APPROVED

Lawrence Family Development Charter School

Minutes

LFDCS Board Meeting-October 9, 2024

Date and Time
Wednesday October 9, 2024 at 5:30 PM

Location
Orange Wheeler-Conference Room
355 Haverhill Street
Lawrence, MA 01841

Zoom Meeting
https://zoom.us/j/2032549498?pwd=Uhun3PubLdHgaVldOnoNCRG0J1F4h7.1&omn=99666145626
Meeting ID: 203 254 9498
Passcode: yJ32tX

Trustees Present
C. Needham (remote), D. DeFillippo, E. Nolberto, G. Lopez, J. Henriquez (remote), J. Tejada (remote), L. Perez (remote)

Trustees Absent
J. Cedeno, L. McRae, R. Almanzar

Trustees who arrived after the meeting opened
L. Perez

Guests Present
A. Croes, C. Parcell, D. Thakkar, H. Castleman, L. Lawler, N. Arpin, Nicole Dean, P. Macario, S. Perry, Sean Reardon, T. Schumann, Y. Rodriguez, rsanchez@lfdcs.org

I. Opening Items

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Record Attendance

C. Call the Meeting to Order

G. Lopez called a meeting of the board of trustees of Lawrence Family Development Charter School to order on Wednesday Oct 9, 2024 at 5:44 PM.

D. Approve Minutes

E. Nolberto made a motion to approve the minutes from the September Board Meeting on 09-11-24.
D. DeFillippo seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. DeFillippo	Aye
L. Perez	Absent
G. Lopez	Aye
J. Tejada	Aye
J. Henriquez	Aye
R. Almanzar	Absent
L. McRae	Absent
C. Needham	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye
J. Cedeno	Absent

E. Re-elect Linette Perez to second term.

Linette's term expired 08/31/2024. She expressed her acceptance to run a second term.
D. DeFillippo made a motion to Vote Linette Perez for a second term.
E. Nolberto seconded the motion.
Linette perez arrived late therefore this was able to be voted on.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

E. Nolberto	Aye
J. Henriquez	Aye
L. McRae	Absent
J. Cedeno	Absent
J. Tejada	Aye
C. Needham	Aye
R. Almanzar	Absent
G. Lopez	Aye

Roll Call

D. DeFillippo	Aye
L. Perez	Aye

F. Re-elect Jose Tejada as Board Secretary.

D. DeFillippo made a motion to Vote Jose Tejada for a second term as Board Secretary.
J. Henriquez seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

J. Tejada	Abstain
D. DeFillippo	Aye
L. McRae	Absent
G. Lopez	Aye
R. Almanzar	Absent
L. Perez	Absent
E. Nolberto	Aye
C. Needham	Aye
J. Cedeno	Absent
J. Henriquez	Aye

II. Superintendent's Report

A. Board Professional Development

A new item has been added to the agenda due to rechartering. DESE has asked what professional development the board participates in. Darshan informed the Board that the platform *Board on Track* offers webinars and coaching through our membership with them. On the Board on Track's home page, there are 2-3 monthly sessions. Any outside training can also be counted, Board members would only need to provide the information of their training to place with their file.

B. Audit Report for FY 2023-2024

Jayne Andrews from Anstiss provided her report for the financial audit conducted for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. She reported that she had met with the finance committee the week prior.
ANSTISS requested a representation letter dated with the October 9, 2024 date.

Jayne Andrews highlighted fluctuations in the financial statements, including an increase in cash and cash equivalents, revenues, and accounts receivable. Jayne also discussed the significant accounting policies and sensitive disclosures in the financial statements. Jayne Andrews also highlighted a significant increase in various expenses such as salaries, rent, and software subscriptions. Jayne explained the increase in office expenses due to additional equipment leases and travel expenses. They also discussed the cash flow statement, noting an increase in cash received from tuition and expenses

related to employees, suppliers, and contractors. Jayne confirmed that no issues were noted during the Finance Committee meeting that would require disclosure in the financial statements.

No further questions from the board to Jayne Andrews about her report.
D. Thakkar asked for management and discussion analysis, it was included in the draft.
Changing Basis to Basic on page 12 of the draft report.

C. Needham made a motion to approve the 2023-2024 audit.
D. DeFillippo seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Needham	Aye
L. McRae	Absent
J. Henriquez	Aye
R. Almanzar	Absent
J. Cedeno	Absent
J. Tejada	Aye
L. Perez	Absent
D. DeFillippo	Aye
G. Lopez	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye

C. Capital Improvement

Chris Needham raised a question about the Capital Plan, which was clarified by S. Perry. S. Perry confirmed that the capital plan for fiscal year 2024- 2025 would not be part of the 2023-2024 audit, as it is a projection for future years.
C. Needham presented a resolution regarding the school's lease of real estate property from Lawrence Family Development, Inc. The resolution aimed to establish a capital plan to fund capital expenditures, including leasehold improvements, and to transfer $1,148,356 to the Capital Reserve to fund the capital plan. The Board discussed the capital plan, which was driven by the school's strong cash position and the need to avoid returning funds to the state. C. Needham states that the board has to approve utilizing the surplus for capital improvements. The resolution was passed with a supermajority vote.
C. Needham made a motion to approve the resolution of the Capital Assessment Plan that will adopt the capital improvement plan and will use the surplus over the 24-25 school year.
D. DeFillippo seconded the motion.
This require super majority.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

J. Henriquez	Aye
C. Needham	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye
R. Almanzar	Absent
G. Lopez	Aye
L. McRae	Absent
J. Tejada	Aye
J. Cedeno	Absent
L. Perez	Aye
D. DeFillippo	Aye

D. Corporate Resolution

The Corportate Resolution for 2024-2025 is missing the final two signatures. Chris Needham and Jose Tejada. Chris will sign the document first and scan it to Jose Tejada for signature.
L. Perez arrived at 6:17 PM.

E. Superintendent Search Committee Chair

At the last board meeting the subcommittee was created but no Chair has been appointed. It has been discussed to appoint D. DeFillippo as Chair. Dave accepts and is happy to serve. He expressed that in his research there needs to be more representation of about 8 members with board members, trustees, and school staff on the committee. He is thinking about including a couple of members from the Charter School. If the board agrees he would like to ask Ms. Castleman to appoint or name 2 individuals (faculty or staff). Dave emphasizes the importance of a fair and transparent selection process with buy-in from all stakeholders.

Dave says the committee meetings have to abide by the open meeting law. Once they get to the stage of interviewing individuals they can go into executive sessions. Initial meetings can be conducted via Zoom. Regarding a timeline, the peak window for applicants applying is usually November through February. The goal is to start now with the preliminary work to have the job posting by no later than Thanksgiving.
E. Nolberto made a motion to Dave DeFillippo to serve as chair of the Superintendent Search Committee.
L. Perez seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

R. Almanzar	Absent
J. Tejada	Aye
J. Henriquez	Aye
D. DeFillippo	Aye
L. Perez	Aye

Roll Call

J. Cedeno	Absent
L. McRae	Absent
G. Lopez	Aye
C. Needham	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye

F. Academic Advisory Committee

Jennifer Cedeno is no longer available to participate.

The AAC will need to elect three board members and 5 faculty. The term is one year for all members.
D. DeFillippo will continue on the Committee and E. Nolberto will continue as well. G. Lopez will replace J. Cisneros on the committee.
D. DeFillippo asks that the faculty representation be a new group to provide new perspectives and a wider view of the needs.
Ms. Castleman says she did put out an announcement to get faculty and she will put it out again. She says in the beginning of the school year there were a lot of competing committees. E. Nolberto says that it is helpful to get the representation. Dave would like a minimum of 3 representatives, one from each building.

This committee will also have to follow the open meeting law. Any agenda items need to be sent to D. DeFillippo at least a week before the meeting.

G. Management Services Agreement.

Work continues on this according to D. Thakkar. This is being expanded to include job descriptions of individuals providing the services. This will help in accountability and transparency on both sides of the organization.

H. Sexual Health Education Policy

Ms. Castleman said a new health curriculum has been introduced this school year. We need to have a policy sent out in the beginning of the school year although the sexual health unit is not going to be taught until towards the end of the school year. Ms. Castleman presented to the Board a policy that she adopted from the States Department to be voted on and added to the handbook.

Elizabeth expressed she is content with the transparency on the new health curriculum and appreciates the admin bringing this forward with notice to the parents.
E. Nolberto made a motion to accept the sexual health education policy.
D. DeFillippo seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

J. Tejada	Aye
J. Cedeno	Absent
D. DeFillippo	Aye
L. Perez	Aye
L. McRae	Absent
J. Henriquez	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye
C. Needham	Aye
R. Almanzar	Absent
G. Lopez	Aye

III. Principal's Report

A. Panorama Results

Nicole Dean-Ward explained to the Board of Trustees what Panorama is. Panorama is a system that offers teachers a comprehensive view of the students, attendance, grades, behavior, test scores and social emotional levels. Panorama syncs with PowerSchool and teachers can view their students and their data in one area.

N. Dean-Ward presented the results of this Fall's assessment. The data chart represents the children who responded favorably.
Teachers in grades K1 -2nd conducted the surveys for their prospective students.
Students in grades 3-8 conducted the assessment themselves.

N. Dean-Ward compared the results from LFDCS to the national results. The areas of concern were Social Awareness and Self-Efficacy.
All students in all grades are participating in morning meeting sessions, SEL and the first quarter of the health curriculum touches upon social-emotional health.
The goal is to conduct the evaluation again in the winter and then in the spring.

B. MCAS Results

Ms. Castleman reviewed the results of the MCAS for the 2023-2024 school year. Students in grades 3-8 took the exam in math, reading, and science, as well as a new civics test for 8th graders. Ms. Castleman expressed excitement for this "championship year" after last year's "rebuilding year". Overall we are seeing precovid results. These results are also posted on the DESE website. The tests measure student performance against state standards using scoring levels from does not meet to exceeding expectations.

Ms. Castlema also went over the accountability results. She presented the school's progress and achievements, highlighting the increase in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in various subjects. She noted that the school has moved up from moderate progress to substantial progress towards targets, earning more points in MCAS achievement and student growth. Ms. Castleman also discussed the school's accountability measures, emphasizing the importance of supporting the lowest-performing student groups. She expressed excitement about the progress made and the team effort that contributed to it.

C. School Site Council Minutes

Ms. Castleman went over the first meeting for the SSC held on 09/25/24. This school year there are returning members and new staff.

There are currently 6 parent members and even more parents who wanted to be part of the SSC this year.
Some concerns that were brought up by parents during the meeting were about the uniforms, meal times and health curriculum. School Nutrionist, Rachel Sanchez was present and was able to give an overview of the meal times. At the next meeting, Ms. Castleman will discuss the health curriculum more in depth.

D. High School Fair

The Head of School for the Upper School, Ms. Arpin, gave an overview of the High School Fair. This year's fair took place on 10/03/24. All but 2 students from the 8th grade class attended. 50 students from other schools in the city attended. The school received positive feedback from the High School representatives stating that our students asked great questions. There were 32 high schools present.

E. Parent Coffee/ALICE Training

Ms. Castleman provided the board with a condensed presentation on what the ALICE training and drills consist of. With ALICE, there have been changes to traditional emergency response. She explained what the school's new emergency preparedness program consists of and what faculty and students are trained on such as situational awareness, communication, and response options. Ms. Castleman explained that staff are trained annually on ALICE protocols and conduct drills with students. The program emphasizes plain language communication in emergencies and encourages staff to evacuate if safe to do so.
One change that was implemented this year in all school buildings due to the ALICE Training is the ability for all staff to be able to page in case of an emergency instead of just being the HOS and receptionist having the ability to announce in the event of a danger.

F. October 2024 Wellness Highlights

School nutritionist, Rachel Sanchez wanted to provide the Board of Directors an update on the changes made last school year through the Wellness Committee. She talked about how they implemented composting in all school buildings and the Green Team. The Green Street Initiative planted trees to reduce heat. They implemented new menu items. She's also worked with different grade levels and implemented activities and taste testing. She conducted surveys and changed the snack schedule. They added a snack to the Upper School which wasn't there before and they also conducted a bullying survey.

For this year they reduced the size of classrooms in the dining area at the K1 and K2 levels.
For Bullying Prevention Month and to honor this, students will wear orange on Jeans Day. They will continue to have discussions on kindness. She worked to create healthy meal guidelines that are on the website and shared with parents such as during Right from the Start and School Site Council Meeting.
The wellness committee will be meeting 4-5 times during the year. There are 10 members on the committee. Their goal is to expand composting and healthy eating in and out of school.

IV. Other Business

A. Firewall Upgrade

IT Director, Tony Schumann gave an update to the Board of Directors regarding the school's firewall software. The need to upgrade the school's firewalls is due to the manufacturer's discontinuation of support and updates. T. Schumann researched the top 10 companies that provide firewalls. He chose one from the top 3 looking at cost and ease of use. He recommended Fortinet as the new firewall system, highlighting its affordability and widespread use. T. Schumann emphasized the importance of the upgrade to support the increasing number of web applications and devices, and to allow for faster internet speeds and better support for students and infrastructure.

Germinudy Lopez asked about the possibility of speaking with City Hall about converting 34 West Street to a one-way in the morning and afternoon to ease the traffic for drop-off and pick-up.

P. Macario said he has tried to control the traffic and has resorted to calling the police and traffic enforcement.

Pedro, Darshan, and Germinudy will meet to discuss this further.

V. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

E. Nolberto made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
D. DeFillippo seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
L. McRae	Absent
G. Lopez	Aye
J. Tejada	Aye
D. DeFillippo	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye
C. Needham	Aye
R. Almanzar	Absent
J. Cedeno	Absent
L. Perez	Aye
J. Henriquez	Abstain

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Y. Rodriguez