20	191	4,337	976	22	1,472	482	6028	80%	3,682	3,816	2	
Norfolk Quota	66													
GSA Portsmouth	26	0	0	17	0	0	8	1	18	69%	22	4	0	
Portsmouth	3646	8	28	2,675	195	5	580	155	3066	84%	1,805	1,841	0	
Portsmouth Quota	24													
GSA Southampton	4	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	1	25%	4	0	0	
Southampton	752	1	1	314	13	0	398	25	354	47%	359	393	0	
Southampton Quota	7													
GSA Suffolk	42	0	1	17	1	0	17	6	25	60%	31	10	1	
Suffolk	4414	11	56	2,624	293	11	1,158	261	3256	74%	2,151	2,263	0	
Suffolk Quota	37													
GSA Virginia Beach	145	1	6	17	11	2	89	19	56	39%	110	34	1	
Virginia Beach	20488	53	1,393	4,849	2,731	99	9,284	2,079	11204	55%	9,958	10,463	67	
Virginia Beach Quota	144													
Total GSA	417								191	46%				



Audition Timeline 2024-2025

Saturday, September 21, 2024	Community Connect Event (Scope) 11am to 2pm
Tuesday, September 24, 2024	Virtual Meet GSA 7:00pm (Suffolk)
TBD	In person visit to Southampton MS and HS
Thursday, September 26, 2024	Virtual Meet GSA 7:00pm (Chesapeake)
Wednesday, October 2, 2024	St. Patricks' Catholic School Fair 6pm -7:30pm
Tuesday, October 8, 2024	Virtual Meet GSA 6:30 pm (Virginia Beach)
Wednesday, October 9, 2024	Administrator, Counselor, GRT Open House 2:30p-3:30p
Thursday, October 10, 2024	Virtual Meet GSA 6:30 pm (Norfolk)
Thursday, October 10, 2024	VB Academy Night, 5pm to 7:30pm
Tuesday, October 15, 2024	Virtual Meet GSA 6:30pm (Portsmouth)
Wednesday, October 16, 2024	SPS Advanced Instructional Fair 6p-7:30p
Wednesday, October 16, 2024	The Williams School Fair 7pm
Thursday, October 17, 2024	Virtual Meet GSA 7:00pm (Isle of Wight)
Tuesday, October 22, 2024	Virtual Meet GSA 7:00pm (Southampton/Franklin)
Wednesday, October 30, 2024	Open House 6:00pm- 8:00pm
Friday, December 6, 2024	Application Deadline
Monday, January 6, 2025	Send Intent Form to Current 9 th -11 th students
Wednesday, January 8, 2025	First Round Decisions Completed
Saturday, January 25, 2025	Visual Arts 9am-5pm (15 min per/2-3 rooms) Instrumental Music 9am-5pm (15 min per) Dance 8am-12pm and 1pm-5pm (organize by District) Theatre Acting 9am-12pm (10 min per) Film 1pm-5pm (15 min per) Tech Theatre 9am-12pm (15 min per)
Saturday, February 1, 2025	Visual Arts 9am-5pm (15 min per/2-3 rooms) Instrumental Music 9am-5pm (15 min per) Jazz 9am-12pm (15 min per) Musical Theatre 1pm-5pm Vocal Music 9am-5pm (5 per hour, each group stays one hour)
Saturday, February 8, 2025	Visual Arts 9am-5pm (15 min per/2-3 rooms) Dance Call backs 1p-5p Theatre Call Backs Design/Tech Call Backs General Back up day/outlying candidates
Saturday, February 15, 2025	General Make up Day (If Needed)
Tuesday, February 18, 2025	Final Selections due to Shelly & Deborah
Friday, February 28, 2025	Decision letters sent
Friday, March 21, 2025	Deadline for Candidates to Accept GSA



Ale Aranda was born and raised in Mexico, her professional training began in Mexico City at the age of 13, specializing in Hip-Hop and Latin Ballroom. By 19 years old she had danced in the TV show "LIP SYNC" for Comedy Central Latin America, Kia Motors Commercial, and National Music Tour for "JEANS." Deciding to challenge herself and always grow in her career, she has trained in schools in the United States, including Sheffield School of Dance (AL), Peridance Capezio Center (NY), Hubbard Street (IL), Latin Street (IL), Velocity Dance Center (WA), DGBEK Studio (FL), and others. Teaching experience includes The Boys and Girls Club of the Albemarle (NC), The Raw Dance center (FL), Dance variations of Rockledge (FL), Dance 101 (AL), David Miner Ballroom Academy (AL), and many others. Sharing her knowledge is a great responsibility that she is grateful for and hopes to continue doing for many years.



A native of Charlotte, North Carolina, Alexandra Dwight has played harp and piano since the age of four and received a BM in Harp Performance from Indiana University in 2016 under Distinguished Professor Susann McDonald. In 2013, she won first prize in the Young Professional Division of the American Harp Society National Competition and as the Concert Artist performed and taught masterclasses in over twenty US cities from 2013-2015. From 2016-2017 she honed her skills as a Celtic harper and worked as an Itinerant Musician at Colonial Williamsburg, where she performed folk and early music in 18th century costume. In 2018 and 2022, she received prizes for her Scottish harp performances and compositions at the Princess Margaret of the Isles Competition sponsored by Clan Donald. Equally comfortable as a collaborative pianist, she received her MM in Piano Accompanying from Florida State University, studying under Professor Valerie Trujillo. During her time in Florida from 2022-2024, she served as Principal Harpist for the Panama Symphony and performed as a substitute for the Mobile Symphony, Tuscaloosa Symphony, Gulf Coast Symphonia, and Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra. She currently lives in Norfolk, VA where she maintains a piano and harp studio, teaching at Norfolk Academy, the Academy of Music, and performing throughout the Hampton Roads area.



Kim Davis is from Portsmouth, VA, and is an alumni from The Governor's School for the Arts. Kim is a 2019 graduate of George Mason University where she performed works by Donald Byrd, Andonis Foniadakis, and Nacho Duato. Kimberly joined DanceWorks Chicago in August 2019. At DanceWorks, she's done pieces by Harrison McEldowney, Joshua Manculich, Greg Blackmon, and more. She danced for South Chicago Dance Theater for four years. She has worked with Kia S. Smith, Donald Byrd, Joshua Blake Carter, Crystal Michelle, Ron De Jesus, Monique Haley, August Tye, and Stephanie Martinez. In her dance career she has traveled internationally to Germany, Columbia and the Netherlands where she performed and taught. She has been in *Dance Magazine* for 3 years and she is a featured dancer in the music video "Sepiricon". She has also had the pleasure of impersonating Josephine Baker and Tina Turner!



Hi, I'm Sherrod Faulks! I've worked in tech for over 15 years as a developer and designer. I've worked for fast-paced startups in NYC and big multinational corporations. After a long career in tech, I decided to pivot to a career as an artist. I launched DEEP BLACK in 2020 and have since been featured in *The New York Times*, collaborated with companies big and small, and created for many wonderful restaurants, including Codex and Bayberry Garden. I moved from NC to VA (born and raised!) in late 2020 and have thoroughly enjoyed rooting into the local creative scene. I am looking forward to teaching ceramics in the Visual Arts Department.



Jasmine Fitch is a dedicated dance professional with a deep and nuanced understanding of modern and contemporary dance, drawing from the Horton and Graham techniques. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Dance from Old Dominion University, advanced studies from Marymount Manhattan College, and a Certificate of Arts in Classical Dance from The Alvin Ailey Dance School. Throughout her training, Jasmine had the privilege of being mentored by distinguished dance professionals, refining her artistry in modern, ballet, and jazz disciplines. Her artistic journey includes performing as a dancer in a film showcased at Lincoln Center in New York City and featured at renowned film festivals nationwide. This experience reflects her dedication to the art of movement, allowing her to explore her craft and engage audiences on a national scale. Additionally, Jasmine has contributed to several independent short films in New York City, demonstrating her versatility and commitment to diverse mediums within the dance field.



Ericka Ricks has excelled in the art of dance performance and choreography. In 2009, she graduated from the Conservatory program at Shenandoah University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance. Additionally, Ericka is a graduate from The Governor's School for the Arts. From performing in multiple Broadway performances to working as a judge/adjudicator in many regional and national dance competitions, she brings a diverse background and fresh perspective to the Hampton Roads dance community. Her professional dance training and experiences have landed her into the Broadway tour productions of *Dreamgirls*, *Legally Blonde*, and *All Shook Up*. She has also performed in several regional theaters across the country. A few of Ericka's favorite regional credits include: *Hairspray*, *All Shook Up*, *Ragtime*, and *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. Through those experiences, she has mastered the art of live stage performance. She has worked as an instructor, coach, and guest choreographer for many local dance and performing arts centers, universities, and pageants across the country and locally. Ericka's award-winning choreography has graced many stages up and down the east coast receiving many awards such as "Best Choreography" and "Most Entertaining." Along with many other regional and national titles and awards. Her gift of teaching includes musical theater, jazz, contemporary, lyrical, tap, and ballet to all ages. She is currently the Director of Dance at Cape Henry Collegiate, in Virginia Beach where she has taught for 10 years.

NEW GSA STAFF 2024-2025



Janelle Spruill earned her BFA in Dance and minor in Media Studies from Marymount Manhattan College and her MA in Arts Administration and Management from Goucher College. She was a member of the Elizabeth Higgins Dance Theater and a scholarship student at The Ailey School, The Gus Giordano Dance School, American Dance Festival, and Garth Fagan Dance where she also had the opportunity to work and perform with the company. She was a teacher's assistant at Broadway Dance Center and a Rehearsal Assistant for the Richmond Ballet's production of *The Nutcracker*. She has been a guest artist at Shenandoah University and has taught master classes at the Regional and National High School Dance Festivals in Virginia, Florida, and Pennsylvania as well as the West Virginia Dance Festival in Charleston. Her works have recently been accepted to the Regional and National High School Dance Festivals and the Richmond Choreographer's Showcase. In 2013, she received the NAACP Area II ACT-50 Award in Dance. Janelle joined ODU as an Adjunct Instructor in 2021 and has been a part of the faculty at The Governor's School for the Arts teaching and choreographing for both the Dance and Musical Theatre Departments since 2010. She is now the Associate Chair of the GSA Dance Department.



CJ Tyson honed his skills at the Governor's School for the Arts in Norfolk, Virginia, and furthered his training at Denise Wall Womble's Dance Energy. Immediately after high school, Tyson embarked on his professional journey, starting with Sesame Street Live. In 2005, he moved to New York City, where his talents have been showcased in Broadway productions like *Wicked* and *West Side Story: The Revival*. His television appearances include [Lip Sync Battle \(2015\)](#), [Saturday Night Live \(1975\)](#), [The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon \(2014\)](#), [The Ellen DeGeneres Show \(2003\)](#), and [Late Night with Seth Meyers \(2014\)](#), complemented by film performances in [Ted 2 \(2015\)](#) and [Popstar: Never Stop Never Stopping \(2016\)](#). Tyson's latest venture, a self-titled album, is available across all major music platforms and CJ can be seen in Amy Schumer's new Netflix project *Kinda Pregnant*. For more information and updates on CJ Tyson, visit cityson.com.

**Personnel Report
September 25, 2024
The Governor's School for the Arts**

Resignations

None

Retirements

Deborah Thorpe	Assistant Director/Foundation Director	Effective June 30, 2024
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Promotions

None

Elections

None

Deborah Thorpe
152 Westover Avenue
Norfolk, Virginia 23507

August 20, 2024

Dr. Shelly Cihak
Executive Director
The Governor's School for the Arts
Norfolk, VA 23510

Dear Dr. Cihak, Committee of Superintendents, and Regional Board members,

It is with great pride that I let you know that I plan to retire effective June 30, 2025 after serving The Governor's School for the Arts for thirty-seven years.

In 1984 I served on a steering committee to discuss plans for the school and in 1985 and 86 co-chaired the dance program. There were so many talented and creative artists working with young people during those summers, and we all had a blast creating this program that was hugely based on collaboration. I became chair of the dance department in 1987 and in 2011 became the assistant director and foundation director. During my tenure I helped raise over \$3 million for the students and programs of the school and I know that Lou Lowenthal, our founding director, would be proud of the growth of the school.

GSA has been my identity, and my source of many deep friendships and creativity. I am most proud of how the school has grown to serve more and more kids. Thank you to every student, teacher and administrator from whom I was able to learn and thank you- our superintendents and regional board for continuing to support this uniquely important program.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Deborah', written in black ink.

Deborah Thorpe



Proposed International Trips 2026

Date	Department	Location	Description
October 2026*	Musical Theatre	Japan	Students will perform in Miyazaki (Virginia Beach's sister city), Kitakyushu City (Norfolk's sister city), Hiroshima, Kyoto, and Osaka at large community venues, as well as designated schools. They will visit the city halls to present the mayoral messages.

*Originally approved for October 2025 at the January 24, 2024 Committee of Superintendents and Regional Board meetings. Change necessary to accommodate venue remodeling in Miyazaki.

Dr. Mary Kate Andris

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EDUCATION

Doctorate Degree	Higher Education Administration Widener University, Chester, Pennsylvania
Master's Degree	Higher Education Widener University, Chester, Pennsylvania
Bachelor of Arts	International Management Moravian College, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

EXPERIENCE

President and CEO – CIVIC LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE, Norfolk, VA – May 2023 to present.

- Serve as the direct liaison between the Board of Directors and the organization's staff. Work with the Board to establish the strategic vision and budget planning for the organization. Engage Board Members in fundraising initiatives as well as programming development and alumni engagement.
- Responsible for CIVIC's two major programs – Executive and Scholars – from planning to execution and budget oversight. Oversee program formatting and content working closely with the CIVIC Leadership Institute team. Facilitate all program days and lead the Community Impact Initiatives (CII), working directly with senior executives and community leaders to incorporate regional and statewide initiatives.
- Lead the initiatives to promote alumni engagement through programming, individual meetings, and fundraising initiatives.
- Responsible for CIVIC's two major events – Darden Awards and Founders' Luncheon. Spearhead the fundraising and sponsorship acquisition for both events. Organize the nominations committee to discuss the recipients of the Individual and Corporate Award.
- Ensure the long-term viability of the organization through fundraising, sponsorship, and grant applications. This includes cultivating major donors, leading the year-end campaign and building relationships with stakeholders (e.g. Darden Award recipients, ODU, Community Foundations).
- Create and manage the budget in collaboration with the Finance Committee and Treasurer.
- Daily oversight of the organization's operations and its staff – Management of payroll and direct responsibility of all areas of HR to include coaching and performance.
- Maintain a positive and engaging image with stakeholders, program participants, alumni, and the Hampton Roads business community. Attend networking events and partners with other organization to raise CIVIC's profile. Oversees all marketing and external communications.

Director, Council Partnership Office – GIRL SCOUTS OF THE USA, New York, NY – April 2021 to present.

- Provide strategic guidance and executive coaching to more than 40 Council-level CEOs to strengthen their leadership by supporting them on local and movement-wide initiatives.
- Plan, develop, and execute a Board Chair Training for annually in collaboration with team members and National Volunteer Partners.
- Leverage data to identify best practices, gaps, movement-wide patterns, and trends to inform a cohesive and comprehensive perspective of the organization and drive the support and service to council leadership.

- Conduct approximately 30 annual assessments of the overall council health Evaluate the financial of council health to support and guide each council CEO in their annual and strategic planning in favor of growth, quality, and sustainability.
- Facilitate peer to peer sharing by connecting councils with each other, GSUSA and other key resources.

President and CEO – YWCA SOUTH HAMPTON ROADS, Norfolk, VA – April 2016 to December 2020.

- Secured the organization’s largest private gift of \$2 million from MacKenzie Scott, philanthropist.
- Established contacts and developed relationships with community leaders to educate them on the role of the YWCA and its needs, while building a positive image of the YWCA in the community.
- Cleared all bad debts and improved cash flow to source the momentum of growth of the organization (avg. 25%-30% consecutive growth over 5 years).
- Managed an 18-month renovation of a 9,000 square foot building in Norfolk, VA that created 22 additional bedrooms for victims of domestic violence.
- Created the organization’s first employee diversity recruitment plan to align with the YWCA’s mission of eliminating racism and empowering women.
- Worked with the Board of Directors on developing and implementing long-term strategic plans for the organization.
- Took an active role in developing and implementing the organization’s development strategies, including annual giving solicitations, capital campaigns, and major gift.
- Ensured that personnel policies and procedures were updated and modeled sound personnel practices, as well as demonstrated leadership in diversity management and leadership opportunities for women.

Philanthropy Director – GIRL SCOUTS OF THE COLONIAL COAST, Chesapeake, VA – June 2013 to March 2016.

- Served as part of the senior leadership team working collaboratively to develop strategies and tactical plans to achieve the mission delivery plan.
- Oversaw all aspects of fundraising including but not limited to special events, corporate sponsorships, fundraising appeals, major gift prospect, portfolio management, grant solicitation, and planned giving.
- Worked directly with 20 board members to implement strategies that engage board members in the philanthropic efforts of the Council.
- Planned and administered the department budget with diligent expense and revenue monitoring.
- Collaborated to develop marketing strategies to promote the Girl Scout image for donor cultivation and determine emerging trends for new solicitations.
- In fiscal year 2014 – 2015, led a philanthropy team of three beyond the adult generated income goal of \$709,264 to \$721,432.
- In the fiscal year 2013 – 2014, led a philanthropy team of four beyond the adult generated income goal of \$680,643 to \$751,321.

PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

CII Project – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Education and Training, CIVIC Leadership Institute, January 26, 2021.

Race, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, CIVIC Leadership Institute, October 23, 2020.

Fireside Chat about Diversity in Leadership, Girl Scouts Staff Association, October 13, 2020.

So you want to be a CEO? Association of Fundraising Professionals, Hampton Roads Chapter, February 2020.

Organize Your Butterflies podcast, YWCA USA, featured spotlight -YWCA South Hampton Roads, October 24, 2019.

Keynote Speaker, International Women’s Day, Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce, March 2019.

Women of the 7 Cities podcast, Featured Woman in Business, August 21, 2018.

Motivation through Circles: An Analysis of Women's Giving Circles on Philanthropy in Higher Education - February 2012, published dissertation.

VOLUNTEER COMMITTEES AND MEMBERSHIPS

Virginia Council on Women, Commonwealth of Virginia, Appointed by Governor Dr. Ralph S. Northam, July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2025

Chesapeake Fine Arts Commission, City of Chesapeake – February 2018 to July 2020

South Norfolk Revitalization Committee, City of Chesapeake – August 2017 to January 2018

Association of Fundraising Professionals, Committee on Directorship, 2014 – 2016

Association of Fundraising Professionals, Hampton Roads, Member, 1998 to present

Past President, 2015

President, 2014

Vice President, 2013

Chair National Philanthropy Day, 2013

Vice President of Membership, 2012

Secretary, 2011

Chair National Philanthropy Day, 2010

Board Member, 2009 – 2011

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Alumna, CIVIC Leadership Institute, Class of 2018 (best class ever).

Famous Former Girl Scout Honoree, Girl Scouts of the Colonial Coast, November 2016.

Women in Business Awardee, Inside Business, December 2018.

Allison Dubreuil

Allison has a deep passion for dance, having danced since the age of four. As a national award-winning choreographer, she continues to share her childhood passion by serving as a teacher, role model, and mentor for young dancers in Virginia Beach. Through her students, she discovered the Governor's School of the Arts and has always been impressed by the level of talent, instruction, and the output from the GSA programs. She enthusiastically attends as many shows as she can drag her husband to throughout the year.

Professionally, Allison is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ with over 16 years of experience in the finance industry. As a Director with Greystone Financial Group, she combines her strengths in analytics and strategy with the art of financial planning to help her clients make the most of their financial resources and maximize their quality of life.

Allison is excited to get involved with GSA, where she can meld her business skills with her passion for the arts to support and further the Governor's School's Mission.