APPROVED

F.W. Parker Charter Essential School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Retreat

Date and Time
Friday January 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM

Location
Parker School

http://parker.school/boardoftrusteesmeeting

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

Trustees Absent
E. Moura

I. 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 Jan 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM.

II. Development Plan Kickoff

A. Development Plan Kickoff; Changing Our World

Mary Simboski of Changing Our World engaged the trustees in a series of live surveys about Parker and why they volunteer as board members. She also shared background and context for non-profit fundraising. She noted that total giving is generally growing, however, the number of people giving is down and last year it dropped below 50%. She

then asked trustees to rate the importance of philanthropy to each of priorities of Parker's strategic plan.

Trustees engaged in a brainstorming chalk-talk activity responding to the prompts, what is the strongest case we can make for giving to Parker and what is the greatest opportunity for philanthropy in support of Parker.

Trustees then shared key ideas that stood out. Luciana noted that it is important to be able to articulate to a donor how it matters to them and what they value, not just what we value.

Tiffany shared that Parker has value to the broader educational community and sector just being Parker.

Caroline shared that Parker does really well answering the needs that people may be feeling in their lives.

Mara added that people continue to look at Parker due to student teacher ratio.

Martin shared that Parker is able to enhance the experience for the kids we directly serve and others.

Stefanie noted that The Sizer Center and NTC are central to Parker's case for giving.

Brian built upon Stefanie's point, emphasizing that Parker thinks of school differently and that other schools come to Parker to learn how to do education differently in ways that Parker has proven can work.

Pam added that doing education differently is something that places are starting to be more open to it.

Christina noted that differentiation from the market is important.

Marie added that perhaps one of the strongest differentiators for Parker is strong, compelling, energetic leadership.

There was broad consensus that Parker has been doing education successfully for 30 years.

Martin shared that Parker needs to expand its sphere of influence to include more potential donors who are then connected to Parker.

Christina shared that reunions for alumni are potentially a missed opportunity for fostering connection and engagement with alumni.

Caroline added that former Parker teachers are also a potential opportunity for increased connection and engagement.

Julie noted that the message that alumni need to better understand why there is a need for them to be philanthropic towards Parker.

Luciana noted that Parker may want to think more in the college model for reunions rather than a more traditional high school model.

Fletcher noted that traditional districts draw students from a single municipality which fosters greater opportunity for reunions.

Christina shared that businesses on Devens are an untapped market for philanthropy and potential enrollment.

Stefanie focused on how Parker can grow its circle of potential philanthropy.

Following the share-out, the Board engaged in more live surveys to provide information and feedback to Changing Our World.

III. Review Agenda, Review Goals of Meeting, and Approve Minutes

A. Approve Minutes

S. Razzetti made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 12-12-24.
E. Sturgis seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
M. Edgar	Aye
M. Turnbull	Aye
F. Fernau	Aye
M. Lindsey	Aye
P. Gordon	Aye
S. Reinhorn	Aye
E. Sturgis	Aye
B. Harrigan	Aye
N. Odekirk Hatlevig	Aye
C. Beasley	Aye
S. Razzetti	Aye
L. Hayner	Aye
M. Beam	Abstain
J. Fredericksen	Aye

Roll Call

T. Testa	Aye
E. Moura	Absent
C. Soderman	Aye

IV. Head of School Report and Enrollment and Charter Renewal

A. Head of School Report

B. Enrollment and Charter Renewal

Brian provided the Board with an update on Parker's enrollment. Parker is currently enrolled at 390 students. He anticipates a couple of potential withdrawals at the semester change. There will be a small lottery for 7th grade for this year and over the next two months Parker will be focused on the lottery for next year. Brian shared that there are over 30 families already signed up for the first information session.

Brian then shared that according to Erica Brown, Chief Policy & Schools Supports at MCPSA, Parker's Five-Year Renewal is the strongest she has seen in five years. Parker exceeded expectations on mission and key design elements and dissemination to other public schools. Parker partially met expectations for Governance, specifically focused on the Board's oversight of the Academic Program and inclusion of all relevant documents within the Board minutes.

To address the concerns Brian plans to include academic updates in the Head of School Report, we will document discussions at Board meeting of student performance, we will invest in "Proven Student Outcomes" from the Strategic Plan and more.

Brian requested that all Board members complete the MCPSA Governance Survey prior to the February meeting. Several trustees noted they had already taken the survey and it only will take about 10-20 minutes.

V. Strategic Plan Implementation; Staffing and resources

A. Strategic Plan Implementation; Staffing and resources

Caroline Beasley left the room.

Pam shared a proposed plan for restructuring of the leadership and staffing model at Parker. Stefanie noted that during the hiring process for the Head of School, restructuring of the leadership and staffing model was part of that conversation. Pam shared the plan was developed by Brian and other members of school leadership.

Brian expressed that the proposal is grounded in the Strategic Plan and the time and resources that will be needed to achieve it. He then shared an organizational leadership

chart with the changes and responsibilities of each position. Brian then asked Deb Merriam to share more about the plan. She shared that this plan is responsive to Parker's needs as an organization.

Brian noted the changes will require some revisions to Parker's bylaws, which the Governance Committee will take up when appropriate.

Martin asked for clarification of the chart and which positions are new and which are unchanged. Brian clarified the color coding.

Brian then directed trustees' attention to a document focused on how the reorganization addresses the needs and goals of the Strategic Plan.

Brian noted the faculty will learn about this plan at the next faculty meeting.

Trustees voiced questions about the timeline of hiring and filling positions.

Caroline Beasley returned.

VI. Finance Committee

A. Midyear Compensation Adjustments; FY26 Budget Process

Michelle shared that with enrollment at 390 students. It appears the budget will close in a favorable position. Michelle then shared a plan for a midyear bonus compensation plan for faculty and staff using Parker's gap closing methodology for salaries.

Trustees asked about why the plan is for bonuses instead of as salary adjustments. Michelle and Brian responded that a lack of clarity for FY26 budget makes bonuses a more financially viable option.

The trustees engaged in a discussion of the plan focusing on how faculty and staff would react to the plan. Brian and Michelle shared the Compensation Committee endorsed the plan and believes the bonus structure is the best path forward and will provide the largest financial benefit.

Stefanie inquired about whether Parker's teachers are part of the MTRS. She noted it was positive that members of the Compensation Committee who would be impacted by the bonus not being pensionable were supportive of the plan.

Michelle concluded by sharing her intention to hold a Finance 101 session for any interested trustees.

VII. Other Business

A. Comments from the Public

B. Midyear Compensation

S. Reinhorn made a motion to suspend a second read of the plan to provide midyear bonus compensation in the amount of $300,000.
J. Fredericksen seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

L. Hayner made a motion to Approve $300,000 for midyear bonuses out of the FY25 budget - paid to current faculty and staff the end of January using the "closing the gap" methodology.
M. Turnbull seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Soderman	Aye
E. Moura	Absent
M. Turnbull	Aye
E. Sturgis	No
M. Edgar	Aye
M. Beam	Absent
J. Fredericksen	Aye

Roll Call

L. Hayner	Aye
B. Harrigan	Aye
S. Reinhorn	Aye
S. Razzetti	No
C. Beasley	Aye
M. Lindsey	Abstain
F. Fernau	Aye
T. Testa	Aye

VIII. 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 6:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Lindsey

Documents used during the meeting

- Parker Board Retreat Outline January 3 2025.pdf
- 2025 January Head of School Report.pdf