

APPROVED



**Springfield Prep**  
CHARTER SCHOOL

## Springfield Prep

# Minutes

## Board Meeting

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### **Date and Time**

Monday October 30, 2023 at 5:00 PM

### **Location**

Meeting at Springfield Prep  
2071 Roosevelt Ave.  
Springfield, MA 01104

Zoom option also available if needed.

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### **Trustees Present**

A. Malone, A. Narvaez, A. Piela, D. Morrin, M. Frodema, R. Leonard, R. Molina-Brantley, S. Balogun, S. Fuller, S. Monson

### **Trustees Absent**

*None*

### **Ex Officio Members Present**

B. Spierer

### **Non Voting Members Present**

B. Spierer

### **Guests Present**

M. Wagner

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## **I. Opening Items**

**A.**

**Record Attendance and Guests**

**B. Call the Meeting to Order**

S. Balogun called a meeting of the board of trustees of Springfield Prep to order on Monday Oct 30, 2023 at 6:13 PM.

**C. Public Comment, If Any**

There was no public comment.

**II. Consent Agenda**

**A. Approve minutes from the previous board meeting**

R. Leonard made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 09-26-23.

S. Fuller seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| S. Fuller          | Aye |
| A. Narvaez         | Aye |
| R. Leonard         | Aye |
| A. Malone          | Aye |
| M. Frodema         | Aye |
| A. Piela           | Aye |
| R. Molina-Brantley | Aye |
| S. Balogun         | Aye |
| S. Monson          | Aye |
| D. Morrin          | Aye |

**B. Fiscal Policies & Procedures - Minor updates**

**C. Contract approval**

**D. Vote to approve consent agenda items**

R. Leonard made a motion to approve consent agenda.

S. Fuller seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| A. Malone  | Aye |
| R. Leonard | Aye |
| D. Morrin  | Aye |
| S. Fuller  | Aye |
| A. Piela   | Aye |
| S. Monson  | Aye |
| A. Narvaez | Aye |

**Roll Call**

R. Molina-Brantley Aye  
M. Frodema Aye  
S. Balogun Aye

**III. Executive Director Items**

**A. October Executive Director Report**

Bill thanked Doug for his many years of extraordinary service to the school and recounted the many ways Doug has supported the board over the years. Bob and Anne shared additional appreciation for his service.

Bill shared information about fall field trips and our high school success program, including noting that we have had alums coming back to visit and to share their high school experience with our current MS students.

Bill reviewed the Commissioner's current initiative to address chronic absence concerns, noting that Springfield Prep's attendance rate has largely bounced back from the pandemic. Sally asked about how we are following up with families when students are absent. Anne shared that this is a nationwide problem. Amy shared that this is also an issue for staff attendance in the corporate workplace because there is a different dynamic post-pandemic.

Ron asked how we deal with extended absences as a school and Bill shared that the teachers provide additional work for short duration absences and provide tutoring for longer absences.

**B. Updated Harassment Policy & Title IX Policy**

Bill reviewed the updated policies that incorporate the most recent revisions to Title IX. Meghan noted that the policy effectively incorporates the law. Bill explained that the Board's role would be to review any appeals. Because this is an update to our handbooks, we are sharing it with the board for approval. Anne asked how we notify staff and Sherriff asked how we communicate this with families. Bill shared that we would email staff and notify families by Class Dojo.

Amy asked about whether people are aware of their roles related to their policies. Bill said that Meghan, Marelin and Bill do training through an online platform, and for staff we highlight roles and responsibilities every year at summer training. He said they would do so again when sharing this updated policy.

A. Malone made a motion to approve the updated Harassment and Title IX policy.

R. Leonard seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| S. Monson          | Aye |
| M. Frodema         | Aye |
| S. Balogun         | Aye |
| A. Malone          | Aye |
| A. Piela           | Aye |
| R. Molina-Brantley | Aye |
| D. Morrin          | Aye |
| R. Leonard         | Aye |
| S. Fuller          | Aye |
| A. Narvaez         | Aye |

**C. Annual Campaign Plan**

Bill shared a sample email and sample text that Board members can use in reaching out to their networks and reviewed the school’s plan for communication around fundraising. Bill named the goal is to get to \$15,000 by the end of the year in order to meet a matching grant opportunity. He shared an individual board member goal of getting 5 donors each.

Bob asked if we could include the pdfs of our one-pagers so board members could share these. Bill will do that. The board discussed lunch with student ambassadors as a fun "award" for board members with the most unique donors.

**IV. Finance Items**

**A. Quarterly Financials**

The headline is that we are trending on budget. We have slightly higher revenue thanks to increased funding through the Emergency Connectivity Fund, which we used to purchase more Chromebooks. We are also seeing an increase in revenue from interest income. Our reserves are now in insured cash sweep accounts, which are earning interest, which leads to an increase of about \$50,000 this year. We had originally projected a balanced budget with a \$200,000 contingency and are now projecting a \$50,000 positive net change. Meghan noted that we submit these reports to our lenders. Amy noted that this is consistent with what the finance committee discussed.

Sherriff asked for confirmation that we are okay being at a moderate risk level according to the DESE Finance Dashboard. Meghan said yes and explained the context - the impact of federal grant funding and the impact of the new lease accounting standard.

**B. FY25 Budget Scenarios**

Meghan reported on budget scenarios for next year. She noted that we will be seeing a 10% decrease in revenue from FY24 to FY25 given the end of ESSER funding. This will be the first time we will see a decrease in funding and we will need to make some

decisions about our spending. Meghan noted that the Student Opportunity Act is driving a significant increase in per pupil spending, but that is being phased in over three years. That said, expenses are going up. It may be a smart decision to draw on our reserves for one year, but we want to ensure that our financial model is sustainable over the longer term. The board discussed the importance of increasing fundraising efforts. Bill shared that the school is considering hiring a fundraising consultant to help with this. Sarah shared that she is planning an ask to families to learn more about families' capacity to give, framing it as an opportunity not an obligation.

Bill discussed the balance in messaging a leaner budget year without impacting morale considering that we do not foresee a need to make significant reductions, especially to core programs. Meghan noted that we are discussing with the finance committee the possibility of drawing from operating reserves in a strategic way.

### **C. Audit RFP**

Meghan noted that while we have been happy with AAFCPAs it is good practice to seek proposals on occasion and we are in the process of soliciting proposals this year.

## **V. Academics & Accountability**

### **A. MCAS Data Report - Part 2**

Bill reviewed the "deep dive" MCAS report, a condensed version of what was analyzed at the Academic Achievement Committee. He specifically highlighted some cohorts and grade bands who were not performing as well as others and reviewed some of the factors that can impact performance, including different approaches to curriculum, as well as additional student and staff transitions.

Sherriff asked about the different math approaches and Bill named the tension between letting kids wrestle with the problems and also ensuring they master the skills. Bill reviewed the importance of reviewing this data at the grade level and then also ensuring we do not make major changes based on one year worth of data.

Bill reviewed the MCAS results of Black and Hispanic students, noting they were significantly higher compared to statewide results of these subgroups.

Bill showed the results of students with disabilities where you can see a disproportionate impact of the pandemic over time and the beginning of some closing of the gap in ELA this year.

Bill shared the work that Jess, as Chief Academic Officer, is doing with teachers to create action plans for specific standards that students may have previously struggled with. Bill reviewed the work that the school is doing to incorporate foundational decoding routines and explicit teaching of morphology across grade levels. Amy asked how

teachers are experiencing this and Bill shared that we are trying to manage new initiatives thoughtfully and provide a lot of supportive professional development, but that some teachers have expressed feeling overwhelmed this year.

He noted that in a recent Pulse Survey, a large majority of teachers felt satisfied at work. He shared that Jess recently had skip level meetings to better understand teachers' experience and the leadership team is doing some work to clear away any additional asks of teachers that may not be necessary.

Sarah shared that it was helpful to hear from her daughter's teacher about the new focus on decoding, even in the middle school grades and Ron shared that this would also be helpful as a parent to have that information so families could support this work. Bill will talk to Jess about communicating simple strategies families can use to support their children.

## **VI. Executive Director Evaluation**

### **A. ED Evaluation Report**

The board reviewed the evaluation report.

Anne said that next year we should strive for 100% participation for evaluation. We will block time at a spring meeting for time for completion.

Sarah noted a change in the scale from last year (1-5 manual) vs. 1-4 in board on track, which is reflected in the evaluation.

Overall, both the board and staff think highly of Bill. We included Bill's self evaluation this year for increased transparency.

Sherriff said it was interesting that Bill rated himself lower on the academics and slightly higher with families.

For the "actively promotes the organization" section, everyone rated this lower than other categories. Bill has named that fundraising capacity has been a challenge (having the time to do it). The Board needs to figure out what his role should be now that he has a full senior leadership team onsite.

Sally shared that we need to name that when he's out in the community, it doesn't have to be about fundraising. It could be more about community events, neighborhood organizations, etc.

Sarah noted that we need to be clear that when he's at those events, he's still at work (just different than the school).

Sherriff shared that this year is a pivotal year for defining the next phase of Bill's role.

Amy said that the role is so broad now - this work could also inform how he supervises/evaluates his direct reports and senior leadership team.

Doug said this seems like this is a great tool for Bill to drive his goal setting for the next year. He could just use his own scores alone to drive how he thinks about priorities for the school. Everyone agrees on this approach.

Bob said that at some point, the CEO is there to fundraise and deal with the biggest challenges. It's a significant shift for him to start thinking about this.

Sarah will share non-profit succession planning webinar as we need to start having plans for next steps.

Amneris asked how can the board support Bill in this transition of roles? Where does he need to grow his expertise?

Sarah shared that a consultant could be helpful in identifying key events that he should be a part of. We need to write a job description and circulate it.

Sally said we should name that we'd like to be more supportive of this.

Sherriff will start the conversation with Bill at their next meeting. We've been tackling things piecemeal but need to think of it more comprehensively.

Sarah will follow up at a governance meeting.

Everyone agreed that the process and dialogue about where we landed with compensation was really helpful. We right-sized expectations based on work with Edgility.

R. Leonard made a motion to approve the Executive Director evaluation.

A. Piela seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| S. Monson  | Aye |
| M. Frodema | Aye |
| D. Morrin  | Aye |
| R. Leonard | Aye |
| S. Fuller  | Aye |
| A. Narvaez | Aye |
| A. Malone  | Aye |
| A. Piela   | Aye |

**Roll Call**

S. Balogun           Aye  
R. Molina-Brantley Aye

**VII. Closing Items**

**A. Board meeting debrief**

The board went around to share the glows and grows of the meeting. Everyone is grateful for the participation from everyone and celebrating each other, and discussed a possible commitment to more in-person meetings.

**B. Next Board Meeting**

**C. Adjourn Meeting**

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
S. Monson

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**Documents used during the meeting**

- MEMO. Fiscal Policies and Procedures Updates FY24.pdf
- MEMO.FY24 Plowing Vendor Contract. Oct 2024 - Google Docs.pdf
- ED Report for 10.30.23.pdf
- Memo & Policies\_ Updated Nondiscrimination and Harassment Policies & Procedures. 10.26.23 v2.pdf
- Board Member Annual Appeal Toolkit 23-24.pdf
- SPCS Finance Dashboard FY24 September.pdf
- 2 SPCS FY24 September Summary.pdf
- 3. SP Friends FY24 September Details.pdf
- 4. SP Realty FY24 September Details.pdf
- 5. SP FY24 September SNP.pdf
- 6. SPCS FY24 September Cash Flow.pdf
- 7. SPCS FY24 September Grants.pdf
- MEMO. FY25 Budget Options. Board - Google Docs.pdf
- Audit Firm RFP FY24 Draft 10 19 23.pdf
- MCAS Deep Dive - summary for board - 10.25.23.pdf

- Bill Spirer Evaluation SY 2022-23.pdf