



River Valley Charter School

Board Meeting

Published on February 22, 2026 at 10:52 PM EST

Amended on February 25, 2026 at 10:47 AM EST

Date and Time

Wednesday February 25, 2026 at 7:00 PM EST

River Valley Charter School welcomes your participation at Board meetings. The purpose of a public meeting of the Board of Trustees (“Board”) is to conduct the affairs of the organization in public. Your participation assures us of continuing community interest in our school and assists the Board in making the best decisions for our school. To assist you in the ease of speaking/participating in our meetings, guidelines are provided at the bottom of this agenda. All materials for all board and committee meetings, are available on our Board on track public portal found at rivervalleycharter.org.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8516508581?pwd=8roWrPp5aJXvEAFctC4bxo69QnaDfv.1>

Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
I. Opening Items			7:00 PM
A. Record Attendance		Jonathan Nickerson	1 m
B. Call the Meeting to Order		Tanya Murdy	

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
C. Review Trustee Code of Conduct		Tanya Murdy	1 m
D. Public Comment	Discuss	Tanya Murdy	15 m
II. Approve Previous Board Minutes			7:17 PM
A. Approve Minutes	Approve Minutes	Tanya Murdy	2 m
III. Consent Agenda			7:19 PM
The Items Below form our consent agenda			
A. Accountability Committee	FYI	Tanya Murdy	1 m
B. Development Committee	FYI	Tanya Murdy	1 m
C. Executive Committee	FYI	Tanya Murdy	1 m
D. Committee on Trustees	FYI	Tanya Murdy	1 m
E. Finance Committee	FYI	Tanya Murdy	1 m
No meeting held			
F. Vote on Consent Agenda	Vote	Jonathan Nickerson	5 m
Vote to Approve Consent Agenda			
IV. Board Business			7:29 PM
A. Vote to Accept Resignation of Board Chair	Vote	Tanya Murdy	5 m
Motion to accept the resignation of Denise Herrera as Chair of the River Valley Charter School Board of Trustees, effective 5 February.			
B. Vote on New Board Chair	Vote	Tanya Murdy	5 m
Motion to elect new Chair of the River Valley Charter School Board of Trustees, effective immediately, to serve for the remainder of the current officer term.			
C. Vote to Elect Vice Chair (if applicable)	Vote	Tanya Murdy	5 m
Motion to elect new Vice Chair of the River Valley Charter School Board of Trustees, effective immediately, to serve for the remainder of the current officer term.			

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
D. Vote to Elect Secretary (if applicable)	Vote	Tanya Murdy	5 m
Motion to elect new Secretary of the River Valley Charter School Board of Trustees, effective immediately, to serve for the remainder of the current officer term.			
E. DESE Virtual Visit	FYI	Tanya Murdy	2 m
Virtual visit at River Valley Charter School on March 12, 2026.			
F. Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law Training	FYI	Tanya Murdy	2 m
Conflict of Training information has been sent by noreply@sklburst.com for completion. Please try to complete this ASAP, please and thank you.			
V. Committee on Trustees			7:53 PM
A. Update	FYI	Tanya Murdy	5 m
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kate Scott Interviews/ Retreat Planning • Policy review • Final bylaw review 			
B. Updated Policy Vote	Vote	Jonathan Nickerson	5 m
Motion to approve associated school policies as updated.			
C. Updated Bylaws Vote	Vote	Jonathan Nickerson	5 m
Motion to approve the board bylaws as updated and send to DESE for approval			
VI. Executive Committee			8:08 PM
A. Update	FYI	Tanya Murdy	10 m
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement of legal services • Human Power Solutions 			
B. Vote on Legal Transition	Vote	Tanya Murdy	5 m
Motion to continue to retain the legal support of Marc Terry			

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
VII. Finance Committee			8:23 PM
A. Update Current financial position	FYI	Chris Whitford	2 m
VIII. Accountability Committee			8:25 PM
A. Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criterion 6: Program Delivery • Fall screener data review • Caregiver survey update 	FYI	Albert Ting	5 m
IX. Development Committee			8:30 PM
A. Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read-a-thon read-out • Development Committee Planning 	FYI	Elizabeth Rankin	5 m
X. Director's Update			8:35 PM
A. Director's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing • Enrollment • Easement/ Grounds • Reviews • 90 Day Plan 	Discuss	Karen Kuse	20 m
XI. Closing Items			8:55 PM
A. Board Meeting Survey Please refer to your dashboard for the survey link.	FYI	Tanya Murdy	1 m

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
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B. Adjourn Meeting			
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	Vote		
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		Tanya Murdy	
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REASONABLE LIMITATIONS MAY BE PLACED ON PUBLIC TESTIMONY The Board Chair reserves the right to impose reasonable time limits on public testimony to ensure that the agenda is completed.

Coversheet

Approve Minutes

Section: II. Approve Previous Board Minutes
Item: A. Approve Minutes
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material: 2026_01_21_board_meeting_minutes (1).pdf

DRAFT

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday January 21, 2026 at 7:00 PM

River Valley Charter School welcomes your participation at Board meetings. The purpose of a public meeting of the Board of Trustees (“Board”) is to conduct the affairs of the organization in public. Your participation assures us of continuing community interest in our school and assists the Board in making the best decisions for our school. To assist you in the ease of speaking/participating in our meetings, guidelines are provided at the bottom of this agenda. All materials for all board and committee meetings, are available on our Board on track public portal found at rivervalleycharter.org.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8516508581?pwd=8roWrPp5aJXvEAFctC4bxo69QnaDfv.1>

Trustees Present

A. Godino, A. Ting, B. MacQuade, C. Getz, D. Herrera, D. Mitchell, E. Bradley, E. Rankin, G. LeFave, J. Nickerson, M. Connerton, P. Ganley (remote), T. Murdy

Trustees Absent

C. Whitford

Ex Officio Members Present

K. Kuse

Non Voting Members Present

K. Kuse

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Herrera called a meeting of the board of trustees of River Valley Charter School to order on Wednesday Jan 21, 2026 at 7:03 PM.

C. Review Trustee Code of Conduct

- Board Code of Conduct reviewed and discussed

D. Public Comment

- The public comment period was noted as a **listening session only**, with no active discussion or dialogue between speakers and the Board.
- Several comments referenced **Board members Derek and Meg**:
 - Community members noted that **their spouses signed the recent public letter**.
 - Derek and Meg **confirmed** that their spouses signed independently, in their roles as parents/community members.
 - They clarified that they **did not participate in drafting, reviewing, advising on, or distributing** the letter, emphasizing appropriate separation between personal family actions and Board governance responsibilities.
- Written versions of all public comments were submitted and are **saved in the meeting's supporting documents**.
- Speakers included:
 - **Sarah Reynolds** (parent, Callan)
 - **Amy Cameron** (parent, Oliver & Cody)
 - **Jed Washburn** (parent of two students)
 - **Martha Burke** (parent, E1 student; founder, Heartwood Nature School)
 - **Michael Clough** (parent of two students)
 - **Laura Hunt** (teacher)
- **Primary themes across public comments**:
 - Strong concern and curiosity regarding the **direction, implementation, and communication of Place-Based Education (PBE)**.
 - Broader reflections on **school culture and environment**, including clarity of expectations and alignment with Montessori principles.

- Desire for improved **transparency**, communication, and community engagement regarding changes or instructional priorities.

II. Approve Previous Board Minutes

A. Approve Minutes

Minutes approved in prior special board meeting - no action required

III. Consent Agenda

A. Accountability Committee

B. Development Committee

C. Executive Committee

D. Committee on Trustees

E. Finance Committee

F. Vote on Consent Agenda

T. Murdy made a motion to approve the consent agenda.

E. Bradley seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

E. Bradley Aye

M. Connerton Aye

J. Nickerson Aye

C. Getz Aye

B. MacQuade Aye

D. Mitchell Aye

A. Ting Aye

G. LeFave Aye

P. Ganley Aye

D. Herrera Aye

A. Godino Aye

T. Murdy Aye

E. Rankin Aye

C. Whitford Absent

IV. Director's Update

A. Director's Report

Full written Director's Report is saved in the meeting documents.

Staffing Updates

- The school posted a **Communications role**, aligned to work currently supported part-time by **Amy Moore**.
 - The posting received **153 views and 1 applicant**; an interview is scheduled.
- Staffing changes and additions continue to be developed collaboratively, with a focus on **near-term needs over the next three months**, particularly given the uncertain timeline for **Jane's absence**.
- The **Finance Committee** previously approved funding (December meeting) to support additional staffing capacity.

Facilities, Easement & Grounds Project

- The **easement** is now on **iteration #4** for submission to the City to ensure required public access.
- The school received **permitting approval for the full grounds project**, though only Phase 1 will proceed initially.
- Easement questions from the Town focus on public access requirements.
- A meeting is being arranged with **all involved stakeholders** to ensure alignment and resolution of outstanding questions.
- The primary concern remains the hold up in release of **\$150,000** in funding contingent on final easement approval.
- The school has submitted a **Community Preservation Act (CPA)** request for **\$450,000** toward a project estimated at **\$1M+**.
 - Last year's CPA pool was approximately **\$1.2M**; this year's available amount is unknown, with requests already exceeding **\$6.5M**.
- **Board representation** is requested at the CPA meeting on **March 5**.

Enrollment

- The annual **lottery** will take place on **February 12**, with **170+ applications** received to date.

HR Process

- **BlueLion** is continuing **bi-weekly HR support meetings**.
- A recent joint meeting was held with **Denise** and the leadership team; further details will be covered in the **Executive Committee update**.

Place-Based Education (PBE)

- The Director thanked the community for the public comments regarding PBE.
- The school is exploring support from an **external facilitator** to guide next steps.

- Additional clarity is expected within the next week following conversations with **HPS**.

V. Board Business

A. DESE Virtual Visit

- The **DESE Virtual Visit** is scheduled for **March 12**.
- Board members are asked to **reserve availability in the morning** to participate.
- The goal is to have **at least six Board members** present for the visit to ensure a strong representation of governance.

B. Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law Training

- Board members were reminded of the requirement to complete the **Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law** training.
- Annual certification is required for all public officials, including charter school board members.
- Members should ensure they:
 - Complete the **online training module**; and
 - Submit the **receipt of completion** to the school for record-keeping.
- Administrative staff will track compliance and follow up with any outstanding certifications.

VI. Finance Committee

A. Update

- Based on Nov finance statement, running to budget with slight surplus
- No information on tuition adjustments at this time

VII. Accountability Committee

A. Update

- The committee **met last night**; minutes from that meeting were not included in the agenda.
- Reviewed and discussed **Fall Screener data**; additional analysis will continue over the coming weeks.
- Discussed **Accountability Criterion #7** (Caregiver Survey).
 - The survey will be **released on Monday**.
 - It will remain open for **three weeks**.
 - Results will be **analyzed** and then **shared back with the community**.

VIII. Committee on Trustees

A. Update

- The committee reviewed the **Board self-assessment surveys** and noted strong participation and thoughtful feedback.
 - Because the surveys are **anonymous**, Board members who wish to engage in follow-up or more personalized discussion should **identify themselves directly** to the committee.
- The annual **Board Retreat** is scheduled for **March 28**.
 - **Kate Scott** will again serve as facilitator; she previously led last year's retreat with positive results.
 - Kate was originally identified through support from the **Massachusetts Charter Public School Association**.
- Kate plans to conduct **individual interviews with Board members** to help shape the retreat agenda, goals, and structure.

B. Updated Bylaws Vote

- Proposed revisions include:
 - Updating the **Foundation footnote** to remove any reference to fundraising.
 - Reviewing and validating the **Parents Alliance footnote** to ensure it is not overly or inappropriately aligned with the Board's **Development Committee**.
 - Confirming that the bylaws clearly articulate both a **Whistleblower Policy** and a **Complaint Process**, as required.
- The **updated bylaws and related policies** have been sent to **Karen** for review and feedback. Once finalized, they will be brought to the Board for approval.
- The Board discussed the need for a **thoughtful, recurring review process** to ensure bylaws remain current and compliant.
- **Jon** will make the next set of edits and **circulate the updated draft** ahead of a formal vote at the **February Board meeting**.
- Following Board approval, the updated bylaws will be **submitted to DESE**.
 - The Board should anticipate that DESE may return **comments or requested modifications** prior to final acceptance.

IX. Executive Committee

A. Update

- The Executive Committee **met with BlueLion on January 13**.
 - Scheduling conflicts had delayed prior meetings.
 - BlueLion shared initial inputs gathered from their **on-site interviews**.
 - BlueLion also stated that related communications had been shared back with faculty; however, **Beth clarified this was not accurate**.
- BlueLion referred the school to **Human Power Solutions (HPS)**, which specializes in organizational support for schools.

- RVCS reached out, and a meeting with HPS was held on **January 21**.
- There is potential access to a **grant of up to \$125,000** that could cover much of the cost of this organizational work.
- The committee emphasized that addressing these issues is essential for ensuring a **sustainable leadership model**.
- The work ahead is framed as a **collaborative, community-involved effort**, not solely a Board initiative.
 - The evolving partnership is a **three-way collaboration** between **RVCS, BlueLion (BL), and HPS**, informed by community input.
- HPS outlined a potential **three-phase approach**:
 1. **Phase 1 – Current State Assessment**
 2. **Phase 2 – Gap Analysis**
 3. **Phase 3 – Execution / Implementation**

- A formal proposal is expected on **Monday, January 26**, including timeline and scope details.
- There is also potential for **HPS to facilitate upcoming PBE-related conversations**, providing needed neutrality.
 - An **unbiased third-party facilitator** is seen as essential for this work.
- **Next Steps & Alignment**
 - Denise has a scheduled call with BlueLion **tomorrow** to address concerns, clarify roles, and better align on communication and collaboration expectations.
 - The committee acknowledged concerns around the **optics** of shifting focus toward HPS and wants transparency and clarity in the transition.
 - Tanya had previously been asked to sit in on selected meetings to ensure alignment. Moving forward, the Board plans to have a member present in relevant **BlueLion and Karen meetings** to maintain visibility and engagement.

X. Development Committee

A. Update

- The Annual Fund is **midway through the campaign**, with **\$6,200 raised to date**, which is **double the amount raised at this time last year**.
- The **Readathon** is the next major initiative and remains the school's **largest annual fundraiser**.
 - Designed as a **non-competitive, inclusive event** that encourages broad participation.
 - A significant portion of donations historically comes from **outside the RVCS community**.

- This year, the committee emphasized improving **alignment with faculty and staff**, ensuring the event supports, rather than burdens, classroom efforts.
 - Tanya and Karen met with **level coordinators** to discuss integration opportunities.
 - The central focus of the event continues to be **literacy and participation**, not fundraising competition.
- **Sponsorships**
 - Outreach is underway via **phone and email**.
 - **Two verbal commitments** have already been received.
 - Connections have been re-established with **previous sponsors**.
- **Promotion & Engagement**
 - Active promotion on **Facebook and Instagram**.
 - Exploring options for an **event celebration**, including allergy-safe treats.
 - Looking into coordination with **Triton schools** to support food service and transportation needs.
 - Considering a return to a **March timeline** in future years (as done last year).
 - Seeking opportunities for **student collaboration** at both kickoff and closing events.
- **Event Planning**
 - **Proposed launch date:** February 2.
 - Proposed closing day activity: **Dress Like a Literary Character**.
 - Additional ideas include engaging **RVCS alumni authors** or **local writers** for virtual or in-person involvement (e.g., notable local figures such as John Cena).
- The committee's **next meeting** will focus on broader **development strategy and long-term planning**.

XI. Closing Items

A. Public Comments

- **Amy Moore** (Instructional Assistant) offered her **time and support** to help strengthen school-wide communications, referencing her past experience working in this area.
- Several parents voiced **concerns related to teacher testimony** shared earlier in the meeting, including the comments provided by **Laura Hunt**.
 - Speakers asked for clarity about how the Board and leadership are addressing the issues raised by staff.

Board members reiterated that:

- These concerns were a **key factor in engaging BlueLion** for HR and organizational support.

- Additional external support will continue to be brought in to help guide **positive, sustainable change**.
- Some discussions necessarily occur in **Executive Session** due to personnel and confidentiality requirements.

Commentary referenced the **natural challenges and growing pains** that accompany leadership transitions in any organization.

Several commenters expressed a desire for **greater community involvement** in school governance.

- The Board encouraged community members to **participate in committees** where appropriate and feasible.

Comments were also made regarding **Place-Based Education (PBE)**:

- Speakers noted that PBE began as an initiative during **COVID**, supported by supplemental federal funding at that time.
- It was noted that outdoor learning and community-based experiences have long been part of the school's practice, even before the formal PBE framework.
- Some families described **positive experiences** with PBE, while others noted **challenges in balancing PBE with core academic requirements**.

B. Board Meeting Survey

- Please remember to fill out survey and provide feedback for your dashboard

C. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
E. Rankin

Documents used during the meeting

- 2026_01_06_development_committee_meeting_minutes (1).pdf
- 2026_01_07_executive_committee_meeting_minutes (1).pdf
- 2026_01_14_committee_on_trustees_meeting_minutes.pdf
- 2025_12_10_committee_on_trustees_meeting_minutes.pdf
- 2025_12_10_finance_committee_meeting_minutes.pdf
- Director's Report 1.21.2026.docx

- RVCS_By-Laws v7.docx

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Coversheet

Accountability Committee

Section: III. Consent Agenda
Item: A. Accountability Committee
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: 2026_02_10_rvcs_accountability_committee_meeting_minutes.pdf

DRAFT



River Valley Charter School

Minutes

RVCS Accountability Committee Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday February 10, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Location

By video conference

River Valley Charter School welcomes your participation at Board meetings. The purpose of a public meeting of the Board of Trustees (“Board”) is to conduct the affairs of the organization in public. Your participation assures us of continuing community interest in our school and assists the Board in making the best decisions for our school. To assist you in the ease of speaking/participating in our meetings, guidelines are provided at the bottom of this agenda. All materials for all board and committee meetings, are available on our Board on track public portal found at rivervalleycharter.org.

Committee Members Present

A. Salerno (remote), A. Thoele (remote), A. Ting (remote), C. Irose (remote), K. Kuse (remote), P. Ganley (remote)

Committee Members Absent

A. Godino, D. Herrera, J. Patterson, M. Mitchell-Daniels

I. Opening Items**A. Record Attendance****B.**

Call the Meeting to Order

A. Ting called a meeting of the Accountability Committee Committee of River Valley Charter School to order on Tuesday Feb 10, 2026 at 6:08 PM.

C. Approve January 2026 Minutes

D. Fall Screener Review

E. Accountability Plan Updates

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Coversheet

Development Committee

Section: III. Consent Agenda
Item: B. Development Committee
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: 2026_02_03_development_committee_meeting_minutes.pdf

DRAFT



River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Development Committee Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday February 3, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Location

RVCS Middle School Great Room

2 Perry Way

Newburyport, MA 01950

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Committee Members Present

C. Getz, K. Kuse, M. Connerton (remote), M. Curcio, M. Makin, T. Murdy

Committee Members Absent

E. Bradley, E. Rankin, J. Leslie

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

K. Kuse called a meeting of the Development Committee of River Valley Charter School to order on Tuesday Feb 3, 2026 at 6:16 PM.

B. Record Attendance

C. Approve Minutes

T. Murdy made a motion to approve the minutes from Development Committee Meeting on 01-06-26.

C. Getz seconded the motion.

Meg C. Abstained-not at the last meeting

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

II. Development at RVCS

A. Annual Appeal Update & Review

Annual Fund — numbers amount, not available. Still ahead of where we were last year in both in amount and number of donations. Gifts still tricking in but not in the burst we initially saw.

Next year we need a more consistent process for getting thank you cards out more efficiently for volunteers.

Do we need a development director?

What steps worked well this year in terms of the annual fund roll out-

1. Training dinner was very valuable in terms of answering the why? “Eye opening and more than informative.”
2. The party last week- volunteer appreciation event- was also valuable.

B. Review of Development Plan

Events looking forward that bring community together—new family event. Let’s bring back the Custom House in May for new families mixed with 8th grade parents.

Consideration of a generous giver reception for people who give over \$500.

Charitable fund opportunities discussed—

Institution for Savings Charitable Foundation - need to start the paperwork now and begin building that relationship.

Mason's Charitable Children's Fund- start with sending them a read a thon sponsorship.

Part time grant writing support would be ideal and Karen is exploring this.

C. Read A Thon (2/2-2/13/2026)

Read A Thon dates 2/2-2/13/2026

As of Day 2: Update: \$10,417; Total Minute Read: 2778

Karen read to both kinderhaus classes—"Robert the Rose Horse."

Shout out Chris Getz who is one of our sponsors!

More print flyers coming next Friday. Current will feature an article

2/13—Celebration Day for end of read a thon delivery of treats

D. End of Year Summary - Annual Report

III. 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 7:38 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

E. Bradley

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Coversheet

Executive Committee

Section: III. Consent Agenda
Item: C. Executive Committee
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: 2026_02_04_executive_committee_committee_meeting_minutes.pdf

DRAFT



River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Executive Committee Committee Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday February 4, 2026 at 7:00 PM

Location

River Valley Charter School
Middle School Great Room

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Committee Members Present

C. Whitford, D. Herrera, J. Nickerson, T. Murdy

Committee Members Absent

None

Guests Present

K. Kuse

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Herrera called a meeting of the Executive Committee Committee of River Valley Charter School to order on Wednesday Feb 4, 2026 at 7:09 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

C. Whitford made a motion to approve the minutes from Executive Committee Committee Meeting on 01-07-26.

T. Murdy seconded the motion.

No discussion

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

II. Director Update

A. Director Update

- **DESE Accountability Visit – Deliverables, Owners, Timeline** (15 min)
 - All actions in master list are due in to Karen for incorporation by 2/11
 - Tanya - Board Self-Evaluation
 - Tanya - School Leader Evaluation
 - Tanya - Succession Plan
- **Staffing, Postings & Interim Leadership Structure** (10 min)
 - Laney not coming back to school next year
 - Offered to sub science areas as needed
 - Josh will stay on as the engineering teacher
 - Working through Jane's duties while out
 - Second interview with individual
- **HR Company & Next Steps** (5 min)
 - Reached out to BlueLion a few weeks ago
 - Unclear as to whether we qualify for the grant for Human Power Solutions to come
 - Discuss different models with HPS to move forward even if dollars don't through
 - Regardless funding would only cover Phase 3 work
 - Karen does not require board approval to move ahead
 - ACTION - add threshold for approval in the future
 - Asked for help in writing a job description for an in-house HR position
 - Is there a potential to create a role that includes HR+
 - Staff Development and Training
 - Asked BL to come on site to have 1:1s as well as time in meetings with teachers - targeting Wednesday 3-11 for half day

- Targeting coming in on Thursdays for the foreseeable future
 - Full day to start then half days for a few weeks
- Potential for them to do trainings - important to do in-person as greater value for inclusion and support:
 - Start with Annual Harassment
- **Tier Focus Monitoring & English Language Learner (ELL) Policy Status – Summary Only (4 min)**
 - RVCS under six-year audit review
 - One issue is that we do not have policies for English Language Learners
 - Colin taking point on addressing the audit
 - Karen working to update the policies for ELL
 - Support has been good from DESE and Hill View Charter has been a good resource as they are farther along in this process
 - Morgan is now trained to do ELL testing
- **Quick Operational Updates (Lightning Round) (3 min)**
 - Easement and Grounds - 4th mock up of easement received yesterday
 - What's left on current phase:
 - Wetland clean up
 - Culvert
 - Underdrains
 - Timber Edging
 - Stone Dust Paving
 - Engineered mats
 - Reseeding and demobilization
 - Once date is set for completion
 - Set date for ribbon cutting with invitations to key leaders in the community
 - CPA - on for March 4 to present
 - May make more sense to pull the request due to easement not being complete at this point

III. Executive Committee

A. Executive Committee

- **Attorney Marc Terry – Transition from Mirick to Stoneman, Chandler & Miller (5 min)**
 - Recommend that we stay with Marc for all current matters- requires a vote at the board meeting
 - Has to be pre-dated to February 1 so not gapped in coverage
- **Board Officer Transition (6 min)**
 - Denise has chosen to step down as the board chair effective 2/5

- A resignation letter has been provided and checklist of actions required to transition responsibilities
- Will remain on the board
- Will require a formal board vote for the transition of executive roles
 - CoT has to make a recommendation - review bylaws and documentation
- Mass Charter is a great support for future
- **Finance Update (4 min)**
 - Good financial position through six months
 - DESE communications through Central Source that tuition is going to come in higher than expected
- **Policy Work – Behavioral / Whistleblower / Complaint (Bylaws alignment) (6 min)**
 - Check on the alignment to complaints in the bylaws to ensure that it ties to governance and not to broader complaints
 - Who do whistle-blower calls go to - need to address this in the policy
 - Next step to coordinate with Karen on the bylaws and updated policies
- **Board Retreat – Next Steps (1 min)**
 - March 28 scheduled
 - Meeting with Karen in CoT to discuss interviews with board members in advance

IV. Set Board Agenda

A. Board Agenda Topics

- Public Comment
- Trustee Officer Slate: Vote
- Marc Terry: Vote
- Bylaws & Policies: Vote
- Human Powers Solutions Recommendation (ED)

V. 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 8:36 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
D. Herrera

Documents used during the meeting

- Executive Committee Meeting 2.4.2026.pdf
- MLT Choice Letter.pdf
- Whistleblower_Policy.docx
- RVCS_By-Laws_v7.1.docx
- RVCS_Complaint_Policy.docx

THE ORDER OF BUSINESS MAY BE CHANGED WITHOUT NOTICE Notice is hereby given that the order of consideration of matters on this agenda may be changed without prior notice.

REASONABLE LIMITATIONS MAY BE PLACED ON PUBLIC TESTIMONY The Board Chair reserves the right to impose reasonable time limits on public testimony to ensure that the agenda is completed.

Coversheet

Committee on Trustees

Section: III. Consent Agenda
Item: D. Committee on Trustees
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: 2026_02_04_committee_on_trustees_meeting_minutes.pdf

DRAFT



River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Committee on Trustees Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday February 4, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Location

River Valley Charter School Middle School Humanities Room:

River Valley Charter School welcomes your participation at Board meetings. The purpose of a public meeting of the Board of Trustees (“Board”) is to conduct the affairs of the organization in public. Your participation assures us of continuing community interest in our school and assists the Board in making the best decisions for our school. To assist you in the ease of speaking/participating in our meetings, guidelines are provided at the bottom of this agenda. All materials for all board and committee meetings, are available on our Board on track public portal found at rivervalleycharter.org.

Committee Members Present

C. Getz, E. Bradley, J. Nickerson, T. Murdy

Committee Members Absent

K. Kuse

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

T. Murdy called a meeting of the Committee on Trustees Committee of River Valley Charter School to order on Wednesday Feb 4, 2026 at 6:00 PM.

C. Approve 01/14/25 Minutes

E. Bradley made a motion to approve the minutes from Committee on Trustees Meeting on 01-14-26.

C. Getz seconded the motion.

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

II. Committee on Trustees

A. Update Bylaws

- Bylaws have been updated based on comments and aligning to guidance from DESE
- Need to time this with approval of new Whistle-blower and Complaint policies as the bylaws reference updated requirements
 - Discuss this with executive committee to work with ED to get policies through approval process to get final approval at the next meeting in line with the bylaws

B. Board Retreat and External Audit

- 30 minute interviews planned with each member of the board with baseline questions but allows room for broader dialog.
 - Noted that 30 minutes is a general time, not a fixed period
 - Questions will be asked about the relationship between governance and management without it going down a rabbit hole
 - Planned as anonymous sessions with information being aggregated for themes and trends in the report out
 - Interested in information on what is important on board composition
- Target completion by end of February
 - Review by CoT before going to the larger board
 - Ideally talk through findings on 3/4 meeting but conflict with Kate - **ACTION - adjust schedule to align with Kate**
 - **Reschedule to 3/3 at 7pm**
 - **Need enough runway to get in two planning meetings before the 3/28 retreat**
 - **Create a subcommittee of the board for board education to simplify the process**

C. Action Items

- Review bylaws and new policies at Executive Committee meeting to ensure proper timing of review and updates
- Update the date of the CoT and/or subcommittee meetings for board training
- Address April 1 CoT and Exec Committee as this is Passover

III. Trustee conduct

A. Discussion

- Concerns raised as to the behaviors of board members in being impartial and aligned to best needs of the school, lack of adherence to open meeting law, lack of preparedness
 - Suggestion to present situation with opportunity for stepping down rather than going to a public vote
 - Not going to a public vote may "sweep the issues under the rug" rather than clearly and publicly shows that actions are not acceptable

Specific board language: **“Any trustee may be removed from the Board, *with or without cause*, upon recommendation by the Committee on Trustees and with an affirmative vote of *two-thirds of the entire voting Board after reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard by the Board.*”**

- This establishes a **four-step, mandatory procedure**:
 - **The Committee on Trustees must recommend removal**
 - The full Board CANNOT vote to remove a trustee unless this committee first makes the recommendation.
 - **The trustee must receive reasonable notice**
 - Notice must include that removal is being considered
 - Must follow Open Meeting Law posting requirements
 - **The trustee must have an opportunity to be heard**
 - This occurs in **open session** (because trustees are not employees and OML does not allow executive session for this purpose)
 - They cannot deliberate in executive session about the trustee
 - **Removal requires a two-thirds vote of the entire voting Board**
 - Not of those present — of the **entire voting membership**
 - This is a high threshold

IV. 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 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
T. Murdy

THE ORDER OF BUSINESS MAY BE CHANGED WITHOUT NOTICE Notice is hereby given that the order of consideration of matters on this agenda may be changed without prior notice.

REASONABLE LIMITATIONS MAY BE PLACED ON PUBLIC TESTIMONY The Board Chair reserves the right to impose reasonable time limits on public testimony to ensure that the agenda is completed.

Coversheet

Vote to Accept Resignation of Board Chair

Section: IV. Board Business
Item: A. Vote to Accept Resignation of Board Chair
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: Letter of Resignation.pdf

To the Board of Trustees of River Valley Charter School,

Please accept this letter as formal notice of my resignation from my position as Chair of the Board of Trustees, effective February 5, 2026.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve in this role.

Respectfully,
Denise Herrera

Coversheet

Updated Policy Vote

Section: V. Committee on Trustees
Item: B. Updated Policy Vote
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: RVCS_Document Retention & Destruction Policy.pdf
RVCS_Complaint_Policy.pdf
RVCS_Public_Access_to_Records_Policy.pdf
RVCS_Whistleblower_Policy.pdf



River Valley Charter School

Document Retention & Destruction Policy

Adopted: [Insert Date] • Effective: [Insert Date] • Review Cycle: Annual

DRAFT

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Purpose & Scope

Definitions

Policy Statement

Records Classification

Retention Periods

Secure Storage & Access

Destruction Procedures

Legal Holds & Exceptions

Family & Community Notification

Accessibility & Translation

Documentation & Recordkeeping

Annual Review & Continuous Improvement

Compliance References

Appendices (sample forms listed only)

Glossary

Purpose & Scope

To ensure legal, secure, and efficient management of all RVCS records, including retention and destruction, in compliance with MA law and FERPA.

Definitions

Records: Any document, electronic or paper, containing school-related information;

Retention Period: Time records must be kept; Legal Hold: Suspension of destruction due to audits or litigation.

Policy Statement

RVCS retains and destroys records according to state and federal requirements, ensuring confidentiality and security throughout the process.

Records Classification

Includes student records, staff records, financial documents, health records, administrative files, and electronic communications.

Retention Periods

Student Records: Permanent for transcripts, 7 years for other records; Staff Records: 7 years post-employment; Financial Records: 7 years; Health Records: As required by MA DPH.

Secure Storage & Access

Records stored in locked cabinets or secure digital systems. Access limited to authorized personnel only.

Destruction Procedures

Paper records shredded; electronic records permanently deleted, including backups. Destruction documented in Records Destruction Log.

Legal Holds & Exceptions

Destruction suspended during audits, investigations, or litigation. Legal Hold Log maintained.

Family & Community Notification

Policy posted online and included in Family Handbook. Annual notice provided to families.

Accessibility & Translation

Policy and forms available in multiple languages and accessible formats.

Documentation & Recordkeeping

Maintain logs of retention schedules, destruction actions, and legal holds securely for at least 7 years.

Annual Review & Continuous Improvement

Policy reviewed annually and updated based on feedback and legal changes.

Compliance References

MA Public Records Law; FERPA; IRS Guidelines; DESE Record Retention Guidance.

Appendices

Sample forms include: Records Retention Schedule Table, Records Destruction Log, Legal Hold Log, Staff Training Log, Annual Data Summary Table.

A. Records Retention Schedule Table | Record Type | Retention Period | Legal Reference | Responsible Staff |

B. Records Destruction Log | Date | Record Type | Volume | Method | Staff Initials |

C. Legal Hold Log | Date | Record Type | Reason for Hold | Released Date | Staff Initials |

D. Staff Training Log | Staff Name | Training Date | Training Topic | Trainer |

E. Annual Data Summary Table

Metric	Current Year	Previous Year	Notes
--------	--------------	---------------	-------

Records Destroyed			
-------------------	--	--	--

Legal Holds			
-------------	--	--	--

Trainings Completed			
---------------------	--	--	--

Glossary

Defines key terms such as Records, Retention Period, Legal Hold, Secure Destruction.



River Valley Charter School

Complaint Policy

Adopted: [Insert Date] • Effective: [Insert Date] • Review Cycle: Annual

DRAFT

Table of Contents

Purpose

Scope

Definitions

Policy Statement

Stepwise Complaint Process

Anonymous Reporting

Accessibility & Translation

Timelines for Resolution

Retaliation Protections

Support Services & Restorative Practices

Parent/Guardian Notification

Documentation & Recordkeeping

Confidentiality & Data Privacy

Community Engagement & Transparency

Professional Development

Annual Review & Continuous Improvement

Compliance References

Appendices (sample forms listed only)

Glossary

Purpose

To provide a clear, fair, and transparent process for resolving complaints within RVCS, ensuring compliance with Massachusetts Charter School regulations and promoting trust and accountability.

Scope

Applies to all RVCS students, parents/guardians, staff, volunteers, and community members. Concerns involving suspected illegal, unethical, fraudulent, dangerous, or otherwise improper conduct fall outside the scope of this Complaint Policy and must be submitted under the RVCS Whistleblower Protection Policy.

Definitions

Complaint: A concern or grievance raised by a stakeholder. Formal Complaint: A written complaint submitted for review. Retaliation: Any adverse action against someone filing or participating in a complaint investigation.

Policy Statement

RVCS encourages resolution at the lowest level possible and prohibits retaliation against any individual filing a complaint or participating in an investigation.

Stepwise Complaint Process

Step 1: Address complaint directly with involved parties (e.g., head teacher). Step 2: Escalate to School Director if unresolved. Step 3: Submit formal written complaint to Board Chair for Complaint Committee review. Step 4: Complaint Committee reviews, may mediate, and issues written response within 30 days. Step 5: Board receives executive summary; complainant may appeal to Commissioner of Education if unresolved.

Anonymous Reporting

Anonymous complaints accepted but may limit investigation and resolution. No disciplinary action based solely on anonymous reports.

Accessibility & Translation

Policy and forms available in multiple languages and accessible formats.

Timelines for Resolution

Initial committee response within 10 days; formal written response within 30 days.

Retaliation Protections

Explicit prohibition of retaliation against complainants or witnesses.

Support Services & Restorative Practices

RVCS offers mediation, counseling, and restorative circles as part of resolution when appropriate.

Parent/Guardian Notification

Complainants notified of outcomes and next steps in writing.

Documentation & Recordkeeping

Maintain complaint records, investigation notes, and outcomes securely for at least 7 years.

Confidentiality & Data Privacy

Information shared only with those who need to know, in compliance with FERPA and privacy laws.

Community Engagement & Transparency

Policy posted online, included in handbooks, and reviewed annually with families and staff.

Professional Development

Annual staff training on complaint procedures, respectful communication, and conflict resolution.

Annual Review & Continuous Improvement

Policy reviewed annually and updated based on feedback and data.

Compliance References

603 CMR 1.09; Massachusetts Charter School Guidelines; RVCS Bylaws.

Appendices

Sample forms include: Complaint Intake Form, Complaint Committee Meeting Log, Resolution/Outcome Form, Annual Complaint Data Summary.

A. Complaint Intake Form | Date | Complainant Name | Role | Description of Complaint | Steps Taken Before Filing | Requested Resolution |

B. Complaint Committee Meeting Log | Date | Attendees | Key Issues Discussed | Actions Taken | Next Steps |

C. Resolution/Outcome Form | Complaint ID | Findings | Resolution | Date Closed | Follow-up Required |

D. Annual Complaint Data Summary

Metric	Current Year	Previous Year	Notes
---------------	---------------------	----------------------	--------------

Total Complaints			
-------------------------	--	--	--

Resolved at Staff Level			
--------------------------------	--	--	--

Formal Complaints			
--------------------------	--	--	--

Appeals to Board			
-------------------------	--	--	--

Glossary

Defines key terms such as Complaint, Formal Complaint, Retaliation, Confidentiality, Resolution.

DRAFT



River Valley Charter School

Public Access to Records (Public Records) Policy

Adopted: [Insert Date] • Effective: [Insert Date] • Review Cycle: Annual

DRAFT

Table of Contents

- Purpose
- Scope
- Definitions
- Policy Statement
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Procedures for Public Records Requests
- Fees and Fee Waivers
- Exemptions, Redactions, and Confidential Records
- Records Available Without a Request
- Appeals and Complaints
- Training, Monitoring, and Annual Review
- Compliance References
- Appendices (sample forms listed only)
- Glossary

DRAFT

Purpose

To ensure that River Valley Charter School (RVCS) provides timely and lawful public access to records, consistent with Massachusetts Public Records Law, the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, and other applicable state and federal confidentiality requirements.

Scope

This policy applies to requests from members of the public for records maintained by RVCS and/or the RVCS Board of Trustees, including records in paper or electronic form. This policy does not replace procedures governing parents' and eligible students' access to student records under FERPA and 603 CMR 23.00.

Definitions

Public Record: As defined by Massachusetts law (M.G.L. c. 4, § 7, cl. 26) and M.G.L. c. 66, § 10; generally, records made or received by RVCS or the Board in connection with public business, subject to statutory exemptions.

Records Access Officer (RAO): The individual designated to receive, coordinate, and respond to public records requests.

Requester: Any person or entity seeking to inspect or obtain copies of public records.

Segregation/Redaction: The process of removing or obscuring exempt information from a record while producing the remainder.

Business Day: Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays.

Policy Statement

RVCS is committed to transparency and public accountability. RVCS will provide access to public records promptly and without unreasonable delay, while protecting confidential information as required by law. Records will be produced in whole or in part unless a specific exemption applies. Where only a portion of a record is exempt, RVCS will redact the exempt portion and provide the segregable remainder.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board Clerk (Records Access Officer for Board records):

- Serves as the primary Records Access Officer (RAO) for Board of Trustees records (e.g., agendas, minutes, bylaws, policies, committee records).
- Coordinates with the Director and staff to locate records where appropriate.
- Issues written responses, fee estimates, and productions/denials consistent with law.

Director (Designee RAO for school administrative records):

- Acts as the RAO designee for school administrative/operational records maintained by the school administration.
- Ensures that student and personnel records are handled under the correct confidentiality

frameworks (FERPA, 603 CMR 23.00, and other applicable laws).

- Maintains the Public Records Request Log and ensures records are retained under the Document Retention & Destruction Policy.

All Staff and Trustees:

- Promptly route any received public records requests to the RAO/RAO designee.
- Preserve potentially responsive records upon notice of a request (legal hold as applicable).
- Do not disclose confidential records outside established procedures.

Procedures for Public Records Requests

A. How to Submit a Request

Requests may be made in writing by email, mail, or hand delivery to the RAO using the contact information posted on the RVCS website and in Board meeting materials. RVCS will not require use of a particular form; however, a voluntary request form may be provided to help requesters describe records with reasonable specificity.

B. Acknowledgement and Initial Response Timeline

Within ten (10) business days of receipt of a request that reasonably describes the records sought, the RAO/RAO designee will provide a written response that, as applicable: (1) confirms receipt; (2) identifies records not in RVCS custody; (3) identifies records or portions that will be withheld and cites the applicable exemption(s); (4) identifies records to be produced; (5) provides a reasonable production timeline consistent with statutory limits; (6) offers to assist with narrowing overly broad requests; and (7) provides a good-faith, itemized fee estimate if fees are anticipated.

C. Clarification and Narrowing

If a request is unclear, overly broad, or not reasonably specific, the RAO may request clarification and offer assistance to refine the request. Timeframes will run from receipt of a request that enables RVCS to identify and locate responsive records.

D. Producing Records

Records will be provided by inspection, electronic delivery, or copies, as appropriate. RVCS will provide records in electronic form when available and requested. If records require redaction, RVCS will produce the segregable remainder and document the basis for redaction.

E. Extensions

If the magnitude or difficulty of the request makes production within ten business days impracticable, RVCS will provide the written response described above within ten business days and will state the earliest reasonable date for production, consistent with statutory maximum timeframes. RVCS may petition the Supervisor of Records for additional time where permitted.

Fees and Fee Waivers

Fees, if any, will be assessed consistent with Massachusetts law. RVCS will not charge more than the actual cost of reproduction, and per-page charges for standard black-and-white copies will not exceed the statutory limit. Where staff time charges are permitted, RVCS will apply the statutory free-time thresholds and hourly limits and will base any labor rate on the lowest-paid employee with the necessary skills. RVCS may waive or reduce fees when disclosure is in the public interest or when the requester demonstrates inability to pay.

Exemptions, Redactions, and Confidential Records

RVCS will withhold or redact records only when required or permitted by law. Common categories of confidential records include (but are not limited to): student records protected by FERPA and 603 CMR 23.00; personnel and medical information; attorney-client privileged communications; and records exempt under M.G.L. c. 4, § 7, cl. 26. When withholding or redacting, RVCS will cite the specific exemption(s) and provide a description sufficient to explain the basis for the decision without disclosing the exempt information.

Records Available Without a Request

To promote transparency and reduce administrative burden, RVCS will make commonly requested governance records available on its website or through routine postings when feasible, such as: Board meeting notices and agendas; approved minutes; bylaws; board-approved policies; annual reports; and audited financial statements, subject to confidentiality requirements.

Appeals and Complaints

A requester may appeal a denial (in whole or in part), an unresolved request, or a fee dispute to the Supervisor of Records within the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, as provided by law. RVCS written responses will include information on appeal rights and how to submit an appeal.

Training, Monitoring, and Annual Review

The RAO and relevant staff will receive periodic training on public records obligations and confidentiality requirements. RVCS will maintain a Public Records Request Log and will review request trends annually to improve accessibility and timeliness. This policy will be reviewed at least annually and updated based on changes in law, guidance, or operational needs.

Compliance References

- Massachusetts Public Records Law: M.G.L. c. 66, § 10 and related provisions.
- Public Records Regulations: 950 CMR 32.00.
- Massachusetts Open Meeting Law: M.G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18–25.
- Student Records: 603 CMR 23.00 and FERPA (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99).

Appendices (sample forms listed only)

- A. Voluntary Public Records Request Form
- B. Public Records Response Letter Template (Acknowledgement/Production Schedule)
- C. Fee Estimate Template
- D. Denial/Partial Denial Letter Template (with exemption citation)
- E. Public Records Request Log Template
- F. Appeal Instructions (Supervisor of Records)

Appendix A. Voluntary Public Records Request Form

Requester Name: _____

Organization (optional): _____

Email/Phone: _____

Date of Request: _____

Description of Records Requested (be as specific as possible):

Preferred format (inspect / electronic copy / paper copy): _____

Delivery preference (email / pickup / mail): _____

Appendix B. Response Letter Template (Acknowledgement/Production Schedule)

Date: _____

To: _____

Re: Public Records Request received _____

This letter acknowledges receipt of your request. RVCS will produce responsive records as follows: _____.

Records to be withheld/redacted (if any) and exemptions: _____.

Estimated fees (if any): _____.

Appeal rights: You may appeal to the Supervisor of Records pursuant to law. Contact information: _____.

Appendix C. Fee Estimate Template

Estimated reproduction costs: \$___ (copies/media/postage)

Estimated staff time (if applicable): ___ hours @ \$___/hour = \$___

Total estimated fee: \$___

Notes/assumptions and options to narrow request: _____

Appendix D. Denial/Partial Denial Template

Date: _____

To: _____

Re: Public Records Request received _____

RVCS is denying (in whole/in part) your request for the following reason(s): _____.

Applicable exemption(s) and explanation: _____.

Appeal rights: You may appeal to the Supervisor of Records pursuant to law. Contact information: _____.

Appendix E. Public Records Request Log Template

Request ID | Date Received | Requester | Description | Assigned To | Status | Due Date | Date Closed | Fees

Appendix F. Appeal Instructions (Supervisor of Records)

If you wish to appeal a denial or lack of timely response, you may submit an appeal to the Supervisor of Records, Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, in accordance with Massachusetts law and regulations. Include a copy of your request and RVCS's response (if any).

Glossary

Public Record: As defined by Massachusetts law (M.G.L. c. 4, § 7, cl. 26) and M.G.L. c. 66, § 10; generally, records made or received by RVCS or the Board in connection with public business, subject to statutory exemptions.

Records Access Officer (RAO): The individual designated to receive, coordinate, and respond to public records requests.

Requester: Any person or entity seeking to inspect or obtain copies of public records.

Segregation/Redaction: The process of removing or obscuring exempt information from a record while producing the remainder.

Business Day: Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays.



**River Valley Charter School
Whistleblower Protection Policy**

Adopted: [Insert Date] • Effective: [Insert Date] • Review Cycle: Annual

DRAFT

Purpose

The purpose of this Whistleblower Protection Policy is to provide a safe, reliable, and confidential mechanism for reporting suspected wrongdoing within River Valley Charter School (RVCS). This policy exists to promote accountability, ensure ethical governance, and protect individuals who raise concerns from retaliation. RVCS recognizes its responsibility to uphold the highest standards of integrity and ensures that all community members—staff, trustees, volunteers, families, and contractors—can report concerns without fear of adverse consequences.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals connected to RVCS, including employees, members of the Board of Trustees, officers, contractors, volunteers, parents/guardians, and community partners.

The policy governs reports involving suspected unethical, illegal, dangerous, or fraudulent conduct, including but not limited to financial misconduct, violations of state or federal law, unsafe practices, abuse of authority, conflicts of interest, misuse of public funds, violations of fiduciary duty, serious policy violations, and retaliation against individuals who report concerns.

Definitions

Whistleblower: An individual who reports suspected wrongdoing or misconduct in good faith.

Good Faith Report: A concern raised with reasonable belief that the information disclosed is true and indicates misconduct.

Retaliation: Any adverse action taken against an individual for reporting a concern or participating in an investigation. Examples include termination, demotion, harassment, threats, exclusion, or negative changes in duties.

Confidential Report: A report in which the reporter's identity is protected to the maximum extent permitted by law and required for effective investigation.

Policy Statement

RVCS encourages the prompt, honest reporting of concerns related to misconduct. All reports will be taken seriously, investigated thoroughly, and addressed appropriately. RVCS strictly prohibits retaliation against whistleblowers or anyone involved in an investigation.

The Board of Trustees oversees the enforcement and application of this policy.

Reporting Procedures

Reports may be submitted confidentially or anonymously. RVCS provides multiple reporting pathways:

1. Direct report to the Board Chair.
2. Direct report to the Clerk.
3. Confidential communication to the Complaint Committee.
4. Secure email or reporting system designated for whistleblower matters.
5. Anonymous written submissions.

Reporters are encouraged—but not required—to provide supporting information such as dates, individuals involved, evidence, and description of the concern.

RVCS maintains a dedicated Whistleblower Reporting Email (whistleblower@rvcs.org) and an Anonymous Reporting Form accessible on the RVCS website. Reports submitted through either method are routed to the Board Chair and Clerk, who jointly oversee intake.

Individuals may also submit a report directly to the Chair or Clerk in writing. RVCS does not require use of any particular method; all methods receive equal consideration.

Confidential & Anonymous Reporting Options

RVCS is committed to protecting the confidentiality of whistleblowers to the fullest extent possible. While anonymous reports are accepted, anonymity may limit the School's ability to fully investigate or address the concern.

When identity must be disclosed due to legal requirements or investigative necessity, RVCS will notify the whistleblower whenever feasible.

Investigation Procedures

Every report received under this policy will undergo an initial review by the Board Chair or Clerk. Based on the nature of the allegation, an investigation may be assigned to the Complaint Committee, an external investigator, or a designated Board officer.

Investigations will include interviews, document review, fact gathering, legal consultation when necessary, and evaluation of evidence. Findings will be documented in writing, and corrective actions will be recommended as warranted.

Significant allegations, such as financial misconduct or violations of fiduciary duty, will be reviewed by the full Board or the Executive Committee.

Timelines

RVCS strives to adhere to timely review and resolution standards.

- Initial acknowledgement: within 10 business days (when reporter identity is known).
- Full investigation: typically within 30–45 days, depending on complexity.
- Extensions: may occur if circumstances require additional time; reporters will be updated when possible.

Retaliation Protections

No individual who makes a good faith report shall suffer retaliation. RVCS prohibits any form of adverse consequences against whistleblowers or participants in an investigation.

Examples of prohibited retaliation include job loss, demotion, intimidation, harassment, exclusion, and threats. Any retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination or removal from the Board.

Responsibilities

Board of Trustees: Responsible for oversight, ensuring impartial investigations, reviewing findings, and implementing corrective actions.

School Leadership: Must fully cooperate with investigations, enforce anti-retaliation measures, and support staff and families in navigating the reporting process.

Whistleblowers: Encouraged to report concerns promptly and provide as much detail as possible.

Support Resources

RVCS may provide access to mediation, counseling, conflict resolution support, restorative practice circles, and external investigative support to help ensure fairness and safety throughout the process.

Documentation & Recordkeeping

All reports, investigation notes, findings, and records of corrective action will be stored securely for at least seven years. Access is restricted to the Board Chair, Clerk, and designated investigators.

Confidentiality & Data Privacy

RVCS will protect private information in accordance with FERPA, state privacy laws, and applicable regulations. Information will be shared only with individuals directly involved in the investigation or required by law.

Accessibility & Translation

RVCS will ensure that reporting pathways and related materials are accessible to all stakeholders by providing translation, interpretation, and alternative formats when requested.

Community Engagement & Transparency

The Whistleblower Policy will be posted publicly, made available in handbooks, and reviewed annually with staff and families. Anonymous trend data may be shared to promote transparency without revealing identities.

Professional Development

RVCS will provide annual training for trustees, administrators, and staff on ethical responsibilities, how to file whistleblower reports, confidentiality obligations, and retaliation prevention.

Annual Review & Continuous Improvement

This policy will be reviewed each year by the Board or its designee. Revisions will be informed by trends, feedback, emerging best practices, and regulatory changes.

Compliance References

Applicable references include Massachusetts General Laws, 603 CMR 1.00, Open Meeting Law, federal whistleblower protections, nonprofit governance standards, and the RVCS Bylaws.

Appendix A: Whistleblower Intake Form

Date:

Complainant Name (optional):

Role:

Description of Concern:

Individuals Involved:

Dates/Times of Incident(s):

Supporting Evidence:

Witnesses (if any):

Risk or Fear of Retaliation:

Requested Action or Outcome:

Preferred Method of Contact:

Additional Comments:

Appendix B: Investigation Log Template

Case ID:

Investigator Name(s):

Date Report Received:

Dates of Key Interviews:

Documents Reviewed:

Summary of Findings:

Determination:

Corrective Actions Recommended:

Follow-Up Actions:

Date Case Closed:

Appendix C: Findings & Resolution Form

Complaint ID:

Summary of Allegation:

Investigation Findings:

Conclusion/Determination:

Corrective or Disciplinary Actions Taken:

Date Closed:

Follow-Up Required:

Responsible Parties for Follow-Up:

DRAFT

Coversheet

Updated Bylaws Vote

Section: V. Committee on Trustees
Item: C. Updated Bylaws Vote
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: RVCS_By-Laws_v7 Final.pdf

River Valley Charter School

Board of Trustees Bylaws

Version 7.0 (Draft)

Adoption Date: _____

Prepared for Board Review and Vote

DRAFT

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0.0 Revision History

This version supersedes prior versions. The Board may maintain a separate change log for minor formatting updates.

Ver	Date	Summary of Changes	Approved by	Author/Editor
1.0	07/13/1999	Original creation and adoption of bylaws.	Board	Founding Board
2.0	04/09/2002	Updated governance language and operational alignment.	Board	
3.0	05/13/2003	Amendments to Board governance processes and meeting procedures.	Board	
4.0	07/08/2003	Updated structural elements of Board committees and procedures.	Board	
5.0	09/09/2008	Amendments to Board operations and compliance references.	Board	
6.0	06/18/2019	Updated governance language; clarified Board responsibilities; incorporated then-current state law and compliance requirements.	Board	
7.0	01/21/2026	Standardized terminology; added Whistleblower Protection, Document Retention, Public Access to Records, and Succession Planning sections; modernized governance language to align with DESE expectations; strengthened Board/Director role separation; updated OML compliance and streamlined meeting notice requirements; removed outdated operational content (e.g., curriculum/calendar oversight); replaced automatic trustee termination rules with discretionary removal rules; simplified indemnification and execution of papers language; shifted operational/legal detail to policy level.		J Nickerson

1.0 Name, Address, and Nature of School

1.1 Legal Status

River Valley Charter School (“the School”) is a regional public charter school located at 2 Perry Way, Newburyport, MA 01950, operating under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 89 and 603 CMR 1.00.

1.2 Purpose

The mission of the School is to provide a rigorous academic program grounded in Montessori philosophy and deeply connected to the history, culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.

1.3 Location

The official address of the School is 2 Perry Way, Newburyport, MA 01950.

1.4 Corporate Seal

The Board may adopt a corporate seal, which shall be affixed to official documents as required.

1.5 Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the School shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30 of the following calendar year, unless otherwise amended by the Board.

1.6 Bylaws and Amendments

These Bylaws govern the Board of Trustees. If any provision is declared illegal or disapproved by an authority having jurisdiction, the remaining provisions shall remain in effect.

Amendments may be proposed by any Trustee or committee and require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire voting Board at a regular or special meeting, provided the proposed amendment has been distributed to each Trustee at least seven (7) days in advance. Amendments shall be submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (“the Department”) as required.

Nothing in these Bylaws shall be interpreted to authorize the Board or its committees to exercise managerial powers over the day-to-day operations of the School, consistent with 603 CMR 1.06.

2.0 Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees serves as a public employer under Massachusetts law and its members are considered special state employees for purposes of the Commonwealth’s ethics

requirements. Trustees shall comply with all applicable ethics, conflict of interest, and financial disclosure obligations.

2.1 Role and Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees (“the Board”) is responsible for governance and oversight of the School, ensuring compliance with all applicable laws, the Charter, and these Bylaws, while delegating day-to-day management to the Director.

The Board’s responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Compliance and Reporting: ensuring required reports, audits, and filings are completed; requesting approval for new Trustees; responding to complaints consistent with Board policy and applicable regulations; and requesting charter amendments when required.
- Oversight and Strategic Direction: hiring, evaluating, and if necessary, removing the Director; approving and monitoring progress toward the goals of the Accountability Plan; strategic planning; and approving the annual budget and providing ongoing financial oversight.
- Community and Advancement: serving as ambassadors for the School and supporting advancement activities consistent with Board policy and governance boundaries.
- Commitment to an Inclusive and Equitable School Community: promoting decision-making practices that support fair access, belonging, and positive outcomes for all students.
- Complaints brought to the Board shall be limited to matters of governance, legal compliance, fiduciary oversight, or concerns involving the performance or conduct of the Director. Operational issues, including staff-level concerns, instructional matters, day-to-day administrative decisions, and any issue within the Director’s managerial authority, shall be redirected to the Director in accordance with the School’s Complaint Policy. The Board shall not intervene in or investigate operational matters except where required to fulfill its governance responsibilities.
- Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to authorize the Board or its committees to direct, supervise, evaluate, investigate, or otherwise intervene in the performance of employees other than the Director, or to participate in operational decision-making.

2.2 Board Policy Review & Approval

The Board shall review and approve Board-level governance policies on a regular basis to ensure alignment with applicable laws, regulations, and best practices, and that updates are communicated to the School community.

The Director shall develop, maintain, and implement all administrative procedures and operational policies. Appendices or operational parameters within Board-approved policies (e.g., annual enrollment dates, procedural forms) may be updated by the Director without further Board approval, provided no substantive governance elements are changed. The Director shall notify the Board of such administrative updates as part of routine reporting.

2.3 Bylaws Review Cycle

The Board shall review these Bylaws at least once every three (3) years, or more frequently if required due to changes in law, regulation, the Charter, or governance needs. Proposed amendments may be brought forward at any time consistent with Section 1.6.

2.4 Number and Tenure

The Board shall consist of between eleven (11) and twenty (20) Trustees and may include one faculty member appointed annually as a full voting Trustee. Trustees are elected for three-year terms unless appointed to fill an unexpired term and are subject to applicable ethics and conflict-of-interest requirements.

The Director serves as an ex-officio, non-voting participant in Board meetings, as may other senior staff if deemed appropriate by the Board. Ex-officio participants do not vote and are not counted toward quorum.

The Director provides reports, operational updates, and professional expertise to support the Board's oversight role. In keeping with accepted governance practice, the Director does not participate in discussions or decisions related to Board governance, Trustee appointments or performance, personnel matters, the Director's own evaluation or employment status, or topics presenting a conflict of interest. The Chair may request the Director's absence for such matters when appropriate.

The faculty Trustee is appointed at the Annual Meeting for a one-year term (renewable) and must recuse themselves from matters presenting a conflict of interest. Committee service by the faculty Trustee is voluntary.

Trustees shall not request or receive operational reporting from School staff except through the Director or as part of a Director-authorized presentation. Trustees shall not direct staff, evaluate staff, or engage staff regarding operational matters.

2.5 Nomination and Election

At least thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Meeting, nominations for new Trustees shall be submitted to the Committee on Trustees. Trustees are elected by a majority vote of the entire voting Board. Vacancies shall be filled by majority vote upon recommendation of the Committee on Trustees. Following Board approval, the School will request the Commissioner's appointment of new Trustees as required; no Trustee's term begins until the Commissioner's appointment is granted.

Trustees may serve up to six consecutive (6) years. After a hiatus of at least one (1) year, a Trustee may be reappointed.

2.6 Board Training & Self-Evaluation

All Trustees shall participate in annual training on governance, ethics, and key School policies as required. The Board shall conduct an annual self-evaluation to assess effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

2.7 Resignation and Removal

A Trustee may resign by submitting a written resignation to the Chair or Clerk. A Trustee absent from three (3) consecutive regular meetings or four (4) regular meetings within a fiscal year may be subject to removal for cause. Removal requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire voting Board after reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard.

2.8 Meetings

2.8.1 Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting shall be held in June (or as otherwise determined by the Board) at the School or another location designated by the Board. Notice shall be provided at least thirty (30) days in advance.

2.8.2 Regular Meetings

Regular meetings shall be held at times and places in Massachusetts determined by the Board. The Board shall meet at least quarterly or as needed.

2.8.3 Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the Chair or at the request of at least two (2) Trustees. Notice shall be provided at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance.

2.8.4 Notice of Meetings

Meeting notice shall be posted consistent with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law and applicable regulations at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays.

2.8.5 Quorum and Voting

A simple majority of voting Trustees then in office constitutes a quorum. Unless otherwise required by law, Charter, or these Bylaws, a majority vote of Trustees present decides a matter when a quorum is present.

A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire voting Board is required for: amendment of these Bylaws; removal of a Trustee; removal of an officer; hiring or removing the Director; and approval of the annual budget.

2.9 Conflict of Interest

Trustees shall comply with the Commonwealth's conflict of interest requirements, including training and disclosures as required by law. Trustees shall act in good faith and avoid using their

position for personal benefit or creating conflicts between personal interests and the School's interests.

2.10 Remote Participation

The Board authorizes remote participation consistent with applicable law and regulations. When a member participates remotely, the Chair shall announce remote participants, confirm that all persons are audible to one another, and ensure votes are taken by roll call.

3.0 Officers

3.1 Officers and Terms

Officers of the Board are the Chair, Vice-Chair, Clerk, and Treasurer. Officers are elected annually from Trustees who are not employees of the School. No more than one office may be held by the same person.

3.2 Election and Vacancies

Officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting by a majority vote. Vacancies may be filled by the Board at any duly called meeting. Officer nominations may be presented by the Committee on Trustees prior to the Annual Meeting, and additional nominations may be made by any Trustee at the meeting at which officers are elected.

3.3 Resignation and Removal

An officer may resign by written notice to the Chair or Clerk. An officer may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire voting Board after reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard. Resignation and removal procedures for officers are governed by this Section.

3.4 Chair

The Chair presides over Board meetings; serves as the primary conduit for providing feedback to the Director; calls special meetings; prepares agendas; appoints committee chairs subject to Board confirmation; and serves as the official spokesperson for the Board.

3.5 Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair assumes the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence and chairs the Committee on Trustees.

3.6 Clerk

The Clerk records meeting proceedings; maintains Board documents and adopted policies; ensures meeting notices and minutes are posted as required; distributes minutes to Trustees; and supports recordkeeping consistent with Board policy.

3.7 Treasurer

The Treasurer serves as the Board's financial officer and ensures effective oversight of the School's financial health and practices.

Responsibilities include: chairing the Finance Committee; overseeing review of the annual budget prior to Board approval; presenting regular financial updates; monitoring internal controls and compliance; overseeing the annual independent audit and follow-up; ensuring appropriate custody of funds and financial documents; and serving as liaison to external auditors and advisors. The Treasurer may delegate tasks but retains responsibility for Board-level oversight.

3.8 Succession Planning

The Board shall maintain a succession plan for key officer positions and committee leadership to ensure continuity. The Committee on Trustees shall review succession planning annually and recommend interim appointments when needed.

4.0 Committees

4.1 Formation and Membership

The Board shall maintain standing committees and may establish additional standing or ad-hoc committees by majority vote. Committees make recommendations to the Board; final authority rests with the full Board.

Committee chairs are appointed by the Chair and confirmed by Board vote. Committee chairs shall be voting Trustees of the Board. Committee membership may include Trustees and, where appropriate, non-Trustees serving in an advisory capacity.

Committees are advisory bodies that support the Board's governance responsibilities. Committees shall not direct staff, supervise day-to-day operations, or engage in activities reserved for School administration.

4.2 Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is chaired by the Chair and consists of the Board officers and the Director, who participates in a non-voting advisory capacity. The Executive Committee supports the work of the Board by assisting in agenda setting, coordinating committee efforts, and ensuring continuity of governance between regular Board meetings.

The Executive Committee may act on behalf of the Board only when a matter is time-sensitive and requires action before the next scheduled Board meeting, and only to the extent that such action: (a) does not involve hiring, evaluating, or removing the Director; (b) does not amend Board policy or these Bylaws; (c) does not approve the annual budget, incur debt, or enter into significant contractual obligations; and (d) does not pertain to matters reserved for the full

Board by law, the Charter, or these Bylaws. The Executive Committee shall not engage in operational or administrative decision-making or direct the work of School staff.

Any action taken by the Executive Committee shall be reported to the full Board at the next regular meeting and documented in the meeting minutes. Except for the limited authority described above, the Executive Committee is advisory and does not possess independent decision-making authority on behalf of the Board.

4.3 Committee on Trustees

The Committee on Trustees consists of voting Trustees and is chaired by the Vice-Chair. It supports Trustee recruitment and orientation, officer nominations, Board self-evaluation, required training and documentation, and Board retreats. The Committee helps ensure Board independence and compliance with ethics requirements.

4.4 Finance Committee

The Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer, provides Board-level oversight of the School's financial health and ensures sound fiscal management.

The Finance Committee shall review monthly financial statements (including budget-to-actual reports and cash flow), monitor the School's financial condition and report to the Board, recommend the annual operating budget for Board approval, oversee the annual independent audit (including monitoring corrective actions), recommend financial policies and internal controls, ensure compliance with applicable financial regulations including public procurement requirements, and review significant financial risks and obligations.

The Finance Committee is advisory; financial decisions including budget approval and significant commitments require full Board approval.

4.5 Development Committee

The Development Committee oversees school-based development activities, including fundraising initiatives and community engagement efforts, in coordination with School leadership and consistent with Board policy and governance boundaries.

4.6 Accountability Committee

The Accountability Committee oversees implementation of the Accountability Plan and monitors compliance with Charter commitments and performance metrics.

4.7 Complaint Committee

The Board convenes a Complaint Committee on an ad-hoc basis when a formal complaint is submitted to the Board in accordance with the School's Complaint Process. The Complaint Committee shall review only those complaints that fall within the governance authority of the Board. Governance-appropriate complaints include issues related to Board policy, legal or regulatory compliance, fiduciary oversight, or concerns involving the Director. Complaints that

are operational in nature shall not be reviewed by the Complaint Committee and will be referred to the Director for resolution pursuant to the School's Complaint Policy.

The Complaint Committee consists entirely of Trustees and includes at least five (5) Trustees and at least one Board officer. The Committee is chaired by a Trustee who is not currently serving as a Board officer. The Complaint Committee shall review written submissions and information provided by the Director or external investigators; it shall not conduct operational investigations or interview School staff except where necessary to fulfill its governance duties. Proceedings respect confidentiality to the extent permitted by law. The Complaint Committee shall not investigate personnel matters, student-specific concerns, or other operational issues, except where necessary to evaluate a complaint related to governance, legal compliance, or the performance of the Director.

5.0 Bylaw-Referenced School Policies (Governance Summary)

The policies summarized below are school-wide policies referenced elsewhere in these Bylaws; they are included here at a high level so that these Bylaws may be read as a largely standalone document. References to specific policies within these Bylaws indicate areas of Board governance responsibility, not an exhaustive list of policies maintained by the School.

5.1 Complaint Process

The Board maintains a Complaint Process as part of the School's Policy Library. The School's Complaint Policy defines the full procedures, timelines, documentation requirements, and responsibilities for resolving complaints.

The Board's role is limited to governance-level complaints involving Board policy, legal or regulatory compliance, fiduciary oversight, or concerns regarding the Director, consistent with Section 2.1. Operational, personnel, and day-to-day matters are addressed through School leadership and are not subject to Board investigation, except where necessary to fulfill governance duties.

When a formal Board-level complaint is submitted, the Board convenes a Complaint Committee consistent with Section 4.7. The Committee carries out its responsibilities in accordance with the Complaint Policy.

5.2 Whistleblower Protection

The School maintains a Whistleblower Protection Policy that defines the procedures for reporting, intake, confidentiality, investigation, recordkeeping, and corrective action related to suspected unethical, illegal, fraudulent, or dangerous conduct.

The Board ensures that individuals making good-faith reports are protected from retaliation. Reports involving governance-level concerns or matters related to the Director are reviewed by

the Board in accordance with the Whistleblower Protection Policy. Operational whistleblower matters are addressed by School leadership.

5.3 Document Retention

The School maintains a Document Retention Policy that defines retention periods and procedures for Board and School records, consistent with the Massachusetts Municipal Records Retention Schedule. The Clerk ensures that Board records, including minutes and official actions, are retained and disposed of in accordance with the Document Retention Policy and applicable law.

5.4 Public Access to Records

Board records and meeting minutes shall be made available to the public consistent with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law and Public Records Law. The Clerk serves as the Records Access Officer (RAO) for Board of Trustees records. The Director (or designee) serves as the RAO for School administrative records. Procedures for responding to public records requests are defined in the School's Public Records Policy maintained in the Policy Library.

6.0 Regulatory and Charter Compliance

The Board ensures that the School operates in compliance with Massachusetts Charter School Law, applicable regulations, the School's Charter, and guidance issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Board oversees compliance related to charter requirements and amendments, annual reporting and audits, accountability documentation, Open Meeting Law and Public Records Law, and applicable federal and state education laws. Trustees complete required training in governance, ethics, conflict of interest, and charter responsibilities. The Board monitors performance against the Accountability Plan and Charter commitments and maintains policies supporting compliance. The Board's role in regulatory compliance is oversight; operational compliance activities are the responsibility of the Director.

7.0 Miscellaneous

7.1 Compensation

No Trustee shall receive honoraria; Trustees may be reimbursed for approved expenses incurred in performance of voluntary School activities in accordance with School policies.

7.2 Personal Liability

Trustees and officers are not personally liable for debts or obligations of the School to the extent permitted by law. Parties contracting with the School look only to School assets for payment.

7.3 Books and Records

The School maintains complete books and records, including Board minutes and actions. Records shall be kept at the School or in a secure electronic repository as designated by the Clerk. Access to books and records by Trustees shall be coordinated through the Clerk and Director to ensure confidentiality, student privacy, and adherence to governance boundaries.

7.4 Execution of Papers

The Board establishes signatory authority and approval requirements by Board vote and exercises fiduciary oversight of the School's financial practices. The School maintains detailed fiscal policies and procedures under the Director to govern day-to-day financial operations.

7.5 Indemnification

To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, the School shall indemnify Trustees and officers for acts performed in good faith within the scope of their duties, subject to available insurance coverage and limitations under law. Nothing herein waives sovereign immunity. The Board may authorize advancement of expenses to the extent permitted by law and any applicable insurance coverage.

7.6 Approval

These Bylaws (Version 7.0) were adopted by the Board of Trustees on _____ and supersede all prior versions.

Signed: _____ (Chair) _____ (Clerk)

Coversheet

Director's Report

Section:	X. Director's Update
Item:	A. Director's Report
Purpose:	Discuss
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	2.25.2026 Director's Report.pdf RVCS 90 Day Plan.pdf

Director's Report for 2.25.2026

Staffing

Laine Ives will not be returning from her sabbatical. You might see her subbing in a class or chaperoning on an overnight field trip, and Josh Cagle will remain in the position of engineer teacher at RVCS.

Enrollment

On Thursday, February 12, we hosted RVCS's 27th lottery.

- Paula Goudsmit was our unbiased witness again.
- 225 applicants for 2026-2027
- Offered 32 Kinderhaus spots to 95 applicants
- 17 of those 32 are siblings, 15 are new applicants

Easement

Newburyport wanted to ensure that parking spots and the two (future) athletic fields are included in the easement, and we have submitted the fourth iteration of the to the city. While currently under review, on February 5, Andy Port with the City of Newburyport acknowledged receipt saying, "On quick glance the plan looks good. I can review the easement language later today or tomorrow morning but presume any details there can be worked out."

Grounds

Once the ground thaws, the remaining items to be done are:

- Wetland Clean Up
- Outlet Control Structure Repair
- TV Inspection of Culvert
- Completion of Underdrains at Play Areas
- Completion of Timber Edging
- Stonedust Paving
- Engineered Wood Fiber and Black Rubber Mats
- Reseeding (as needed)

- Demobilization

DESE 6-Year Review

Integrated Monitoring Review (IMR) – The IMR focuses on special education, civil rights, and English Learner education. The purpose is to verify that schools are implementing IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and legal requirements, focusing on student outcomes, compliance, and equity.

- The review includes analyzing student records, interviewing staff and parents, observing classrooms/facilities, and reviewing district policies.
- Districts are reviewed on a three-year cycle, with standards divided into "Group A" (e.g., IEP development, student identification) and "Group B" (e.g., staff licensure, professional development). This cycle, we're group A.
- If noncompliance is found, districts must create and implement a corrective action plan to address issues within one year.

Due Dates:

- Civil Rights Self-Assessment via WBMS - May 15, 2025
- Indicators 11, 12, and 13 via CHAMP - June 2, 2025
- Special Education Documentation via WBMS - January 19, 2026
- Review Week - March 16, 2026

ELE Review - The Office of Language Acquisition (OLA) conducts a review of the English Learner Education (ELE) program(s) through a process called Targeted and Focused Monitoring (TFM). What does this mean for us? This is a year-long process for us as there were no policies in place at RVCS for English Language Learners (ELL).

- Write and submit twelve ELL policies by March 3, 2027.
- Have an employee train in WIDA to administer tests and build curriculum for ELL students. [WIDA English Language Development Framework](#)
- Build a curriculum and hire and ESL teacher/coordinator to oversee
- Data collection
- Virtual Interviews – Week of March 9

- On-Site Visit - TBD

ESSA Review –This is an evaluation ensuring compliance with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. It analyzes academic achievement, student growth, and equitable access to identify schools needing support. The review uses data-driven metrics to focus on closing achievement gaps and improving performance for specific student subgroups.

Due: February 27, 2026

- DESE reviews district and school performance to identify institutions that are underperforming or have low-performing subgroups, requiring intervention plans.
- The review verifies that schools are implementing approved, evidence-based strategies to improve student outcomes.
- Massachusetts specifically focuses on early grades literacy and middle grades mathematics.
- The review analyzes annual MCAS assessments, progress towards English proficiency for English learners, and school quality measures.
- For schools identified as needing support, DESE provides monitoring and technical assistance to implement improvement plans.



River Valley Charter School's 30–60–90+ Day Plan 2026

Re-centering on Montessori. Strengthening systems. Moving forward together.

Focus

Our work over the next 90+ days is about three things:

1. Restoring authentic Montessori practice
2. Stabilizing people systems and communication
3. Building sustainable structures that reduce burnout and fragmentation

The Commitment

This plan restores coherence:

- Montessori first.
- Systems that support adults.
- Clear leadership and boundaries.
- Equity in experience for students and staff.
- No islands. One continent.

Days 1-30: Stabilize & Clarify

Less noise. Clearer expectations. A steadier rhythm.

1. Re-anchor to Montessori

- Protect uninterrupted three-hour morning work cycles.
- Reduce scheduling disruptions (added programming).

2. Reset Communication

- Establish predictable staff and family communication rhythms.
- Hold 1:1 meetings based on *Reaffirming Our Montessori Direction* draft

3. Clarify Expectations & Guardrails

- Publish an updated org chart and decision-rights map.
- Reinforce clear reporting lines and no-triangulation.
- Define integrated PBE: class-based, Montessori-aligned, safe, and academically rigorous.
- Maintain formal PBE pause through June while we redesign thoughtfully.

4. Immediate Systems Work

- Launch HR routing workflow with clear response timelines.
- Begin standardized salary schedule development.
- Create DESE readiness checklist and evidence tracking.

Days 31–60: Build Structure

More clarity. Fewer disruptions. A calmer tone.

1. Compensation & Staffing Reform

- Present transparent salary schedule aligned to credentials and role.
- Remove historical variability tied to interpersonal relationships.
- Align responsibilities with strengths and qualifications.

2. E2 Program Redesign

- Increase consistent Montessori material use.
- Restore protected work cycles.
- Balance enrichments intentionally.
- Clarify program identity.

3. Special Education Integration

- Mandate SPED and General Education planning meetings.
- Improve service scheduling to eliminate missed services.
- Establish clearer communication systems.
- Reduce compliance risk.

4. Organizational Systems

- Guarantee employee breaks.
- Increase teacher planning time.
- Implement cross-level articulation meetings.
- Improve duty scheduling efficiency.
- Expand internal and external Montessori observation opportunities.

Days 61–90: Demonstrate & Institutionalize

Work feels more manageable. Systems are supporting you instead of draining you.

1. Show What's Working

- Publish “What We Heard / What We’re Doing” themes from staff conversations.
- Publish examples of rigorous, Montessori-aligned integrated PBE work.
- Share student artifacts demonstrating inquiry and strong academic writing.
- Highlight improvements in service delivery and communication consistency.

2. Operational Confidence

- Execute DESE Reviews with clarity and cohesion.
- Track teacher retention, staff satisfaction themes, and SPED compliance indicators.
- Monitor workload and burnout patterns.

3. Finalize Structural Decisions

- Determine long-term HR model (in-house or hybrid).
- Activate communications/community engagement capacity.
- Prepare student-support leadership plan for summer onboarding.

90+ Days: Sustainable Design

Stronger alignment. Visible instructional quality. Clearer leadership structure.

Over the next year, we will:

- Design an equitable compensation program that recognizes education, training, and experience.
- Integrate Life Skills, Technology, and PBE directly into classroom instruction.

- Maintain core specials: Art, Music, PE, Theater, Engineering.
- Begin planning for Spanish integration within classrooms.
- Re-launch integrated PBE for Fall 2026 as a Montessori-aligned instructional lens, not a competing program.
- Institutionalize collaboration rhythms and planning time.
- Strengthen retention systems and professional growth pathways.
- Position RVCS as the region’s premier public Montessori school grounded in:
 - Academic rigor
 - Environmental stewardship
 - Civic responsibility
 - Humanities and the arts
 - Grace and courtesy

Milestones & Review Points

To support shared accountability and ensure this plan translates into visible progress, we will use the milestones below as checkpoints. These are stabilization signals (not perfection metrics) and will be reviewed and refined as systems take hold.

Progress toward these milestones will be reviewed through (1) scheduled Executive Director–Board Chair/Executive Committee check-ins focused on progress, risks, and resourcing needs, and (2) updates at properly posted Board meetings.

Indicators We Will Monitor

These indicators help us assess stabilization and system health over time; they are not evaluative performance targets.

- Teacher retention
- Student academic outcomes (especially writing and mathematics)
- Work-cycle fidelity observations
- SPED compliance indicators
- Staff and caregiver satisfaction themes
- Reduced communication overload

- Reduced scheduling disruption

By Day 30

- Staff listening conversations are underway and themes are being tracked for follow-through.
- Interim HR routing is live and communicated clearly to staff, with response timelines and confidentiality expectations.
- Decision-rights and reporting lines are published and being used to reduce confusion.
- DESE readiness checklist and evidence tracking system is active with owners identified.

By Day 60

- A draft salary schedule framework is developed and shared for feedback (aligned to role/credential expectations).
- Uninterrupted three-hour Montessori work cycles are consistently protected across divisions, with exceptions documented, reviewed, and addressed.
- SPED and MTSS systems are operating with clear ownership, predictable collaboration routines, and improved service reliability.
- Organizational systems (planning time, duty coverage, communication cadence) are operating more predictably and reducing daily friction for staff.
- Core people systems are functioning predictably and no longer default to the Executive Director.

By Day 90

- “What We Heard / What We’re Doing” themes have been published and referenced in staff communication.
- Examples of rigorous, Montessori-aligned integrated PBE work and student artifacts are shared to demonstrate instructional quality.
- DESE review readiness is executed with cohesion and a clear narrative of improvement actions underway.
- Long-term people systems plan is defined (in-house or hybrid HR model) with next steps and timelines.
- A student-support capacity plan (including MTSS ownership clarity) is defined for summer onboarding where needed.

Shared Commitments & Conditions for Success

This plan reflects a shared understanding between the Executive Director and the Board of Trustees, and it succeeds only if it lives in daily practice. Success depends not only on execution by school leadership, but also on disciplined governance, resourcing, and support by the Board, and on positive, mission-aligned participation by faculty, staff, and our broader community.

The Board commits to:

- Maintaining clear governance boundaries and avoiding operational involvement.
- Providing timely decisions, approvals, and feedback required to support the plan.
- Supporting the development of internal HR and student support capacity.
- Using established check-in points to assess progress and adjust course thoughtfully.
- Acting as stewards of stability.

The Executive Director commits to:

- Leading implementation with transparency and consistency.
- Surfacing risks, capacity constraints, and decision needs early.
- Using defined structures (RACI, communication rhythms, planning cycles) to reduce fragmentation.

Faculty and staff commit to:

- Keeping the classroom as the center: safe, joyful, Montessori-aligned environments and protected work cycles.
- Engaging in collaboration rhythms (planning, articulation, SPED/Gen Ed meetings) with positive intent and shared responsibility.
- Routing concerns through clear channels so that time and energy stay focused on students.

Families and community commit to:

- Using established channels for questions and concerns and reserving Board-level escalation for governance matters.
- Participating in bounded input opportunities when invited, aligned to Montessori values and school priorities.

- Contributing through structured support pathways (ex: Community Rolodex) so help is specific, matched to needs, and does not increase teacher workload.

This plan is a living document and will be reviewed and refined as systems stabilize and capacity increases.

RACI (Responsible / Accountable / Consulted / Informed) Guiding Principle:

One person is accountable. Input is welcomed. Authority is clear.

As part of strengthening our systems, we are clarifying decision-making roles using a simple structure called RACI. The goal isn't to add process, it's to reduce confusion.

This helps us clearly answer four questions:

- Who is doing the work?
- Who ultimately owns the decision?
- Who needs to be consulted?
- Who simply needs to be informed?

In this plan, “Accountable (A)” reflects final decision authority and responsibility for outcomes (“the buck stops here”), while “Responsible (R)” reflects day-to-day execution. To protect sustainability, we will intentionally assign R ownership to operational leaders and working groups so accountability does not become overload.

In the past, some of our stress has come from blurred lines, decisions revisited, concerns routed in multiple directions, or uncertainty about who has final authority. Clarifying this protects everyone's time and energy.

It also reinforces something important:

- The Board governs.
- The Executive Director is accountable for school operations.
- Leaders and teachers are responsible for implementation within clear structures.

When expectations are visible, conflict decreases and momentum increases.

This is about creating stability, not control, so we can focus on what matters most: strong Montessori practice and our students.

Through the 90-day process, the RACI will be updated to better distribute Roles and Responsibilities across the Leadership Team.

Instructional Program & Montessori Fidelity

Area	R	A	C	I
Protection of 3-hour work cycle	Coordinators	Executive Director	Teachers	Board
Integrated PBE framework	Working Group (random selection)	Executive Director	Coordinators	Staff, Families
E2 Program Redesign	E2 Leads	Executive Director	SPED Lead, Teachers	Board, Families

Special Education & Student Support

Area	R	A	C	I
SPED service delivery scheduling	SPED Lead	Executive Director	Gen Ed Teachers	Families
SPED/Gen Ed collaboration meetings	SPED Lead	Executive Director	Coordinators	Staff
Compliance monitoring	SPED Lead	Executive Director	HR (as needed)	Board
MTSS framework & intervention	SST Lead	Executive Director	Coordinators	Staff

Compensation & Staffing

Area	R	A	C	I
Salary schedule design	Executive Director	Finance Committee	Director of Operations, Board Chair	Staff
HR routing workflow	HR Lead	Executive Director	Coordinators	Staff
Hiring decisions	Division Head	Executive Director	HR Lead, Staff (as applicable)	Board (as required)

Communication & Community

Area	R	A	C	I
Family-facing PBE messaging	Communications Lead	Executive Director	Teachers	Board
Staff communication cadence	Executive Director	Executive Director	Leadership Team	Staff
Community Rolodex / targeted support matching	Communications Lead	Executive Director	Leadership Team	Families

Governance & Oversight

Area	R	A	C	I
Operational decisions	Executive Director	Executive Director	Leadership Team	Staff, Board
Policy adoption	Board Chair	Board of Trustees	Executive Director	Staff, Families
Complaint/Whistleblower intake (per policy)	HR Lead	Executive Director	Board Chair (if required by policy)	Relevant parties only

What This Means

- The Executive Director is accountable for school operations.
- The Board governs and adopts policy but does not manage day-to-day execution.
- Teachers and assistants are responsible for implementation within clear structures.
- Input is encouraged, ownership is not diluted.

Plan Endorsement & Shared Accountability Sign-Off

This 30–60–90+ Day Plan reflects a shared commitment to restoring coherence, strengthening systems, and supporting authentic Montessori practice at River Valley Charter School. By endorsing this document, the Executive Director and the Board of Trustees affirm their mutual responsibility for its successful implementation and stewardship.

Scope of Endorsement

This endorsement represents agreement on the following:

- The overall direction, priorities, and sequencing outlined in this plan.
- The shared accountability framework, including clearly defined governance and management boundaries.
- The use of 30/60/90-day milestones and review points as stabilization indicators, not punitive performance measures.
- A commitment to provide appropriate resources, capacity, and governance discipline necessary to support execution.
- Recognition that this is a living document that will be refined as systems stabilize and feedback is incorporated.

Review & Adjustment

Progress on this plan will be reviewed through established Executive Director–Board check-ins and at properly posted Board meetings. Adjustments will be made thoughtfully and transparently, with the goal of sustaining momentum while protecting adult capacity and student experience.

Affirmation of Roles

This sign-off affirms that:

- The Board of Trustees governs, sets policy, and provides oversight and resourcing, but does not manage day-to-day operations.
- The Executive Director is accountable for implementation, leadership coherence, and operational execution.
- Faculty, staff, families, and community partners contribute through defined roles and structured channels aligned to Montessori values.

Signatures

Executive Director

Board Chair

Name:

Name:

Signature / Date:

Signature / Date: