APPROVED

Springfield Prep
CHARTER SCHOOL

Springfield Prep

Minutes

Succession Committee

Date and Time
Monday August 4, 2025 at 4:30 PM

Location
Join Zoom Meeting
https://springfieldprep.zoom.us/j/82561470118?pwd=Ic9NIxJrdPGrMjzZ4GZdZuYy1cmsKF.1
Meeting ID: 825-6147-0118
Password: 192576
(646) 558 8656

Committee Members Present
A. Malone (remote), A. Piela (remote), L. McCoy (remote), S. Monson (remote)

Committee Members Absent
None

Guests Present
B. Spirer (remote), Shawna Wells (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

B. Spirer called a meeting of the Succession Committee Committee of Springfield Prep to order on Monday Aug 4, 2025 at 4:32 PM.

II. Committee Items

A. Purpose of the Committee

Shawna W. began by facilitating a check-in activity about back-to-school traditions. She then outlined the meeting's agenda, thanked everyone for participating, and framed the meeting's goals:

- Guide the succession process
- Pick a committee leader
- Review the job description
- Discuss internal candidates
- Discuss the stakeholder engagement process.

Bill provided an overview of how the committee would operate. He reminded people that the committee is a sub-committee of the board and will meet in open session except in the event that it screens applicants, in which case it is permitted to go into Executive Session. He referenced the excerpt of the state's Open Meeting Law guidance, which was attached.
Shawna M. shared that she hoped to develop a timeline for the process. Shawna W. agreed and said this group would work towards that together.
Amy requested pre-booking meetings.

B. Meeting Schedule

The group discussed meeting scheduling. It decided to meet on Mondays at 4:30 pm, weekly, during August, to start. Bill will schedule these meetings.

C. Committee Leadership

Bill reported out that the governance committee discussed having Anne chair this committee given that she is the Vice Chair of the Board and because Sherriff, the Chair, is not on the committee, and this year will be his final term.

The succession committee discussed this and agreed that it would be valuable to have Anne leading the committee to ensure continuity.
Motion to elect Anne Malone as Chair of the Succession Committee.
The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

A. Malone	Aye
A. Piela	Aye
S. Monson	Aye
L. McCoy	Aye

D. Executive Director Job Description

The committee reviewed the job description.

- It confirmed that the Board decided that its leadership model should be a sole executive director, not co-directors or a director/deputy-director role.
- It reviewed the existing job description for the ED role that was developed and approved by the board last year, although Bill noted that he added two sections: the Requirements and Skills & Competencies sections, which were not board-approved. Bill gave context around this job description, describing this as an overview of the role he serves in.
- Shawna W. emphasized the importance of testing candidates for the necessary skills and adapting the hiring process to match the organization's needs.
- Anne asked whether there should be more detail about strategic planning in the job description.
- Shawna M. asked about whether the requirements felt like true requirements or preferences. I.e., what if a strong candidate has 3 years of senior leadership experience?
- Bill shared that he believed that the role is complex enough that he believed 5 years should be a requirement, although there is some subjectivity in what is considered senior leadership.
- Amy asked that we make minor edits to clarify the term Board of Trustees. She raised the question of whether the section related to impacting education reform in Massachusetts was a requirement or a reflection of how Bill has served in the role. She also discussed how the DEI section could be perceived in the current political climate.
- Shawna W. recommended that we review the job description at each committee meeting so that it can evolve to a final form. The team agreed to review and potentially revise certain sections of the description to ensure clarity and appropriateness.

E. Stakeholder Engagement

- The committee asked about the status of internal candidates who have previously been identified as successor candidates and Bill gave an update about the status of internal leader readiness and interest. He shared that Meghan expressed interest in the role and would likely apply. Bill shared his view that having a strong internal successor candidate who has previously served as an interim Executive Director and has excellent institutional knowledge and credibility is valuable. He shared that he has talked to other leaders who have managed smooth searches, as well as the school's counsel. It is important that the board does its fiduciary duty of having a rigorous process prior to selecting the next leader. Other schools have found this to be beneficial, even for internal candidates, because it helps the community assess their readiness, learn about them, and eventually, provide the right support to them.

- Anne said that she feels like this is an excellent position to be in given the many benefits of having someone who knows the school well, but agreed that there needs to be a thoughtful and open process.
- Amy agreed and shared that it's important that we think about and communicate about this process in the context of purposeful leadership development, otherwise it could be perceived as biased.
- Shawna M. agreed and said that it would be important to engage stakeholders deeply throughout this process.
- Shawna W. discussed this process. She said that during a "pre-enagement process" we can ask some questions early on to shape the process. She noted that listening is an opportunity for the board to build a different relationship with the school community.
- Sarah M. asked about stakeholder groups and whether these would include teachers and staff. Bill agreed that this was really important and said this would be a part of the process.
- Shawna M. echoed Sarah's point about teacher and staff voice. She also asked how we would ensure parent accessibility given how much educational jargon can be involve, like in the job description.
- Amy asked how we would weight the feedback given how much input we expect to collect.
- Shawna noted that the goal is to ask the questions so the board does not say "I wish I asked this sooner." It's also important to think about what we realistically have the capacity for. Some pitfalls she has seen are when people make the process too big and do not have a plan for feedback once it's collected. She also advocated for a way to let people give feedback asynchronously, such as through an online form.
- Anne and Sarah asked about when listening would take place and who would facilitate the meetings.
- Bill shared that he will talk to the full staff about his plans and the transition process on 9/5. Shawna W. noted that once that happens, the board will want to be ready to communicate with the staff and family community to outline a process. She shared that her strong recommendation is that board members facilitate those meetings so they hear directly from stakeholders.
- Anne offered for board member presence when Bill shares this news.
- Amy asked if we could review a school calendar at our next meeting to align family events with stakeholder engagement.
- Bill said he and Shawna W. would work on a communications plan.
- Shawna W. recapped next steps: the committee will continue to revise the job description, will work on a stakeholder engagement process, will work to establish a hiring process, and will determine what will be reported to the board and when.
- Anne added that people should bring edits to the job description and stakeholder engagement process to the next meeting, and bring their own calendars to figure out the level of support they can provide.

III. 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 5:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
A. Malone

Documents used during the meeting

- MA Open Meeting Law Guide Excerpt and Educational Materials.pdf
- SPCS. ED Job Description. Board Approved 5.28.24. Working Version 8.1.25.pdf
- SpringfieldPrep_ED_StakeholderEngagement.pdf