APPROVED

Lawrence Family Development Charter School

Minutes

LFDCS Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday December 10, 2025 at 5:30 PM

Location
Lower School Conference Room (2nd floor)
34 West Street
Lawrence, MA 01841

Zoom

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

Trustees Absent
L. Perez, R. Almanzar

Trustees who left before the meeting adjourned
J. Henriquez

Guests Present
C. Parcell, D. Thakkar, H. Castleman, L. Lawler, M. Ventre, N. Arpin, P. Macario, S. Reardon (remote), S. Stukuls, Y. Rodriguez, ndean@lfdcs.org

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B.

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 Dec 10, 2025 at 5:42 PM.

C. Pledge of Allegiance

D. Approve minutes from the November 12, 2025 BOT Meeting

D. DeFillippo made a motion to approve the minutes from Zoom-LFDCS Board of Trustees Meeting on 11-12-25.
J. Henriquez seconded the motion.
Dave D. raised a question regarding Rita A., noting that she has not responded to multiple attempts to contact her. Germinudy L. stated that she will make one more in-person attempt to reach Rita A.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

II. Board Composition

A. Attendance record to date.

Data showing Board attendance through November 2025 was shared to address the general understanding that Board members who miss three consecutive meetings may be subject to removal. It was noted that this attendance policy is not currently stated in the Bylaws. Board Chair Germinudy L. was asked how to proceed in the case of Rita A., who has not responded to numerous attempts at communication. Germinudy L. stated that she would visit Rita A. at her place of work to speak with her directly. She was asked to inform Rita A. that if she does not wish to continue serving on the Board, she may submit a letter of resignation.

Lynette M. requested that the attendance data be revised to clearly distinguish between Board meetings and committee meetings, as many trustees serve on multiple committees and the current table does not clearly reflect this.

III. Superintendent's Report

A. Lease Update

Mark V. shared that the school is currently waiting to obtain clear title for all properties, which is the reason the lease has not yet been signed. He explained that securing clear title is typically the seller's responsibility, in this case the Fund. However, due to timing constraints, the school has taken on responsibility for conducting the title work and addressing any conflicts and encroachment issues that have been identified. The school hopes to seek compensation from the Fund through an adjustment to the purchase price of the buildings.
Krokidas & Bluestein will assess the risk associated with the school signing the lease without clear title. Chris N. noted that the school should not expect the Fund to cover these expenses, but acknowledged that this work is required as part of the building purchase process. One of the identified encroachment issues involves a railroad easement running from Railroad Street to West Street, which can only be resolved with state involvement and will require additional effort.

Darshan T. stated that the school may consider obtaining title insurance on the lease; however, this would require an accurate valuation of the properties. Chris N. asked whether an estimate could be obtained without a full appraisal, and Mark V. responded that they plan to raise this question with the title company.

Dave D. asked why the school is undertaking this work if it is the Fund's obligation. Mark V. explained that, given the deadline for closing, it is in the school's best interest to proceed in order to avoid losing the properties and to remediate significant title issues that could cause a lender to withdraw. He added that the school is not confident the Fund would meet its legal obligations in a timely manner. Chris N. noted that it may be necessary to amend the lease to address issues uncovered through the title work.

Mark V. also reported that during their fieldwork, Krokidas & Bluestein did not identify any covenants restricting the use of the buildings as a school. This raised concerns, as the absence of such restrictions could impact the school's value and allow other parties to express interest in purchasing the buildings for non-school use. This finding also calls into question the assumption that certain buildings, such as the Academy donated by the Haffner company, were restricted for school use. Chris N. suggested contacting the donor family to determine whether they have any documentation supporting such restrictions.

Krokidas & Bluestein provided a list of potential financing advisors, and Mark V. stated that he will begin discovery meetings in early January, subject to an RFP process. Chris N. asked whether the school has a designated procurement officer. Mark V. responded that he will serve in that role and will attend a two-day DESE training next week. Chris N. requested that Mark V. share information learned about the RFP process for financing advisors with the finance committee. Darshan T. added that the state does not have a specific RFP template for this purpose, and that the Massachusetts Charter School

Association may also have sample materials. Mark V. suggested reaching out to Community Day Charter Schools, which recently completed a $50 million project.

Chris N. clarified for the trustees that the purpose of hiring a financing advisor is to act as an investment banker for the school by preparing offering materials and identifying lenders, thereby relieving the board of these responsibilities. While this represents a significant cost, he emphasized that given the scale of the potential transaction, it is prudent for the school to proceed carefully and professionally. Mark V. added that he and Darshan T. met with one firm that proposed a fee of 6.5 percent of the purchase price.

B. Audit Update

Mark V. provided the Board with an update on the audit. He reported that Ahmatjan, the project manager from AAFCPAs, has resigned, which has resulted in a delay in the legal confirmation needed for Krokidas & Bluestein to complete their work and return it to AAFCPAs. Darshan T. and Mark V. are required to sign the Management Representation Letter, confirming that they are not aware of any outstanding issues. In addition, Board minutes must be submitted, after which AAFCPAs will complete its internal quality review.

Chris N. asked whether any further action is required from the Board. Mark V. responded that the Board will need to vote to approve the final audit report, which AAFCPAs expects to deliver by Friday, December 19. This approval must occur before the January 1 submission deadline to DESE. As there are no additional Board meetings scheduled, the approval will need to be completed through unanimous written consent of the Audit/Finance Committee. The audit report will be circulated via email, and committee members will be asked to respond by email indicating approval or disapproval. Mark V. noted that if any questions or discussion are needed, a special meeting would have to be convened. Members of the Finance/Audit Committee confirmed their availability to participate in the written consent vote.

Darshan T. requested a motion to approve proceeding with the written consent vote. C. Needham made a motion to Whereas the board of trustees, by a quorum of votes at the meeting on August13, 2025, delegated the authority to accept the final audit documents to the audit committee, and Whereas all presentations, discussions and deliberations regarding the audit within the meaning of the Open Meeting Law have taken place publicly at the board of trustees' meetings on September 10, October 8, and November 12, and the finance committee meetings on September 3, October 1, and November 4, and Whereas the final documents are not ready as of today, but remain due to DESE on or before January 1, 2026, and Whereas the next meeting of the finance committee is not until January 6, 2026, I make a motion to vote to accept the final audit documents upon receipt via unanimous written consent of the audit committee via email which will be solely for the purpose of voting and not for any deliberations, and that the written consent vote shall be reconfirmed at the public meeting of the finance committee meeting on January 6, 2026.

L. McRae seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

IV. Assistant Superintendent's Report

A. Updates from the Assistant Superintendent

Assistant Superintendent Sally-Ann Stukuls shared that she and Communications Specialist Tricia Chisolm have been collaborating on a strategy for Board recruitment for next year. As part of this effort, they plan to develop a recruitment brochure outlining the expectations and responsibilities of Board service. The brochure is expected to be available for Board review next month and will be shared with families through multiple channels.

During this discussion, they also proposed including photos of current trustees on the School Board webpage. Elizabeth N. indicated that she will connect with Sally-Ann Stukuls to further discuss recruitment strategy.
Sally-Ann S. shared some data with the Board of Trustees regarding the school's efforts to combat vaping. According to the 2024 National Youth Tobacco Survey, over 1.6 million U.S. children used e-cigarettes last year. While use has declined since 2019, vaping remains a serious concern, with 7.8% of high school students and 3.5% of middle school students reporting current use.

At school, possession or use of vaping materials is treated as an infraction, and students complete the four-week “Catch My Breath” course to learn about the dangers of vaping and access resources to quit. The Wellness Committee is developing a Vaping Awareness Campaign, including parent resources, presentations with the Lawrence Police Department,collaborating with Community Day Charter School, student assemblies, and student-led activities like posters and a pledge wall. The school welcomes suggestions from parents and the community to support these efforts.

V. Principal's Report

A.

School Site Council 11/19/25

J. Henriquez left at 6:28 PM.
Principal Hali Castelman shared with the Board the feedback from November's School Site Council Meeting regarding ways to increase parent engagement. Suggestions included offering homework passes or jeans day passes for students, as well as prizes for parents. They also provided ideas on improving communications and involving parents more, such as parent volunteers for Field Day.

B. LFDCS Alumni Program

Principal Hali Castleman also updated the Board on the school's Alumni Program. She shared the website, which provides information for alumni, including volunteer opportunities, newsletters, and highlights of alumni achievements beyond LFDCS. The school recently hired Genesis Paulino, an LFDCS alumna and former Upper School teacher, as the new Alumni Coordinator.

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

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

Roll Call

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

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:36 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Y. Rodriguez

Documents used during the meeting

- Board of Trustee Report for December 10, 2025.pdf

- School Site Council 11.19.25.pdf