APPROVED

Lawrence Family Development Charter School

Minutes

LFDCS Board of Trustees-Special Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday July 14, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Location
Zoom

Trustees Present
C. Needham (remote), G. Lopez (remote)

Trustees Absent
None

Guests Present
D. Thakkar (remote), S. Stukuls (remote), Y. Rodriguez (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

C. Needham called a meeting of the board of trustees of Lawrence Family Development Charter School to order on Tuesday Jul 14, 2026 at 6:08 PM.

II. Business Items

A. Professional Development

Chris N. opened the meeting by explaining to Darshan T. that the Board had reviewed his grievance and consulted with legal counsel, Attorneys Elka Sachs and Bettina Toner, regarding the appropriate response. Chris N. shared that counsel advised against pursuing the removal of a board member. In Elka S.'s experience, removing a trustee under these circumstances would be an unusual action and could create unnecessary disruption. Instead, she recommended focusing on strengthening the Board's governance by providing board-wide governance training and developing a written code of conduct that all trustees would be expected to sign and follow.

Chris N. explained that the Board considered whether the code of conduct should apply only to the individual trustee named in the grievance but ultimately concluded it would be more appropriate for every trustee to sign the same document so that the expectations for professionalism would apply equally to the entire Board. He stated that this was the direction the Board intended to pursue and hoped that Darshan T. would find the approach acceptable.

Chris N. also noted that another consideration in the Board's discussion was that Linette P. had only one year remaining on her term. At the same time, the Board was preparing to recruit five new trustees, making it an appropriate opportunity to strengthen board governance and establish clear expectations for both current and future members. He explained that Sally S. and Elizabeth N. were already working on board recruitment and that the Board wanted to focus on bringing in qualified trustees while minimizing unnecessary disruption during the transition.

Darshan T. said he appreciated that the Board took his grievance seriously by speaking with legal counsel and considering different options. He said this showed the Board recognized the importance of the concerns he had raised.

He also said that governance training and a code of conduct were things the Board should already have in place as part of its regular responsibilities. While he supported both ideas, he did not see them as special actions because they are basic good governance practices.

Darshan T. explained that although he originally wanted individual accountability, he had started to believe that improving the Board's overall behavior was more important. He said that if governance training and a code of conduct helped trustees work together more professionally and prevented similar issues in the future, those steps would address his concerns even if no individual trustee was identified or disciplined.
Chris N. added that Sally S.'s involvement would be important in ensuring the Board's plans were successfully implemented. He explained that while developing a code of conduct was relatively straightforward, putting those standards into practice and incorporating them into ongoing board development would require additional work. He expressed confidence that Sally S.'s experience would help the Board complete the process.

Chris N. then explained that the Board also intended to address recent Open Meeting Law concerns as part of the same overall governance improvement effort. Rather than treating the two issues separately, he believed they could be addressed together through comprehensive board development and training. He proposed working directly with Sally S. to develop the governance materials because having one board member collaborate with a senior staff member avoided potential Open Meeting Law concerns that could arise if multiple trustees worked together outside a public meeting. Chris N. explained that he would work with Sally S. to prepare recommendations and then present the completed materials to the full Board for consideration. Germinudy L. agreed with that approach.

Sally S. informed the group that she had recently spoken with Robert Carpenter from MCPSA, who had provided templates and sample documents that could be used in developing the Board's code of conduct and governance materials. Sally S. noted that the timing was particularly beneficial because several new trustees would soon be joining the Board.

Chris N. noted that the Nominating and Governance Committee currently consisted of only Elizabeth N. and Linette P. and expressed concern that such a small committee would be responsible for evaluating five potential new trustees. He also believed that expanding the committee would create a more balanced recruitment process by reducing the influence of any single member over board nominations. Chris N. recommended increasing the committee to four members and suggested Germinudy L. ask Dave D. to serve because of his educational background, leadership experience, and the respect he had earned from fellow trustees. He also recommended appointing at least one additional parent representative to broaden the committee's perspective. Chris N. volunteered to serve temporarily if necessary but stated that Dave D. would be his preferred choice. Germinudy L. agreed and said she would ask Dave D. if he was willing to participate.

Chris N. proposed that the expanded Nominating Committee be established within the next seven to ten days so it could begin its work. He recommended that the committee hold an open meeting to discuss recruitment criteria, qualifications for prospective trustees, and the overall nomination process before presenting recommendations to the full Board.

Chris N. asked for clarification that the Board was not expected to elect new trustees until the September Board meeting, providing adequate time for the committee to complete its work while governance training was being developed. Darshan T. confirmed that September remained the anticipated timeline for electing new trustees.

Chris N. asked Sally S. if the current trustees should receive training before the new trustees joined or if everyone should be trained together. Sally S. recommended holding one training session for both current and new trustees so everyone would receive the same information and understand the same expectations.

Chris N. agreed, saying that training together would also help build relationships between the current and new trustees, especially if it could be held in person. The group also agreed to include Open Meeting Law training in the same session so trustees would receive both governance and legal compliance training at the same time.

Sally S. agreed to prepare the training materials and send them to Chris N. for review. Darshan T. started to experience technical problems and had to leave the meeting.

Chris asked Sally S. to follow up with Darshan T. after the meeting to confirm that the Board's proposed actions aligned with his expectations and to determine whether he had any additional input that he had been unable to provide during the meeting.

Sally S. agreed and said she would update Chris N. and Germinudy L. after speaking with him.

III. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Y. Rodriguez

Documents used during the meeting

None