APPROVED

# Collegiate Charter School of Lowell

# Minutes

## Regular Board Meeting

April 2025

**Date and Time**
Tuesday April 15, 2025 at 5:30 PM

**Location**
Collegiate Charter School of Lowell
1857 Middlesex Street, Lowell, MA 01851

**Meeting Notice**
The Collegiate Charter School of Lowell, 1857 Middlesex Street, Lowell, MA will hold a Board of Trustees monthly meeting on April 15, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in room 1223.

Posted to The Lowell Sun 4/13/2025.

**Trustees Present**
A. Miller, B. Chapman, D. Tucker, K. McCarthy, P. Patel, W. McGrail

**Trustees Absent**
E. Nelson

**Trustees who arrived after the meeting opened**
K. McCarthy

**Guests Present**

A. Bakr, Brian Henderson, C. Connors, C. Crane, C. Nystrom, P. Rondon, T. Cameron

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## I. Opening Items

### A. Call the Meeting to Order

W. McGrail called a meeting of the board of trustees of Collegiate Charter School of Lowell to order on Tuesday Apr 15, 2025 at 5:46 PM.

### B. Record Attendance

### C. School Mission

The entire board recited the School Mission.

### D. Approve Agenda

B. Chapman made a motion to approve the agenda as presented.
D. Tucker seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

### E. Approve Minutes - January 2025

B. Chapman made a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Board Meeting on 03-11-25.
D. Tucker seconded the motion.
Approval of March 2025 minutes as presented.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
K. McCarthy arrived at 5:49 PM.

## II. Public Comment

### A. Floor Open to the Public

No public comments.

## III. Director's Report

### A. School Updates

Update provided by Brian Henderson, Athletic Director.

- Spring Sports for 2024-2025
  - Track & Field (co-op with Lowell Catholic)
  - Boys' Volleyball
    - Currently 3-4
  - Boys' JV Volleyball

        - Currently undefeated
    - Girls' Flag Football (not currently MIAA)
        - Currently 4-0 (beat Lowell High, Westford Academy, Great Lawrence, Pentucket
    - Boys' Flag Football
        - New and great practice.  First game is today.
    - Working on co-ops for Girls Tennis, Softball, and Boys Baseball, Lacrosse for 2025-2026
    - Cheer joined MIAA for 2024-2025 school year
    - Wrestling Team possible MIAA team for 2025-2026
- Kevin Ortins, Girls Varsity Basketball Coach - MCSAO North Division Coach of the Year
- Girls Basketball has been ranked as high as #21 in the state in D5, won MCSAO charter league
- Vanessa Guingue ended with 1,162 points for her career
- Cheer came in 2nd place, in their division, in their first ever competition in MIAA
- Middle school boys' basketball went undefeated and won the EAA championship for 2nd year in a row
- New Middle School flag football league started by Kevin Ortins, Assistant AD, with about 90 students

Question from B. Chapman: Archives of successes in growing Athletics Department, how are we recording to look back on in the future.

- Talking about how best. Currently tracking records in excel format.  Previously have just basketball records.
- Suggestion: Collegiate Sports Hall of Fame
- C. Nystrom: Working on trophy case in High School lobby

Events Updates from A. Bakr.

- A. Bailey had her baby on Friday, April 11th
- MCAS Pep Rally in Gr. 3-5 on 3/28 consisting of musical chairs, pies in the face, capture the flag
- March Mathness Competition - 2C (Mrs. Smith) won the competition
    - Created results.  Teachers very excited. Expected 80% completion by EOY, already surpassed goal in April
- Model UN at Winchester High School
    - Jessica Higgins (2026) won Honorable Mention
- Gr. 3-5 Perfect Attendance Awards Ceremony

Upcoming Events:

- 4/29 - Mobile Dentist visiting Collegiate
- 4/29 - Planting Party with Mill City Grows

- Future events shared with Board via flyer/calendar
- 5/23 - Arts Festival on May 23rd with visual arts, musical performances, and spring play
- 5/29 - STEM Discovery Night
- 5/30 - Junior/Senior Prom (6:00p) at Lenzi's
- Today 4/15 we held our College Fair.  Gr. 8-12 attended to speak with reps from 60 colleges. Innovation Academy brought 40-50 students.  Great feedback from all.

Academic Update provided by A. Bakr and C. Connors.

- All students are exceeding academic internal goals
- Collegiate students have been accepted to 90 colleges for Fall 2025
- Decision Day is May 1st
- Standardized Testing
    - April 30th - All juniors take SAT at Collegiate
    - SAT Prep courses in ELA and Math current courses
    - Sophomores and Juniors will take PSAT in fall 2025
- Attendance
    - Average daily attendance is 90%
    - As of April 15th
        - K-5 = 95%
        - 6-8 = 95.7%
        - 9-12 = 91.7%

Question from B. Chapman - Any interest or connections with the HBCU's?

- A. Bakr - One student has visited and applied. Waitlisted currently.

MAP Data review from C. Connors -

- Students recently took Math and Science MAP testing
    - All grades - 71st percentile for growth (fall 40th) - our students compared to national averages
        - KG - 88th percentile
        - K-4, 6-10 grew
        - Gr. 5 remained the same, working on interventions
- A. Bakr spoke of changes and approach to supporting students' post-separation from EMO
- Most Growth
    - KG, Gr. 3, Gr. 8 in math
- Only Gr. 5 and 8 take Science
    - Both showed growth
- New proposed intervention curriculum for 2025-26 for Gr. 3-12
    - READ 180
    - Math 180

- New Teacher Institute for April
    - Reviewed evaluation process and evidence collection
- Math and Science MCAS Bootcamp during April Vacation
    - Parents have been contacted to invite students
    - Rebranding of incentives and such to get students excited about bootcamp
- Sharing of K-12 Cultural Projects from Spanish classes. Now on display.
- Social Studies working on Industrial Revolution. Worked on class projects.

B. Chapman made a motion to pause regular meeting to enter executive session at 6:46p.
D. Tucker seconded the motion.
Attorney Mark McCarthy called in to provide feedback on settlement.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
B. Chapman made a motion to restart regular board meeting at 6:55 p.m.
D. Tucker seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
K. McCarthy made a motion to approve the Executive Director to sign the settlement agreements with Bicknell Associates LLC. and Commons Wealth LLC as drafted and presented by legal council.
A. Miller seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| B. Chapman | Aye |
| K. McCarthy | Aye |
| W. McGrail | Aye |
| D. Tucker | Aye |
| A. Miller | Aye |
| P. Patel | Aye |
| E. Nelson | Absent |

A. Bark provided update on search and hire of new leadership staff.

- Dr. Dan Hanneken has been hired as the Assistant Executive Director/Director of Student Support Services
    - 30+ years of experience in leadership roles
    - Starts in June 2025
- Jennifer Mahon has been hired as the Director of Special Education.
    - 20+ years of experience in public education
    - Started April 2025
- Dina Muldoon has been hired as the Business Manager
    - 15+ years of experience in education, municipal accounting, grant management, budgeting and compliance
    - Starts May 1, 2025

A. Bakr provided update on strategic partnerships

- Increase positive reputation
- Increase community network of resources
- Increase potential fundraising partners/donors
- Increase additional internships and volunteer opportunities
- Search for potential new board members

C. Crane provided additional update on partnerships:

- LASA (Love All Serve All) Leadership
- Lowell Youth Leadership Program
- Aaron's Presents
- Girls, Inc. (possible summer program at Collegiate for 75 students)
- Lowell Five
- Jean D'Arc Credit Union
- Project Learn
- Possible connection to get students involved/visit to state house

**B. Items for Board Discussion**

A. Bakr provided updates on current environment for charter schools in MA

- MA Charter Association seeking additional support
- Partner and promote our visibility

A. Bakr provided update on DESE mid-cycle meeting

- very positive feedback compared to last renewal and previous mid-cycle
- greater detail summary provided at May 2025 meeting

A. Bakr provided additional information on Competency Determination Requirements and Graduation Requirements

- Grad requirements are defined at school level following DESE frameworks
- Comp. requirements (previously passing MCAS) are now defined by school level

Graduation Requirements:

- Proposed Changes beginning with the Class of 2029
  - Include World History as a requirement (currently only US History is requirement)
  - Include community service (10 hours per year) at Collegiate for a total of 40 hours
  - Financial Literacy - 1 quarter

Question from K. McCarthy - Do all schools currently do Financial Literacy?

- A. Bakr - no, but has been increasing need. Not a DESE requirement.

Competency Determination Requirements:

- High School Competency Determination: ELA/Math Students at the Collegiate Charter School of Lowell can earn their CD requirements in 2 ways
    - Students can pass the 10th grade ELA/Math MCAS with a score of 470 or above
        - Current EL students with ACCESS below 3.0, can have MCAS score of 465
    - Students can pass the 10th grade Science MCAS with a score of 467 or above
        - Current EL students with ACCESS below 3.0, can have MCAS score of 465
    - Students who do not pass the MCAS will complete and ELA/Math/Science portfolio that meets all DESE requirements, as well as completing the semester-long portfolio course at some point before graduation.
        - Portfolio
            - Scorers review work samples that document each required standard and determine whether the evidence meets the following criteria
                - is all work submitted

### C. Items for Board Action

D. Tucker made a motion to adopt graduation requirement changes as presented beginning with the Class of 2029.
K. McCarthy seconded the motion.
Graduation Requirements:

- Proposed Changes beginning with the Class of 2029
    - Include World History as a requirement (currently only US History is requirement)
    - Include community service (10 hours per year) at Collegiate for a total of 40 hours
    - Financial Literacy - 1 quarter

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
D. Tucker made a motion to accept the Competency Determination Requirements as presented.
K. McCarthy seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

## IV. Committee Reports

### A.

**Finance**

Update provided by A. Miller.

- Sub-committee meeting prior to this board meeting
- Review of budget vs. actual
- Everything is in line with budget

Question: Employer FICA med over budget.

- C. Nystrom: Staff in MTRS pay medicaid and not FICA

A. Miller made a motion to accept the monthly report as presented.
B. Chapman seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
A. Miller discussed setting aside funds for capital outlay funds as discussed in sub-committee meeting. Help to prepare for future renovations in the amount of $1,454,028 in restricted capital outlay.
A. Miller made a motion to move $1,454,028 into a capital restricted fund for future renovations and repairs over the next 10-years.
B. Chapman seconded the motion.
Will be disclosed in bond report.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

## B. Academic Excellence

No additional updates beyond presentation from C. Connors.

## C. Governance

Shared MA Charter Public Schools Association Board Resources

- Overall Board Support
- Clarifying Governance vs. Management
- Resources provided
- Board job descriptions
- Open meeting law
- Director evaluation

Board member recruiting updates

- Shared resume of potential candidate
- Request candidate to attend May 20, 2025, Board Meeting

B. Chapman provided background on candidate and recommended candidate.

## D. Board Development (Fundraising)

Currently $6,175 in scholarship fund.

Question: K. McCarthy asked about when the funds are needed for scholarships. Who is requesting donations for scholarships?

- A. Bakr - C. Crane continues to solicit donation funds. Suggests strategic planning to develop a process moving forward.

Question: B. Chapman asked about rental fees of facility and turf field.

- C. Nystrom - currently turf field is being rented. Monies are earmarked for scholarships. A. Bakr shared sample facility rental fees schedule from another district.

Continued discussion of current fundraising efforts and possibilities moving forward.

Leadership will create schedule of fees to share with the board for review and approval.

**E. Facilities Committee**

C. Nystrom provided update.

- Garage
  - Architect currently designing garage.
  - Bid to be released.
  - June construction planned.

Potential Building Projects - tabled for future budget meeting discussion.

**F. Executive Director Support and Evaluation Committee**

A. Bakr provided documentation previously shared with the board regarding Executive Director's review, goals/results, and compensation analysis.

Executive Director review for 2024-2025 approved at March Board Meeting. Will schedule sub-committee meeting to discuss compensation and to review goals/results for 2024-2025 to-date.

Discussion on Executive Director salary led by W. McGrail. Process of setting salary. Discussion of increase for 2024-2025. Discussion on legal matter between Collegiate Charter School of Lowell and MA Department of Children and Families and its representatives.

Board will review salary increase for Executive Director to become effective July 1, 2025. Contract renewal to be signed by Board Chairman.

Comment by D. Tucker to A. Bakr commending the work done by A. Bakr. He has been there for the students, the faculty, and for the Board of Trustees.

A. Bakr spoke about the hard work being done and his dedication to the students of Collegiate. He acts in the best interest of the students at all times. Requests to rely on the resources available and the collective expertise of everyone.

A. Bakr requests to schedule next sub-committee meeting to discuss goals and progress. Meeting to be scheduled.
B. Chapman made a motion to have Collegiate Charter School of Lowell cover legal fees regarding legal matter between MA Department of Children and Families and its representatives and Collegiate Charter School of Lowell.
A. Miller seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
A. Miller made a motion to adjust salary increase of 7.8% to $178,000.00 for Executive Director for the 2024-2025 school year effective July 1, 2024.
D. Tucker seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| A. Miller | Aye |
| P. Patel | Aye |
| W. McGrail | Aye |
| B. Chapman | Aye |
| E. Nelson | Absent |
| D. Tucker | Aye |
| K. McCarthy | Aye |

## V. Executive Session

### A. Bicknell Easement Settlement

Entered executive session at 6:47 p.m.
Attorney Mark McCarthy called in to discuss settlement agreements with Bicknell Associates LLC and Commons Wealth LLC.
Board reviewed settlement agreements and received clarification and attorney recommendations.
No questions from Board regarding drafted settlement agreements.
Mark McCarthy awaiting response from attorney from Bicknell on agreement.
Recommendation that A. Bakr signs agreement upon final approval from Board of Trustees.
B. Chapman made a motion to exit executive session and return to regular meeting.
D. Tucker seconded the motion.
Exited executive session at 6:54 p.m.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

## VI. Closing Items

### A. Next Board Meeting

### B. Adjourn Meeting

K. McCarthy made a motion to adjourn meeting.
B. Chapman seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
T. Cameron