

APPROVED



Springfield Prep
CHARTER SCHOOL

Springfield Prep

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday January 30, 2024 at 5:45 PM

Location

Meeting held remotely via Zoom

Trustees Present

A. Malone (remote), A. Piela (remote), M. Frodema (remote), R. Leonard (remote), S. Balogun (remote), S. Monson (remote)

Trustees Absent

A. Narvaez, R. Molina-Brantley, S. Fuller

Ex Officio Members Present

B. Spirer (remote)

Non Voting Members Present

B. Spirer (remote)

Guests Present

J. Yiannos (remote), M. Wagner (remote)

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 Tuesday Jan 30, 2024 at 5:48 PM.

C. Public Comment, If Any

II. Consent Agenda

A. Approve minutes from the previous board meeting

A. Malone made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 11-28-23.

M. Frodema seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

B. Vote to approve consent agenda items

III. Executive Director Items

A. January Executive Director Report

Bill shouted out board members for their work in January, including Mary Kate for support with 403(b) proposals, Sarah and Bob for signing up for Advocacy events, and Jean for supporting with audit proposals.

Bill discussed the activities planned for Advocacy Week and the importance of highlighting charter schools as the state budget is developed.

IV. Finance Items

A. Quarterly Financial Report

The headline is that we are not seeing major changes from the last time we discussed the financials.

- We are projecting an overall positive change in net position for the end of the year. We are seeing a slight increase in revenue in government grants and funding and a slight increase in costs on the technology line, because these are related.

- We are seeing a decrease in meal participation and believe this is related to late bus issues. We've extended the time we're offering breakfast and that this is increasing participation slightly.

Mary Kate asked about how meal participation works and Meghan explained this.

B. 2023 Annual Campaign Report & Fundraising Consulting Update

Bill noted that we put some additional time and effort into fundraising this year and have seen an increase in both funds raised and number of donors engaged.

Bill reviewed the work the school is beginning with Donorly, noting that he has consulted with Sarah and Sally about this engagement. This will include strategic efforts to build a sustainable donor base, the development of an annual development calendar, and strategic planning for foundation engagement and outreach.

Sarah noted how some intentional work and effort made a significant difference, and highlighted the work that Diana has done in communications to support this effort.

Sherriff highlighted how our strategic planning work led to our commitment to grow this.

Sarah asked about plans to continue to keep new donors engaged and Bill explained that this is one of the topics he has already started talking to Donorly about.

Mary Kate asked about how we determined Donorly would be the best option to support with this work. Bill explained that he sought recommendations from other charter schools and did not find many that seemed they would meet our needs, which are to develop fundraising systems and provide research and planning support. He felt Donorly was very aligned with how we operate and our needs, and its references spoke highly of its work.

C. 403b Plan

Meghan talked through the 403b Options Review memo.

The school's recommendation is to move forward with Lincoln Investments because it comes highly recommended from peer charter schools, has a lot of charter-sector experience, and because it offers a two options in terms of cost.

Mary Kate explained that the 403b space is difficult. There are not a lot of advisors in this space because at first, there are no assets, although as assets grow, the advisor will make profit. She noted that there is a benefit to having a financial advisor because if there isn't a person who will help them do it, employees are much less likely to participate. Mary Kate shared that her hesitation is the cost to the employee, which is

1.53% plus some investment-related fees. That said, there is an option to choose a 0% interest rate with no advisor support.

Anne shared that she has experienced working with a Vanguard 403b in her work and that most employees are not sure how to invest, and that they can approach administrators about this, which is awkward and difficult.

Bob expressed support for Vanguard but said that he thinks it is good to have an advisor option, even if the rate is on the high side. He asked if they could move their money from the advisor to the non-advisor option and Meghan said they could.

Bob asked if there was a Roth option. Meghan said that this is an option but that we were not sure if we would offer this given the potential for additional administrative work.

Sherriff, Anne, and Amy asked about how we would roll this out to teachers and emphasized how important it is that we are helping to educate employees on what this plan is, and encouraging them to get further education from the advisor.

Meghan shared that she felt it would be important to offer this outside the open enrollment window so people would have time to consider their options.

Bob is supportive of the plan and encourages us to include a Roth. Mary Kate agreed as long as logistically it would not strain Meghan and team.

Amy shared wanting to have space for the board to discuss this topic and not just moving to a quick vote.

Bob suggested having Lincoln draft the plan documents and bring that back to the board for a formal vote at the next meeting along with any final decision points.

Amy asked that we have counsel review the final documents.

V. Academics & Accountability

A. January Academic & Culture Dashboard

Jess joins at 5:55 to share academic updates and discuss current academic performance

Jess reviewed the school snapshot that was discussed at the Academic Achievement Committee meeting this month, reviewing current enrollment and attendance percentages.

- She highlighted the December attendance initiative and success we saw this year over last in December attendance rates. She discussed the state initiative related to chronic attendance and noted our improvement in this area over last year,

though noted that there is still room for improvement compared to pre-pandemic levels. Mary Kate asked for clarification the calculation of chronic absenteeism and Jess explained that this is more than 10% of days.

- Jess reviewed current discipline data, noting that we are seeing an increase in January, but that suspension numbers are still very low this year.
- Jess reviewed ANet data and demonstrated that overall as a school the data in ELA and Math are relatively similar to last year. Jess explained that it is no longer as helpful to compare our performance to network, but that we are still outperforming the network in all grades for both ELA and Math. Bob asked about why we no longer see it as helpful to compare to the network. Jess explained that many schools have moved to abbreviated assessments and are no longer showing up in our network comparison because they aren't taking the same test that our students are taking. Jess and Bill also discussed how some of the bigger networks of charter schools are using their own internal assessments instead of the Anet assessments and noted that there are more differences in terms of scope and sequences across schools.
- Sherriff asked how this compares to what we would expect and what we are seeing in the classroom and Jess said that it seems mostly consistent. Jess noted how we have seen more attrition in certain grades and often see lower performance in those grades when we have more students that are newer to our school.
- Jess reviewed early elementary (K-3) ELA performance and explained our metrics for determining whether students are on target, taking into account both STEP and DIBELS/MCLASS. Jess discussed a possible shift in the way that we use STEP based on what we've learned through the Science of Reading and what we are seeing in the classrooms.
- Jess shared the 2022-23 ACCESS testing results, noting that Springfield Prep was in the top 5 districts in the state and the 2nd highest performing charter in the state. Jess and Bill discussed the ways in which our EL team, teachers throughout the school and our model contribute to this success. Bill shared that DESE is going to do a case study on our EL work.
- Amy asked about the two open seats and Jess, Meghan and Bill explained that we enroll up to Feb. 15 and discussed some of the factors related to enrollment.

B. VOCAL Student Climate Survey Report

Bill explained that the survey is administered every year during MCAS administration to grades 4, 5, and 8.

Bill highlighted that Springfield Prep was rated "favorable" and above the state average across the three dimensions: School Climate, Engagement and Environment. Bill noted that 8th grade data was very high, while 4th and 5th grade data was more average.

The Academic Achievement Committee discussed some hypotheses related to this and how we can provide additional support for the 4th and 5th grades to strengthen their school experience.

Jess highlighted the high positive response rate in questions related to relationships with teachers and support from teachers.

VI. Closing Items

A. Board meeting debrief

Sarah led the board debrief. Sherriff appreciated having Jess join to share academic result insights and felt the agenda includes a lot of positive highlights. Bob shared that we moved through the agenda in an appropriate time fashion. Anne shared that the 403b discussion and different perspectives was helpful. Mary Kate is excited that the school will be offering a 403b and found Jess's presentation very helpful and knowledgeable. Amy named the power in the data that Jess shared, including the 3rd and 4th grade data and how this highlights the ongoing challenge of grades that started school during COVID. Sarah highlighted the value in the VOCAL results related to student's relationships with their teachers

Jess left the meeting after this presentation.

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 7:16 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
S. Monson

Documents used during the meeting

- ED Report for 1.30.24.pdf
- 0. SPCS FY24 December Finance Dashboard.pdf
- 2. SPCS FY24 December Summary.pdf
- 3. SP Friends FY24 December P and L.pdf
- 4. SP Realty FY24 December P and L.pdf
- 5. SPCS FY24 December SNP.pdf
- 6. SPCS FY24 December Cash Flow.pdf

- 2023 Annual Campaign & Fundraising Report.pdf
- Donorly scope of work.pdf
- MEMO. 403b Options.pdf
- Academic Dashboard - January 2024.pdf
- VOCAL Student Climate Survey Report - 2023.pdf