Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School of Excellence

Minutes

Monthly MLKCSE Board Meeting

Monthly Meeting of the MLKCSE Board of Trustees

Date and Time
Tuesday September 15, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Location
Topic: Monthly MLKCSE Board Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting:
https://mlkcs-org.zoom.us/j/88216732831?pwd=s6geaJi8is5tuYTvXUgp93ynGzMECd.1

Meeting ID: 882 1673 2831
Passcode: 573504

One tap mobile:
+19292056099,,88216732831#,,,,*573504# US (New York)
+13017158592,,88216732831#,,,,*573504# US (Washington DC)

Join by SIP:
• 88216732831@zoomcrc.com

Join instructions:
https://mlkcs-org.zoom.us/meetings/88216732831/invitations?signature=KgPXLDniYk-bRo1qpicZGBxUNLVICLZnlnJbo7lBbnk

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Trustees Present
Allison Sullivan (remote), Alton Jones (remote), Caleb Pointdujour (remote), Denise Pagan-Vega (remote), Donna Carroll (remote), Nealon Jaynes-Lewis (remote), Sherard Johnson (remote), Tim Battle (remote)

Trustees Absent
None

Trustees who left before the meeting adjourned
Sherard Johnson

Guests Present
Alena Mudry (remote), Kendra Salvador (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. **Record Attendance**

B. **Call the Meeting to Order**

Donna Carroll called a meeting of the board of trustees of Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School of Excellence to order on Tuesday Sep 15, 2026 at 5:36 PM.

C. **Public Comment**

No public in attendance.

D. **Approve Minutes from July 28, 2026**

Sherard Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes from MLKCSE Board Meeting - Special Meeting on 07-28-26.
Nealon Jaynes-Lewis seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

E. **Approve Minutes from July 31, 2026**

Caleb Pointdujour made a motion to approve the minutes from MLKCSE Board Meeting - Annual Board Retreat on 07-31-26.
Nealon Jaynes-Lewis seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

II. Executive Director's Report to the Board

A. **Executive Director's Report to the Board**

Kendra Salvador presented **Executive Director's Report:**

The Executive Director reported an exceptionally strong start to the school year.

- **Charter Accountability:** The accountability plan remains pending final DESE approval. The enrollment policy amendment is proceeding to DESE for review, while the proposed bylaws revision will be discussed separately.
- **Academics:** Teachers are focusing on intellectual preparation, supported by coaching and more frequent literacy and math content meetings. Beginning-of-year reading and math assessments are nearing completion, including the new MCLASS Math assessment alongside iReady. Special Education staff are using new IEP preparation templates, and the new Multilingual Learner Program Director is reviewing screening and family-engagement processes.
- **Student Support:** There have been no suspensions to date. The school recorded 62 minor and 26 major incidents, primarily involving work avoidance and failure to follow directions. Wednesdays and the 1:00–2:00 p.m. post-lunch period have been identified as the highest-frequency times, and targeted interventions are being developed.
- **Enrollment and Attendance:** Student departures have primarily resulted from family relocations and sibling placement at K–8 or K–12 schools. The school increased its recruitment goal to 300 applications and has already participated in three recruitment events. Board members recommended relocating the Holyoke Mall advertisement to a higher-traffic area; administration will explore alternatives. Current attendance is 95.1%, compared with 96.9% at this time last year. New interventions include staff caseloads, personalized family outreach, earlier intervention, teacher follow-up, and greater emphasis on attendance during morning meetings. Board members also suggested proactive positive messaging, shorter-term incentives for improvement, peer mentoring for older students, and recognition or incentives for caregivers.
- **Operations:** The new fast-lane dismissal system is now operating smoothly. Van driver licensing and October 1 state reporting are in progress. The school nurse will depart at the end of the month, and recruitment for an RN replacement is underway. SPS replaced Sodexo as the food-service provider, with existing cafeteria staff remaining in place. Facility and technology updates include exterior-door weather stripping, bids for a new intercom system, two new servers, planned network upgrades, Chromebook insurance, and new internet-based communication devices. The part-time evening custodian position remains vacant.

III. Committee Updates

A. Academic Excellence

Committee did not meet this month.

B.

Finance Committee

Kendra Salvador presented **Finance Committee report and updates**:

- The annual audit is nearing completion, with a cautiously optimistic outlook. Budget-to-actual results remain favorable. Supply expenses reflect advance purchasing, while personnel underspending is attributable to vacant positions.
- Current assets total approximately $4.8 million, including funds held at Beacon Bank and two $1 million certificates of deposit at Munson with staggered maturity dates and interest rates of approximately 3.6%–4%. Kendra will ask Megan to update the bank name from Berkshire Bank to Beacon Bank in future financial reports.

Grants:

- The school received an $85,000 Davis Foundation grant to support early-literacy initiatives, including LETRS structured-literacy training for teachers and school leaders, as well as a $35,000 technology grant.
- Allison is pursuing a $100,000 AOTA grant providing $50,000 annually for two years. The proposed partnership with AIC would engage occupational therapy and public health interns in delivering a social-emotional learning program, including support for the transition from lunch to the classroom. The initiative would use existing school assessments and include the Community Center's after-school program. AIC's grant writer is assisting with the application.
- The Community Center is also applying for a SAFE grant to implement the Strong African American Families violence-prevention program for middle and high school students. The program could provide continued support for students as they transition into high school.

Build-Out and Development:

- Garcia Galuska D'Souza Incorporated was recommended to provide engineering services for the unfinished-space build-out. Its $9,600 proposal includes a site visit, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing assessments, an existing-conditions report, and a review of cost estimates.
- The Board agreed to proceed without a formal vote. Kendra will confirm next steps and schedule a follow-up meeting with the architects. Strategic Planning and Development Committee members Nilan, Alton, and Denise will be copied on related communications.

Allison Sullivan made a motion to Re-approve FY27 Capital Plan with Updated RTU Project Quote.
Donna Carroll seconded the motion.
Capital Plan Revote:

- The original capital plan included a $1.1 million estimate for replacing 13 rooftop HVAC units. A Carrier proposal of $675,000 was received, with a potential Mass Save rebate of $214,000 that could reduce the net project cost to $461,000. The revised capital plan conservatively reflects the $675,000 cost and an updated completion date.
- Allison moved to approve the revised capital plan, and Donna seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
Sherard Johnson left at 6:27 PM.

C. Governance and Human Resources Committee

Donna Carroll presented **Governance & HR Committee updates:**

Board Recruitment:

- The Board discussed the need to recruit additional members and maintain the minimum membership required by the bylaws. Members were asked to identify prospective candidates through their professional networks. Committee service was also identified as a potential entry point for individuals who may not initially be ready for full Board membership.
- Donna reported that Ireland Stevenson had not responded to two outreach attempts. Caleb confirmed that she remains interested in learning more and will ask her to contact Donna directly. If no response is received, Donna will discontinue further outreach to this candidate.

Employee Handbook:

- The employee handbook revisions discussed during the Board retreat have been incorporated and do not require a formal vote.
- For future consideration, Kendra proposed returning to a per-pay-period PTO accrual system rather than front-loading leave. This is not a proposed change for the current year.

Denise Pagan-Vega made a motion to Approve Tim Battle as Treasurer.
Allison Sullivan seconded the motion.
Board Appointments and Elections:

- DESE officially approved Allison Sullivan and Tim Battle as members of the Board of Trustees.
- Denise moved to elect Tim Battle as Treasurer, and Allison seconded the motion. The motion passed.

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

D.

Development Committee

Development Committee did not meet this month.

IV. Board Chair Updates

A. Board Chair Updates

B. Executive Director Oversight and Evaluation

Denise Pagan-Vega made a motion to Approve the new Executive Director Evaluation Process.
Allison Sullivan seconded the motion.
Donna Carroll presented **Executive Director Evaluation Process:**

The Board discussed its responsibility to conduct a formal annual evaluation of the Executive Director in accordance with DESE requirements. The currently required process had not been consistently followed. To address this concern, Donna drafted a new formal evaluation process based on DESE resources and recommended best practices. The Board reviewed the following five-step annual evaluation cycle:

1. **Executive Director Self-Assessment and Proposed Priorities — September:** The Executive Director completes a self-assessment and proposes priorities for the upcoming evaluation cycle.
2. **Goal Setting and Evaluation Plan Approval — October:** The Board and Executive Director establish the annual goals and evaluation plan. This discussion and approval will occur publicly during a Board meeting.
3. **Implementation — October through June:** The Executive Director works toward the approved goals while the Board monitors progress throughout the evaluation period.
4. **Mid-Cycle Formative Review — January or February:** The Board conducts a formal mid-year review to assess progress, provide feedback, identify challenges, and determine whether any adjustments or additional support are needed.
5. **Summative Evaluation — June through July:** The Board completes the annual summative evaluation based on performance against the approved goals, focus indicators, and established evaluation areas.

The evaluation will be organized around four key performance areas. The annual plan will include three to six goals, with approximately six to eight focus indicators identified for each goal. Evidence will primarily consist of reports, documents, and other materials already created through the Executive Director’s regular work. The intent is to emphasize the quality and relevance of evidence rather than require the creation of additional documents or an excessive volume of materials solely for evaluation purposes.

The Board also clarified participation in the evaluation process. Because Allison Sullivan and Tim Battle joined the Board after the 2025–26 evaluation period, they will not participate in the retrospective evaluation for that year. They will, however, participate fully in establishing goals, monitoring progress, conducting the mid-cycle review, and completing the summative evaluation for the 2026–27 cycle.

The 2025–26 evaluation remains outstanding, pending the completion of Kendra's self-assessment. Kendra committed to completing and submitting it by the end of the week. Once submitted, Board members will receive a notification through BoardOnTrack and will proceed with their portion of the evaluation.

Denise moved to approve the new Executive Director evaluation process, and Allison seconded the motion. The motion passed.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

C. Bylaws Revision

Donna Carroll and Kendra Salvador led discussion of **Bylaws Revision:**

The Board reviewed the proposed 2026 version of the bylaws against DESE's 22-item bylaws checklist (last updated in 2014). The review identified several areas requiring clarification or additional language to ensure alignment with DESE requirements.

Term Limits — Checklist Item 16 and Section 3.5

- The proposed bylaws established three-year terms for trustees but did not specify limits on consecutive or total terms, as required by DESE. The Board agreed to establish a limit of three consecutive three-year terms, allowing a trustee to serve for up to nine consecutive years. Trustees may choose to leave the Board before completing the maximum number of terms.
- The Board noted that the 2010 bylaws limited trustees to two consecutive terms, with an exception permitting founding trustees to serve three terms. Because no founding trustees remain on the Board, that exception is no longer applicable. The three-term limit was also viewed as supporting Board recruitment by permitting experienced members to serve longer when needed.

Special Majority Votes — Checklist Item 19 and Article 11

- The draft referenced actions requiring a special majority vote but did not provide a complete list of those actions. The Board agreed to incorporate DESE's enumerated list of matters requiring a supermajority vote directly into Article 11. These include actions such as amending the school's charter and amending the bylaws.
- The revised language will also clarify that the phrase “trustees then in office” refers to all trustees actively serving on the Board at the time of the vote.

Attendance and Removal — Section 3.8 and Article 9

- The draft stated that three unexcused absences within a calendar year would trigger a vote on a trustee's removal. However, the final sentence created ambiguity regarding whether a vote was required when the absences were consecutive.
- Following clarification from Alton, the Board agreed that:
- Three unexcused absences during a calendar year will trigger a Board vote on removal; and
- Three consecutive missed Board meetings will result in automatic removal without a vote.
- The bylaws will be revised to clearly distinguish between these two circumstances.

Public Complaint Process — Article 9

- The draft permitted complaints to be submitted verbally or in writing but did not adequately define the investigation and response process. Specifically, it did not identify the investigating body, explain how verbal complaints would be documented, establish when the 30-day response period would begin, or clearly define the meeting at which the complaint would be addressed.
- The Board agreed to revise the process as follows:
- The Governance Committee will serve as the investigating body;
- Verbal complaints will be formally recorded and documented in the meeting minutes;
- The 30-day response period will begin upon receipt of the complaint; and
- References to a "regularly scheduled board meeting" will be replaced with "monthly Board of Trustees meeting" to eliminate ambiguity.

Internal Cross-Reference

- A minor internal cross-reference involving Article 11 and Sections 3.4–3.6 was identified and corrected.

Next Steps

- Legal counsel will review the revised draft before it is submitted to DESE for provisional feedback. Any feedback received from DESE will be incorporated into the document, after which the final bylaws will be presented to the Board for approval.
- No Board vote on the bylaws was required at this stage. The Board will vote on the final version after DESE completes its provisional review.

D. Board and Committee Meeting Attendance

The Board discussed the importance of consistent attendance at both full Board and committee meetings. Because the Board currently has a limited number of members, absences can affect quorum and the Board's ability to complete required governance work and meet its commitments to DESE.

The attendance provisions in the proposed bylaws were reviewed. Three unexcused absences within a calendar year will trigger a Board vote on removal, while three consecutive missed meetings will result in automatic removal without a vote.

Kendra entered all Board and committee meetings for the academic year into BoardOnTrack. Members were asked to review the schedule and RSVP through the platform so attendance and quorum can be anticipated.

E. BoardOnTrack Training

The Board discussed the need for multiple officers to understand BoardOnTrack's administrative functions to ensure continuity and avoid relying on one individual to manage the platform.

Donna will coordinate lunchtime training sessions for the Board officers: Donna as Chair, Caleb as Secretary, and Tim as Treasurer. The training will build shared knowledge of the platform and provide redundancy in completing essential Board functions. Committee chairs may also benefit from participating in relevant training.

F. Committee Goals for AY 2026–2027

Each committee will draft its goals for the 2026–2027 academic year during its next committee meeting. All committees are scheduled to meet before the October Board meeting.

Committees will present their proposed goals to the full Board in October for discussion and finalization. The Academic Excellence Committee did not meet in September and will hold its first meeting in October, when beginning-of-year assessment data will also be reviewed.

V. Other Business

A. Open Meeting Law Education and Training

The Board discussed the importance of ongoing professional development to support compliance with Open Meeting Law and other charter school governance requirements.

Donna will review the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association's professional development calendar and recommend relevant training opportunities at the next Board meeting. Trainings generally occur from 12:00 to 1:30 p.m. New Board members were especially encouraged to participate, although the opportunities will be available and beneficial to all members.

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

Alton Jones made a motion to Adjourn Meeting.
Nealon Jaynes-Lewis seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:23 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Donna Carroll

Documents used during the meeting

- Board of Trustees Annual Calendar 26-27.pdf
- Executive Director's Report to the Board - September 2026.pdf
- Budget vs. Actual August Summary.pdf
- MLK Balance Sheet August 2026.pdf
- RTU Replacement Project Budget Proposal.pdf
- MLKCSE Capital Plan FY27_Last updated 9.1.2026.pdf
- Johnson Roberts Assoc. - Engineer proposal.png
- MLKCSE_2026-27_School_Leader_Evaluation_Process.pdf
- MLKCSE Bylaws 7.31.2026.docx
- MLKCSE_2026_Bylaws_Checklist_Comparison.docx
- Board of Trustees Menu Sample of Committee Goals.pdf
- 2026- 2027 MCPSA Governance Supports Overview.pdf