APPROVED

Lawrence Family Development Charter School

Minutes

LFDCS Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday February 12, 2025 at 5:30 PM

Location
OW Conference Room
355 Haverhill Street
Lawrence, MA 01841

Trustees Present
D. DeFillippo, E. Nolberto (remote), G. Lopez, J. Cedeno (remote), J. Henriquez (remote), J. Tejada (remote)

Trustees Absent
C. Needham, L. McRae, L. Perez, R. Almanzar

Trustees who arrived after the meeting opened
G. Lopez

Guests Present
A. Croes, C. Parcell, D. Thakkar, H. Castleman, N. Arpin (remote), Nicole Dean-Ward, P. Macario, S. Perry, Y. Rodriguez, sreardon@lfdcs.org

I. Opening Items

A. **Record Attendance**

B. **Call the Meeting to Order**

D. DeFillippo called a meeting of the board of trustees of Lawrence Family Development Charter School to order on Wednesday Feb 12, 2025 at 5:37 PM.

C. What is a Charter Public School

Darshan T. highlighted a video created by Charter School Association regarding Charter Public schools in Massachusetts.
This year, LFDCS did not participate but he hopes that next year, the school can be a part of this.
G. Lopez arrived at 5:40 PM.

D. Approve Minutes

D. DeFillippo made a motion to approve the minutes from LFDCS Board Meeting - January 8, 2025 on 01-08-25.
E. Nolberto seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

II. Superintendent's Report

A. Breakfast for Rep. Frank A. Moran.

Darshan T. informed the Board about a fundraising breakfast organized for State Representative Frank Moran. This event, which was also held last year, will take place on March 6 at 8:30 AM in the Foley Library. Darshan emphasized that this presents an excellent opportunity to engage with local representatives in a more personal, one-on-one environment. The event was well attended last year. Representative Frank Moran has been instrumental in passing several bills that benefit schools. Darshan also advised the Board to expect an invitation from Meredith Coolidge of the Advocates for Massachusetts Charter Schools.

B. Immigration update

Darshan T. reported on a memo that has been distributed to both families and members of the Board regarding concerns surrounding immigration policies and processes in the

school. The memo included resources for families who have questions and concerns regarding ICE and schools.
He highlighted and spoke on item #8, "Know Your Rights," since there were more inquiries about the rights of students in this context.
The key points to note are as follows:

- The school does not request immigration status from students applying or enrolling. Massachusetts law mandates that schools must enroll students regardless of their immigration status.
- The school does not permit federal agents to enter the premises without a valid warrant signed by a judge and a verified badge number.
- The school does not share student records unless a court order or parental consent is provided.

Additionally, the Massachusetts Attorney General issued a memo for K-12 schools affirming the same information, emphasizing on the commitment to protecting student privacy and maintaining a safe environment for all students.

C. PowerSchool security incident update

Darshan T. addressed a recent security incident involving PowerSchool, which is not officially classified as a data breach, though it closely resembled one. PowerSchool has stated that if any families' data was compromised, they will directly notify the affected individuals and offer credit monitoring services. Darshan T. reassured the Board that LFDCS does not collect sensitive data, aside from names and addresses.

Dave D. inquired whether any feedback had been received from parents or faculty regarding the incident. School administrators confirmed that no such feedback had been reported. Hali C. clarified that parents were informed during a parent coffee session, where school personnel explained that the issue was related to PowerSchool's system and not the result of any actions from the school's IT department.

PowerSchool is responsible for reporting the incident to the Attorney General and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). This was a nationwide event.

D. Management Services Agreement

The Management Service Agreement is a standing agenda item. Darshan T. provided an update on the status of the agreement, noting that they are still awaiting a draft from the attorneys at Lawrence Prospera. There is no confirmed date for when the draft will be available. Darshan T. requested that Susan P. provide a timeline, ideally a draft or a definitive date, by the next board meeting.

Darshan T. recommended adding two positions to the school side, explaining that as the school personnel and budget have expanded, it makes sense to allocate these positions within the school's structure.

Dave D. inquired whether there has been ongoing communication with Lawrence Prospera to ensure that the proposed changes are beneficial and agreeable to both organizations. Darshan T. reassured the Board that the school and the nonprofit are in mutual agreement and are negotiating the terms amicably.

Darshan T. shared and briefly reviewed compiled salary data from the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (MCPSA) regarding the proposed positions.

Dave D. raised a question from the Finance Committee about the transition period and the logistics of where the offices for these new positions will be located. Darshan T. emphasized that Susan P.'s guidance will be essential in ensuring that the new roles have sufficient time to understand the school's processes.

Dave D. also clarified that this transition should not be viewed as a reflection of any issues within Lawrence Prospera's Finance and HR departments. Darshan T. confirmed this, explaining that the changes are simply a result of the school's growth and evolving needs. He noted that 8 or 9 out of the original charter schools still maintain management service agreements, and LFDCS has now outgrown this arrangement.
Darshan T. assured the Board that he will continue working closely with Lawrence Prospera on finalizing the details.

E. Comparative Financials

Susan P. presented a report on comparative financials, highlighting key findings and ongoing evaluations. She noted that last year, Lawrence Prospera reassessed the services and identified that the current tools were insufficient to support the operational capacity of both organizations.
Susan reviewed multiple financial reports, emphasizing that they remain in draft form. These reports included the Balance Sheet, Comparative Income Statement, Budget vs. Actual, and Monthly Expense reports, all sourced from NetSuite. The data provided comparisons between the previous fiscal year and the current fiscal year to date. She pointed out significant expenditures related to capital improvements, such as a firewall upgrade, paving, and roofing repairs. However, in the Budget vs. Actual report, she underscored that the school remains well under budget across all line items.

Jose T. requested that savings from the composting program be included in the next meeting. Susan noted that this information is available on the school's website, reporting an estimated savings of $50,000 by the end of the last school year, with an additional $20,000 saved by the end of the calendar year. She also highlighted in the Comparative

Income Statement an estimated savings of approximately $62,000 for the current fiscal year compared to the previous year.

Darshan T. raised a question regarding the Budget vs. Actual report, specifically about the Building Supplies category, noting that the budgeted amount and actual expense showed $295,831, which was a lot higher than the budgeted amount. Susan acknowledged the discrepancy and will investigate the matter. He also inquired about leasehold improvements and whether any tenant-funded improvements would result in a credit or discount. Susan explained that she still needs to enter data from the capital improvement spreadsheet and that some projects, including the Bobcats, are yet to be completed and will be categorized under vehicles.

Lastly, Darshan T. asked about the depreciation of leasehold improvements and whether it would be allocated to the tenant or landlord. Susan confirmed that the responsibility would fall on the tenant.

III. Principal's Report

A. SY' 2025-2026 Calendar (1st Draft)

Ms. Castleman shared a draft of the calendar for the next school year. She noted that it looks similar to this year, including two weeks break in December.

The final draft will be reported at the next board meeting and it will be voted on.

B. Second Quarter Results

During the Quarter 2 review, each Head of School (HOS) presented the academic achievements and attendance trends for their respective grade levels, including High Honor Roll, Honor Roll, Model Student recognition, and Perfect Attendance.

Academy Grades K1 & K2:

Ms. Castleman reported on behalf of Mrs. Lawler for the Academy's K1 and K2 grades. She noted that by Quarter 2, students had acclimated well academically, leading to a significant increase in the number of students earning High Honor Roll and Honor Roll recognition. Overall, the quarter was strong. The number of Model Students remained consistent in K1, while K2 experienced a slight decline. Perfect Attendance rates decreased due to seasonal illnesses, a recurring trend observed annually across all grade levels.

Academy Grades 1 & 2:

Ms. Croes presented the results for grades 1 and 2, highlighting an increase in High Honor Roll and Honor Roll recipients. She noted that both students and teachers had gained confidence in the new ELA curriculum by this point in the school year. The number of Model Students also increased. Regarding attendance, she acknowledged the

impact of seasonal illnesses but emphasized the importance of recognizing students with perfect attendance during assemblies.

Lower School Grades 3 & 4:

Ms. Parcell shared the Quarter 2 outcomes for grades 3 and 4, noting a substantial increase in High Honor Roll recipients. In third grade, there was a slight rise in the number of students achieving Honor Roll. She highlighted the strong performance in mathematics, attributing part of the success to the support of the Title I Math teacher, who has been instrumental in assisting students. The number of Model Students increased in both grades. However, Perfect Attendance declined, primarily due to widespread illness, including cases of the flu.

Upper School Grades 5-8:

Mrs. Arpin provided an overview of Quarter 2 for the Upper School, acknowledging fluctuations in performance across grades. She specifically recognized the 7th-grade students for their notable growth in High Honor Roll, Honor Roll, and Model Student recognition, crediting teachers for their dedicated support. In contrast, grades 6 and 8 experienced slight declines. Sixth-grade students are working on self-control and accountability, particularly as academic expectations become more rigorous with increased homework and higher completion standards. Adjustments are ongoing, but she expressed confidence in their improvement in Quarter 3.

Eighth grade has historically faced challenges in Quarter 2, as many students focus on high school applications, essays, and school visits. With applications now submitted, they are eagerly awaiting acceptance letters. Despite this temporary dip, Mrs. Arpin remains optimistic about a strong finish in Quarters 3 and 4. Similar to other grade levels, Perfect Attendance declined due to seasonal illnesses, but she remains hopeful for an improvement moving forward.

C. Winter MAP Data

Winter MAP Assessment Results

Nicole Dean-Ward presented the Winter MAP assessment results, emphasizing key trends in student performance. She explained that an ideal outcome involves a decrease in the number of students in Tier 3, with corresponding increases in Tiers 2 and 1.

In **Reading**, there was a notable percentage decrease in Tier 3 students, while the number of students in Tier 2 increased. Although the number of students in Tier 1 (those performing at grade level) declined, there was an increase in the number of students achieving advanced levels.

In **Mathematics**, students demonstrated significant progress. At the beginning of the school year, 19% of students were in Tier 3, and this figure has since decreased to 13%. Many students successfully moved out of Tier 3 and are now performing at grade level (Tier 1).

Regarding the **Spanish benchmark**, Nicole noted that this is the first year implementing the new Spanish curriculum. Teachers are adapting to the new instructional approach, and students are becoming more accustomed to a Spanish curriculum that aligns with the reading curriculum. As familiarity with the program increases, further improvements in student performance are anticipated.

In **Science**, students performed exceptionally well. The number of students in Tier 3 decreased, while gains were observed in both Tier 2 and the Advanced category.

For **EDDA**, a program designed based on MAP results, 58% of Upper School students have successfully exited the program. Nicole also highlighted the use of Varsity Tutors for additional math support in the Upper School. In the Lower School and Academy, teachers are focusing on phonemic awareness and reading skills for students in the EDAA program. Among students in grades K2-4, 33% have tested out of the program.

Additionally, Nicole recognized teachers who have achieved a milestone of 70% or more of their students meeting or exceeding their RIT growth targets.

D. Winter Panorama Data

Winter SEL Survey Results Report

Nicole Dean-Ward presented the findings from the Winter SEL Survey, conducted using Panorama, a comprehensive tool that supports schools and districts in fostering students' social-emotional learning (SEL) through research-backed surveys and actionable data reports. Panorama consolidates various student data points into a single system, enabling educators to gain a holistic understanding of their students.

Students in Grades 3-8 participated in an SEL survey that assessed key areas such as supportive relationships, social awareness, challenging feelings, emotion regulation, and self-efficacy (the latter for Grades 7-8 only). Meanwhile, teachers of students in Grades K1-2 completed a teacher perception survey focusing on emotion regulation, social awareness, classroom effort, grit, and self-management. The collected data allows for comparisons between students at LFDCS and their peers nationwide.

Grades 7-8

Since the beginning of the school year, students in Grades 7 and 8 demonstrated growth in social awareness, challenging feelings, and emotion regulation. Students reported an increased ability to identify their emotions and manage difficult feelings. However, there was a slight decline in self-efficacy and supportive relationships.

In open-ended responses, students identified schoolwork, high school transitions, and assignments as their most significant challenges. When asked how adults at school could better support them, common responses included a desire for greater understanding, open conversations, and educators viewing situations from their perspective.

Grade 6

Sixth-grade students exhibited growth in supportive relationships but a slight decline in managing challenging feelings. However, compared to the national average, LFDCS sixth graders performed significantly better in this category. No change was observed in emotion regulation, while social awareness saw a slight decrease.

Nicole Dean-Ward attributed these results to students adjusting back to school routines and social interactions following the break. Open-ended responses indicated that students' primary challenges were related to grades, family issues, and time management. When asked how school staff could better support them, students expressed a need for more attention, empathy, and an understanding from their perspectives.

Grades 3-5
Students in Grades 3-5 experienced a decline across all measured SEL areas. Despite a drop in supportive relationships, their performance remained consistent with national averages. When asked about their greatest challenges, many students referenced home and family-related concerns. Their responses on how school staff could better support them included suggestions such as taking walks, being available to answer questions, and providing homework assistance.
Grades K1-2
For students in Grades K1-2, where teachers completed the survey on their behalf, improvements were observed across all areas. These results suggest that younger students are becoming increasingly acclimated to the school environment.

Next Steps
Nicole Dean-Ward outlined the next steps in response to the survey results. Currently, 24% of LFDCS students fall within Tier III, indicating the highest level of need in areas such as emotional regulation, social awareness, self-efficacy (Grades 7-8), and self-management (Grades K1-2).
To address these needs, an SEL Response to Intervention (RTI) initiative will be launched in March, targeting the 98 students requiring Tier III interventions.

Dave D. inquired about the structure of these interventions. Nicole explained that they will include strategies such as developing personal toolkits, identifying emotional triggers, and implementing coping mechanisms tailored to individual student needs. These interventions will take place during the school day, with Nicole collaborating closely with teachers to ensure effective implementation.

E. ELL Math Night Grade 2- 02/10/2025

Ms. Castleman reported that they hosted an in-person ELL Math Night for Grade 2 this past Monday, marking the first time the event has been held in person since the COVID-19 pandemic. During the event, teachers facilitated interactive stations where they

engaged families in hands-on math activities. Additionally, families were provided with materials to take home for continued learning. The next ELL Math Night, for Grade 1, is scheduled for next month.

F. Lottery- 03/05/2025

Ms. Castleman reported that the upcoming Lottery is scheduled for March 5, with an application deadline of February 28. To date, over 300 applications have been received for the 87 available K1 spots.
This year, the application and lottery processes have transitioned to an online format. While the lottery will still be conducted in person in the gymnasium, it will now be executed electronically. Additionally, parent liaisons will attend Community Day's lottery, which takes place two days prior to LFDCS's event, to observe and gain insight into the new process.

G. Read Across America- 03/07/2025

Ms. Castleman informed the board that they should have received an email from Arlene Garcia regarding Read Across America. Guest readers are scheduled to visit on the morning of Friday, March 7, to read to students in K2 through 2nd grade. Board members, faculty, and local politicians are invited to participate in this event by reading to the students.

IV. Superintendent Search

A. Update from the Superintendent Search Committee

Dave D. provided the Board with an update on the Superintendent Search Committee. He explained that following Ralph Carrero's departure and the appointment of Darshan T. as Interim Superintendent, the Board of Trustees initiated the search for a permanent replacement. In October, the Board appointed a search committee comprised of several trustees—some of whom are also parents of the school—as well as faculty members. The committee members include trustees Elizabeth N., Germinudy R., Jose H., Rita A., and Dave D., along with faculty members Laurie L., Erika W., and Allison B. The committee size aligns with recommendations from the Massachusetts Charter School Association, which advised a group of no more than 8-9 members.
The committee developed a job posting for the Superintendent position, which included a job description, an overview of the school and its mission, a list of required competencies, and necessary application documents. The application window was open from November 28 through January 31, and the position was advertised across multiple platforms, including the Massachusetts Public School Association job board, SchoolSpring, Indeed, ZipRecruiter, Education Link, and Bamboo.
All application materials were submitted to the Board Secretary, Jose T., who managed the receipt and organization of the documents. As of the application deadline, the

committee received 16 applications. These applications and resumes have been distributed to committee members for review.
The search committee is scheduled to meet tomorrow in an executive session to discuss the candidates. Dave D. expressed hopes that during this meeting, the committee will identify a shortlist of candidates to invite for in-person interviews, which could begin as early as next week. The goal is to present a recommendation for the Superintendent position to the Board of Trustees at the next Board Meeting on March 12.

V. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

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

Roll Call

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

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Y. Rodriguez

Documents used during the meeting

- SCHOOL CALENDAR 25-26 DRAFT.pdf