# River Valley Charter School

## Board Meeting

Published on November 16, 2026 at 1:56 PM EST

**Date and Time**

Wednesday November 18, 2026 at 5:45 PM EST

**Location**

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.

**Agenda**

| | | Purpose | Presenter | Time |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **I.** | **Opening Items** | | | **5:45 PM** |
| **A.** | Record Attendance | | Meredith Makin | 1 m |

| | | Purpose | Presenter | Time |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **B.** | Call the Meeting to Order | | Tanya Murdy | |
| **C.** | Review Trustee Code of Conduct | | Tanya Murdy | 1 m |

The Board will review the norms developed together at the Alnoba retreat and adopted on September 23. These norms define who we want to be as a Board, the standard we set for ourselves, and what every trustee can expect from one another.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **D.** | Public Comment | Discuss | Tanya Murdy | 6 m |

The Board welcomes public comment on matters within its governance authority. Each speaker may speak for up to two minutes. To request a spot on the speaker list, please email bot@rivervalleycharter.org.

The Board will not respond to or deliberate on public comments during the meeting. Comments about school operations, individual personnel or students, or other matters outside the Board's authority may be referred to the Executive Director or another appropriate channel.

At River Valley, Montessori's practice of grace and courtesy guides how we work through disagreements. We encourage respectful, face-to-face conversation with the people involved when appropriate. We aim to listen to understand, give each person a chance to speak, and work together toward a constructive next step.

## II. Approve Previous Board Minutes — 5:53 PM

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A.** | Approve Minutes | Approve Minutes | Tanya Murdy | 1 m |

Approve minutes for Board Meeting on October 28, 2026

## III. Director's Update — 5:54 PM

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A.** | Director's Report | Discuss | Joey Gustafson | 20 m |

- Director's Report
- Montessori Minute--Sarah Bove
- RVCS Dashboard

| | | Purpose | Presenter | Time |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **The Director's Report is Attached** | | | |
| **B.** | Dashboard | FYI | Joey Gustafson | |

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1IGXJOaIzXkMg7O_EyDBtzKJkEimjrALz5Z-fYkZxFqk/edit?gid=1123592319#gid=1123592319

## IV. Board Business — 6:14 PM

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A.** | Habits of Learning: 8 C's | FYI | Tanya Murdy | 5 m |

Habits of learning: 8 C's
COL's (celebration of learnings; 8th grade cap stone project) incorporate 3-4 habits of learning. As board members, we will be panelist at these celebrations. Please familiarize yourselves with these:

- Community
- Communication
- Creativity
- Collaboration
- Critical Thinking
- Curiosity
- Compassion
- Citizenship

## V. Finance Committee — 6:19 PM

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A.** | Update | FYI | Gary LeFave | 5 m |

- Review of October Financials

## VI. Development Committee — 6:24 PM

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A.** | Update | FYI | Farrell Boghos | 5 m |

Development Update

- Turkey Trot

| | | Purpose | Presenter | Time |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **VII.** | **Accountability** | | | **6:29 PM** |
| | Update | | | |
| **A.** | Accountability Update | Discuss | Alison Salerno | 5 m |
| | Update | | | |
| **VIII.** | **Committee on Trustees** | | | **6:34 PM** |
| **A.** | COT Updates | FYI | Jonathan Nickerson | 5 m |

- Update on process deliverables
- Staff Holiday Party, 12/10
- Development Efforts: 100% board participation

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **IX.** | **Exectuive Committee** | | | **6:39 PM** |
| **A.** | Update | FYI | Tanya Murdy | 5 m |

- Search committee update
- Meetings

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X.** | **Closing Items** | | | **6:44 PM** |
| **A.** | Gratitude | FYI | Tanya Murdy | 5 m |
| **B.** | Board Meeting Survey | FYI | Tanya Murdy | 1 m |
| | Please refer to your dashboard for the survey link. | | | |
| | Board Survey | | | |
| **C.** | Adjourn Meeting | Vote | Tanya Murdy | |

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

# Coversheet

## Review Trustee Code of Conduct

**Section:** I. Opening Items
**Item:** C. Review Trustee Code of Conduct
**Purpose:** FYI
**Submitted by:**
**Related Material:** RVCS_Board_of_Trustees_Norms_Alnoba FINAL.pdf

# River Valley Charter School
# Board of Trustees Norms

**Distilled from the Alnoba Board Retreat | September 2026**

*These norms describe how trustees agree to work with one another. They apply equally to every trustee and focus on conduct and board culture; procedural requirements are maintained separately in bylaws, policies, and operating protocols.*

1. **Treat others with respect and dignity.** Practice kindness, grace, and courtesy, especially when conversations are difficult.
2. **Assume good faith and remain accountable for impact.** Seek clarification before drawing conclusions, while taking responsibility for how words and actions affect others.
3. **Listen with openness and curiosity.** Consider different perspectives, experiences, and ideas before forming judgments or making decisions.
4. **Challenge ideas, not people.** Keep disagreement focused on facts, issues, and governance considerations rather than motives, personalities, or personal criticism.
5. **Address concerns directly and constructively.** Raise issues with the appropriate person or within the appropriate Board setting; avoid gossip, side conversations, and conduct that undermines colleagues.
6. **Communicate clearly, respectfully, and in a timely manner.** Check for shared understanding, provide necessary context, and avoid unnecessary escalation.
7. **Exercise sound judgment with information.** Share what trustees need for informed governance while protecting confidential, sensitive, or unnecessary details.
8. **Respect collective decision making.** Participate candidly in deliberation and, once the Board acts, support the integrity of the decision and the Board's public credibility.
9. **Honor governance roles and boundaries.** Distinguish the authority of the Board as a whole from the role of an individual trustee and remain focused on governance rather than school operations.
10. **Share responsibility for a healthy Board culture.** Come prepared, follow through on commitments, give and receive respectful feedback, and reflect on whether conduct aligns with these norms and the Board's purpose.

Board adopted: __09/23/26_____

# 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 October 28, 2026

APPROVED

# River Valley Charter School

# Minutes

## Board Meeting

**Date and Time**
Wednesday October 28, 2026 at 12:00 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.

**Trustees Present**
B. Friedman (remote), C. Getz (remote), D. Candelario (remote), F. Boghos (remote), G. LeFave (remote), J. Ellen (remote), J. Nickerson (remote), M. Connerton (remote), M. Makin (remote), T. Chaisson (remote), T. Murdy (remote)

**Trustees Absent**
A. Salerno, A. Tsonas, D. Mitchell

**Guests Present**
cdalfonso@danieldennis.com (remote), vmarcal@danieldennis.com (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 Oct 28, 2026 at 12:02 PM.

### C. Public comment

Public reminded they can submit written public comment to the Board if timing is an issue.

Alison Fields: Expressed interest in a listening session with teachers and Board. Also expressed concern about what she heard at recent board meetings with regard to search firm being used and structure of committee. Does not feel like the teacher's are being heard by the Board and are being dismissed. Concern with how Board members speak to other Board members based on feedback from other teachers who attended prior meetings. Suggestion to Board to be open to all ideas and not be dismissive or defensive.

Lauren Dufner - not present

### D. Approve Minutes

T. Murdy made a motion to approve the minutes from July 24, 2026 Special Board Meeting Special Board Meeting on 07-24-26.
J. Nickerson seconded the motion.
D. Candelario: Who submitted October minutes- Murdy or Makin as both names are listed?

J. Nickerson: Will address.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| T. Murdy | Aye |
| D. Candelario | Aye |
| T. Chaisson | Aye |
| B. Friedman | Abstain |
| M. Makin | Aye |
| J. Ellen | Aye |
| A. Salerno | Absent |
| F. Boghos | Aye |
| C. Getz | Abstain |
| A. Tsonas | Absent |

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| G. LeFave | Aye |
| D. Mitchell | Absent |
| M. Connerton | Aye |
| J. Nickerson | Aye |

## E. Approve Minutes

T. Murdy made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 9.23.26 Board Meeting on 09-23-26.
J. Nickerson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| B. Friedman | Aye |
| F. Boghos | Aye |
| D. Mitchell | Absent |
| J. Ellen | Aye |
| M. Connerton | Aye |
| J. Nickerson | Aye |
| D. Candelario | Aye |
| G. LeFave | Aye |
| A. Salerno | Absent |
| C. Getz | Abstain |
| T. Murdy | Aye |
| M. Makin | Aye |
| A. Tsonas | Absent |
| T. Chaisson | Aye |

## F. Approve Minutes

T. Murdy made a motion to approve the minutes from October 15 Board Meeting on 10-15-26.
J. Nickerson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| B. Friedman | Aye |
| F. Boghos | Aye |
| M. Makin | Aye |
| C. Getz | Aye |
| D. Mitchell | Absent |
| J. Ellen | Aye |
| T. Murdy | Aye |
| T. Chaisson | Aye |
| G. LeFave | Aye |
| A. Tsonas | Absent |
| M. Connerton | Aye |

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| A. Salerno | Absent |
| J. Nickerson | Aye |
| D. Candelario | Aye |

## II. Finance & Facilities

### A. Review & Approve the FY 2026 Audit Financial Statements

Colleen D'Alfonso and Val Marcal from Daniel Dennis & Co., along with Treasurer Gary LeFave, provided an overview of the FY2026 audited financial statements.

The auditors reported an **unmodified opinion**, with **no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies identified and no material issues of noncompliance**.

The financial health ratios used by DESE were reviewed. Overall, the school was assessed as low risk, with the exception of the **Change in Net Position Percentage**, which was identified as moderate risk but remained below the state average. The auditors expressed no concerns with the ratios and characterized FY2026 as a strong financial year.

The FY2026 **debt service covenant ratio was not met**. The financial statements include both the school and the Foundation, with the Foundation as borrower and the school as guarantor. Significant investments in the grounds project and staffing transition costs contributed to the FY2026 result. A covenant waiver has been requested from the financial institution and is pending, with no issues anticipated.

Additional items discussed included:

- Continued adherence to existing governance and compliance practices.
- Depreciation associated with the Grounds Project will be reflected in FY2027.
- GASB Statement 105 changes the reporting of subsequent events.
- The audit is due to DESE on October 30, 2026, with the End-of-Year Report due November 13, 2026. Federal and state tax returns are due November 16, 2026, with an automatic six-month extension expected.

G. LeFave made a motion to Motion to vote to approve the audited financial statements.
J. Nickerson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| F. Boghos | Aye |
| J. Ellen | Aye |
| D. Candelario | Aye |
| C. Getz | Aye |
| G. LeFave | Aye |

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| A. Salerno | Absent |
| T. Chaisson | Aye |
| D. Mitchell | Absent |
| M. Makin | Aye |
| M. Connerton | Aye |
| J. Nickerson | Aye |
| B. Friedman | Aye |
| T. Murdy | Aye |
| A. Tsonas | Absent |

## III. Executive Search Committee

### A. Executive Director Search Committee—Scope and Decision-Making Authority (Discussion and Vote)

T. Murdy made a motion to Vote to authorize the committee to coordinate the search with Kristin Levine, conduct preliminary screening and interviews, and select finalists to recommend to the full Board, within the Board-approved scope and budget. Final hiring, compensation, and employment contract approval remain with the full Board.
D. Candelario seconded the motion.
B. Friedman: Seeking clarification that not deciding the group today? T. Murdy: Confirmed.

J. Ellen - Seeking to clarify what things the committee will have decision power on versus full board.

T. Murdy - Levine will utilize survey data to create ideal candidate profile for job description. The committee will be involved in preliminary interviews with the vetted candidates to get information to Board in most effective manner. All major decisions remain with full Board.

M. Connerton - When determining committee?

T. Murdy - Need to determine scheduling for purposes of commitments and availability, should know by end of the week.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| D. Candelario | Aye |
| F. Boghos | Aye |
| C. Getz | Aye |
| B. Friedman | Aye |
| G. LeFave | Aye |
| J. Ellen | Aye |
| J. Nickerson | Aye |

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| D. Mitchell | Absent |
| A. Salerno | Absent |
| T. Chaisson | Aye |
| T. Murdy | Aye |
| M. Connerton | Aye |
| A. Tsonas | Absent |
| M. Makin | Aye |

## IV. Other Business

### A. DESE Determination—Complaint No. 16603: Board Record

Complaint filed; for transparency put on board agenda for audit purposes and trustee institutional knowledge; documentation.

No further action required

## 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 12:33 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
T. Murdy

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**Documents used during the meeting**

- River Valley -Revised Draft - FY26.pdf
- 3701 Adjusting Journal Entries Report - Published.xlsx
- 3703 Foundation Journal Entries Report - Published.xlsx
- 16603 River Valley Charter PS LOC-CF Final 10.21.26 .pdf

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# Coversheet

## Director's Report

**Section:** III. Director's Update
**Item:** A. Director's Report
**Purpose:** Discuss
**Submitted by:**
**Related Material:** November 2026 IED Report.pptx

RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL

JOEY GUSTAFSON

INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

NOVEMBER 18, 2026




# OCTOBER 30, A GREAT LEARNING & PRESENTATION DAY:

- Vertebrate/Invertebrate, K
- Mystery History, E1
- Dead and Famous, E2

*Well attended, exciting, fun, & impressive!*

# SO MANY GREAT MOMENTS!








# “RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS GET INTO HISTORY”

--NOV. 2 NEWS ARTICLE, NEWBURYPORT DAILY NEWS





# FAMILY FALL HARVEST EVENT

FAMILY ALLIANCE EVENT






# ADMINISTRATIVE

- Hiring:  Front Desk (complete), IA, and Tier 2 Math/Literacy Interventionalist
- Check’ins with new staff & new non-Kinder families (with supportive programming)
- Ongoing financial work (audit)
- Identification of policy updates needed
- Focus on restoring instructional time (drop off improvements, tardiness, & absenteeism)
- Preparing for upcoming student recruitment season
- Creation of a compliance team to work on our regular reports to DESE

# FACILITIES & CAPITAL

- External improvements:  finalized playground, middle school yard improvements
- Prepared for snow with vendor contract in place
- Current:  Minor roof repairs, flashing under the building on backside, fencing around playground
- Upcoming:  more roof repairs (spring), window flashing on front (spring break or June 2027), shade for both yards, fencing for MS yard and perhaps back of building, (likely spring), outdoor classroom (spring), quotes for fire door magnetizing and for security upgrades for the building
- Research the Massachusetts School Building Authority's application process for the long-term fix for the roof.  This is a multi-year process.

# TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

- 100 pieces of old equipment to be recycled or destroyed (printers, chromebooks, windows devices, old ipads). “Iffy” and outdated tech is gone.
- For staff and students, we have purchased 75 new chromebooks, 5 printers, 10 ipads (coming soon), 40 walkies and docking equipment/windows devices for admin.
- Net result is the ability for E1 – E2 teachers to use functioning computers for all students in a class at once as desired (2 students:1computer ratio)
- Technology and Engineering now classes have enough computers to do projects with a full class as needed.
- We are prepared as a school to implement the MCAS on reliable equipment aligned to MCAS requirements.

# ACADEMICS

- Screeners complete (DIBELS, and Acadience) – results indicate needs in math in E1-E2, needs in K, students with IEP's not performing as well
- ELA is still a highlight
- Focusing on data informing our instructional work by creating small groups for specific missing skills to be taught
- Focusing Tier 1 (classroom) instruction on addressing the needs of varied groups and teaching specific lacking skills in math K - E2
- Will hire a math interventionist (Tier 2) to support
- Preparing for IxL roll out to support math at home and at school

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Weekly Faculty Meetings (varied topics such as Progress Reports, Observation/Eval tools, adult culture check in's, etc.)
- Implementing a new faculty evaluation process & tools (observation and evaluation)
- Faculty focused on progress reports and teacher-parent conferences (ample time provided for teachers to prepare)
- Progress reports are now done on Google Docs (family portals)
- Surveyed staff on professional development interest areas

# CULTURE

- Regular faculty meeting allocated for the faculty to discuss our adult culture and brainstorm improvements
- Faculty will help lead RVCS's whole community effort to provide community service to the Merrimack Valley  [in process for determining our focus area(s)]. Parents and students to be surveyed.
- New staff are acclimating well and happy at RVCS

# UPCOMING (OTHER)

- Parent Workshop Series
- Updating budget by Jan/Feb.
- Working with families on absenteeism and tardiness
- Focus on faculty observations/evaluations
- Preparing for the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector review this year

# QUESTIONS?

# RVCS DASHBOARD

# RVCS'S MONTESSORI MOMENT:

# MEET SARAH BOVE, INSTRUCTIONAL LEAD & COACH

# Coversheet

## Update

**Section:** V. Finance Committee
**Item:** A. Update
**Purpose:** FYI
**Submitted by:**
**Related Material:** October 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:

October Financials.xlsx