APPROVED



Lawrence Family Development Charter School

Minutes

Academic Advisory Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday November 12, 2025 at 4:00 PM

Location
Zoom

Committee Members Present
D. DeFillippo (remote), E. Nolberto (remote), G. Lopez (remote), H. Clark-Kusiv (remote), K. Douphinette (remote), M. Denu (remote), T. Schaufenbil (remote)

Committee Members Absent
None

Committee Members who arrived after the meeting opened
E. Nolberto, G. Lopez, H. Clark-Kusiv

Guests Present
Y. Rodriguez (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

D. DeFillippo called a meeting of the Academic Advisory Committee of Lawrence Family Development Charter School to order on Wednesday Nov 12, 2025 at 4:04 PM.

II. Public Participation

A. Public Participation

No public participation.

III. Committee Discussions

A. Review of Leadership Response to AAC Discussions of March 12, 2025

G. Lopez arrived at 4:06 PM.
The Committee Chair opened the meeting with a review of the administration's responses to the discussions held during the March 12, 2025, Academic Advisory Committee (AAC) meeting.

A teacher committee member expressed appreciation for the administration's hiring of an additional School Adjustment Counselor to support grades K1–3. A Trustee member noted that this position was filled in late September following an extensive hiring process and expressed satisfaction that the role is now staffed. Trustee members also emphasized that this progress was made possible through the work and advocacy of the AAC.

A teacher committee member then commented on the administration's response regarding the search for a new math curriculum. They shared that they serve on the Math Curriculum Committee, which is exploring options to replace the current Eureka curriculum. Each committee member is reviewing three potential curricula, with the goal of piloting selected programs in January and ultimately identifying a replacement for Eureka.

Another AAC teacher member who also serves on the Math Curriculum Committee confirmed that a total of five curricula is under review. Each member will evaluate and score their assigned programs using a standardized rubric, after which the top two or three will be selected for piloting.

A Trustee member inquired about the structure of the pilot process. A teacher committee member responded by referencing their experience on the ELA Curriculum Committee two years prior. At that time, specific teachers were selected to implement the pilot programs, and administrators and specialists conducted classroom observations using rubrics focused on student discourse. They anticipate that the pilot process for the math curriculum will follow a similar model.

H. Clark-Kusiv arrived at 4:10 PM.
E. Nolberto arrived at 4:13 PM.
A teacher committee member commented on the administration's efforts to address student behavior and increase supportin this area. They emphasized the importance of continuing the search for a BCBA or behavior specialist, noting that such support is especially critical for the younger grades.

The teacher representative also acknowledged the administration's update regarding changes to the school's cell phone policy, confirming that classroom lockboxes for student phones have been received. They noted that implementation of these changesis underway and expressed hope that the information has been clearly communicated to families.

A Trustee member affirmed that communication has been shared with parents and emphasized that successful implementation will require ongoing awareness and consistent enforcement. They underscored the need for the school to uphold the consequences outlined in the policy and stated that the Trustees fully support the policy and encourage its continued implementation. They further noted that this aligns with a broader statewide trend, as many schools are adopting stricter guidelines, and in some cases, complete bans on student cell phone use.

The Trustee memberalso addressed the administration's commentsregarding interest in implementing a PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports)–type framework for behavior management. They clarified that RBT is distinct from PBIS and expressed hope that the school is actively exploring PBIS or similar systems. Leadership has indicated plans to research and introduce such a model in the younger grades, and the Trustee committed to following up on this work in future board meetings.

The committee members introduced themselves to each other. Stating their role and why they chose to be a part of the academic advisory committee.
Motion to approve the minutes from Academic Advisory Meeting on 03-12-25.
A teacher made a motion to approve the minutes of the
Academic Advisory Meeting on 03-12-25.

A Trustee seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

G. Lopez	Aye
D. DeFillippo	Aye
K. Douphinette	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye
M. Denu	Aye

Roll Call

T. Schaufenbil Aye

H. Clark-Kusiv Aye

B. Support for Academic Success

Teacher committee members noted that when they first joined the school, each grade level had multiple paraprofessionals; currently there is only one paraprofessional assigned per grade. They explained that paraprofessionals are frequently reassigned to provide classroom coverage or to assist in other areas and buildings. When this occurs, teachers lose essential paraprofessional support, and no additional personnel are available to fill the need. There appears to be no procedure in place to provide substitute coverage when paraprofessionals are absent.

Teachers reported that the absence of paraprofessional support is very acutely felt. While leadership has stated that a paraprofessional is present during the Needs-Based Group (NBG) block, teachers clarified that this is and has not been consistent across all NBG periods. As a result, teachers are not receiving reliable support during these instructional blocks.

An upper- school teacher committee member shared that paraprofessionals are sometimes reassigned as long-term substitutes. In this case, paraprofessional support is only available on Thursday mornings, and that support was even pulled for coverage needs the previous week. The teacher noted that a lack of consistent availability of a paraprofessional is especially challenging for first-year teachers who rely heavily on paraprofessional assistance during their NBG block.

Another teacher explained that in their lesson planning efforts, teachers assume the presence of an additional adult (paraprofessional) in the room. When paraprofessionals are redirected to another use, teachers must modify their lessons, often shifting away from more interactive or small-group formats. Several teachers emphasized that paraprofessionals are used as substitutes whenever teachers are absent, resulting in frequent reassignment and diminishing the consistency and effectiveness of a teacher's expected support for students in the classroom.

A teacher committee member added that for students with IEPs, the loss of paraprofessional support places additional strain on classroom teachers. For example, teachers may wish to run activity center-based instruction during NBG, but with only one adult in the classroom, they must instead rely on less interactive alternatives due to insufficient staffing.

A Trustee member asked for clarification regarding paraprofessional allocation. Teachers confirmed that each grade has only one paraprofessional, and that individual is often

pulled when a teacher is absent. A teacher from the grades 1–2 Academy shared that paraprofessional support is offered during writing and math.

At the lower school, a teacher reported that a single paraprofessional serves five classrooms and, when not reassigned, is available for an average of 45 minutes per day. Teachers recalled that in previous years, grade levels had more than one paraprofessional, and this availability allowed paraprofessionals to check in with teachers who needed additional support.

When asked by a Trustee what an ideal staffing model would look like, one teacher suggested a goal of two (2)paraprofessionals per grade or three (3) paraprofessionals shared between two grade levels.

A teacher noted that younger students who travel to the upper school for specials would benefit from increased staffing. On days when students attend specials, having one paraprofessional per classroom at the younger grade levels would be particularly helpful. Another teacher stated that due to the frequency of behavioral incidents and crisis calls in K1 and K2, the younger grades should ideally have one paraprofessional per classroom.

A Trustee asked whether the shortage of behavior specialists has increased the demand for paraprofessional support. Teachers confirmed that there is a correlation. The existing services are stretched thin due to student needs. One teacher emphasized that younger students require more age-appropriate support, making student-to-adult ratios especially important at the lower grade levels.

Another teacher shared that while faculty have received valuable training, they are unable to implement these strategies effectively with high-needs populations without adequate staffing support.

C. Vertical Teams

A teacher committee member noted with vertical teams in place there is satisfaction in the increased cohesiveness in academic planning and has been beneficial, particularly the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues who teach the same subject across multiple grade levels.

Another teacher commented that the current structure and execution of vertical team meetings at times does not fully meet teachers' needs. They acknowledged that their vertical team this year is an improvement over the previous year, as it is more content-focused and allows teachers to address instructional gaps rather than concentrate on lesson planning. Teachers emphasized that if teachers are expected to stay after school for these meetings, the time should yield meaningful outcomes that directly support classroom instruction. The focus of these teams should include discussions about grade-

level challenges, standards alignment, and areas where students are not meeting benchmarks. This would provide more value than drafting lessons during that time.

A teacher committee member proposed that ELA and writing should not be combined within the same vertical team, as doing so is not conducive to productive collaboration. They explained that the current meetings focus on reviewing standards and unpacking the language, but greater benefit would come from structured discussions on what practices are effective, which are not, and where alignment can be strengthened. Such conversations would enhance consistency and instructional coherence across grade levels.

D. Cohesiveness Across Buildings

A teacher committee member noted that Read Across America (RAA) demonstrated strong cohesion and was successfully implemented across all school buildings. They emphasized that future PBIS initiatives should be built on this model, ensuring consistent messaging and expectations for students as they move between buildings. The goal is for all students to recognize that they are part of LFDCS and receive uniform guidance and support.

A second teacher suggested that the process of selecting and implementing a PBIS framework should involve a committee with representatives from each grade level to ensure buy-in from all stakeholders. They emphasized the importance of implementing a system that is trackable and tied to measurable rewards.

A teacher committee member added that Reading Across America program served as a useful example because it helped build strong culture. Each building had goals linked to learning, and the initiative provided incentives connected to both behavior and academics. This approach fostered cohesiveness through consistent language and shared objectives. They also noted that one of the strengths of LFDCS is its emphasis on rigor and high expectations. However, they observed that some of these expectations have become inconsistent in recent years and expressed the importance of maintaining a unified standard schoolwide.

E. Behavior Management and SEL Support

A teacher committee member noted that faculty survey responses reflect a recurring theme i.e. meeting academic expectations has been challenging due to student behavior and social-emotional learning (SEL) needs.

Another teacher committee member shared that it took time to understand the hierarchy of behaviors and associated consequences. They recommended additional training and regular review with teachers on behavioral expectations and the discipline process.

One teacher committee member stated that their Head of School (HOS) provides strong support, although teachers in other buildings have reported less consistency. They suggested that HOSs should clearly communicate to teachers the appropriate points of contact and the steps to follow when addressing behavioral issues.

Another teacher committee member highlighted that the behavior flow chart is a valuable resource but once again stated it is not consistently communicated. They recommended that it be reviewed regularly with all teachers to ensure understanding. A teacher added that while their HOS frequently reviews the flow chart, some teachers in other buildings remain unsure of the process or whom to contact.

At the upper school, a clearer behavioral system is in place, whereas at the lower school, teachers reported a lack of structured guidance regarding next steps once initial interventions have been implemented. Committee members suggested establishing a universal, age-appropriate behavioral protocol across all buildings.

A Trustee member acknowledged that the communication and review of the flow chart was raised last year by AAC faculty and urges school leadership to address this communication issue more effectively this year. Consistent communication and review of the flow chart should be made a priority within all divisions of LFDCS. It appears that this is not the case.
A second Trustee further proposed developing a chart that visually indicates a student's progress within the behavioral system and sharing it with families to reinforce expectations at home.

IV. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

E. Nolberto made a motion to adjourn.
M. Denu seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

H. Clark-Kusiv	Aye
K. Douphinette	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye
D. DeFillippo	Aye
T. Schaufenbil	Aye
M. Denu	Aye
G. Lopez	Aye

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 5:11 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Y. Rodriguez

B. Next AAC Meeting - January 14, 2026 - 4:00 PM

Documents used during the meeting

None