APPROVED

F.W. Parker Charter Essential School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Retreat

Date and Time
Friday September 13, 2024 at 12:00 PM

Location
Discovery Museum, 177 Main St, Acton, MA 01720

We will meet in the PlayLabs Classroom of the Discover Museum.

Trustees Present
B. Harrigan, C. Beasley, E. Moura, E. Sturgis, F. Fernau, J. Fredericksen, M. Beam, M. Edgar, M. Lindsey, M. Turnbull, N. Odekirk Hatlevig, P. Gordon, S. Razzetti, S. Reinhorn, T. Testa

Trustees Absent
C. Soderman, L. Hayner

Guests Present
D. Van Patten, K. Tedstone, M. Beganski

I. Meeting Notes

A. Meeting Objectives

1. To welcome new Trustees and build relationships
2. To kick off the new school year
3. To reflect on our experience at the museum; to begin the work of Strategic Plan implementation and prioritization; to find ourselves in the work.
4. To help the committees plan and set goals for the year ahead

B. To prepare for this meeting, please do the following...

1. RVSP through Board on Track
2. Read the agenda, Head of School Report and Strategic Plan
3. Bring a laptop computer if you have one

II. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

P. Gordon called a meeting of the board of trustees of F.W. Parker Charter Essential School to order on Friday Sep 13, 2024 at 2:13 PM.

III. Welcome

A. Ice Breaker and Lunch

Before the meeting was officially called to order, Trustees had lunch and social time. Discovery Museum Director, Marie Beam led the group in hands-on science experiments.

B. Explore the Discovery Museum

Marie invited Trustees to explore the museum and gave them "permission to play" and observe observe how other visitors experience and approach learning in the space.

C. Debrief

Trustees debriefed their time exploring the museum.

Brian Harrigan asked Trustees:

- How does your experience at the Discovery Museum today inspire your work as a Trustee?
- Pick one element of the Strategic Plan that aligns or relates to your experience at the Discovery Museum today.

Trustees spent time sharing their answers to these prompts in pairs and then shared within the larger group.

IV. Minutes, Agenda and Goals

A. Approve Minutes

J. Fredericksen made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees on 07-22-24.
F. Fernau seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
B. Harrigan	Aye
M. Beam	Abstain
J. Fredericksen	Aye

Roll Call

E. Sturgis	Abstain
E. Moura	Abstain
C. Beasley	Abstain
C. Soderman	Absent
M. Edgar	Aye
S. Reinhorn	Aye
L. Hayner	Absent
T. Testa	Aye
P. Gordon	Aye
N. Odekirk Hatlevig	Abstain
M. Lindsey	Aye
M. Turnbull	Aye
S. Razzetti	Aye
F. Fernau	Abstain

B. Review Agenda and Meeting Goals

Pam Gordon and Brian Harrigan reviewed the agenda and meeting goals.

V. Head of School Report and Enrollment and Facilities Update

A. Head of School Report and Enrollment and Facility Committees

Brian said the school welcomed almost one hundred new students and 8 new staff members. Brian said that enrollment is 388 up from 361 at the end of last year and he thanked all the people who were involved with increasing enrollment. Brian said the partnership with the Leominster Boys and Girls Club yielded three new students.

Brian said the MART shuttle is running twenty students from three towns. Brian said cost is a concern and he has spoken to MART and is working to get costs down.

Brian said 9th grade is overenrolled and most waitlisted students are 9th graders. He said we probably won't achieve the target enrollment of 400 - enrollment is expected to stay in mid-380s.

Brian highlighted diversity numbers and said the overall BIPOC population is 20%, the highest in school history. Details are in the attached Head of School report. Brian said the percentage of students on an IEP or 504 continues to increase. IEP numbers are slightly above average and 504 numbers are significantly higher than average. He said the hire of instructional aides has allowed for Parker class structure to remain as usual.

Brian said the 7th grade acceptance rate is lower than it has ever been and it is worth exploring why. He said the waitlist for 7th grade has already been exhausted. Brians said the acceptance rate for 9th grade is 50%

Nicole asked about offering transportation to Parker. Brian said if transportation is offered from one town it has to be offered for all towns. He said municipal funds are not available as there aren't many students from Devens attending Parker and they live too close to qualify for transportation.

Stefanie asked if the change in demographics correlates to a change in sending towns. Brian said sending towns are mostly unchanged and that the diversity is connected to more marketing and visibility to diverse populations within popular sending towns.

Trustees discussed about the variety of factors contributing to acceptance and enrollment Brian said it is worth the Enrollment Committee to explore some of the factors.

Mara asked about Parker's retention strategy. Brian said 6% is typical attrition. Last year - Parker's was 12% - much too high and work is being done to work on better retaining students. Brian said the school is asking parents to give it a year to allow students to adjust. Brian said advisors are being asked to track when they hear that students are struggling or absent and this is work the staff needs to lead on. Stefanie said changing messaging to saying "it takes a year" might reframe expectations for families.

Caroline said looking at characteristics of this generation of parents could useful. She said promoting to parents the power and importance of resiliency may be helpful.

Fletcher asked about the connection of the PLP process to retention strategy. Brian said it's an important component of building relationships with families.

Mara said devising a metric based on predictive analytics could be employed for retention. She suggested asking what five things advisors should be looking for - i.e. absenteeism, changing friend group, sitting alone at lunch, dropping out/not participating in afternoon activities.

Brian said if enrollment stays on track, the Board may want to consider increases or bonuses for teachers.

Facilities

Martin gave an update on the front entrance sidewalk work. He said the project has been revised to reduce cost. Michelle McKenna said the updated plan is coming in at $400-$415K and they are trying to get it closer to $350K. Michelle said the goal is to have the plan done and bids in hand by early November so that work can be completed over the summer.

Mara asked if there is a cap for cost overruns. Martin said there is a guaranteed minimum price and the hope is for it not to extend beyond that. Michelle said one caveat is that there was an oil spill years ago and soil testing will be required. If there is an issue, it could contribute to cost overruns.

Development
Katrina said a large donation has been received from a family who visited Parker for the first time since their kids graduated over 10 years ago. Katrina said they doubled their commitment to $500K over 5 years. The funds will be used for:

- front walkway - work planned for summer 2025
- courtyard including increasing accessibility to the space - work planned for summer 2026
- windows around courtyard - work planned for summer 2027

Marie Beam suggested making incremental accommodations for accessibility in advance of planned projects.

Brian said the charter renewal inspection is scheduled for October 1st. He said that not all Trustees need to take part and a quorum is not expected. The Charter Renewal Application is in the meeting packet.

VI. Strategic Plan

A. Strategic Plan: 1/3/5 year plans

Members formed small groups and were given 20 minutes to:

- review the goals from each of the four Strategic Priorities
- Consider the timeline for meeting each goal
- place each of the goals on the timeline in Year 1, 3, 5 or somewhere in between

Group 1: Sonia, Caroline, Tiffany
Group 2: Pam, Mara, Nicole, Fletcher
Group 3: Marie, Matt, Emily, Martin
Group 4: Brian, Julie, Stef, Ellen

Brian asked groups to consider their selections for year 1 priorities. He asked groups to define the body of work for implementation, address what needs to be done and what investments will be required, and identify measures of success.

Groups reported back to the larger group o**n their discussions.**

B. Break

VII. Committees

A. Meet by Committee

Brian asked Members to break into their respective subcommittees (Enrollment, Development, Finance , Facilities, Governance, DEI) and:

- discuss the subcommittee calender for the year
- draft one or two goals for the 2024-2025 school yearaligned with the Strategic Plan
- draft one or two measures of success for each of the goals
- draft the agenda for your first subcommittee meeting

Brian suggested that next week, subcommittees should:

- Enter the subcommittee meetings into the Board on Track calendar
- add the agendas for the first Meeting into Board on Track

Stefanie Reinhorm introduced the Committee Running Agenda Template as a tool for subcommittees to use for organization, documentation, and planning.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Committee Reports

Committee reports were not presented to allow time for the rest of the agenda.

IX. Other Business

A. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

X. Votes

A. Student Hiking Trip

E. Sturgis made a motion to approve the Carter Notch Overnight Field Trip as detailed in the meeting packet.
M. Lindsey seconded the motion.
Mara asked about liabiltiy coverage. Michelle McKenna said the blanket policy fully covers the trip.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

XI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

M. Beam made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
E. Sturgis seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 4:41 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Lindsey

Documents used during the meeting

- Parker Strategic Plan 2024-2029.pdf
- Parker SOA Plan 2024.pdf
- Parker Charter Renewal Application 2024.pdf
- 2024 September Head of School Report.pdf
- White Mountains Hiking Trip 2024 - BOT summary.pdf