APPROVED

Springfield Prep
CHARTER SCHOOL

Springfield Prep

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday November 7, 2024 at 5:45 PM

Location
This meeting will take place on Zoom.

Trustees Present
A. Malone (remote), A. Narvaez (remote), A. Piela (remote), M. Frodema (remote), R. Leonard (remote), R. Molina-Brantley (remote), S. Balogun (remote), S. Fuller (remote), S. Monson (remote)

Trustees Absent
None

Ex Officio Members Present
B. Spirer (remote)

Guests Present
B. Seyoum (remote), J. Yiannos (remote), M. Velazquez (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 Thursday Nov 7, 2024 at 5:48 PM.

C. Public Comment, If Any

II. Consent Agenda

A. Approve minutes from the previous board meeting

R. Leonard made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 10-03-24.
S. Monson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

B. Contract approvals

C. CIPA Policy

D. Vote to approve consent agenda items

Sherriff introduced the consent agenda and asked for comments. There were none.
R. Leonard made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.
S. Monson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

III. Academic Items

A. Fall Achievement & Culture Dashboard

Jess presented the Academic and Culture Report, highlighting the school's achievements and challenges. She reported that the student body was fully enrolled with demographics similar to Springfield Public Schools. Chronic absenteeism rates had declined compared to the previous year, and the attendance rate exceeded 96%. There had been only one out-of-school suspension to date, significantly lower than the previous year.

Jess discussed assessment data, noting that ANet assessment results indicated consistent student performance compared to the prior year, though 6th Grade math and ELA required additional focus due to a performance drop. A new approach to data analysis was introduced, comparing scores to the average of the past three years plus a five-point target for continuous improvement. She also reviewed MClass and STEP Data, which showed strong decoding skills in K-1 but emphasized the need to improve comprehension in Grades 2-3. To address these challenges, the school implemented progress monitoring structures for Grades K-3, modified literacy blocks for Grades 2-3, and focused on comprehension through professional development and coaching.

Sherriff asked if these results identified any academic areas the school should focus on. Jess said that students seem to do really well leaving 5th grade but struggle with the first round of assessments in 6th grade. They are going from "on grade level" to not hitting the bar. The biggest takeaway from this data is that we have some investigation to do in the 6th and 8th to see why those drops are happening. Sally asked if this drop was only between those grades. Jess confirmed that it was and noted that some other schools, like Brooke, have students remain in a "homeroom" with the same teachers, versus having them move around to different subject-area teachers, which we do and which is more common. She suggested it was an idea to explore to see if that would be helpful for our students.

Amneris asked how the school is addressing the needs of students who need the most additional help. Jess shared that teachers have created groups to target specific needs (e.g., phonics, fluency, math), with homeroom teachers who know their students best, to provide support. Sally inquired about staffing and support and Jess explained each grade has 4 teachers and the support of an Associate Teacher to provide small group instruction based on data.

Bill introduced Maggie Collins to share English Learner assessment results (ACCESS data). He noted that the program she coordinates has gotten positive attention from DESE due to its strong results.

Maggie provided an update on the school's English Language Education (ELE) program, focusing on Access testing data. She reported that the school ranked in the top 4% statewide for ELL student progress, with 87% of students meeting their growth benchmarks compared to a state average of 37%. Additionally, 54% of ELL students attained proficiency, significantly higher than the state average of 12%. Maggie attributed this success to targeted and intensive support for ELL students, effective use of data to

monitor progress and inform instruction, and strategies to invest students in their language acquisition work, as well as the Access test.

Board members discussed the demographic disparity between the school and district averages for ELL students. Maggie and Bill explained that the school's lower percentage of ELL students was in part due to their rapid reclassification and differences in grade levels served and in part due to fewer new arrivals with EL needs starting at the school due to the way the lottery system works. The Board commended the team's efforts and acknowledged the significance of the results.

IV. Executive Director Items

A. Executive Director Report

Bill provided his report.

- He reviewed the school's compliance with SPED and civil rights programs in the recent Tiered Focused Monitoring process. The school "met" in 29 out of 30 categories, with 1 partially implemented. There was one special education issue noted: the timeline for creating a proposed IEP within 45 days was partially implemented. While eligibility was determined within 45 days, the proposed IEP was not created within this timeline. Pam is working on a Corrective Action Plan to ensure the IEP is completed within 45 days, along with parent notifications.
- The Alumni Program is taking longer to establish than expected. Bill is working with attorneys to finalize the structure. Ben (Managing Director of Business & Operations) and Ashley (Director of Operations) will work together to set up systems to reach out to alumni. We have raised some funds to support this program but still have more fundraising to do.
- If the Board Holiday Breakfast is held again, it will be appreciated by staff. Bill shared information about the ideal day for this and suggested the board discuss this later in the meeting.

B. Fundraising & Annual Appeal Update

- Bill shared a shift from a multi-year fundraising "campaign" to a fundraising "initiative". The goal is still the same, but the framing is slightly different. The goal is still to raise $250,000–$350,000 annually to support programs like afterschool programs, alumni support, and high school advising.
- The Annual Appeal is coming up and is an important part of our fundraising efforts. The focus is still on supporting the after-school program. He asked board members to amplify the appeal by sharing it with 5 people in their network. Board pledges are nearly at $15,000 and he asked members to share their pledge with him if they haven't already.

V. Finance Items

A. First Quarter Financial Report

Meghan presented the quarterly financials. She reviewed the financial dashboard, noting that many categories were in the low-risk level. One key highlight was the return to a traditional funding model following the end of ESSER funding, which contributed to a balanced budget despite the loss of those additional resources. The percentage of program paid by tuition returned to a low-risk level due to this change.

Meghan called attention to a few specific areas on the dashboard.

- The percentage of total revenue expended on facilities was in the medium-risk range, though this was expected due to the school's facility financing structure. She assured the board that this metric was not a concern and anticipated a change in this metric over time.
- She talked about the change in net assets percentage, and noted that this was attributed to typical first-quarter trends, including higher start-up costs and delayed grant funding. She projected this metric would normalize as the year progresses.
- She talked about lower participation in the school's nutrition program, particularly breakfast, which was partially attributed to the loss of snack funding. Meghan noted that the nutrition team had successfully adjusted orders to minimize waste and maintain cost efficiency, resulting in a net gain for the program despite reduced participation. She emphasized efforts to increase breakfast participation through initiatives like a second-chance breakfast.

Amy asked why some students aren't using the breakfast program. Meghan explained that middle schoolers aren't as interested in breakfast. A second chance breakfast is being explored to give students another opportunity. Mary Kate asked how breakfast participation is counted. Meghan explained that it's based on previous participation, and breakfast is offered daily to all students, but orders are placed according to past usage.

Amy asked about the financial implications of state reimbursement timing. Meghan explained that there had been some slight delays in state tuition payments, but that these did not pose a cash flow issue due to the school's healthy financial position.

Board members also asked about fundraising goals. Bill and Meghan explained that we are on track to meet targets but that it's important to maintain focus on this.

Lastly, Meghan mentioned plans to refine key performance indicators (KPIs) to provide the board with a clearer picture of revenue and expense drivers, particularly enrollment, which remains a critical factor in tuition revenue. The board acknowledged the thoroughness of the financial report and commended Meghan and her team for their proactive management.

VI. Governance & Compliance Items

A. Executive Director Evaluation

Sarah shared the results of the evaluation. There was 100% board participation and 100% participation from direct reports.

The general consensus is strong performance. The board noted that a few “I don’t know” responses isn’t negative but just lack of awareness of what they don’t know.

The board discussed evaluation trends:

- One board member and one team member disagreed with “all students will meet mastery". The board raised a question about adjusting the language around “all students” given that this can be subjective.
- Regarding the work leading the education program, it was noted that Bill definitely supports Jess, but not exactly in his day-to-day work.
- There was alignment around his intentionality with staff.
- Responses in the fundraising and partnership section was the most neutral and the board talked about how hiring new staff members should help with that.

The board discussed how his role has evolved as the school has matured. It is now more focused on externally-focused work than ever. There is a feeling that the school team is strong now.

The board shared praise for Bill allowing the team to own and lead specific areas, and noted that this was huge growth. There is a feeling that Bill now has bandwidth for taking on activities outside the school, e.g., the MA charter association board, which is also positive for the school.

There was discussion about how the board should adjust the evaluation going forward if this reflects the desired role.

The board discussed incorporating staff member feedback into the overall evaluation, and Sarah will do that.

Sherriff discussed compensation with Bill based on market data. He said he would raise this in the governance committee and then bring it to the board for vote in January.

He noted that Bill is also beginning to consider succession planning. He is focused on making sure there is a clear plan so that an eventual transition can happen seamlessly.

VII. Closing Items

A. Next Board Meeting

The next board meeting is January 9th, in person.

B. December Board-Sponsored Staff Breakfast

Board members discussed the plan for providing breakfast and encouraged participation at the event.

C. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
S. Monson

Documents used during the meeting

- MEMO.FY24 Vendor Contract Summary. Nov 2024.pdf
- Internet Safety Policy CIPA 24-25 DRAFT.pdf
- Academic & Culture Dashboard for 11.7.24 meeting.pdf
- ED Report for 11.7.24.pdf
- Fundraising & Annual Appeal Update for 11.7.24.pdf
- SY 24-25 Board Member Annual Campaign Toolkit.pdf
- FINAL 2024 Annual Appeal.pdf
- 2. SPCS FY25 September Summary.pdf
- 4. SP Realty FY25 September Summary.pdf
- 6. SPCS FY25 September Cash Flow.pdf
- 5. SP FY25 September SNP.pdf
- 0. SPCS FY25 September Financial Dashboard.pdf
- 3. SP Friends FY25 September Summary.pdf