

F.W. Parker Charter Essential School

Minutes

Board of Trustees

Date and Time

Tuesday December 5, 2023 at 6:45 PM

Location

Parker School

Trustees Present

B. Harrigan, C. Soderman, G. Penna, J. Fredericksen, M. Edgar, M. Lindsey, M. Turnbull, P. Gordon, S. Razzetti, S. Reinhorn, T. Testa

Trustees Absent

A. Jolly, L. Hayner, N. Odekirk Hatlevig, R. Madamba

Guests Present

D. Merriam, K. Tedstone, M. Beganski, M. McKenna

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

G. Penna called a meeting of the board of trustees of F.W. Parker Charter Essential School to order on Tuesday Dec 5, 2023 at 6:49 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees on 11-14-23.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

D. Announcements

Brian shared that an email letter about hate speech on campus went out to students, families, and staff today.

Tiffany shared that she appreciated the letter and that a student was the one who reported it. Glenn asked how advisory conversations related to Israel and Gaza in the fall went. Stef shared that students are seeing a lot about these topics online and it is important to discuss them with students.

Mara shared that the email letter that went home "felt human" and contrasted how she has seen other districts respond.

Brian also thanked Luciana for approaching him to discuss using the term BIPOC in his goals.

Brian highlighted that Parker has received a \$41,000 Teacher Diversification Grant Award and invited a Board member to participate in a Teacher Diversification Professional Learning Community. Tiffany expressed interest in the PLC.

II. Strategic Plan, Development & Governance

A. Strategic Plan, Development & Governance

Brian shared the draft agenda for the Board's January Retreat. He noted the agenda maintains time to meet with students at the start. The Board will then be updated on the Strategic Planning work and discuss priorities.

Stef inquired about when the Board might have the opportunity to look at data related to the Strategic Planning work, as the Board will be at the stage of priorities in January. Martin and Mara agreed that an opportunity to understand and synthesize the data. Tiff decided, as well. Sonia, Matt, and Deb Meriam noted that the Strategic Planning Committee must still synthesize and better understand the data before sharing it with the Board.

Glenn clarified the purpose of the time with students and whether it would be reflecting on strategic planning work. Brian responded that the time with students is planned to be the same as in years past. Glenn also inquired about the timeline for the strategic plan and how upcoming Board meetings may be allocated toward strategic planning.

Brian noted the need to begin budget discussions. Sonia asked about the relationship between the financial discussion and the strategic plan. Stef stated that the January agenda may need additional time for strategic planning. Sonia emphasized the importance of aligning the budget with the strategic priorities.

Mara asked about the timing of the student portion of the agenda and how it related to strategic planning work. Tiff and Stef said that its purpose is primarily to remind trustees about the "why" of the Board's work and allow for engagement with students.

Glenn asked about students sharing a portfolio piece during the student portion of the January meeting. Pam said that she found that time to be valuable.

The Board discussed and suggested potential adjustments to the timing of the January agenda to Brian. Stef shared an overview of the Development Committee's agenda item for January related to telling Parker's story.

Stef noted she would feel uncomfortable prioritizing the strategic plan without more information. Mara shared the current work of the Strategic Planning Committee and that it will be meeting next week to process further and synthesize the data.

Julie advocated for additional information to be shared from the Strategic Planning Committee. The Board agreed that additional transparency and data would be helpful for members who do not serve on the committee.

The Board decided to move the retreat to February and will turn the January meeting into a regular Board meeting.

Matt shared that at the January meeting, the Governance Committee will ask trustees to share contact information for at least three individuals for consideration to include in the recruitment pipeline.

Katrina shared an update on behalf of the Development Committee. The Board looked at a dashboard of where the Annual Fund stands broken down by constituencies and goals for this year. She highlighted alumni donated \$5377 on Giving Tuesday and that the average gift on Giving Tuesday was considerably higher when compared to past years. The Development Committee is in the planning process of the 29th Celebration. They are leaning toward moving the event up the street to the Devens Common Center. Katrina shared they are considering having the event on a Thursday evening. The tentative date is June 13.

III. Head of School, Enrollment, DEI & Finance

A. Head of School, Enrollment, DEI & Finance

Brian shared highlights from his Head of School Report. He noted:

- Current Enrollment is 367 students, and he hopes to end the year at 375.
- Applications for the Lottery are about the same as last year's. The deadline for this year is being extended an extra month to allow for additional applications.

Julie asked whether there is data about how students who have arrived in the midyear have adapted and transitioned into Parker. Glenn asked what the retention rate has been

for those students. Brian noted a few withdrawals, and the retention rate is lower than the rest of the student population.

Mara inquired about how student tuition works for students who leave Parker. Michelle and Brian responded that Parker receives tuition based on how many days the student attended.

Brian highlighted his update and overview of the progress on the Marketing Plan. The Board discussed recruitment and retention as both being areas for focus.

Julie wondered whether adding a "Prospective Families" tab would be an attractive addition that could provide greater clarity for potential families seeking information.

Sonia highlighted that a specific flyer will be going out to Leominster.

Brian shared a mailer that is going out to 10,000 prospective families. The mailer advertises both this year's December Lottery and the Lottery for next year. Board members thought the mailer looked great.

Brian asked trustees to examine a list of "talking points" developed to support more consistent messaging about Parker's program. Trustees identified phrases and words that resonate with their experience and family. Trustees highlighted appreciation for the outcomes that are contained in the talking points. Trustees expressed a desire to add more to the co-curricular activities.

Stef emphasized there is an authenticity of the work at Parker that is not yet captured in the talking points.

Luciana noticed that there could be more language that speaks to preparing students for life and work, not just college.

Brian concluded by asking the Trustees to use the talking points to assist in completing a review on Niche for Parker.

IV. Other Business

A. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

V. Votes

A. Marketing Resources

C. Soderman made a motion to authorizing a \$40,000 for Marketing Resources.

S. Reinhorn seconded the motion.

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

VI. 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 8:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Lindsey