APPROVED

Lawrence Family Development Charter School

Minutes

LFDCS Board of Trustees Meeting-Special Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday July 28, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Location
Zoom

Invite Link: https://zoom.us/j/2032549498?pwd=Uhun3PubLdHgaVldOnoNCRG0J1F4h7.1&omn=93317704104

Topic: LFDCS Board of Trustees-Special Meeting
Time: Jul 28, 2026 05:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Join Zoom Meeting
https://zoom.us/j/2032549498?
pwd=Uhun3PubLdHgaVldOnoNCRG0J1F4h7.1&omn=93317704104
Meeting chat link
https://zoom.us/launch/jc/93317704104
Meeting ID: 203 254 9498
Passcode: yJ32tX

One tap mobile
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+13126266799,,2032549498#,,,,*634945# US (Chicago)

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

Trustees Absent
None

Trustees who arrived after the meeting opened
R. Almanzar

Trustees who left before the meeting adjourned
R. Almanzar

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

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 Tuesday Jul 28, 2026 at 5:33 PM.

II. Business Items

A. Open Meeting Law- Attorney General Complaint

R. Almanzar arrived at 5:39 PM.
Germinudy L. explained that the purpose of the discussion today was to review an Open Meeting Law complaint submitted by Jeovanny R. and determine how the Board would respond. She emailed the complaint to the full board for review before the meeting.

Germinudy L. stated that the first issue identified in the complaint involved a technical glitch with the school website that had already been corrected. The remaining concerns, items 2-12, are a no and would require further review. Germinudy L. proposed requesting additional time so the Board's attorneys could review the complaints and prepare a formal written response. She stated that, to her understanding, the complaints had already been submitted to the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office.

Jeovanny R. clarified that he did not submit the complaint to the Attorney General's Office. Instead, he had completed the Attorney General's Open Meeting Law complaint form and submitted it directly to the Board Chair, following the instructions provided on the form for charter school boards. He explained that the Attorney General's complaint form instructs complainants to first send the complaint to the public body, which in this case was the Board of Trustees, and allow the Board an opportunity to respond before the complaint is forwarded to the Attorney General. He stated that he was still waiting for the Board's response and had intentionally not involved the Attorney General because he wanted to give the Board the opportunity to address the concerns first.

Linette P. asked why they had been under the impression that the complaints had already been filed with the Attorney General. Germinudy L. acknowledged the misunderstanding and apologized for the confusion.

To clarify the confusion, the complaint was displayed for the Board to review. Darshan T. asked Jeovanny R. whether he had only used the Attorney General’s complaint form and had not actually filed the complaint with the Attorney General’s Office. Jeovanny R. explained that using the form does not mean the complaint was filed with the Attorney General’s Office. He then explained the filing process, noting that complaints involving municipal public bodies are generally sent to the city or town clerk, while complaints involving charter school boards are sent directly to the Board Chair. He stated that the Board Chair is responsible for sharing the complaint with all trustees and making sure the Board responds within the required timeframe.
Jeovanny R. explained that the Open Meeting Law complaints were directed at the Board, not the school's administration. Darshan T. asked him to clarify whether he meant the school or the Board was responsible for responding. Jeovanny R. explained that the Board is the governing body that holds the charter issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and is therefore legally responsible for Open Meeting Law compliance. He noted that although the Superintendent manages the school's day-to-day operations, the Board remains accountable for its own meetings and governance practices. It was clarified that the response to the complaint has to be signed by the Board Chair.

Jeovanny R. then explained that there are two complaints. He stated that the first complaint concerned an alleged Open Meeting Law violation related to an executive session held during a special Board meeting. He said the complaint identified what he believed was a violation and included recommendations for how the Board could correct the issue. The second complaint concerned public access to Board meetings. Jeovanny R. explained that several meeting agendas did not include Zoom links, making it difficult or impossible for members of the public to attend remotely. He stated that because the meetings were not held in locations freely accessible to the public, electronic access should have been provided. He further explained that the Zoom links should be included directly on meeting agendas and made easily available on the school's website so parents and community members could participate in Board meetings.

Jeovanny R. explained that he had also submitted a separate complaint on July 6 regarding the executive session, but it appeared that the complaint had not been forwarded to the full Board. Several trustees said they had only received one. Germinudy L. confirmed that only the July 7 complaint had been distributed. She agreed to locate the

missing complaint and send it to all Trustees so the Board could review and consider both complaints together.
Jeovanny R. stated that because the July 6 complaint had not previously been distributed to trustees, he was willing to treat it as though it had been received that day. He explained that his primary objective was to obtain a meaningful response from the Board rather than immediately pursue enforcement through the Attorney General's Office.

Jeovanny R. acknowledged that one of the concerns raised in his second complaint had already been partially addressed. He observed that the current Board meeting included a working Zoom link, allowing him to participate remotely. He said this demonstrated that the Board had already begun correcting the accessibility issue. However, he encouraged the Board to continue improving public access by placing meeting links in a more visible location on the school's website, such as the homepage, so parents and community members could easily locate upcoming Board meetings.

Jeovanny R. said he was willing to give the Board additional time to respond. He explained that he was not required to submit the complaint to the Attorney General's Office until the Board provided its response. If the Attorney General's Office did not approve the extension, he was willing to contact them and request they approve the additional time.

Elizabeth N. thanked Jeovanny R. for the flexibility and understanding.
Chris Needham then asked Yulissa R. why Zoom links had been missing from previous meeting notices. Yulissa R. explained that she creates all Board meetings in BoardOnTrack and enters the meeting location, Zoom link, login information, and agenda for each meeting.

She explained that after the school's website was redesigned, a technical issue prevented the meeting information in BoardOnTrack from automatically appearing on the public website. As a result, the Zoom information was entered correctly in BoardOnTrack but was not visible on the website as intended. Once the issue was brought to staff's attention through the complaint, it was investigated and corrected.

The technical issue likely began sometime after the website was reconfigured during the previous school year, possibly between July and December, and the problem may have affected multiple Board meetings before anyone realized the information was no longer being displayed. The school had upgraded its website from an older version of Joomla to a newer platform while also implementing BoardOnTrack, and it was unclear whether the issue resulted from the connection between the two systems or from the website conversion itself.

Chris N. suggested that, now that the issue had been corrected, the school should proactively notify parents and the public. He explained that Jeovanny R.'s complaint might not represent the only individual who had attempted to attend a Board meeting but

was unable to locate the Zoom link. Chris N. recommended publishing a news announcement on the school's website explaining that a technical oversight had occurred during the website conversion, that the issue had been corrected, and that parents were encouraged to attend future Board meetings.
Jeovanny R. thanked the Board for addressing the issue and stated that increasing public participation had also been one of the concerns he raised during his public comments at a previous Board meeting. He recalled that, at that meeting, the Board had explained that proper public notice of meetings was already being provided. However, he believed acknowledging the website oversight would help parents understand why accessing meetings had been difficult and would reinforce the Board's commitment to improving transparency.

Elizabeth N. shared that one of the goals for the Board is to get more parents involved. Darshan T. stated that parents can be reminded about Board meetings during other school events, including parent coffees and similar family engagement activities. They emphasized that repeated reminders would likely increase participation over time.

Darshan T. shared that if the school were aware of the issue earlier, then the problem would have been fixed sooner.

Elizabeth N. shared that with the work Sally S. is doing with recruitment, parent participation in the upcoming school year can be more prevalent.

Dave D. supported Darshan T.'s recommendation, stating that publishing a notice on the school's homepage explaining the issue and encouraging parents to attend future meetings would go a long way.

Jennifer C. asked whether the recordings made during meetings could be accessed after the meetings concluded. Darshan T. explained that Massachusetts Open Meeting Law does not require public bodies to record meetings. The recordings generated through Zoom and BoardOnTrack exist solely to assist staff in preparing accurate meeting minutes. Once the minutes have been completed and approved, the recordings automatically expire due to limited storage capacity in the software. He clarified that the official public record consists of the written meeting minutes, which continue to be published on the school's website in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. The website issue had not affected the publication of Board meeting minutes, which had remained publicly available throughout the period in question.

Dave D. thanked Jeovanny R.'s for bringing the website issue to the Board's attention, stating that his complaint allowed the Board to identify and correct a problem.

Elizabeth N. expressed that the concerns had been clearly explained and reiterated that the Board would prepare a formal written response after consulting legal counsel.

B.

Recruiting

Sally S. provided an update on recruitment efforts. Interest in Board service had continued to grow. She explained that the number of individuals who had expressed interest in serving on the Board had increased from approximately eight or nine to ten. Parent Liaisons continued distributing recruitment brochures during meetings with new families throughout the summer, while brochures were also being shared with community organizations, local businesses, and other community groups in an effort to attract both parent and community member candidates. Sally S. reported that she had already met with nearly all of the interested individuals, either in person, virtually, or by telephone, to explain the responsibilities of serving on the Board and answer questions about the position.

Sally S. explained that she and Darshan T. were preparing a letter to send to all interested candidates outlining the next steps in the selection process. She stated that candidates who remained interested after these conversations would be invited to attend the September Board meeting, where each would deliver a brief five-minute statement introducing themselves, identifying whether they were applying as a parent or community representative, explaining why they wished to serve, and describing the skills and experience they would bring to the Board. Trustees would then have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions before voting on the candidates.

Chris N. then raised questions about the role of the Nominating Committee in the recruitment process. He explained that he had expected the committee to review and vet candidates before presenting recommendations to the full Board, rather than having the entire Board conduct the evaluation during the September meeting. He also asked how many of the interested candidates were applying as community representatives. Sally S. responded that only one candidate currently represented the community. Chris N. clarified that the Board's bylaws allowed for an additional three community trustee positions and only two parent trustee positions. She explained that this shortage was the reason the school had expanded its outreach beyond current families by distributing brochures throughout the community.

Sally S. stated that she was open to having the Nominating Committee play a larger role in reviewing candidates before the election and noted that her current approach was based on practices she had observed while serving other school committees that did not use a separate nominating committee. Chris suggested she and Elizabeth N. work together and that the committee meet before the September election to discuss candidate evaluation procedures. Sally S. agreed to schedule a meeting with the committee and provide an update at the next Board meeting. Chris N. also wanted to note that Jose Tejada's departure from the Board had created a vacancy and there were discussions about adding one additional person. Germinudy L. confirmed that she would join the committee, and Sally S. agreed to contact all committee members to arrange a meeting.

Chris Needham cautioned that if several trustees met together with Sally S., the gathering could potentially qualify as a public meeting requiring notice under Open Meeting Law. Sally S. explained that she would work with Darshan T. to ensure they had accurate information before scheduling any meetings related to the Nominating Committee.

C. Professional Development

Sally S. provided an update on the governance training she had been developing for the Board. She explained that the presentation was intended to serve as both an orientation for newly elected trustees and a refresher for current Board members. Sally S. reported that she had consulted with Robert Carpenter of the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association while developing the training and had incorporated many of his recommendations into materials specifically tailored for Lawrence Family Development Charter School. She explained that the presentation covers the Board's legal responsibilities, governance duties, decision-making processes, appropriate responses to various situations trustees may encounter, and an overview of Open Meeting Law requirements. Sally S. stated that the presentation was largely complete but still required additional refinement. She had been sharing drafts with Darshan T. to obtain feedback and planned to continue making revisions before presenting the final version after the new trustees were elected. She expected to provide another update at the Board's August meeting.

Chris N. explained to Linette P. that the professional development initiative was directly connected to governance concerns that had arisen during the spring. He reminded trustees that the Board had previously agreed that strengthening governance practices through training would be the most constructive way to address those concerns. He stated that the purpose of the training was to help all trustees better understand their responsibilities, improve how the Board handles difficult situations, and establish consistent expectations for Board conduct and decision-making.
The Board anticipated having both current and newly elected trustees participate in the training so that everyone would receive the same guidance and help build a stronger Board culture moving forward.

R. Almanzar left.

III. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

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

Roll Call
D. DeFillippo Aye
J. Henriquez Aye

Roll Call

L. Perez	Aye
G. Lopez	Aye
R. Almanzar	Absent
J. Cedeno	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye
C. Needham	Aye

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:31 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Y. Rodriguez

Documents used during the meeting

None