



**RIVER VALLEY  
CHARTER SCHOOL**  
*montessori made public*

## River Valley Charter School

### Minutes

#### Board Meeting

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##### **Date and Time**

Wednesday September 18, 2024 at 7:00 PM

##### **Location**

River Valley Charter School Middle School Great Room

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##### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the River Valley Charter School is to provide a rigorous academic program based on the Montessori philosophy and rooted in the history, culture and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. Students will reach their full potential as scholars and become self-reliant, productive members of society. They will be adept at critical thinking and creative problem solving and will be fully prepared to succeed in future schools, careers and civic life.

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##### **Trustees Present**

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

##### **Trustees Absent**

*None*

##### **Ex Officio Members Present**

K. Kuse

##### **Non Voting Members Present**

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K. Kuse

### Guests Present

A. Wetmore, Sara Treem

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## I. Opening Items

### A. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Herrera called a meeting of the board of trustees of River Valley Charter School to order on Wednesday Sep 18, 2024 at 7:01 PM.

### B. Record Attendance

### C. Board Expectations

Board Expectations appear for all Trustees to review at all Board of Trustee meetings.

### D. Public Comment

None.

## II. Review Previous Board Minutes

### A. Approve Last Board Meeting Minutes

D. Herrera made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 08-28-24.

D. Mitchell seconded the motion.

Minor typographical changes not affecting the substance of the minutes were made.

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

#### Roll Call

E. Bradley Aye

A. Ting Aye

P. Ganley Aye

T. Murdy Aye

M. Connerton Aye

N. Durkee Aye

E. Simone Aye

B. MacQuade Aye

C. Getz Aye

D. Herrera Aye

D. Mitchell Aye

J. Nickerson Aye

C. Whitford Absent

A. Godino Aye

E. Rankin Aye

### III. Consent Agenda

- A. Approve Finance Committee Minutes
- B. Approve Accountability Committee Minutes
- C. Approve Executive Committee Minutes
- D. Approve Development Committee Minutes
- E. Approve Committee On Trustees Minutes
- F. Vote to Approve Consent Agenda

D. Herrera made a motion to approve the minutes from the consent agenda Executive Committee Meeting on 09-11-24.

E. Bradley seconded the motion.

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

#### Roll Call

|              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| N. Durkee    | Aye    |
| T. Murdy     | Aye    |
| M. Connerton | Aye    |
| D. Herrera   | Aye    |
| A. Ting      | Aye    |
| D. Mitchell  | Aye    |
| J. Nickerson | Aye    |
| E. Rankin    | Aye    |
| E. Simone    | Aye    |
| C. Whitford  | Absent |
| P. Ganley    | Aye    |
| E. Bradley   | Aye    |
| A. Godino    | Aye    |
| C. Getz      | Aye    |
| B. MacQuade  | Aye    |

### IV. Director Update

#### A. Director's Report

The Director's Report appears in the Board Packet. Time was allowed in the meeting for questions.

EBradley: Will the school psychologist only be doing testing? She will be doing testing and meeting with the team. She is a part time hire.

ATing: How will MCAS scores be released? KKuse: However DESE tells us to. There will be trainings soon and then it will be known. DHerrera: Once you have your information, Exec Committee can help you with

KKuse: Tomorrow, Lydia Sisson, KKuse and Micheal Esenberg (?) are meeting about a grant from Project Greenschools for the outdoor space. They would like to do a check presentation at the school in October.

## V. Board Business

### A. Accountability Plan 2024-2029: Vote

It is the Board's job to approve the plan or send it back.

Discussion.

ATing: Some of the measures seemed to be hard to acheive. But as long as the teachers are aware of them, we can be successful. ESimone: It does seem to be achievable.

NDurkee: It doesn't feel like it doesn't give teachers a lot of flexibility if students have anxiety, there are points in the rubric that seem hard at that level. It's hard to bring this up now, but if there's a way to unlink the rubric, it could be really helpful. ESimone: Not 100% of students have to get 3.5. DHerrera: There's also an expectation of the teachers to educate the panelists on the rubric.

D. Herrera made a motion to Approve the Accountability Plan as presented in the board packet.

T. Murdy seconded the motion.

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

### Roll Call

M. Connerton Aye

P. Ganley Aye

J. Nickerson Aye

A. Ting Aye

E. Bradley Aye

E. Rankin Aye

T. Murdy Aye

E. Simone Aye

N. Durkee Aye

B. MacQuade Aye

C. Whitford Absent

D. Herrera Aye

A. Godino Aye

D. Mitchell Aye

**Roll Call**

C. Getz            Aye

**B. Food Allergy Policy: Vote**

D. Herrera made a motion to Approve the Food Allergy Policy as presented in the board packet.

E. Bradley seconded the motion.

The previous RVCS allergy policy didn't align with the new school lunch program. It was old and much more strict than standard school allergy policies.

It has been updated and reviewed by the school physician, Dr. March, and the Executive Committee.

AChala: How does the allergen free table play out as far as isolation? KKuse: What the class has opted to do is always have a teacher and friend sitting at the table.

EBradley: Feels this policy is in line with the Montessori philosophy.

ATing: Feels this policy is much more in line and is much better for the school.

JNickerson: How will the students feel the change? KKuse: I don't think the students will feel a change since this is the beginning of the school year. DHerrera: They may notice that a sign outside the class is no longer there.

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

**Roll Call**

D. Herrera        Aye

P. Ganley        Aye

J. Nickerson     Aye

T. Murdy        Aye

N. Durkee        Aye

E. Rankin        Aye

D. Mitchell      Aye

C. Whitford      Absent

M. Connerton    Aye

C. Getz           Aye

A. Ting           Aye

E. Simone        Aye

E. Bradley        Aye

B. MacQuade     Aye

A. Godino        Aye

**C. Facility of Use Policy: Vote**

Vote is postponed due to consideration of wording change in the policy. It will be presented at the next Board of Trustees meeting.

#### **D. FY 24 Caregiver Survey**

Last year, former school director Jonnie Lyn Evans reported out on the data.

NDurkee reviewed the data and summarized it at a high level. Many comments expressed gratitude. Most narrative comments came through highlighting the strengths of RVCS.

Feedback that was constructive was taken into consideration follows:

Themes:

Time in the classroom should be increased.

Placed based education takes too much time away from typical classroom learning, especially when added to early release Wednesdays, portfolio half days, etc. Scheduling seems to be an issue.

Teachers should communicate before students fall behind. Parents don't have a sense of progress until progress reports come out. Proactive communication would be appreciated.

Math curriculum needs improvement. Language skills mentioned less so.

ERankin: How was the response rate compared to other years? ESimone: A little lower than the year before.

ESimone: Math Curriculum, did you see any correlation with grade levels? NDurkee: I didn't capture that here. I can look into that.

DHerrera: Pointed out the area in the Accountability plan that correlates to School Climate and Family Engagement questions in the caregiver survey. It is no longer in the survey, so now it falls back on the Director.

NDurkee: Moving the Caregiver Survey out of the purview of the committee was never discussed in the Accountability Committee, to no longer administer the Caregiver Survey. We'll need to talk about this in the committee. Disagrees that the survey should no longer live in Accountability.

### **VI. Executive Committee Update**

#### **A. Executive Committee**

Next meeting will focus on the Director's Goals and review of the Master Policy.

If you are interested, please feel free to attend on October 9, 2024, 7 pm.

## **VII. Finance Update**

### **A. Finance**

Current focus is the year end audit. The committee plans to have drafts for the next Board of Trustees meeting. All in all, we are in the same position as we expected to be. Everything seems to be in line with no major issues.

## **VIII. Accountability Update**

### **A. Accountability**

MCAS data will likely push out until October.

In October, the committee will likely look at screener data and the Montessori Audit Review and revisit the Caregiver Survey.

JNickerson: What is the Superintendent Checklist? DHerrera: It is a list of items that schools need to send in along with dates for compliance. Not all items apply to RVCS.

## **IX. CoT Update**

### **A. Committee on Trustees**

The committee is looking at updating the board bylaws in regards to inclusivity. Updating the bylaws takes a lot of effort and paperwork. Asks other committee heads if there are other updates they'd suggest. Please bring those updates to ATing.

Please also review committee descriptions for updates.

Board goals were discussed at the retreat. We'll discuss how that can be tracked so they can be achieved.

This year we need to have an internal review in preparation for next year's external audit. DHerrera: Who does the external audit? ATing: We're trying to arrange that now.

## **X. Development Update**

### **A. Development**

The committee is not ready to reveal the entire plan for the Charting the Course campaign. The committee is also finalizing their calendar for the year.

DHerrera: Is the committee looking for more members? ERankin: Yes. Parent representation would be great.

ERankin: Please support the Read-a-Thon. Opportunities for ad space would be wonderful.

## **XI. Closing Items**

### **A. Public Comment**

None.

### **B. Adjourn Meeting**

E. Rankin made a motion to adjourn.

E. Bradley seconded the motion.

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

#### **Roll Call**

D. Herrera Aye

P. Ganley Aye

T. Murdy Aye

A. Ting Aye

D. Mitchell Aye

M. Connerton Aye

J. Nickerson Aye

E. Bradley Aye

N. Durkee Aye

E. Rankin Aye

E. Simone Aye

A. Godino Aye

C. Getz Aye

C. Whitford Aye

B. MacQuade Aye

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

Respectfully Submitted,

D. Herrera

### **C. Meeting Survey Link**

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Chris Whitford arrived at 8:04 pm.