

APPROVED



Foxborough Regional Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Executive Director Candidate Interviews

Date and Time

Monday February 5, 2024 at 5:00 PM

Meeting Format

Whether in person or online, the public is welcome to attend Board/Committee Meetings and have access to meeting minutes. Meetings are held once a month and additionally, as determined by the Board/Committee Chair. All meeting Agendas are posted on the school website at least 48 hours in advance of each public meeting.

During the meeting, the Board and its committees follow the published agenda. Gallery members are not part of the formal discussion or deliberations. Those wishing to speak at a meeting are asked to follow our [Privilege of the Floor Policy](#). To request to speak at a meeting, please complete the following [google form](#) before the start of the meeting.

Trustees Present

Anissia Vixamar, Badawi Dweik, Kathleen Crawford, Mia Ortiz, Sergio Martin, Todd Tetreault

Trustees Absent

Matthew Yezukevich

Guests Present

Christine Barraford

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Kathleen Crawford called a meeting of the board of trustees of Foxborough Regional Charter School to order on Monday Feb 5, 2024 at 5:00 PM.

II. Executive Director Search Committee

A. Interview of Kevin McIntyre

Ms. Crawford welcomed candidate Kevin McIntyre and asked what his favorite part of the day touring FRCS was.

He reported that his favorite part of the day was talking to high school students for half an hour, with a close second being his visits to the classrooms, with an elementary school student asking if he was Joe Biden!

Ms. Crawford: Since you have had an opportunity to look at us and interact with different groups of people, what are your impressions. If you were to be offered the position of Executive Director, and if you were to narrow down your focus, what would you do first, second and third?

Addressing the first part of the question, he was struck by “how much the seniors loved being at school, and how compassionate and invested the staff was in the education of their students.” If he was offered the position, rather than coming in with a plan or mandate, he would first learn more about the school culture and what is happening in the classroom. Starting on July 1st he would engage with as many people as possible in the community of staff, students and parents. By learning what was going well, he would look at opportunities for the school in ways to strengthen its mission.

Ms. Crawford: I realize you are just learning about us, but as Superintendent of Milford Public Schools, do you see any parallels between Milford and FRCS that would be beneficial to carry with you about the getting to know FRCS?

Although Milford Public Schools is a diverse community, he appreciated that, FRCS being one-third the size of Milford with a smaller staff and fewer students and families, presented opportunities to get to know people in a different way.

Mr. Dweik: Can you provide an example of a specific significant crisis you faced in a leadership role and how you handled it?

Notwithstanding the cliché of the pandemic being a perfect example of a challenging time for everyone in education, it provided the opportunity for working collaboratively under the guidance of the Board of Health Director, nursing staff and administrative team in

consistent communication with parents. Teachers had concerns for their own health, and the district responded to those concerns and made the best decisions with the information at the time. As the information shifted over time as health officials learned more about the virus and what could and could not be done safely, decisions were adjusted as well. In an atmosphere of anxiety and fear, there were groups that applauded decisions and groups that pilloried them, but the goal remained to listen to all sides and communicate the rationale for decisions.

Mr. Dweik: Keeping talent in an organizations is not easy. What strategies would you utilize to attract and retain top talent in the organization?

In terms of both the leadership team and teachers, developing a positive, supportive and flexible school environment in which all voices are heard is a priority. As a leader that is “approachable with an open door policy,” his experience has been that “people enjoy working” with him. He has had a high retention in the administrative and leadership with high retention for teacher over the state average. He makes people who work for the district feel valued, while at the same time addressing the reality of fostering retention with a competitive comprehension package.

Ms. Ortiz: please elaborate on what it means to be an effective leader in a diverse community like FRCS. What does that mean to you?

As the “cheerleader for the organization, he is the most optimistic person in the room. When faced with challenges, realizing that he does not have a “monopoly on moving things forward,” his approach as a collaborative leader is to listen to the team that does the work adjusting and shifting based on conditions. With a focus on student learning and growth, the organization takes students in one spot to where they want to go in the future. Quoting the mission of the school “enter to learn and exit to lead,” he would be a leader who listens well, and “with input from the team, makes tough decisions.”

Mr. Martin: why are you applying to FRCS?

Mr. McIntyre stated that a lot of things were reinforced by visiting the school and especially the diversity of population and its connection to serving the community. He added that the “school passion is fantastic.” With its focus on college and career readiness, its college admissions number have been good. Walking in and around the building and in the classrooms evidence “the work to get students where they need to be and where they are going.” With his experience as a Superintendent in Milford for eleven years, he is ready to serve the FRCS community,

Mr. Martin: Can you give an example of tough decisions you have had to make?

While Milford has received the benefits of the Student Opportunity Act with state and federal ESSER funds for a higher percentage of high-need students, Milford has recently received less in Chapter 70 funds. Without laying anyone off, he and the School Committee are in a position to make difficult decisions on cutting a certain percentage of funds.

Ms. Ortiz: The Governor has recently announced new ways of career readiness reducing the demand for a college degree. What skilled based initiatives can you create to support student job readiness?

Mr. McIntyre noted a lot of untapped potential in partnering with local community colleges for certificate programs in advanced manufacturing and technicians in the medical field. He had partnered with community colleges a reasonable distance from Milford Public Schools in building programs that offer a potential pathway for advanced lucrative careers other than a four-year college degree.

Ms. Crawford noted that FRCS students have been able to skip their freshman year in college because of credits earned in dual enrollment programs prior to graduation.

Mr. Tetreault: coming into the district already running processes, how would you go about assessing the skills and performance of your leadership team to determine the effectiveness, cohesiveness and capacity of the leadership team and strategies for coaching where needed?

Mr. McIntyre would get to know the leadership team and find out what is important to them and how they approach the job. A number of protocols would be used, i.e. how principals interact with teachers, team members and colleagues; observing what the priorities are in how they see the future; how administration interacts directly with students in how they speak and the words they use; what they say to parents to how they deal with issues with family and mitigating conflict; and how they approach hiring of teachers.

Mr. Martin: FRCS has had a change in leadership over the years, and the next leader needs to be someone who will be able to earn trust from teachers and staff. How do you plan to do that?

I am someone “who says what they will do and do what they say and follow through and do it.” As you get to know people trust develops over time. Even in disagreements, they respect the fact that I have listened to them and being consistent on how I approach trust building. With eleven years in Milford and six years in Tewksbury, I am committed to this new opportunity, and my goal is to commit for the long term.

Mr. Dweik: how do you handle conflicts and disagreements between the leadership team and staff and please provide an example?

Mr. McIntyre brings people together and has conversations to find common ground whatever the conflict. It may manifest itself in different forms. A recent example is the Milford teacher contract requiring a physician’s note after a certain number of days absent for sickness. Since physicians are not always available, the clause was changed to a requiring a note from a physician’s assistant or nurse practitioner. The main thing is communication and being comfortable with disagreements and work through them. Listen to all sides, make decisions, and support that decision to support or not support.

Ms. Crawford: what have you seen about the FRCS culture that appeals to you from things heard preparing for this opportunity or things you saw and heard participating to day's meetings?

Mr. McIntyre related the positive experience he saw in the classrooms, with every student (except one) with greetings and thumbs up. Each classroom was engaged in good academic activities and culturally positive things. He found the elementary school very comfortable and well run, the middle school engaging students and the high school very positive walking through. The climate felt calm, adults were speaking to students respectfully, with a few times administration respectfully redirecting students with them being responsive as well as administration and teacher actions positive.

Mr. Dweik: how will you measure performance and how it will affect assessment?

Mr. McIntyre will focus on enrollment and how to move enrollment in a positive direction. Also on the matrix is test scores, college admission rates, management of budget with every staff position filled in challenging employment market, as well as the recruitment and retaining of educators.

Mr. Martin: what is your experience with negotiations with union and non-union contracts?

Mr. McIntyre has successfully settled contracts with five different unions, i.e. teachers, administrators, custodial staff, secretarial staff and behavioral assistants and teacher assistants. The key is to be respectful to all parties and listen what they have to share about their positions. While all negotiations come down to money and time, a positive approach to negotiations is critical.

Ms. Crawford: given the great experience described, are there any things that you would do differently in this job compared with what was done in your prior work experiences. Given that we are a smaller organization than Milford but entering its twenty-fifth year as a charter school, is there anything that you would do differently or approach this new job?

Mr. McIntyre would employ the same approach and come to the relationships with respect and communication. Building relationships requires showing respect to what folks are negotiating for, and communicated in such a way that they know their concerns are being heard. Insofar as different issues require different approaches with "Monday morning quarterbacking," keeping lines of communication open is critical. He referenced a conversation with a teacher on the bargaining team who relayed her appreciation that even though "we can disagree, we can still sit next to each other at the unified basketball game" and maintain a personal relationship even though there is disagreement professionally.

Mr. Tarvin: between what you have heard or seen, what are the most concerning things to you?

There are two concerning things: the turnover of teachers and staff, why it is happening and how it can be turned around as well as the enrollment dip in the last couple of years,

obtaining data and making a concerted effort to turn around by outreach to the community.

Mr. Tetreault: how is it that you are hoping to grow and learn from this opportunity and how you can help FRCS to grow?

Citing that this would be his first time working in a charter school, Mr. McIntyre would take the opportunity to grow in this different environment and learn how finances and operations work and differ with public schools. He referred to the nineteen years of central office experience he brings to the table and his outstanding record recruiting staff “that stay.” Also citing his experience at Notre Dame High School in Lawrence where applications increased following aggressive passionate messaging and “significant public relations work to get parents to trust their children to a brand new school.” He also cited his time at Tewksbury High School with competition from the tech school convincing students to stay and in Milford. He added 500 students in seven years. His credentials also include assistant superintendent of curriculum instruction and his perspective from different grade levels as elementary principal and secondary level and bringing an “authentic voice to each.”

Mr. Tetreault invited Mr. McIntyre to ask questions of the Board members.

What interested you in my application?

Ms. Crawford stated his diversity of experience was definitely what made her curious about him. Also, the fact that that he had been in different environments handling different kinds of challenges, that he was candid about the pandemic and that she had a “good feeling about what [he] brought to the table.”

Ms. Vixamar noted that as co-chair on the Executive Director search and notwithstanding the significant amounts of experience candidates brought to the table, it was the soft skills of the candidate that was an important part of the role, i.e. how the candidate could interact and communicate with staff, students and families to build positive trusting relationships.

Mr. Tetreault reiterated the importance of those qualities following the instability of that leadership role and “erosion” it caused. He appreciated the intangible energy that Mr. McIntyre could bring to alter the professional climate and culture of the school.

What are you looking for the Executive Director to do within the first 30-60-90 days? Mr. Tetreault mentioned the two key metrics as enrollment and professional climate and culture.

Mr. Martin stated the ability of the Executive Director to: a) earn the trust of staff, students and families; and b) once built it will lead to the higher retention of teachers and lead to more stability with the focus on student excellence (this was hard to do with constant changes being made.) The progression of stability will lead to strategic planning for the long-term to benefit the entire organization.

Ms. Vixamar stated that she was excited about the prospect of strategic vision for value of both teacher and student retention, i.e. an elementary parent coming into the school

being excited about the trajectory of education to the middle and high schools for the child's overall experience.

Mr. Dweik stated the importance of the Executive Director to "establish presence," conduct program assessment and review and make recommendations for potential adjustment and handle conflict and challenges as an important factor of performance.

As a member of the administrative team, what are you most proud of FRCS as a regional charter school?

Ms. Crawford stated that one of the things that she found very gratifying and exciting was to hear speeches "from the stage when students graduate," of those recounting their experiences since Kindergarten. She found the fact gratifying that many of the students have gone through K-12 at the school and were continuing their education at top schools. She noted the "great energy" she witnessed at the science fair or the basketball game which "may not quite be what it used to be but hopeful that the right person can get it back and even better." She had two nieces who went up through grade 8 and are now involved in successful careers.

Ms. Ortiz has two children, one at elementary and the other at middle school. She noted the "passionate and committed professionals eager to engage with students," and the special offerings for music, computers, gym and Spanish which increase the intellectual curiosity of students. She sees that curiosity "light" in her own children and parents relaying that same experience for their children. "Children want to be here," and this is the true testament of the power of FRCS.

Mr. Tetreault noted that families from twenty-two different towns go through "extra challenges" to create community. FRCS has been that community for over twenty-five years and continues to have potential. The most compelling fact is to see the diversity of background that brings families together "as one of the coolest things we are."

Mr. Dweik's four children, now college graduates, benefitted from the inclusivity and diversity of the FRCS environment. Values of community involvement and safety prompted families to get to know each other in a spirit of support.

Mr. Tetreault announced that time had expired for the interview session, and he and Ms. Crawford thanked Mr. McIntyre for sharing his candidacy for consideration as Executive Director.

III. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

Todd Tetreault made a motion to adjourn.

Kathleen Crawford seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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|--------------------|--------|
| Badawi Dweik | Aye |
| Kathleen Crawford | Aye |
| Anissia Vixamar | Aye |
| Sergio Martin | Aye |
| Mia Ortiz | Aye |
| Matthew Yezukevich | Absent |
| Todd Tetreault | Aye |

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine Barraford

Documents used during the meeting

None

The listed matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.