River Valley Charter School

Board Meeting

Published on June 15, 2026 at 6:51 PM EDT

Date and Time

Wednesday June 17, 2026 at 7:00 PM EDT

Location

Zoom

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.

Zoom link: 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.	Public Comment	Discuss	Tanya Murdy	15 m

- 3 minutes each
- 5 speakers

D.	Review Trustee Code of Conduct		Tanya Murdy	1 m

II. Approve Previous Board Minutes — 7:17 PM

A.	Approve Minutes	Approve Minutes	Tanya Murdy	1 m

Approve minutes for Board Meeting on April 29, 2026

B.	Approve Board Meeting Minutes	Approve Minutes	Tanya Murdy	1 m

Approve minutes for Board Meeting on June 9, 2026

C.	Approve Board Meeting Minutes	Approve Minutes	Tanya Murdy	5 m

Approve minutes for Board Meeting on June 2, 2026

D.	Approve Board Meeting Minutes	Approve Minutes	Tanya Murdy	5 m

Approve minutes for Special Board Meeting on May 27, 2026

E.	Approve Board Meeting Minutes	Approve Minutes	Tanya Murdy	5 m

Approve minutes for Board Meeting on May 20, 2026

F.	Approve Board Meeting Minutes	Approve Minutes	Tanya Murdy	1 m

Approve minutes for Special Board Meeting on April 9, 2026

G.	Approve Board Meeting Minutes	Approve Minutes	Tanya Murdy	1 m

Approve minutes for Special Meeting on March 12, 2026

H.	Approve Board Meeting Minutes	Approve Minutes	Tanya Murdy	1 m

Approve minutes for Emergency Board Meeting on May 17, 2026

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
I.	Approve Board Meeting Minutes	Approve Minutes	Tanya Murdy	1 m

Approve minutes for EMERGENCY MEETING on May 28, 2026

III. Consent Agenda — 7:38 PM

The Items Below form our consent agenda

A.	Accountability Committee	Approve Minutes	Tanya Murdy	1 m
B.	Development Committee	Approve Minutes	Tanya Murdy	1 m
C.	Executive Committee	Approve Minutes	Tanya Murdy	1 m

Approve minutes for Executive Committee Committee Meeting on May 6, 2026

D.	Committee on Trustees	Approve Minutes	Tanya Murdy	1 m

Approve minutes for Committee on Trustees Committee Meeting on June 4, 2026

E.	Finance Committee	Approve Minutes	Tanya Murdy	1 m
F.	Vote on Consent Agenda	Vote	Denise Herrera	5 m

Vote to Approve Consent Agenda

IV. Director's Update — 7:48 PM

A.	Director's Report	Discuss	Joey Gustafson	20 m

- Updates

V. Policy — 8:08 PM

- Attendance Policy
- Animal Policy

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
A.	Approve Policy	Vote	Tanya Murdy	5 m

Approve the following polices:

- Attendance Policy
- Animal Policy

Attendance:
The old policy was outdated- it did not have the accurate school hours, did not include PUP procedures, and did not include accountability for chronic absenteeism. We reviewed the attendance policy from NPS, then updated our old policy to account for all of the above points and added links directly to DESE.
Animals:
Animals in school are becoming more and more frequent without an understanding of the potential negative impacts on students and staff. This policy would halt the entrance of additional animals and establish a thoughtful approach to when and where we have animals in the building.

VI. Interim Executive Director Search — 8:13 PM

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
A.	Search Questions Overview	Discuss	Tanya Murdy	10 m

Questions for survey and focus groups

VII. Finance Committee — 8:23 PM

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
A.	Update	Discuss	Gary LeFave	5 m

1. Review of May budget vs actual results
2. Approval of $90k in stipends funded for 2025/2026
3. Review & approval of 2026/2027 budget
4. Approval of Daniel Dennis as auditor

Year in review

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
B.	FY 25-26 Budget Surplus Vote	Vote	Gary LeFave	5 m

1. Approval of $90k in stipends funded for 2025/2026

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
C.	Vote to Approve FY 26-27 Budget	Vote	Gary LeFave	5 m

- Review & approval of 2026/2027 budget

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
D.	Daniel Dennis	Vote	Gary LeFave	5 m

Approval of Daniel Dennis as auditor

VIII. Committee on Trustees — 8:43 PM

A.	Board Leadership: Vote for Slate of Officers for FY '26	Vote	Jonathan Nickerson	15 m

- Board Chairperson: Tanya Murdy, Derek Mitchell, Meg Connerton
- Vice Chairperson: Jonathan Nickerson, Derek Mitchell, Meg Connerton
- Treasurer: Gary LeFave
- Secretary/Clerk: Achala Godino

B.	Board Trustee Nominees	Vote	Jonathan Nickerson	20 m

Nominees:
Beth Friedman
Alex Tsonas
Tyler Chiasson
Alison Salerno
Meredith Makin
Farrell Boghos-Maryniak
Daniel Candelario

C.	Annual Board Assessment	Discuss	Jonathan Nickerson	5 m
D.	THANK YOU!!!!	Discuss	Jonathan Nickerson	5 m

With heartfelt gratitude, we would like to thank the following trustees for their years of dedicated service to RVCS. Their commitment, leadership, and stewardship have helped guide the school through growth, challenges, and opportunities, always keeping the best interests of our students and community at the center of their work.

- Albert Ting
- Denise Herrera
- Elizabeth Rankin
- Erin Bradley Irose

IX. Board of Trustee 2026-2027 Planning — 9:28 PM

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
A.	Planning	Discuss	Tanya Murdy	15 m

- Committee Selection
- Committee meeting dates
  - COT/Exec: Wednesdays
  - Development: Tuesdays
  - Finance: Monthly Zoom and Quarterly in person
  - Accountability:
- Discuss Board of Trustees meeting date: 4th Wednesday of the month.

X. Exectuive Committee **9:43 PM**

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
A.	DESE Complaint	FYI	Tanya Murdy	5 m

DESE complaint stating lack of board oversight in regard to PBE.

The Department has carefully reviewed your concerns. However, the alleged changes in
the PBE program do not affect the Charter School's ability to carry out its mission to "provide a rigorous academic program based on the Montessori philosophy and rooted
in the history, culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley" and provide students
with the key design elements of the charter, which include "educational program based
on the Montessori philosophy; elements of the curriculum rooted in the history, culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley; and critical thinking and problem solving." As
you have not alleged that the Charter School has failed to implement a material term of
its charter, you have not alleged a violation of M.G.L. c. 71 §89(w) or its implementing regulations under 603 CMR 1.00 that the Department has the authority to investigate. The Department appreciates your outreach on behalf of your student and all other students at the Charter School. To address your concerns, you may wish to consider contacting the Charter School Office at charterschools@mass.gov.As of the date of this letter, this complaint is closed, and the Department will not take
further action on this complaint.

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
B.	Year In Review	Discuss	Tanya Murdy	5 m

- Transitioned board leadership
- Transitioned executive director leadership
- External board audit: focus on systems and structures. More focus on managing through process and data.

XI.	**Accountability**			**9:53 PM**
A.	Year in Review	Discuss	Albert Ting	5 m
XII.	**Development**			**9:58 PM**
A.	Year in Review	Discuss	Elizabeth Rankin	5 m
XIII.	**Closing Items**			**10:03 PM**
A.	Board Meeting Survey https://app2.boardontrack.com/surveyForm/show/1163	FYI	Tanya Murdy	1 m
B.	Adjourn Meeting	Vote		

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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

Review Trustee Code of Conduct

Section: I. Opening Items
Item: D. Review Trustee Code of Conduct
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: BoT_Expectations_2_7_23__1_ (7).pdf

RVCS Board of Trustees
Member Expectations

The River Valley Charter School Board of Trustees is committed to promoting a culture of accountability, integrity, and transparency. We expect our board members to demonstrate the highest level of ethical conduct and integrity in all aspects of their service. Board members must:

1. Act in the best interest of River Valley Charter School and its mission.
2. Attend board meetings prepared and on time.
3. Maintain an open mind and recognize the value of each board member's input.
4. Contribute to meaningful discussions and decision-making processes.
5. Respect the opinions of other board members and show support for the majority's decisions.
6. Set a positive example of behavior.
7. Actively participate in fundraising activities and events.
8. Remain current on financial information and legal documents pertaining to the organization.
9. Respect the roles and responsibilities of other board members and staff.
10. Respect the confidentiality of board meetings and information shared by board members, as appropriate.
11. Avoid any form of discrimination or harassment.
12. Act with integrity and professionalism in all dealings with the school, its staff, and members of the community.

February 2023

Coversheet

Approve Minutes

Section: II. Approve Previous Board Minutes
Item: A. Approve Minutes
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material: Minutes for Board Meeting on April 29, 2026

DRAFT

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday April 29, 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 (remote), C. Getz, C. Whitford, D. Herrera, D. Mitchell, E. Bradley, E. Rankin, G. LeFave, J. Nickerson, M. Connerton, T. Murdy

Trustees Absent
None

Ex Officio Members Present
K. Kuse (remote)

Non Voting Members Present
K. Kuse (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

T. Murdy called a meeting of the board of trustees of River Valley Charter School to order on Wednesday Apr 29, 2026 at 7:07 PM.

C. Review Trustee Code of Conduct

- The Board Chair opened the meeting, acknowledged the unusually high attendance, and noted the heightened emotions within the school community due to recent events.
- The Board Chair addressed safety concerns, noting that additional precautions were in place for the Executive Director due to threats received, and emphasized the seriousness of maintaining appropriate conduct.
- Expectations for meeting behavior were clearly stated. The Board Chair explained that disruptive behavior could result in a recess or adjournment of the meeting.
- The Board reiterated that public comment was not open at this time and that this portion of the meeting was reserved for Board remarks and dialogue only.
- The Board Chair raised concerns about inappropriate conduct surrounding student protests earlier in the day, including filming of students.
- Examples of hostile and inflammatory communications directed toward school leadership were referenced to underscore the negative tone affecting the school community and the Board’s concern about how conflict is being expressed.
- The Board emphasized that trustees are volunteers serving in support of the school, students, staff, and families, and noted the personal toll the current situation has had on Board members and their families.
- It was clarified that personnel decisions are made through established processes involving legal counsel, state agencies, and external professional advisors, and not by unilateral action of any one individual.
- The Board stated that both internal and external reviews related to allegations against the Executive Director had been conducted and reported no findings.
- The Board Chair shared that the school had been advised by state authorities that failure to adhere to proper governance processes and restore stability could place the school at risk of closure.

- The Board reiterated its commitment to following required processes, maintaining confidentiality where legally required, and acting in the best interests of the school community.

D. Public Comment

Public comment provided by:

- Melissa Tremor
- Alison Solerno
- Dan Buchard
- **Desenya**
- Dave Draper
- Jon Ellen
- Milda

Public comments:

- Multiple community members expressed concern regarding recent personnel actions and their impact on staff morale and school culture.
- Several speakers raised questions about leadership decision-making, transparency, and the handling of complaints.
- Comments emphasized the importance of maintaining the school's Montessori mission, staff stability, and community trust.
- Concerns were raised about the effect of adult conflict on students and the broader school environment.
- Some speakers expressed appreciation for the dedication of teachers and Board members while urging improved communication and reconciliation.

II. Approve Previous Board Minutes

A. Approve Minutes

E. Rankin made a motion to approve the minutes from Special Board Meeting on 03-13-26.
A. Godino seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

B. MacQuade	Absent
C. Getz	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye
A. Ting	Aye

Roll Call

C. Whitford	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye
A. Godino	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye

III. Consent Agenda

A. Accountability Committee

No discussion

B. Development Committee

No discussion

C. Executive Committee

No discussion

D. Committee on Trustees

No discussion

E. Finance Committee

No discussion

F. Vote on Consent Agenda

E. Bradley made a motion to Approve consent agenda.
E. Rankin seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. Mitchell	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
A. Godino	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
B. MacQuade	Absent

IV. Board Business

A. Montessori Moment

- Achala presented the Montessori Moment, focusing on Montessori principles of peace, democracy, and education.
- The presentation emphasized how Montessori education supports democratic values through student agency, community responsibility, conflict resolution, and respect for diverse perspectives.
- Achala highlighted the role of freedom within limits and individual responsibility as foundational elements of Montessori practice and civic development.
- Connections were drawn between Montessori philosophy, classroom practice, and broader school culture, particularly during times of heightened community stress.
- The Montessori Moment concluded with a reminder of the shared commitment among families, educators, administrators, and trustees to the school's mission and the well-being of students.

B. Board Audit Review

- Kate Scott, an external governance consultant, presented the results of the Board audit, including an overview of the scope of her work, which involved document review, Board member interviews, committee observations, and facilitation of a Board retreat.
- The audit identified significant strengths, including strong trustee commitment to the school, a wide range of professional expertise on the Board, improved governance practices over recent years, and solid financial oversight.
- Key governance challenges were highlighted, including reduced trust and cohesion, blurred boundaries between governance and management, and inconsistent communication within the Board and with the broader community.
- The audit noted structural gaps at the leadership level, including clarity of roles and responsibilities and the need for a more robust and fully supported senior leadership structure.
- The importance of data-informed decision-making and consistent alignment among trustees was emphasized, particularly during periods of disagreement or heightened community pressure.
- The Board was advised that the current grievance committee structure is atypical for Massachusetts charter schools and should be reconsidered in favor of clearer policies and procedures for handling complaints.
- High-priority recommendations included:
    - Implementing a consistent, documented evaluation process for the Executive Director
    - Establishing leadership succession and transition planning

    - Ensuring all Board members are appropriately informed of key committee work
    - Strengthening Board alignment and communication norms
- Kate Scott emphasized that none of the findings negated the Board's dedication to the school and framed the recommendations as necessary steps to strengthen governance, restore trust, and support long-term stability.
- The Board engaged in discussion following the presentation and acknowledged the findings and recommendations.

C. Timeline/PBE discussion

- The Board engaged in a high-level discussion regarding the history and evolution of Place-Based Education (PBE) at the school to provide context for current community questions.
- It was noted that PBE originated during the COVID period as an outdoor learning model, enabling continued in-person education when indoor instruction was restricted.
- As pandemic conditions evolved, the program transitioned from an "outdoor school" model to Place-Based Education, with the intent of integrating experiential learning more formally into the school's instructional approach.
- The Board discussed that the development and continuation of PBE were influenced by temporary pandemic-related funding, including ESSER funds, which later expired and affected the program's sustainability.
- Trustees acknowledged that, over time, questions arose regarding alignment with Montessori principles, including concerns about uninterrupted work cycles, equitable access across levels, instructional coherence, and long-term feasibility.
- The Board emphasized that programmatic decisions, including instructional models such as PBE, fall within the responsibility of school administration rather than the Board, while the Board's role is oversight and alignment with mission and charter.
- The discussion reflected differing perspectives within the community and underscored the importance of understanding the historical context in which PBE was introduced and modified.
- The Board reiterated that its intent in discussing PBE was informational and contextual, and not to evaluate or decide upon specific instructional practices during this meeting.

D. Policy Vote

E. Rankin made a motion to Approve the Professional Code of Conduct.
E. Bradley seconded the motion.

- The Board discussed a proposed Professional Code of Conduct drafted by the external human resources firm, Blue Lion.

- During the discussion, several Board members noted initial confusion regarding the origin and authorship of the document, with clarification made that the policy was produced externally rather than authored by the Board.
- Trustees raised concerns about the scope, structure, and language of the proposed document, including whether certain provisions were overly broad, subjective, or open to inconsistent interpretation.
- Discussion focused on whether the proposed policy appropriately reflected the school's mission, values, and collaborative Montessori culture.
- Board members expressed concern that the document did not sufficiently address staff protections, including the absence of a clearly defined whistleblower policy and clarity around progressive discipline and due process.
- The potential impact of the proposed language on staff morale, trust, and psychological safety was discussed, particularly in the context of existing community tensions.
- Trustees emphasized the importance of clearly distinguishing between professional expectations and language that might discourage constructive dialogue, feedback, or dissent.
- The Board acknowledged the role of external advisors but emphasized that policy adoption and accountability rest solely with the Board.
- The discussion concluded with consensus that, in its current form, the proposed Professional Code of Conduct required substantial revision and additional context before it could be considered for adoption.

The motion did not carry.

Roll Call	
D. Mitchell	No
C. Whitford	No
C. Getz	No
E. Bradley	No
A. Ting	No
G. LeFave	No
T. Murdy	No
A. Godino	No
M. Connerton	No
B. MacQuade	No
D. Herrera	No
E. Rankin	No
J. Nickerson	No

V. Committee on Trustees

A. Update

- Trustee Recruitment
- Trustee interest in leadership positions for 2026-2027

- Bylaws update

VI. Executive Committee

A. Update

- Executive Director Review/Tool
- Succession Planning: ED & BOT
- BoT RVCS emails

VII. Finance Committee

A. Update

- The Finance Committee provided an update on the school's financial position, noting that tuition revenue is tracking above projections while benefit costs are expected to increase in the upcoming year.
- The Committee reviewed preliminary budget assumptions for the next fiscal year and discussed financial risks and uncertainties, including personnel-related and legal expenses.
- The Finance Committee recommended approval of a 3.5% increase to the salary line for the upcoming school year, emphasizing fiscal sustainability while supporting staff compensation.
- The Committee confirmed that allocation of the approved salary increase would be determined by the Executive Director.

C. Whitford made a motion to To approve a 3.5% increase in the salary line item of the budget for dispensing by ED as appropriate.
C. Getz seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Getz	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
B. MacQuade	Absent
D. Herrera	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
A. Godino	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye
C. Whitford	Aye

VIII. Accountability Committee

A. Update

- The Accountability Committee presented an overview of assessment data and instructional monitoring, including the use of literacy and math screeners to track student progress.
- Committee members discussed the importance of **consistent assessment administration**, data transparency, and progress monitoring to support instructional decision-making.
- Data were reviewed across multiple dimensions, including grade level, gender, and special education status, to better understand trends and identify areas for targeted intervention.
- The Committee emphasized that the work is ongoing and that additional data collection and review would continue later in the academic year.

IX. Development Committee

A. Update

- The Development Committee provided an update on fundraising and community engagement efforts, including planning for upcoming events and initiatives.
- Discussion highlighted the importance of development activities in supporting school programs and supplementing public funding.
- Trustees encouraged continued participation and volunteer involvement to strengthen development capacity and community connections.
- A suggestion was raised to consider moving development activities under the School’s Foundation to improve alignment, flexibility, and coordination of fundraising efforts. The discussion noted potential benefits, including clearer separation from governance functions, increased operational flexibility, and enhanced donor privacy, while also acknowledging the need for further review before any structural changes are considered.

X. Director's Update

A. Director's Report

- The Executive Director provided an overview of key operational and instructional priorities across the school.
- An update was shared on academic monitoring and student progress, including the use of literacy and math screeners to identify areas of strength and need, and to guide instructional supports and interventions.
- The importance of data-informed decision-making was emphasized, including ongoing review by the Accountability Committee and school leadership.

- Staffing and instructional supports were discussed, including efforts to ensure appropriate services for students requiring additional academic or special education support.
- The Executive Director addressed instructional alignment, including the need for uninterrupted instructional time, adequate classroom materials, and consistency across grade levels.
- An overview of professional development priorities was provided, including collaboration, instructional alignment, and strengthening Montessori practice.
- Operational updates included ongoing attention to school safety, staffing coverage, and continuity of day-to-day school functions.
- The Director acknowledged current community challenges and reaffirmed a commitment to maintaining a stable learning environment focused on student well-being and academic growth.

XI. Executive Session

A. Vote to Move to Exec Session

D. Mitchell made a motion to Go to executive session under purpose 2.
D. Herrera seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

J. Nickerson	Aye
A. Godino	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
B. MacQuade	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
C. Whitford	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye

XII. Closing Items

A. Board Meeting Survey

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
T. Murdy

Documents used during the meeting

- 2026_02_10_rvcs_accountability_committee_meeting_minutes.pdf
- 2026_03_03_development_committee_meeting_minutes.pdf
- 2026_04_08_executive_committee_committee_meeting_minutes.pdf
- 2026_04_08_committee_on_trustees_meeting_minutes.pdf
- 2026_04_16_finance_committee_meeting_minutes.pdf
- Professional Code of Conduct.docx
- Board Audit Report for RVCS.pdf
- 4.29.2026 Director's Report - Google Docs.pdf
- River_Valley_Charter_School_FY26_Internal_Audit.pdf
- RVCS__Fall_Data_Overview_from_2025-26.pdf

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Coversheet

Approve Board Meeting Minutes

Section: II. Approve Previous Board Minutes
Item: B. Approve Board Meeting Minutes
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material: Minutes for Board Meeting on June 9, 2026

DRAFT

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday June 9, 2026 at 6:00 PM

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ZOOM LINK: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8516508581?pwd=8roWrPp5aJXvEAFctC4bxo69QnaDfv.1

Trustees Present
A. Godino (remote), A. Ting (remote), B. MacQuade (remote), C. Getz (remote), E. Rankin (remote), G. LeFave (remote), J. Nickerson (remote), T. Murdy (remote)

Trustees Absent
D. Herrera, D. Mitchell, E. Bradley, M. Connerton

I. Opening Items

River Valley Charter School Board Meeting Minutes - Tuesday, June 9, 2026 at 7:00 PM

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

T. Murdy called a meeting of the board of trustees of River Valley Charter School to order on Tuesday Jun 9, 2026 at 6:01 PM.

C. Review Trustee Code of Conduct

Code of conduct reviewed for audience.

II. vChief Updates

A. Updates from Kristin

- Kristin provided an overview of vChief's ongoing support to the Board, including progress on leadership transition planning and stakeholder engagement activities.
- She outlined the structured approach being used to gather input from across the school community, including surveys and facilitated sessions with key stakeholder groups (e.g., staff, families, and Board members).
- The purpose of these engagements is twofold:
  - To inform the development of a clear, aligned Executive Director job description that reflects the current and future needs of the school.
  - To surface perspectives that will help guide the Board in determining the most appropriate leadership model moving forward.
- Kristin emphasized the importance of broad participation to ensure the process is inclusive, transparent, and grounded in community voice.
- She noted that vChief will synthesize findings from all inputs and provide the Board with themes, recommendations, and next steps to support decision-making.

III. Interim and Permanent Executive Director Search Process

A. Discussion for ED Search Process

The Board discussed the overall approach to the Executive Director search process, including the potential pathways of:

- Appointing an Interim Executive Director, or
- Proceeding directly to a full, permanent search.

It was reaffirmed that current survey data collection and stakeholder listening sessions are a critical first step in the process and will directly inform:

- The development of a comprehensive Executive Director job description, and

- The Board's determination of whether an interim appointment or immediate permanent hire best meets the school's needs at this time.

Board members discussed the value of using this input-driven approach to ensure alignment between:

- The school's strategic priorities,
- Community expectations, and
- Leadership competencies required for the role.

There was recognition that:

- An interim role may provide flexibility and stability during a transition period, while
- A direct permanent hire could support continuity if the Board feels there is sufficient clarity and readiness following the input process.

No final decision was made during this discussion. The Board agreed to:

- Await the synthesis of survey and session findings from vChief, and
- Revisit the decision with the benefit of that analysis and a draft job description.

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 8:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
T. Murdy

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Approve Board Meeting Minutes

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Submitted by:
Related Material: Minutes for Board Meeting on June 2, 2026

DRAFT

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday June 2, 2026 at 8:00 PM

Location
Zoom

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.

ZOOM LINK: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8516508581?pwd=8roWrPp5aJXvEAFctC4bxo69QnaDfv.1

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

Trustees Absent
None

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

T. Murdy called a meeting of the board of trustees of River Valley Charter School to order on Tuesday Jun 2, 2026 at 8:01 PM.

C. Public Comment

Speakers:

- Tatiana
- Jamie Clowe
- Ali Field

Public Comment Summary:
Members of the public expressed concerns regarding trust, transparency, and clarity in board processes and decision-making. Comments highlighted a desire for more consistent and accessible communication from the board, clearer explanations of how key decisions are made, and improved visibility into governance practices, including board member selection and leadership decisions. Several speakers emphasized the importance of rebuilding community trust, reducing confusion, and ensuring opportunities for meaningful community engagement and understanding.

D. Review Trustee Code of Conduct

Reviewed the Trustee Code of Conduct

II. Interim Director

A. Interim Discussion

E. Rankin made a motion to Authorize the Board Chair to extend an offer of employment to Joey Gustafson to serve as interim interim director, effective June 4, with a short-term contract, under the following conditions: Karen Kuse transitions to a virtual, consultative role Karen is not present in the building during in-session hours Joey Gustafson reports to the Board Karen Kuse reports to Joey Gustafson.
A. Godino seconded the motion.

1. **Overall Alignment on Need for Immediate Stability**

- Broad agreement that **leadership continuity was urgent** given the Executive Director's upcoming departure.
- The short-term "interim interim" approach was viewed as a **practical bridge** while conducting a more inclusive interim search.

2. **Scope and Duration of the Role**

- Board discussed **30–60 day vs. shorter/rolling terms**, with many leaning toward a **~60-day window** to allow time for a proper search process.
- Emphasis that this role is **temporary and stabilizing**, not intended for major strategic or structural changes.

3. **Primary Role Expectations for Joey**

- Consensus that the interim role should focus on:
  - **Crisis management and stability**
  - **Maintaining operations and compliance (DESE/year-end)**
  - **Supporting the school community and lowering tension**
- Clear expectation that the role is **not to "burn and slash" or introduce major changes**.

4. **Reporting Structure and Authority**

- Strong agreement emerged on a **clear reporting model**:
  - Joey → reports to Board
  - Karen → reports to Joey
- Rationale:
  - Avoid confusion or competing authority
  - Ensure Joey has **clear leadership control and accountability**

5. **Karen's Role and Presence (Major Point of Debate)**
This was the **most debated issue**:

- One perspective:
  - Karen should be **fully remote**, to reduce community tension and avoid disruption.
- Alternative perspective:
  - Karen should remain **available for knowledge transfer**, including possible in-person support if needed.
- Compromise direction:
  - Allow **limited, controlled involvement**, primarily:
    - Remote support
    - In-person only when students are not in session (or at leadership discretion)

6. **Board vs. Leader Autonomy**

- Discussion on how prescriptive the board should be:
  - Some members pushed to **set clear boundaries and expectations upfront**
  - Others emphasized:
    - If hired as leader, Joey should have **latitude to manage and make decisions independently**
- Resulting balance:
  - **Define structure and constraints**, but **avoid micromanaging execution**

7. **Communication and Stakeholder Confidence**

- Emphasis on:
  - Ensuring **clear communication to staff and community**
  - Providing **certainty around roles, contracts, and decision-making authority**
- Recognition that:
  - Stability requires both **operational clarity and trust rebuilding**

8. **Transition and Knowledge Transfer**

- Agreement that:
  - Knowledge transfer from Karen is **important but should not disrupt the environment**
  - Prefer:
    - Off-hours, remote, or limited on-site engagement
- Intent: **enable continuity without reigniting tension**

9. **Connection to Longer-Term Interim Search**

- Repeated emphasis that this decision:
  - Is **not the long-term interim solution**
  - Must be paired with a **transparent, community-informed search process**

Bottom Line

- The board aligned on:
  - **Urgent need for stability**
  - **Joey as a short-term stabilizing leader**
- The discussion focused heavily on:
  - **Defining reporting structure**
  - **Managing Karen's transition appropriately**
  - **Balancing board control vs. leader autonomy**
- Final motion incorporated:

- Clear structure + **guardrails to reduce community tension while enabling continuity**

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

Roll Call

J. Nickerson	Abstain
B. MacQuade	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
A. Godino	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye
T. Murdy	Abstain
E. Rankin	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye
A. Ting	Aye

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 9:21 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

Approve Board Meeting Minutes

Section: II. Approve Previous Board Minutes
Item: D. Approve Board Meeting Minutes
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material: Minutes for Special Board Meeting on May 27, 2026

DRAFT

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Special Board Meeting

Listening Session

Date and Time
Wednesday May 27, 2026 at 7:00 PM

Location
RVCS Gym

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.

ZOOM LINK: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8516508581?pwd=8roWrPp5aJXvEAFctC4bxo69QnaDfv.1

Trustees Present
A. Godino, B. MacQuade, E. Bradley, E. Rankin, G. LeFave, J. Nickerson, M. Connerton, T. Murdy

Trustees Absent
A. Ting, C. Getz, D. Herrera, D. Mitchell

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

T. Murdy called a meeting of the board of trustees of River Valley Charter School to order on Wednesday May 27, 2026 at 7:15 PM.

C. Review Trustee Code of Conduct

D. Public Comment

Extended public comment from community.
Key themes included:
concerns around school stability
refocusing on students
faculty concerns regarding staffing changes

II. 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 10:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
T. 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 Board Meeting Minutes

Section: II. Approve Previous Board Minutes
Item: E. Approve Board Meeting Minutes
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material: Minutes for Board Meeting on May 20, 2026

DRAFT

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday May 20, 2026 at 7:00 PM

Location
Zoom

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.

This meeting will be on Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82215031126?pwd=aYvzhMaoPCyIgaeDGXXGoIuqIXy5AF.1

Trustees Present

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

Trustees Absent
None

Ex Officio Members Present
K. Kuse (remote)

Non Voting Members Present
K. Kuse (remote)

Guests Present
M. Terry (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

T. Murdy called a meeting of the board of trustees of River Valley Charter School to order on Wednesday May 20, 2026 at 7:36 PM.
Zoom link originally posted only had 100 person capacity. We had to change to add more capacity. Stayed in original zoom meeting to tell participants and added to the chat. Agenda was updated with new zoom link. An email was sent out to RVCS community with the updated link.

C. Review Trustee Code of Conduct

Board chair reviewed Trustee code of conduct

D. Public Comment

Speakers:

- Kristen Hunter (E2 parent)
- Carly Hamilton (staff; LIT special / theater & language specialist)
- Robin Demand (parent)
- Megan (parent/community member; last name not captured in transcript excerpt)
- Lauren Hajar (parent; with spouse Rick)
- Shelby Lee (parent)

- Martha Burke (parent)
- David Javier (parent)
- Tricia O'Leary (RVCS Staff)

Summary:

- **Leadership and Governance Clarity** – Speakers raised questions or concerns regarding leadership structure, decision-making clarity, and board oversight.
- **Communication and Transparency** – Comments reflected a desire for clearer, more consistent communication from the board and school leadership.
- **Staffing and Organizational Changes** – Concerns and/or feedback were shared related to current or proposed staffing roles, hiring decisions, or organizational shifts.
- **School Culture and Student Experience** – Input focused on maintaining a positive, stable environment aligned with the school's values and mission.
- **Community Trust and Engagement** – Speakers emphasized the importance of rebuilding or maintaining trust and ensuring ongoing community involvement.
- Comments represented a range of perspectives from the community
- No board deliberation occurred during public comment

II. Approve Previous Board Minutes

A. Discussion

- Approval of the April 29 meeting minutes was **deferred**
- Board identified that **public comment was not fully captured** in the minutes
- Board discussion indicated that **public attendees should be documented directly in the minutes**, consistent with prior practice

Required Updates Before Approval

- Incorporate **public comment section directly into the minutes**
- Add **list of public attendees within the minutes**

III. Consent Agenda

A. Accountability Committee

E. Rankin made a motion to approve the minutes from RVCS April Accountability Committee Meeting on 04-27-26.
A. Ting seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

J. Nickerson	Aye
A. Ting	Aye

Roll Call

E. Rankin	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye
A. Godino	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
B. MacQuade	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye

B. Development Committee

E. Rankin made a motion to approve the minutes from Development Committee Meeting on 05-05-26.
D. Mitchell seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Connerton	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye
B. MacQuade	Aye
A. Godino	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye

C. Executive Committee

D. Committee on Trustees

C. Getz made a motion to approve the minutes from Committee on Trustees Meeting on 05-12-26.
D. Herrera seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. Herrera	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye
B. MacQuade	Aye

Roll Call

A. Ting	Aye
A. Godino	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye

D. Herrera made a motion to approve the minutes from Committee on Trustees Meeting on 05-06-26.

C. Getz seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

D. Herrera	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye
B. MacQuade	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
A. Godino	Aye

E. Finance Committee

D. Mitchell made a motion to approve the minutes from Finance Committee Meeting on 04-16-26.

E. Rankin seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

M. Connerton	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye
B. MacQuade	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye
A. Godino	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye

IV. Board Business

A. Montessori Moment

Beth led a Montessori moment focused on recentering the board and broader community on students as the school's primary priority. She emphasized that "grace and courtesy" are foundational Montessori principles and should guide all interactions among board members, staff, and families, noting that recent tensions and communication dynamics are impacting students' sense of safety and stability. Beth highlighted that adult behavior —particularly tone, communication, and conflict—directly models behavior for students and influences the overall school culture, and she called for stronger listening, empathy, and understanding across the community. She encouraged reflection and a renewed commitment to modeling respectful, collaborative behavior to ensure a safe and supportive environment in which students can thrive. Multiple members of the board echoed these themes and contributed additional reflections, reinforcing the importance of compassion, self-awareness, and maintaining a student-centered focus in both governance and community interactions.

B. Discussion request by Meg Connerton

Meg led a discussion to raise general questions regarding situations that occurred during the prior week, seeking clarity on both what transpired and how those situations were handled. Her questions focused primarily on understanding the appropriate role of the board versus management, particularly in relation to involvement in staff-related matters, and highlighted concern around consistency in process and access to information. Meg noted the tension between limited visibility for the full board and instances where individual board members were involved, and emphasized the need for clearer, more consistent governance practices going forward. The discussion prompted broader board reflection on governance versus management boundaries, transparency, and the importance of ensuring that decision-making processes are well-defined and consistently applied. Additional comments from board members expanded on these themes, including considerations related to timing, communication, and the impact of these situations on students and the broader school community.

V. Committee on Trustees

A. Bylaws

E. Bradley made a motion to Pass the updated version 7.0 bylaws with suggested updates.
A. Ting seconded the motion.
The board considered proposed revisions to the bylaws; however, the motion did not pass as it failed to reach the required two-thirds majority for approval. During discussion, several board members expressed a desire to incorporate broader community input before finalizing changes, particularly in light of recent feedback and ongoing concerns

regarding governance, transparency, and board structure. While many members acknowledged the significant work completed to date and generally supported the direction of the revisions, there was agreement that additional review and engagement with the community would strengthen confidence in the final document. As a result, the bylaws will be revised as needed, informed by feedback gathered during the upcoming community listening session and any additional board input, and will be brought back for further discussion and a subsequent vote at a future meeting.

The motion did not carry.

Roll Call

M. Connerton	No
C. Getz	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
G. LeFave	No
E. Rankin	Aye
D. Mitchell	No
D. Herrera	No
A. Godino	No
B. MacQuade	No
E. Bradley	Abstain
A. Ting	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye

B. Board Candidates

C. Getz made a motion to Nominate seven board candidates as presented.
A. Godino seconded the motion.
The board reviewed and discussed the proposed slate of board candidate nominees, which had been identified through a structured evaluation process based on criteria including expertise, governance experience, and alignment with current board needs. Board members noted the strength and depth of the candidate pool and expressed appreciation for the level of community interest and engagement in board service. While some members acknowledged concerns related to recent events and overall board credibility, there was general agreement that the selection process followed a thoughtful and methodical approach and resulted in a well-balanced slate aligned to identified skill gaps. Additional discussion emphasized the importance of onboarding, committee participation, and ongoing engagement of candidates not selected, including opportunities to serve on committees or in future board roles.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Getz	Aye
B. MacQuade	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye

Roll Call

T. Murdy	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye
A. Godino	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye

C. Board Exec Committee Nominations

VI. Executive Committee

A. Update

Interim Executive Solutions - The Executive Committee provided an update on interim executive leadership planning, noting that efforts are underway to identify and evaluate potential interim solutions to support the school during the current transition period. The committee outlined the general approach to assessing candidates and emphasized the importance of ensuring continuity of leadership, stability for staff and students, and alignment with the school's operational and governance needs. Discussion highlighted the intent to move thoughtfully through the process while maintaining flexibility and responsiveness to evolving circumstances.

COL Sign-Up - The Executive Committee provided an update regarding COL (Celebration of Learning) sign-up and participation, encouraging continued board engagement in this core Montessori practice. Members emphasized the importance of board presence at COLs as an opportunity to connect directly with students, observe learning in practice, and reinforce the school's mission and values. The discussion underscored the value of participation in supporting students, building community, and maintaining alignment with the Montessori framework.

VII. Finance Committee

A. Update

A brief update was provided noting that the finance committee has not yet met to approve recent minutes, and that review and approval will occur at an upcoming meeting.

VIII. Accountability Committee

A. Update

No meeting since last board meeting

IX. Development Committee

A. Update

An update was provided on a proposed survey intended to capture in-kind donations and parent contributions at the classroom level. The survey is designed to improve visibility into the full scope of resources supporting the school, including volunteer time, materials, and other contributions that are not formally tracked through financial systems. The committee noted that this information will help better understand overall community support, inform future planning and fundraising efforts, and ensure a more complete picture of contributions across the school.

X. Director's Update

A. Director's Report

2025–26 Annual IDEA LEA Determinations- An update was provided on the school's 2025–26 Annual IDEA LEA Determinations, reflecting the state's review of the school's performance in supporting students with disabilities under federal IDEA requirements. The determination serves as an important indicator of compliance, program effectiveness, and overall support for special education services, and leadership noted its importance in guiding continued improvement efforts.

ELE Review - An update was shared regarding the English Learner Education (ELE) review process, including ongoing efforts to ensure compliance with state requirements and strengthen support for English learners. The review process is intended to assess program effectiveness, instructional practices, and alignment with regulatory expectations, with a focus on continuous improvement.
Maritime Mixer - The Director highlighted the recent Maritime Mixer as a successful community event, noting strong participation and engagement across families and staff. The event was described as an important opportunity to build community connections and reinforce the school's culture.

Literacy Night - An update was provided on Literacy Night, which was well attended and supported student learning and family engagement. The event focused on promoting literacy development and provided families with opportunities to engage in their children's academic experience in a meaningful way.

Staff Updates - The Director provided general staff updates, including ongoing transitions and changes across roles. Emphasis was placed on maintaining continuity and supporting staff during a period of change, while continuing to prioritize student needs and classroom stability.
Facilities / Handyperson Hire - The school has hired a handyperson to support ongoing facilities maintenance and operational needs. This addition is intended to improve

responsiveness to maintenance issues and support the overall upkeep of the school environment.

Technology / Network Infrastructure - The Director shared that the school is currently interviewing external technology providers to potentially outsource network infrastructure and security. This effort is aimed at strengthening system reliability, improving cybersecurity posture, and ensuring more consistent technical support.

Easement - An update was provided regarding an easement matter, with leadership continuing to assess requirements and next steps. The item remains under review as part of broader facilities and property considerations.

Pet & Absentee Policy - The Director provided an update on proposed revisions to the pet and absentee policies. Discussion focused on ensuring clarity, consistency, and alignment with student health, safety, and attendance expectations. The policies will continue to be refined prior to final consideration.

XI. Closing Items

A. Board Meeting Survey

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 11:56 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
T. Murdy

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Coversheet

Approve Board Meeting Minutes

Section: II. Approve Previous Board Minutes
Item: F. Approve Board Meeting Minutes
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material: Minutes for Special Board Meeting on April 9, 2026

DRAFT

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Special Board Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday April 9, 2026 at 3:30 PM

Location
RVCS-great 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.

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

Trustees Absent
E. Bradley

Guests Present

M. Terry

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

T. Murdy called a meeting of the board of trustees of River Valley Charter School to order on Thursday Apr 9, 2026 at 3:33 AM.

C. Review Trustee Code of Conduct

Code of conduct reviewed by the board

D. Public Comment

Jared Hubbard - The Board received public comment. A member of the community addressed the importance of board communication, engagement with stakeholders, rebuilding trust, and clarity regarding the Board's ability to seek information necessary to fulfill its duties. No Board action was taken in response to public comment.

II. Board Business

A. School Calendar 2026-2027

J. Nickerson made a motion to Approve the official first day of school: September 1, 2026, and last day of school: June 16, 2027.
C. Getz seconded the motion.

- Aligns to Newburyport calendar

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

Roll Call

E. Bradley	Absent
C. Whitford	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
A. Godino	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
B. MacQuade	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye

Roll Call

A. Ting	Aye

B. Executive Session

D. Herrera made a motion to Enter Executive Session G.L. c. 30A, section 21(a)(2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel (Executive Director Karen Kuse).
A. Godino seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Getz	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
C. Whitford	Aye
B. MacQuade	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
E. Bradley	Absent
E. Rankin	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
A. Godino	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye

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 3:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
T. Murdy

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Coversheet

Approve Board Meeting Minutes

Section: II. Approve Previous Board Minutes
Item: G. Approve Board Meeting Minutes
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material: Minutes for Special Meeting on March 12, 2026

DRAFT

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Special Meeting

Complaint Committee Update

Date and Time
Thursday March 12, 2026 at 8:30 PM

Location
Zoom

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.

Zoom Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8516508581?pwd=8roWrPp5aJXvEAFctC4bxo69QnaDfv.1

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

Trustees Absent
None

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

T. Murdy called a meeting of the board of trustees of River Valley Charter School to order on Thursday Mar 12, 2026 at 8:32 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

E. Bradley made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 02-25-26.
D. Herrera seconded the motion.

- Information on the assessment data - includes disaggregated data
- Add "caregiver survey" in front of survey
- On director's report, check bullets listed under DESE for proper alignment
- Respectfully submitted by Derek Mitchell
- Validate that member of public in attendance is added to the docs
- Make sure that motions on the policies are listed as a no

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

Roll Call

C. Whitford	Abstain
M. Connerton	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye
B. MacQuade	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
A. Godino	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye

II. Complaint Committee

A. Complaint Committee Update

Complaint (Grievance) Committee Update

- The Complaint Committee provided an overview of its recent work and process under the **2015 Complaint Policy**.
- The Committee clarified terminology, noting that “Complaint Committee” and “Grievance Committee” have been used interchangeably in the past and that this will be corrected for clarity.
- The Committee reported that it met for an extended session and reviewed **seven submissions** received under the complaint policy.

Summary of Submissions Reviewed

- **Three submissions** did **not** meet criteria for formal complaint review:
  - Submissions lacked required steps under the policy, did not request formal review, or raised general concerns rather than actionable complaints.
  - The Committee recommended acknowledging receipt, thanking individuals for raising concerns, and clarifying available processes where appropriate.
- **Four submissions** met the threshold for Committee review:
  - One was determined not to be actionable under the policy but raised broader governance considerations.
  - One required procedural clarification before proceeding further.
  - One complaint required further investigation and the potential use of outside expertise due to complexity.
  - One complaint raised issues that could have legal and reputational implications for the school.

Themes Identified by the Committee

- The Committee noted broader themes emerging across submissions, including:
  - Communication and transparency.
  - How non-actionable feedback may still inform governance and oversight.
  - Organizational health, morale, and clarity of roles.
- The Committee emphasized that these themes were shared for governance awareness and not as requests for immediate Board action.

Board Discussion

- Board members discussed:
  - The importance of acknowledging concerns raised, even when they do not meet formal complaint thresholds.
  - The role of the Board in governance oversight related to organizational culture and leadership.
  - The need to consider reputational and potential legal risk to the school.
- Clarifying questions were asked regarding process, next steps, and communication with complainants.

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 9:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
T. Murdy

IV. Executive Session

A. Enter Executive Session

E. Bradley made a motion to A motion was made to enter Executive Session under Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, Purpose 1 (to discuss matters affecting the reputation, character, or condition of an individual).
D. Mitchell seconded the motion.

- It was stated that the Board would **not return to open session** after executive session.
- A roll call vote was taken; the motion **passed unanimously**.
- The recording was stopped and the public session was closed.

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

Roll Call

E. Rankin	Aye
A. Ting	Aye
B. MacQuade	Aye
J. Nickerson	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
C. Whitford	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
A. Godino	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye

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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 Board Meeting Minutes

Section: II. Approve Previous Board Minutes
Item: H. Approve Board Meeting Minutes
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material: Minutes for Emergency Board Meeting on May 17, 2026

DRAFT

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Emergency Board Meeting

940 CMR: OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL 940, CMR 29.00: OPEN MEETINGS, Section 29.02

Date and Time
Sunday May 17, 2026 at 8:00 PM

Location
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83513785124?pwd=tD7pbLh3FDpbEXDd7a5VaHrhcHLQmi.1

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.

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

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

Trustees Absent

None

Guests Present
M. Terry (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

M. Connerton called a meeting to order on Sunday May 17, 2026 at 8:00 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

Marc Terry advised that this does not constitute as an 'emergency' under Open Meeting Law. Meeting adjorned.

II. 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 8:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Connerton

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Coversheet

Approve Board Meeting Minutes

Section: II. Approve Previous Board Minutes
Item: I. Approve Board Meeting Minutes
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material: Minutes for EMERGENCY MEETING on May 28, 2026

DRAFT

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

EMERGENCY MEETING

Date and Time
Thursday May 28, 2026 at 8:00 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.

ZOOM LINK: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8516508581?pwd=8roWrPp5aJXvEAFctC4bxo69QnaDfv.1

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

Trustees Absent
None

I. Opening Items

A.

Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

T. Murdy called a meeting of the board of trustees of River Valley Charter School to order on Thursday May 28, 2026 at 8:01 PM.

II. Other Business

A. Executive session

E. Bradley made a motion to Under Reason 1.
T. Murdy seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

A. Godino	Aye
D. Herrera	Aye
D. Mitchell	Aye
E. Rankin	Aye
E. Bradley	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
G. LeFave	Aye
M. Connerton	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye
A. Ting	No
J. Nickerson	Aye
B. MacQuade	Aye

E. Bradley made a motion to Enter Exec Session Purpose 1.
T. Murdy seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

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 10:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
T. 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

Executive Committee

Section:	III. Consent Agenda
Item:	C. Executive Committee
Purpose:	Approve Minutes
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Minutes for Executive Committee Committee Meeting on May 6, 2026 2026_06_04_executive_committee_committee_meeting_minutes.pdf

DRAFT

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Executive Committee Committee Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday May 6, 2026 at 7:00 PM

Location
River Valley Charter School
Middle School Great 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, J. Nickerson, T. Murdy

Committee Members Absent
C. Whitford

Guests Present
K. Kuse

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

J. Nickerson called a meeting of the Executive Committee Committee of River Valley Charter School to order on Wednesday May 6, 2026 at 7:11 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

J. Nickerson made a motion to approve the minutes from Executive Committee Committee Meeting on 04-08-26.
C. Getz seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

II. Director Update

A. Director Update

1. Compliance & Academic Updates

- **Special Education (SPED) Review**
  - Completed with **no findings**
  - Represents significant improvement from prior year
- **IDEA/LEA Determination**
  - School received a **96/100 score**
  - Credit attributed to leadership and staff effort

2. Upcoming State Review

- **English Learner Education (ELE) Review**
  - Rescheduled to **week of June 1**
  - School did not previously have an ELL policy in place
  - A finding is expected due to timing, but corrective actions are in progress
- ELE policies are being developed and submitted incrementally for DESE review

3. Policies in Development
Pet Policy

- Developed to address:
  - Student allergies
  - Safety/liability concerns (including prior incidents of animal bites)
  - Clear approval and oversight process
- Created in consultation with medical professionals
- Intended to balance classroom use of animals with student health needs

Absentee Policy

- New policy under development due to lack of formal guidelines
- Addresses thresholds for excessive absences and required interventions
- Based on DESE guidance and other school benchmarks

4. Staffing / Operations

- **Facilities / Maintenance Hiring**
  - Candidate identified for “handy person” role
  - Plan:
    - Short-term hourly trial through end of school year
    - Potential transition to full-time role if successful
  - Role would support:
    - Repairs, maintenance, cleaning, and operational needs
    - Reduction of outsourced work

5. Events & Community Engagement

Maritime Mixer

- Scheduled for May 7
- Open to trustees, staff, and select families (8th grade only for students)

Literacy Night

- Planned for KinderHouse and new families (target date: ~May 19, pending confirmation)

6. Facilities / Capital Planning

City Easement / Funding

- Pending submission included in upcoming city agenda
- Related to securing approximately **$150,000 in funding**

CPA Grant (Community Preservation Act)

- Originally planned withdrawal is being reconsidered
- School remains on the agenda for a **$450,000 request**
- Leadership evaluating whether to proceed based on new information

7. Key Takeaways for Minutes

- Strong progress on compliance (SPED, IDEA score)
- Active policy development (Pet, Absentee, ELE)
- Operational improvements underway (facilities role)
- Continued focus on funding opportunities and capital planning
- Upcoming events support community engagement

III. Executive Committee

A. Executive Committee

Committee/Board Operations & Planning

- **COL signups**: Discussion that each trustee should sign up for **two** (as panelist recommendation) and ensure it appears on a future agenda.
- **Board leadership nominees (SY 26–27)**: Noted that leadership nominees would be handled in the **May** board meeting context.
- **New board member nominations timeline**: The “6:00 group” (C.O.T. context referenced) would **recommend nominees**, nominees would be **presented in May**, and the board would **vote in June**.

Finance / Budget

- **Finance update**: Mention that after a **salary increase vote** (referenced as occurring the prior Wednesday), items are largely “good to go” for the year; expectation of **one more budget update**, and that the **overall budget** would be approved at the **May** meeting to close out the year.

Governance / Policies / Bylaws

- **Policy workflow**: Reminder/discussion that **all policies go through Executive Committee first** before the full board (for review/quality control).
- **Bylaws**: Discussion of getting bylaws **out well in advance**; bylaws were described as being made **standalone** (policy references pulled out) so that policy approvals won’t hold up bylaws updates.
- **Upcoming votes preview** (for future meeting agendas): referenced as including **two policies** (pet + absentee), **bylaws**, and a **treasurer vote** (see below).

Treasurer Transition

- Discussion that **Chris Whitford resigned** (reason characterized as being tired of “rhetoric”/too much), and that **Gary** would step into a **temporary Treasurer** role, requiring a future **vote**.

IV. Set Board Agenda

A. Board Agenda Topics

- Pet Policy (Exec Committee review, then Full Board vote)
- Absentee Policy (Exec Committee review, then Full Board vote)
- Updated bylaws (distributed in advance; move forward for approval)
- Treasurer transition vote (Gary stepping in after Chris Whitford resignation)
- Board leadership nominees for 2026–27

- Board candidate nominees (presented in May; vote in June)
- COL/CLL signups (trustees sign up; include on agenda)
- Finance/budget (one more update; overall budget approval in May)

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 8:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. Nickerson

Documents used during the meeting

None

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DRAFT

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Executive Committee Committee Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday June 4, 2026 at 7:00 PM

Location
River Valley Charter School
Middle School Great 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, G. LeFave, J. Nickerson, T. Murdy

Committee Members Absent
None

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B.

Call the Meeting to Order

J. Nickerson called a meeting of the Executive Committee Committee of River Valley Charter School to order on Thursday Jun 4, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

J. Nickerson made a motion to approve the minutes from Executive Session on 05-26-26.
T. Murdy seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

G. LeFave	Abstain
J. Nickerson	Aye
C. Getz	Aye
T. Murdy	Aye

II. Executive Committee

A. Discussion

- Annual Report - Being worked by ED with support from vChief and Executive Committee
  - Financials - tight deadlines for financial data based on when it comes in from Central Source
  - Board Composition - show beginning and end of year with changes over the course of the year
- Financials
  - Finance committee will not know about approval on $150K additional funding from CPA until after the board meeting so it will remain a moving piece in the final budget review
- 2026/27 Calendar - plan for meetings in week 1/2 of the month, week 3 is the agenda planning with committee chairs adding information to agendas in week 3
  - Board - Every 4th Wednesday of the month 7-9pm
  - Executive -Every 2nd Wednesday of the month 7-8pm
  - **Finance -**schedule quarterly with upfront budget finalization and budget to actual review. Plan for combination of in person and remote
  - CoT - Every 2nd Wednesday of the month 6-7pm
  - Accountability - To be collected from chair
  - Development - To be collected from chair
- Orientation - coordinate with Kate about dates
  - Assess mandatory training based on board audit

III. Board Meeting Topics

A. Discussion

- Board minutes (vote)
- Board Officers (vote)
- Board Nominees (vote)
- Finance
    - Budget Approval (vote)
    - Stipend Approval (vote)
    - Draw Down on Foundation Funds (potential vote)
- Board & Committee Goals
- Board Assessment

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 7:46 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
T. Murdy

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Coversheet

Committee on Trustees

Section:	III. Consent Agenda
Item:	D. Committee on Trustees
Purpose:	Approve Minutes
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Minutes for Committee on Trustees Committee Meeting on June 4, 2026 2026_05_15_committee_on_trustees_meeting_minutes.pdf 2026_05_15_executive_session__-committee_on_trustees_minutes.pdf

DRAFT

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Committee on Trustees Committee Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday June 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, J. Nickerson, T. Murdy

Committee Members Absent
E. Bradley

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

J. Nickerson called a meeting of the Committee on Trustees Committee of River Valley Charter School to order on Thursday Jun 4, 2026 at 6:00 PM.

II. Committee on Trustees

A. New Board Member Onboarding

- Reviewed of vetting process used to review board candidates by reading email sent in response to questions posed by other board members
    - Consulted with DESE and Mass Charter
    - Used skill matrix
    - Resumes, Questionnaires collected
    - Candidate interviews using standard template
    - Reviewed candidates anonymously
- Discussed recommended committee alignments for each of the candidates regardless of being recommended to join the board or not
    - Desire to set committee members by the start of school to ensure continuity throughout the year
- Need to reach out to recommended candidates to invite them to attend the 6/17 meeting and come prepared to say a few words (Action - Tanya)
    - Process (by individual) - motion made for individual, second, short comments from candidate, vote
- Recommendation to use Kate Scott for onboarding training - Kate has accepted
    - Recommendation from Kate to break up the group in half due to numbers
    - Action to ask Kate about inviting other members as a refresher opportunity and/or to provide direct board context
- 8/28 at Elnova in Kensington, NH - leadership training with a focus on leadership through crisis
    - Invitation to whole board, to include interim ED, Kate Scott
- Consideration to make the training, and potentially retreat more frequent
- New Board Member Buddies - plan to divide candidates by members of CoT to provide discussion, feedback, "phone a friend", etc.
    - Create a FAQ page to consolidate questions that arise and pre-fill based on comments from board members
- Committee Chairs by Exec Committee Members
    - Chair - Exec
    - Vice - CoT
    - Treasurer - Finance
    - Accountability -
    - Development -
- Exec Committee role votes
    - Runs top down from Board Chair - Vice Chair - Treasurer - Secretary

- Tanya meeting with Legal to ensure that we are clear on the process prior to 6/17 meeting
- Reevaluation of Committee Commitments - talk to board members about what committee they want to take part in - think first about CoT as it only board members
- Suggestion to send out board and committee meetings in the Current

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 6:52 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. Nickerson

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River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Committee on Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Friday May 15, 2026 at 12:00 PM

Location
Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8516508581?pwd=8roWrPp5aJXvEAFctC4bxo69QnaDfv.1

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Location Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8516508581?pwd=8roWrPp5aJXvEAFctC4bxo69QnaDfv.1

Committee Members Present
C. Getz (remote), E. Bradley (remote), J. Nickerson (remote), T. Murdy (remote)

Committee Members Absent
None

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 Friday May 15, 2026 at 12:00 PM.

II. Committee on Trustees

A. BoT Evaluation

E. Bradley made a motion to Move to Executive Session for the purpose of personnel matters involving an individual to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition, mental health, discipline, dismissal, complaints, or charges involving a specific employee or individual. This does not generally include discussions of professional competence or evaluations, which are usually public.
J. Nickerson seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

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DRAFT

River Valley Charter School

Minutes

Executive Session -Committee on Trustees

Date and Time
Friday May 15, 2026 at 12:15 PM

Location
Remote

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

Trustees Absent
None

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

E. Bradley called a meeting of River Valley Charter School to order on Friday May 15, 2026 at 12:15 PM.

C. Executive Session

1) Board Member Removal Discussion
Trustees discussed **removal of a board member (Derek)** based on:

- **Conflicts of interest** (family/foundation relationships, prior employment connections)
- **Fiduciary concerns**
- **Potential breach of executive session confidentiality**

Additional concerns raised:

- Lack of disclosure of relevant relationships
- Questionable alignment with board expectations and representation of the school

2) Legal and Risk Considerations
Discussion emphasized the need to:

- **Focus on objective grounds** (e.g., conflict of interest) rather than personal critiques
- Offer **option to resign vs. public vote** to reduce legal risk
- Minimize exposure to **defamation or procedural challenges**

External legal guidance reinforced:

- Importance of **limiting public statements**
- Treating all discussions as potentially discoverable/public record

3) Path Forward and Process
Agreed next steps:

- Attempt **private outreach** to offer resignation option
- If declined → proceed to **formal board vote**
- Conduct vote in a **separate special meeting** (not regular June meeting)

Rationale:

- Avoid mixing removal action with **board onboarding decisions**
- Better manage optics and meeting focus

4) Vote Planning and Board Alignment

- Trustees:
    - Reviewed **two-thirds vote requirement**

6) Communications and Confidentiality Concerns
Internal concern raised about:

- Potential **leaks or premature disclosure** of executive session discussions
- Need for strict adherence to **confidentiality expectations**

II. 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 1:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. Nickerson

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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

Director's Report

Section: IV. Director's Update
Item: A. Director's Report
Purpose: Discuss
Submitted by:
Related Material: Karen Kuse BoT Updates.pdf

Tanya Murdy BOT <bot.tanya.murdy@rivervalleycharter.org>

Board Agenda Items - Outdoor Improvements and Grounds Priorities

1 message

Karen Kuse <kkuse@rivervalleycharter.org> Mon, Jun 15, 2026 at 3:27 PM
To: Tanya Murdy BOT <bot.tanya.murdy@rivervalleycharter.org>
Cc: Joey Gustafson <jgustafson@rivervalleycharter.org>, Jonathan Nickerson BOT <bot.jonathan.nickerson@rivervalleycharter.org>

Hi All.

During one of our recent staff meetings, teachers expressed a strong interest in several outdoor improvements. Interestingly, a number of staff members shared that their highest priority has always been having a secure, fully enclosed outdoor space. Had I known that two years ago, it certainly would have influenced our planning discussions.

Some of the strong wants include:

- Monkey bars
- A fully enclosed fence that is high enough to prevent balls from going over (top priority)
- A basketball area on the Lower School side, ideally with a paved surface and hoop (Jon Ellen can provide additional details)

My hope is that Ian Mentassi and other members of our parent community may be interested in helping support some or all of these projects.

Important to Note: if the swing is discussed at any meeting, several staff members reported observing large groups of children using it simultaneously after school hours, at times with as many as 12–15 children on the swing at once while parents were talking nearby. This information may be helpful as discussions continue regarding maintenance, repairs, and safe use of the equipment.

Lastly, I'd like to offer a reminder that RVCS was awarded a $10,000 prize in 23-24 towards the construction of a new Gazebo. The funds were received last year and are being held by the Foundation. Robin Sidman with Project Green Schools will need an update on the project.

Thank you for your continued work on behalf of the school.

Karen

Karen Kuse
Consultant
River Valley Charter School
Montessori Made Public
2 Perry Way
Newburyport, MA 01950
P (978) 465-0065 | F (978) 465-0119

Coversheet

Approve Policy

Section:	V. Policy
Item:	A. Approve Policy
Purpose:	Vote
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	River Valley Charter School proposed Animal Policy (1) (1).pdf New attendance policy 2026.pdf

RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL
montessori made public

Classic Montessori learning includes Botany, Zoology, and the study of landforms. Students study realistic animal models, and, sometimes, care for and enjoy the company of living animals. Practical life skills in the elementary years may, on occasion, include cooking, care of the environment, care of animals, and goings-out. As a public Montessori school, it is important to maintain the principles of Montessori learning while simultaneously providing an environment that protects the safety and well being of individuals. When striving to achieve this balance, the presence of animals is a significant consideration.

The presence of animals may introduce unintended consequences to the school. Air quality may be negatively affected, carpeting may retain allergens and can be difficult to clean thoroughly, urine and fecal contamination carry odor and disease, and animals may carry dander, mites, and/or microorganisms of concern. Associated items, such as bedding and food source, can be allergens. Physical injuries such as scratches and bites can occur and potentially become infected. Each of these concerns need to be addressed, and remediated to reduce negative effects on students and staff. This must occur in a manner that is safe and fair, to both animals and humans.

This policy is meant to clarify expectations and set forth procedures regarding animals in school and on school property.

Definitions

Class pet- an animal owned by RVCS, with a specific teacher designated to be responsible for its health and well-being. Responsibility may be transferred to another teacher when/if teacher placements change. It is the designated teacher's responsibility to ensure that appropriate veterinary practices are maintained, that the animal has appropriate and clean shelter, and fresh food and water at all times. The designated teacher may use classroom funds for this purpose. Students may help with these tasks if the following criteria are met- the student has no known health contraindications AND parental permission has been obtained. As class pets belong to the classroom, the animal may go home with the designated teacher or students' families over weekends and vacation periods, but shall not reside exclusively with a teacher.

Personal pet- owned by an individual person who retains rights and access to the animal regardless of their employment at RVCS. Personal pets are prohibited from the building and grounds.

Emotional Support animal- a personal pet that is kept for the purpose of emotional support. It is not the practice of RVCS to have emotional support animals at school.

Service animal- Service animals are specially trained to do work or perform tasks for individuals with disabilities. In accordance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA)[1], service animals will be

[1] Americans with Disabilities Act https://www.ada.gov/resources/service-animals-2010-requirements/

RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL
montessori made public

allowed in school and on school grounds, within certain parameters, as defined by the ADA. The owner must be able to independently care for their pet in an ethical manner. The service provided by the animal must be directly related to the person's disability. The animal may only be handled by the owner, and must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless the individual's disability prevents using these devices or these devices interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of tasks. In that case, the individual must maintain control and proximity of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls. The owner must abide by cleaning protocols set forth by the School.

Placement of animals in the building
To ensure that RVCS retains some spaces which are free from animals and associated concerns, only fifty percent of the classrooms in a given level may have classroom pets at any time (Kinderhaus, E1, and E2). Because students move from classroom to classroom in Middle School, classroom pets are not appropriate for the Middle School. Similarly, classroom pets are not appropriate for Specialist and Special Education spaces. Classroom pets that have been approved for a specific classroom shall remain in the classroom (unless they are being transported into or out of the building).

The health and safety of our students is our priority. RVCS will make every attempt to place students with known allergies in classrooms that do not have animals. If student enrollment or students' health status changes mid-year, or RVCS becomes aware of new and pertinent information, classroom pets may need to be re-homed. Classroom pets and personal pets are not permitted on the playground or grass areas.

Educational Programs and Animal Husbandry
Animal programs with a short term duration may be undertaken by a classroom if the animals involved are considered to be low risk to the population of students in that given time period. Past examples of such programs have included presentations by animal rehabilitation programs, turtle or trout fostering in preparation for release, or hatching chicks. Please review the class roster and proposed program with school nursing prior to beginning these programs.

Therapy Animals
Although we recognize the significant emotional support that animals can provide, given the number of students in the building with allergies and the presence of carpeting throughout the majority of the school, therapy animals are not permitted. Should extenuating circumstances arise, an exemption may be sought.

Procedure
Requests for animals in school shall be provided in writing to the Health Office and Administration who, in conjunction, will make a decision regarding each request within 30 school days. No animals shall enter the building without stated permission.

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Exemptions
The School Physician has participated in the development of this policy. An individual seeking an exemption to any of the above shall contact the Health Office and School Director.

Policy drafted 3/19/2026, HWC review 5/8/2026, RVCS Board approval XXXX

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RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is the expectation of River Valley Charter School (RVCS) that families and students will make every reasonable effort to attend a full day of school when school is in session. The continuity of day-to-day instruction is a critical dynamic to the overall success of each student. Regular attendance helps children feel connected to their classroom community and supports progression in their learning. Because Montessori lessons build upon one another and rely on consistent participation, we encourage families to prioritize daily attendance. Research supports the connection between regular attendance and a student's personal, social, and emotional wellness and academic success. Massachusetts General Laws chapter 76 sets out many aspects of compulsory attendance, including the responsibilities of families and school committees.

Families must:

- ensure that a child in their care attends school. G.L. c. 76, §2.
- call the school at a designated number at a designated time as established by the school committee to report a child's absence and reason for it. G.L. c. 76, §§1A, 1B.

Schools must:

- Record daily student attendance for all students
- Each school committee shall provide for and enforce the school attendance of all enrolled students children in accordance with state law. G.L. c. 76, §1.

Therefore, the administration has created the following attendance policy and the protocols included therein, to foster family and school alignment regarding student attendance.

Absence Notification/Verification Procedure

When a child is absent for any reason, families shall utilize our web-based attendance tool, PickUp Patrol, to communicate this information. If the school has not received notification of an absence through PickUp Patrol, the school shall notify the student's contacts, as listed in the directory, of the child's absence. PickUp Patrol is monitored by the front office. Please note that PickUp Patrol is not a means of communication with your child(ren)'s teachers or the Health Office. Do not leave information in PickUp Patrol that you wish others to receive, for example, confidential medical information, requests for homework, or messages for classroom teachers. Although a notification may have occurred, and this is required, family notification alone does not constitute an excused absence.



Following an absence, it is the responsibility of the student to meet with their teacher to understand what work and lessons were missed and the required make-up work. Participation in after-school or evening events will not be allowed for students absent on the day of the event.

Tardiness

Students begin their day as a class, where the daily schedule is discussed, expectations are set, and work cycle commences. Arriving late to school can negatively impact a student's day. Students arriving after the start of school (8:25) are considered tardy and need to sign in at the school office with an adult. Tardiness is noted in our attendance system and is reported to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Although we realize that emergencies occur on occasion, students are expected to arrive at school on time. If a family is experiencing difficulty getting a student to school on time, please contact the director's office or school counselors for assistance in managing timely arrival.

- If a student is tardy ten (10) times before December 31st families will receive a notification;
- If a student has eighteen (18) late arrivals over the course of the school year, a notification will be issued to families reminding them of the school's attendance policy. A member of administration will contact the family to schedule a meeting to develop a proactive arrival plan.

Absence and associated definitions

A student may be absent for a number of different reasons. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) provides the following definitions and distinctions:

- Absence- a student must be at school, at a school related activity, or receiving academic instruction for at least half of the school day to be counted as present. A student who is not present (as defined above) is considered absent from school.
- Chronically absent- Students who miss at least 10% of days enrolled (e.g., 18 days absent when enrolled for 180 school days) are considered chronically absent.
- Habitually truant- Under state law, a school-aged child who is not excused from attendance and who "willfully" fails to attend school for more than 8 school days in a quarter is considered habitually truant.

Medical Absence and Student Illness

River Valley Charter School requires families to notify the school when students have communicable illnesses. This helps us to monitor health trends and cleaning practices at school. Children who are ill should stay home while ill, in accordance with the school's health guidance. An absence will only be considered as medically excused when a doctor's note is provided.



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Please contact the school Health Office in the following situations:

- A new medical diagnosis or change in health or emotional status
- A newly prescribed medication (please do not initiate medication trials on school days)
- Any change(s) in current medication
- A serious injury, illness, or hospitalization
- An injury that will require ambulatory assistance (crutches, wheelchair, elevator use, cast, or sling)
- Any contagious illness
- Extended period of absence for any medical reason

If you believe your child will have an extended medical absence, please contact the Health Office and School Director to discuss the circumstances and receive support.

Dismissals

Please try to schedule appointments after school hours. In the event that you have to dismiss your child early, please use PickUp Patrol to notify the school of your intention to do so.

Religious Observations

Students may be granted excused absences when the school's schedule conflicts with their religious holidays. A student should not suffer adverse or prejudicial consequences from an excused absence, should be allowed a reasonable opportunity to make up school work missed during the absence, and will not be subject to scholastic or attendance penalties from absences incurred due to religious observances. A sincere attempt will be made to avoid field trips, assessments, and special school events on religious holidays.

Family Vacations

Please do not schedule vacations that occur during regularly scheduled school time. The school calendar is published in advance of the school year to help parents plan family trips so that they coincide with school vacations. The school follows the requirements outlined in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76 Sections 1–21, which state that parents or families are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly. Under this law, individuals who knowingly encourage or cause a student to be absent from school may face legal action. With this in mind, we reaffirm the position that parents are responsible for their children to attend school every day that classes are in session. Absences due to family vacation are unexcused. RVCS teachers are not required to provide advance and/or make-up work when the student is absent from school due to vacation, excessive absenteeism, or late arrivals. Students who are absent at the time when state or national standardized tests are administered will be allowed to make up missed tests to the extent that scheduled make-up time is available and consistent with state law and regulations.



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Student Absence Remediation Program

DESE requires all public schools to have a written policy regarding attendance and attendance improvement. If a student is found to be frequently absent or habitually tardy, the following process will be utilized:

When a student:

- has five absences (excused or unexcused) by December 31st, a notification will be issued to families
- has ten (10) absences (excused or unexcused) over the course of the school year, a notification will be issued to families reminding them of the school's attendance policy. A member of administration will contact them to schedule a meeting to develop a proactive attendance plan.

If absences total eighteen (18) days, the student will be considered chronically absent. School officials may consider taking any or all of the following actions:

- Scheduling and holding an attendance meeting with the parents, administrator and School Resource Officer;
- Filing a CRA (Child Requiring Assistance) or criminal complaint with the juvenile court, which will result in a hearing held with the juvenile court.
- Retention when irregular attendance impacts student learning.

Our goal is to partner with families to support consistent attendance so that each child can fully participate in the rich learning experiences and relationships that are central to a Montessori education.

2 Perry Way, Newburyport, MA 01950
Phone 978-465-0065 Fax 978-465-0119
rvcs@rivervalleycharter.org

Coversheet

Search Questions Overview

Section:	VI. Interim Executive Director Search
Item:	A. Search Questions Overview
Purpose:	Discuss
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	IMG_5784.jpeg Executive Director Hiring Stakeholder Input Gathering.pdf

June 11th, 2026

Dear RVCS Board of Trustees,

We want to make it known that we would like Joey Gustafson to be our interim director for the 2026-2027 school year. Her confidence, expertise and integrity have instilled a sense of peace and a confidence in our school becoming a sound, joyful and productive space again for staff, families and students alike.

Thank you,

Nell Sheridan
Nell Sheridan

Morgan Harris
Morgan Harris

Cynthia Chapman
Cynthia Chapman.

Brooke Guilbault
Brooke Guilbault

Executive Director Hiring: Stakeholder Input Gathering

Purpose: Gather input from key stakeholders to inform the ideal candidate profile for the next executive director by sourcing their input via surveys and focus groups around the following primary categories:

- Leadership Priorities: What work should the executive director focus on?
- Leadership Competencies: What skills and experiences are most important?
- Leadership Behaviors: How should the leader communicate, engage stakeholders, and build trust?
- Success Indicators: What outcomes should be evident after one year?

Surveys: Disseminate student, teacher, and family surveys on Tuesday 6/16 and have them due Monday 6/22. ● For students, work with Joey to identify a structured time in school to have students complete the survey all at the same time during a class together. (targeting at least grades 3-8) ● For staff and families: ○ Send survey 6/16 ○ Send reminder 6/18 ○ Send reminder morning of 6/22	**Focus Groups:** Host 3-5 optional focus groups for staff and families to get together and elaborate on their input ● Varying times to match different schedules between 6/16-6/26 ● Sign-up sheets to limit focus groups to 10 people max ● Open more time slots as needed based on interest

Executive Director Hiring: Stakeholder Input Gathering

Stakeholder Group 1: Staff

Survey Questions	Focus Group Questions
Section 1: Current Experience • I understand the school's current priorities. • I know what is expected of me in my role. • I have the tools and resources I need to be successful. • I have clarity about who makes key decisions in the organization. • Communication from school leadership is timely and transparent. • I feel supported in my work. • The school has effective systems for addressing challenges when they arise. (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree) **Section 2: Leadership Priorities:** Please select the TOP THREE areas where leadership attention is most needed next year. • Organizational stability • Clear communication • Instructional leadership • Building trust among stakeholders • Montessori implementation • Staff morale and culture • Student support systems	• What are the greatest strengths in the school should the next leader build upon rather than change? • What are the biggest challenges currently facing staff? • What is one decision or challenge from the past year that illustrates the kind of leadership River Valley needs next? • What leadership behaviors would help staff feel more supported? • Where do staff need more clarity, consistency, or direction? • What systems or structures are most in need of improvement? • What experiences should the Executive Director bring to the role? • What personal qualities would help a leader be successful at River Valley? • What leadership behaviors would build trust quickly? • If the next leader could only accomplish three things during the next year, what should they be? • What would success look like one year from now? • If we hired the right person, what would be noticeably different one year from now?

Executive Director Hiring: Stakeholder Input Gathering

• Family engagement • Clarifying roles and responsibilities • Operational systems • Improving student achievement • Enrollment and retention • Strategic planning • Financial sustainability **Section 3: Leadership Competencies:** How important is it that the Executive Director has experience with: • Leading organizational change • Building trust during times of uncertainty • Coaching and developing staff • School improvement and instructional leadership • Montessori education • Public charter schools • Board governance and board relations • Family and community engagement • Operations and organizational systems • Experience with budget management and financial stewardship (Response Scale: Not Important → Extremely Important) **Section 4: Open Response** • What are the most important challenges facing River Valley today?	

Executive Director Hiring: Stakeholder Input Gathering

• What should be the Executive Director's highest priorities during the first six months? • What leadership qualities will be most important for success in this role? • One year from now, what would tell you that the Executive Director has been successful? • What is one thing that makes River Valley special that the next leader must protect?	

Stakeholder Group 2: Families and Caregivers

Survey Questions	Focus Group Questions
Note: We already have data on family experience from the caregiver survey to draw upon **Section 1: Leadership Behaviors and Competencies:** How important is it that the Executive Director: • Communicates regularly with families. • Is visible and accessible to families. • Builds trust across the community. • Provides stability during times of change. • Deeply understands Montessori education. • Has a strong vision for academic and instructional excellence. • Prioritizes student safety and well-being. • Improves academic outcomes. • Listens to family feedback. • Makes decisions transparently. (Rate importance 1-5)	• What do you value most about River Valley? • What do families most need from the next school leader? • What leadership practices have helped families feel informed and connected? • What leadership practices create frustration or confusion? • What qualities or behaviors would help a leader earn your trust? • If the leader could only accomplish three things during the next year, what should they be? • What should the board prioritize when selecting an Executive Director? • What outcomes would make you feel optimistic about the school's future?

Executive Director Hiring: Stakeholder Input Gathering

Section 2: Leadership Priorities: Choose the top three priorities you think the Executive Director should focus on in the next year: ● Strong communication ● Stability and consistency ● Academic excellence ● Montessori fidelity ● Positive school culture ● Student support well-being ● Community trust and family partnership ● Staff retention ● Strategic planning ● Operational effectiveness ● Financial sustainability **Section 3: Open Response** ● What leadership qualities are most important in the next Executive Director? ● What should the Executive Director prioritize during their first year? ● What would help you have confidence in the school's leadership? ● What would help you trust the school's leadership more? ● What would success look like one year from now? ● What is one thing that makes River Valley special that the next leader must protect?	

Executive Director Hiring: Stakeholder Input Gathering

Stakeholder Group 3: Students

Survey Questions
Section 1: Student Experience (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree) • I feel safe at school. • Adults at school care about me. • I know who to go to if I need help. • Students are treated fairly at this school. • This school has an overall positive mood. • Adults in this school listen to student ideas. • My teachers help me learn. • My teachers have high expectations of me. • Students in this school are respectful of one another. • I feel like I belong at this school. • I understand what is expected of me at school. • I am proud to be a student at River Valley. **Section 2: Open Response** • What is your favorite thing about River Valley? • What is one thing you would like adults at school to improve? • If you could give advice to the next school leader, what would you want them to know?

Coversheet

Update

Section: VII. Finance Committee
Item: A. Update
Purpose: Discuss
Submitted by:
Related Material: May_Financials.xlsx

Notice

The following file is attached to this PDF. You will need to open this packet in an application that supports attachments to pdf files, e.g. Adobe Reader:

May_Financials.xlsx

Coversheet

Vote to Approve FY 26-27 Budget

Section: VII. Finance Committee
Item: C. Vote to Approve FY 26-27 Budget
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: FY27_Budget_V5.xlsx

Notice

The following file is attached to this PDF. You will need to open this packet in an application that supports attachments to pdf files, e.g. Adobe Reader:

FY27_Budget_V5.xlsx

Coversheet

Board Leadership: Vote for Slate of Officers for FY '26

Section: VIII. Committee on Trustees
Item: A. Board Leadership: Vote for Slate of Officers for FY '26
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: Leadership Slate Voting Procedures (2).pdf

Executive Committee Leadership Slate Voting Procedures

Consulted with Marc Terry and Robert Carpenter along with bylaws.

Voting will be as follows: Chair, V. Chair, Treasurer, Secretary

1. "I move that XYZ candidate be elected Chair of the River Valley Charter School Board of Trustees for the 2026-2027 term."
2. Second
3. Discussion
4. Vote

Chair: Tanya, Derek, Meg
Incumbent goes first.
If majority is met,voting is over.
If not, on to the next candidate.
There will be no ties.
The candidate with the least votes will be eliminated from the slate.
Voting will continue until a candidate is chosen.

Vice Chair: Jonathan, Derek, Meg

Incumbent goes first.
If majority is met,voting is over.
If not, on to the next candidate.
There will be no ties.
The candidate with the least votes will be eliminated from the slate.
Voting will continue until a candidate is chosen.

Treasurer: Gary

Secretary: Achala

Trustee Nomination Process:

Each candidate will be a separate vote.

1. "On behalf of the Committee on Trustees, I move that the Board appoint XYZ candidate to serve as a Trustee of River Valley Charter School for a three-year term, subject to approval by the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education."
2. Second
3. Discussion
4. Vote

Candidates:

1. Beth Friedman (non-parent, education leader)
2. Alex Tsonas (non-parent, education leader, sped)
3. Tyler Chaisson (non-parent, construction, finance, alumni)
4. Alison Salerno (accountability committee, curriculum development, financial services)
5. Meredith Makin (development committee, lawyer)
6. Farrell Boghos-Maryniak (HR, compliance, operations)
7. Daniel Candelario (finance, analysis)
8. Jon Ellen (faculty rep)

Coversheet

DESE Complaint

Section: X. Exectuive Committee
Item: A. DESE Complaint
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: 6.9.26 PRS 16227 River Valley Charter NFA Final.pdf

MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Pedro Martinez | Commissioner

June 9, 2026

Jared Hubbard
49 Boardman Street
Newburyport, MA 01950

PRS Intake #16227
No Further Action Letter

Dear Jared Hubbard,

On June 2, 2026, you filed a complaint with the Problem Resolution System Office ("PRS") of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (the "Department") related to the River Valley Charter School (the "Charter School"). Briefly, you alleged the following:

- On April 13, 2026, you submitted a complaint to the Charter School's Board of Trustees (the "Board") "regarding the Board's lack of oversight regarding significant changes to the [Charter Schools'] curriculum." Specifically, on January 13, 2026, the Executive Director notified parents that "[d]ue to temporary staffing change…the [Place-Based Education ("PBE")] program will be on hiatus for now." On February 24, 2026, the Executive Director notified the parents that "After careful consideration, we have decided to pause PBE for the remainder of the school year."
- You reported that the Board has not responded to your complaint within the required timeframe for resolution of complaints made pursuant to 603 CMR 1.09(1) and you have requested the Department review the Charter School's approach to making a "significant change to the school's curriculum."

The Department has carefully reviewed your concerns. However, the alleged changes in the PBE program do not affect the Charter School's ability to carry out its mission to "provide a rigorous academic program based on the Montessori philosophy and rooted in the history, culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley" and provide students with the key design elements of the charter, which include "educational program based on the Montessori philosophy; elements of the curriculum rooted in the history, culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley; and critical thinking and problem solving." As you have not alleged that the Charter School has failed to implement a material term of its charter, you have not alleged a violation of M.G.L. c. 71 §89(w) or its implementing regulations under 603 CMR 1.00 that the Department has the authority to investigate.

The Department appreciates your outreach on behalf of your student and all other students at the Charter School. To address your concerns, you may wish to consider contacting the Charter School Office at charterschools@mass.gov.

As of the date of this letter, this complaint is closed, and the Department will not take further action on this complaint.

Recipients:

Karen Kuse, Executive Director, River Valley Charter School
Charter School Office, DESE

Coversheet

Year in Review

Section: XI. Accountability
Item: A. Year in Review
Purpose: Discuss
Submitted by:
Related Material: AC_2025-26.pdf

RVCS Accountability Committee
2025–2026 School Year

The work of the RVCS Accountability Committee this year centered on strengthening a culture of thoughtful reflection, continuous improvement, and mission alignment. Accountability at RVCS is more than a process of measuring outcomes or fulfilling state requirements; it is a commitment to understanding the full experience of our students, supporting strong educational practices, and ensuring that the school continues to thrive while remaining grounded in its Montessori philosophy and charter mission.

A central theme throughout the year was developing a broader understanding of accountability. We endeavored to exemplify strong governance through looking beyond individual data points and asking deeper questions about the systems, practices, and experiences that shape our school community. Are students receiving consistent opportunities to thrive? Are our systems supporting teachers and learners effectively? Are our decisions aligned with the values and long-term vision of RVCS?

Highlights

During the 2025–2026 school year, the Accountability Committee focused on several important areas that strengthened oversight, reflection, and improvement at RVCS:

Committee Purpose and Governance
-The committee began the year by revisiting its role and responsibilities within the larger governance structure of RVCS. Discussions focused on how the committee could best support the Board through thoughtful review of academic progress, organizational health, charter commitments, and mission alignment. This foundation reinforced the importance of accountability as an ongoing responsibility rather than a periodic review process.

Student Growth, Academic Outcomes, and Equity of Experience
-Review of MCAS results, internal assessments, student screeners, and disaggregated data when appropriate provided opportunities to better understand both areas of strength and opportunities for growth. Discussions focused on looking beyond school-wide outcomes to identify patterns over time, understand the experiences of different groups of students, and ensure all learners have access to the support they need to thrive. The committee recognized the importance of reviewing disaggregated data thoughtfully, balancing the need for deeper understanding with care and respect for student privacy.

Assessment Practices and Data-Informed Decision Making
-The committee explored how RVCS collects, interprets, and acts upon student data. Emphasis was placed on consistent assessment practices, historical comparisons, and creating clearer connections between data, classroom instruction, student interventions, and follow-up. The goal of data review is to ensure that information leads to reflection, action, and improved student outcomes.

Accountability Plan Implementation and Progress Monitoring
-As RVCS entered the first year of its 2024–2029 Accountability Plan, the committee discussed the importance of creating systems to monitor progress throughout the charter cycle. Regular placement on the monthly agenda allowed for mindful and timely updates.

Montessori Fidelity Audit
-The Essential Elements Review created an opportunity to reflect on how RVCS continues to live its Montessori mission. The process highlighted many strengths of the school community,

including student engagement and family partnerships, while identifying opportunities to increase consistency, collaboration, communication, and alignment across classrooms and programs.

Caregiver Feedback
-The caregiver survey provided an important opportunity to listen to the RVCS community. Feedback demonstrated strong support for the school while also identifying areas where improved communication, transparency, and consistency could strengthen the experience for students and families. The committee recognized that caregiver perspectives are an essential part of understanding how the school's mission is experienced in practice.

Institutional Memory and Sustainable Systems
-A recurring theme was the importance of preserving knowledge and context as RVCS continues to mature. Schools, like all organizations, are vulnerable to "organizational amnesia", losing the reasoning, lessons, and experiences behind previous decisions as time passes and individuals transition out of the committee. Strengthening documentation, tracking decisions, and understanding the history behind past choices helps ensure future Accountability Committee members can build upon prior learning and minimize repeating mistakes.

Reflection
This year reinforced that meaningful accountability requires creating a clear connection between reflection and action. Data, surveys, audits, and conversations are valuable because they help RVCS better understand where the school is succeeding, where opportunities exist, and what systems are needed to support continued growth.

Building sustainable systems remains essential to the long-term strength of RVCS. Clear processes for collecting data, monitoring progress, evaluating interventions, and communicating outcomes create shared understanding across leadership, staff, families, and the Board. These systems help ensure accountability becomes embedded in the culture of the school rather than dependent on any single person, initiative, or moment in time.

Equally important is protecting the qualities that make RVCS unique. Maintaining an authentic Montessori environment requires continued reflection, investment, and collaboration. As the school matures, deliberations in the Accountability Committee should always be grounded in and connected to the values and educational philosophy at the heart of RVCS.

Looking ahead, the Accountability Committee will continue supporting RVCS by helping transform information into insight and insight into meaningful action. Continued focus will include monitoring progress toward the Accountability Plan, strengthening systems for long-term improvement, preserving institutional knowledge, and supporting alignment between daily practices and the mission of the school.