

Oakland, August 1, 2020

Dear GSEB community,

I am writing today as part of a formal recruitment drive by the GSEB board. With several board members leaving for family and work reasons, we need to think about the long-term health of our school. To that end, we are actively searching for new board members. I want to stress that GSEB is by no means in crisis. We are financially healthy, our enrollments remain at or near capacity, and we have fantastic staff and teachers. Despite our current COVID-19-related travails, we have every reason to believe that GSEB will be around for decades to come!

So what does the GSEB board do? Board members do not run the school but rather oversee its operations and plan for GSEB's future. This includes hiring and investment decisions, scheduling, planning events, evaluating curricula, contract negotiations, and co-managing facilities. The German School of the East Bay is a registered non-profit that has provided a valuable service to the Bay Area community since 1966—over fifty years! There is no GSEB without the board. Everything that happens at the school is the result of rational planning at the top. The school is operated as a serious non-profit with approximately fifteen part-time employees and an annual budget around \$150,000. That GSEB has provided such excellent service to the community for so long at such low cost reflects the time and talents of many people over the years. Joining the GSEB board is a chance to be involved in this important work.

How can you join the board? Board members are elected by the GSEB general membership at the annual meeting in May, but provisional board members may come onto the board at other times through a vote of the board itself. (Provisional board members will then stand with all other board members for reelection at the annual meeting). Currently, the board can have a maximum of eleven members, and must have at least seven members. This fall we have a few seats open. The board functions through a mix of collaborative problem-solving and a division of labor. Some roles, such as President and Treasurer, are specified in GSEB's by-laws, but other tasks (e.g., serving on subcommittees, managing specific operations, or organizing events) depend on the skills of particular board members and the needs of the school. Normally each board member takes on a particular remit, while also being involved in the overall decision-making regarding GSEB's operations.

What makes a good board member? First and foremost: a belief in GSEB's value and a desire to help keep the school in good health. Collegiality and an eye for detail are

also important qualities. Specific skills and professional experience—in finance, information technology, communications, public relations, management, event planning, and so forth—are valuable too. What we most need is people who are reliable, responsible, and judicious.

What commitment does board membership entail? Meetings usually take place once a month during the academic year and last 1-2 hours. We do not normally meet during the summer. Meeting dates and times are flexible and agreed on collectively. Members are expected to attend board meetings (we have no proxy votes), but occasional absences for work or family reasons are understandable. GSEB board members generally have full-time jobs and family responsibilities, and we have all found board membership to be manageable and compatible with our busy lives. Also, be aware that board members are not paid. This is a volunteer commitment and should be embraced in a spirit of community service.

How can I take the next step? If you are interested in joining the GSEB board or have any questions, please just get in touch. A good way to start is to attend a board meeting. Our next meeting is on August 15 at 10am. (All meetings will take place via Zoom conference call for the time being, so attending a meeting is now easier than ever!) Doing so does not imply any commitment whatsoever but is simply the best way to gain insight into how the board operates and allow you to meet the current members.

Thank you!

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