APPROVED

Lawrence Family Development Charter School

Minutes

LFDCS Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday August 12, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Location
Zoom

Invite Link: https://zoom.us/j/95999649651?pwd=xOoUqajMMzULJMXLV0IxLALAXK1yaW.1

Topic: LFDCS Board of Trustees Meeting
Time: Aug 12, 2026 05:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Join Zoom Meeting
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Trustees Present
C. Needham (remote), D. DeFillippo (remote), E. Nolberto (remote), G. Lopez (remote), J. Cedeno (remote), J. Henriquez (remote), R. Almanzar (remote)

Trustees Absent

L. Perez

Trustees who arrived after the meeting opened
J. Cedeno

Guests Present
A. Croes (remote), Bettina Toner, K&B (remote), C. Parcell (remote), D. Thakkar (remote), H. Castleman (remote), L. Lawler (remote), M. Denu (remote), M. Ventre (remote), N. Arpin (remote), Nicole Dean-Ward (remote), S. Stukuls (remote), Y. Rodriguez (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. 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 Aug 12, 2026 at 5:35 PM.

B. Record Attendance

C. Public Participation

There was no public participation. Attorney Bettina Toner from Krokidas & Bluestein joined the meeting. She mentioned to the Board that she had limited time and will need to leave the meeting at 6:00 pm.

II. Approval of minutes of past meetings.

A. BOT meeting on 06/10/26

E. Nolberto made a motion to approve the minutes from LFDCS Board of Trustees Meeting-Zoom on 06-10-26.
D. DeFillippo seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

The Board decided to address the executive session minutes from June 10, 2026 because Bettina T. had limited time.

The Board had received a request from Jeovanny Rodriguez to release the executive session minutes from this meeting. Darshan T. explained that, under the Open Meeting Law, the Board could have the Chair determine whether the need for confidentiality was still necessary. Germinudy L. stated that, because the meeting was an executive session and was not open to the public, she believed the minutes should remain confidential. Elizabeth N. clarified that the discussion concerned only the executive session portion of the June 10 meeting, not the open session minutes. Jennifer C. joined the meeting during the discussion and was informed that the vote was to keep the June 10 executive session minutes confidential in response to Mr. Rodriguez's request to make them public. Jennifer C. also voted in favor, and the motion passed.
J. Cedeno arrived at 5:40 PM.
D. DeFillippo made a motion to maintain confidentiality of the executive session minutes from the 06/10/26.
J. Henriquez seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

The Board then moved Bettina T.'s agenda item forward so she could address the two Open Meeting Law complaints before she had to leave.

B. Update from the Board Chair on the Open Meeting Law Complaint

Bettina T. explained that there were two complaints filed by Mr. Rodriguez on July 6 and July 7. The Board Chair and Superintendent had worked on responses to both complaints, and Bettina T. had reviewed and provided comments on the draft responses. She explained that the Board needed to decide how it wanted to respond because the deadlines were approaching. The first response was due the following day, and the second was due Friday. Bettina T. said she was available to answer questions about the complaints or the responses but cautioned that she generally would not provide attorney-client privileged legal advice in an open session. She was willing to answer questions related to the Board's responses.

Darshan T. asked whether she had previously discussed the complaints with Germinudy L., and Bettina T. confirmed that she had not had a conversation with Germinudy L. about them. Darshan T. shared that at the July 28 meeting, it had decided to delegate the responsibility for responding to the complaints to the Board Chair, which was why the complaints had been sent to Bettina T. for review. Darshan T. offered to assist in preparing the responses.

It was asked whether the responses should be sent from Bettina T.'s office or from Germinudy L.'s email. Bettina T. said it made sense for Germinudy L. to send them because the Board had delegated the responsibility to her. Bettina T. stated that she had already reviewed the drafts and believed they were in good shape, but she was willing to review them one more time to make sure they complied with the law and were complete before they were submitted.

C. BOT meeting on 06/24/26.

C. Needham made a motion to approve the minutes from LFDCS Board of Trustees Special Meeting-Zoom on 06-24-26.
D. DeFillippo seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

D. BOT meeting on 06/29/26.

C. Needham made a motion to approve the minutes from LFDCS Board of Trustees-Special Meeting on 06-29-26.
D. DeFillippo seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

E. BOT meeting on 07/14/26.

D. DeFillippo made a motion to approve the minutes from LFDCS Board of Trustees-Special Meeting on 07-14-26.
J. Henriquez seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

F. BOT on meeting 07/28/26.

D. DeFillippo made a motion to approve the minutes from LFDCS Board of Trustees Meeting-Special Meeting on 07-28-26.
E. Nolberto seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

III. Superintendent's Report

A. West Street Parking Ban

Darshan T. reported on the West Street parking ban affecting the Lower School at 34 West Street. He explained that the school discovered a notice posted on the front door stating that parking on the even side of West Street would be prohibited from August 17 through September 11, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., because of sidewalk construction, and that vehicles would be towed. The notice was printed on plain paper and did not have a City of Lawrence logo, contact information, or other identifying information, so the school initially questioned whether it was legitimate. Darshan T. contacted the Department of Public Works at around 1:00 p.m. the previous day, but the person who answered did not know anything about the notice and transferred him to the City Clerk's Office. Someone from the City Clerk's Office later returned his call and explained that the parking ban had been placed on the City Council agenda at the request of Mr. Gregory Del Rosario and Mr. Jeovanny Rodriguez. Darshan T. was directed to contact City Clerk Eileen Bernal to obtain the document number and details of the approved parking ban. He left a message but did not receive a response until later the following day.

Darshan T. then contacted DPW around 9:00 a.m. and attempted to speak with DPW Director Jorge Jaime, but he was unavailable. A staff member confirmed that the work involved routine sidewalk repairs and was not an emergency. Darshan T. questioned why the work could not be completed before school started, but the staff member could not provide an answer and said she would speak with the Director and call him back. He explained that the timing was a serious concern because teachers would return on August 17 and students on August 24, and the parking restriction would eliminate parking along more than 1,000 feet of the even side of West Street in front of the school. He explained that West Street is a narrow, busy, two-way street, and parents would likely have to park farther away, near the rotary or past Haverhill Street, and walk their children through heavy traffic. He was particularly concerned about the safety of students and the significant congestion and confusion this could create during arrival and dismissal. Darshan T. also questioned why routine maintenance would take three weeks and why the school had not been notified in advance. He said that if the City had contacted the school, the school could have worked with the City to find a better schedule.

Eileen Bernal eventually returned his call around 5:00 p.m. and told him she would speak with the DPW Director the next morning. She also suggested that the school contact Joel Chalas, Supervisor of Streets and Parks, for additional information about why the schedule had been selected. Darshan T. pointed out that both Jorge Jaime and Joel Chalas have children who attend LFDCS and therefore would have been aware of the school's calendar and opening dates. He felt that the work should have been scheduled before school opened to avoid creating unnecessary safety concerns for students.

Ms. Parcell, the Head of School for the Lower School, added that she was also very concerned about the traffic problems the construction would cause. She explained that the morning arrival may not be as difficult because the school had changed its arrival procedures the previous year, but afternoon dismissal is already congested on West Street. With the loss of street parking, there may not be enough available parking for parents, and the situation could create additional congestion for buses trying to enter and leave the school.

Germinudy L. said she had heard the Mayor mention the construction earlier that day but had not realized the parking would be completely restricted to the point that it could interfere with student drop-off and pickup. She offered to contact Joel Chalas to find out what could be done and said she would report back to the Board.

It was agreed that a communication should be sent to Lower School parents the next day. Chris N. also suggested contacting the Mayor's Office because the Mayor had publicly mentioned the project and was the City's top official.

Chris N. asked whether the City Council had formally approved the parking restriction. Darshan T. explained that he had left messages and had been told by someone identifying herself as a City Council secretary that the matter had been placed on the City

Council agenda and approved. However, the City Clerk had not yet provided the document number confirming the approval. Eileen told Darshan T. that she first needed to speak with DPW and investigate how the parking restriction had been approved. She explained that if the restriction was only temporary, it might not require City Council approval and could instead be handled by the Supervisor of Streets and Parks. A longer-term parking ban would go through the City. It was unclear whether a three-week restriction would be considered temporary or long-term.

Germinudy L. reported that she had also attempted to contact Jorge Jaime, Joel Chalas, and Mayor Brian De Pena, but none of them answered. She expected they might return her calls and said she would continue trying to reach someone who could help address the situation. She agreed that the parent communication should still be sent because the construction was scheduled to begin Monday, and even if the matter had to go before City Council, it would not be addressed until the following Tuesday.

Chris N. discussed whether the school had any legal options if the City proceeded with the full parking restriction. Darshan T. stated that if the City followed the proposed schedule and began closing the area without providing assurances about the actual duration of the work, the school could potentially have a legal claim because of the safety concerns involved. He explained that the Board of Charter Schools has authorized the school to operate and that the school has a responsibility to protect the safety of its students. Because the parking restriction could create safety risks for children traveling to and from school, Darshan T. believed there could be a basis for legal action. He recommended that the Board appoint either himself or another person to work with legal counsel on the matter, noting that he was already handling another issue and could take responsibility for working with counsel on the West Street parking situation.

C. Needham made a motion to authorize Darshan Thakkar to consult with legal if the project for sidewalk renovation moves forward.
D. DeFillippo seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

IV. Assistant Superintendent's Report

A. FY 27 Federal Grant Allocations

Sally S. provided a report on the federal grant allocations awarded to the school for the current year, including a comparison with the previous year's funding. She explained that the report was color-coded to show the increases and decreases in each grant. Sally S. noted that these changes were expected and were not a surprise, as the Grants Department at DESE had discussed the anticipated changes during webinars and at its conference. Overall, the total federal grant funding is slightly higher than what the school received the previous year. The funding is divided among several individual federal grants, and the school is making good progress with the applications. The IDEA grants are almost completely finalized, while the Title grants under ESSA are nearly ready to be submitted.

Dave D. asked Sally S. to explain what Title III-A and Title IV-A grants support. Sally S. explained that Title I supports the school's programs for students in reading and math. Title II provides funding related to professional development and mentoring. Title III primarily supports the school's ESL department. Title IV supports areas including the effective use of technology, safe and supportive schools, and opportunities for a well-rounded education. Sally S. also explained that IDEA funding is used for special education.

V. Finance Department Update

A. Campus Acquisition Update

Mark V. thanked Sally S. for taking over the grants work and said she had done an excellent job. He noted that the school was still submitting amendments for the FY25 grants through the end of June, while Sally S. had already completed most of the current year's grant applications before Labor Day.

Mark V. discussed the QPD proposal. He explained that QPD is a financial advisory group that was independently recommended to the school by both the school's auditors, AAF, and its attorneys, Krokidas & Bluestein. QPD recently managed the financing process for Community Day Group's new middle school on Andover Street, a project valued at approximately $50 million. QPD would serve as both the school's financing advisor and owner's construction manager/representative. Darshan T., Chris N., Yulissa R., and Mark V. interviewed QPD's two principals, Bob Baldwin and Lindsey Richard. Mark V. explained that they have significant experience in real estate and that QPD's financing practice focuses heavily on raising funds for charter schools and nonprofit organizations. Bob Baldwin also has connections to Lawrence because his family previously owned the Riverwalk Mill Complex, which was eventually sold to Sal. QPD is currently working with Community Day Group and has provided the school with several references. Mark V. also noted that QPD works closely with an architectural firm that was selected by Central Catholic to design its faculty area, although that project was ultimately not built. Christopher Lane, a principal at that firm, also independently referred the school to QPD. Based on QPD's experience, reputation, local connections, and work with charter schools and nonprofits, the group felt that QPD would be a good cultural fit for the school.

Mark V. reported that Elka Sachs was reviewing QPD's agreement and was expected to provide a revised contract during the week. The next steps would be to present the agreement at the October Finance Committee and Board of Trustees meetings, review the proposed milestones, and then formally confirm QPD's selection as the school's financing advisors.

B. FY26 Audit Update

Mark V. provided an update on the FY26 audit. He explained that the audit began in July with compliance testing, and the auditors were sending requests for information on a daily basis. He acknowledged that keeping up with the requests had been challenging, but said that he, Robin, Cristina, and Caroline were working to provide the requested information and expected the school to have a successful audit. Formal fieldwork was scheduled to begin in September. The audited financial statements and audit results would be presented to both the Finance Committee and Board of Trustees in October, with the final audit submission to DESE due by October 31. Mark V. also noted that the year-end financial results had already been reviewed at the Finance Committee meeting the previous week and would be presented again with the audited financial statements at the October Board meeting.

VI. Principal's Report

A. Parent Survey Results

Hali C. presented the results of the annual parent survey, which received 431 responses over the summer. Overall, the results showed a high level of parent satisfaction with the school, including academics, the learning environment, communication, and parent-teacher conferences.

Parents reported the highest satisfaction with the STEM program, with 99.3% satisfied or highly satisfied with their child's progress. Hali C. credited the positive results in part to the new hands-on and inquiry-based STEM curriculum introduced last year. The school's learning environment also received strong feedback, with 97.2% of parents satisfied or highly satisfied. Spanish was identified as an area for continued improvement, although 95.4% of parents were still satisfied or highly satisfied with their child's progress.

Parents also provided positive feedback about school staff and communication. The nursing staff received a 98.6% satisfaction rating for communication, while 61.5% of parents reported being highly satisfied with communication from classroom teachers. Parent-teacher conferences received particularly strong feedback, with 99.1% of parents satisfied or highly satisfied. Parents also reported high satisfaction with the school's communication methods, website, and Facebook page. Hali C. noted that the school may separate the BrightArrow and PowerSchool questions in future surveys to better understand which communication methods families prefer.

The most common request from parents was for more sports and after-school activities. Parents suggested additional sports, as well as clubs such as music, dance, karate, and homework clubs. They also requested more activities for younger students, since much of the current after-school programming is focused on grades five through eight. Hali C. plans to share this feedback with after-school coordinator Sandy Calandrella.

Other suggestions included an English program for parents, more field trips, additional fun activities, bringing back more community service opportunities, and childcare during family meetings. Hali C. noted that alumni volunteers may be able to assist with childcare during meetings.

Parents also requested workshops on neurodevelopmental disorders, managing different student behaviors, and using the school's technology platforms. Other suggestions included holding more events in the late afternoon or evening for working parents and offering a workshop to help parents support their children with math homework, especially with the new math program being introduced this year.

Parents also expressed interest in students learning more about the economy and artificial intelligence. Hali C. explained that the school already uses The Social Institute with students in grades three through six to teach digital literacy and plans to include more lessons about AI this year.

Hali C. noted that some parents also shared positive comments, particularly about the school's learning environment and its willingness to listen to suggestions and continue improving. The feedback will be used as part of the school's improvement efforts, including discussions at the first School Site Council meeting in September.

Hali C. also shared that the school held its first day of new staff orientation and welcomed several new staff members. She said the first day went well and that orientation would continue the following day.

B. 2026 Summer School Review

Meredith D. presented an overview of the school's summer programs. This was her third year serving as the summer coordinator. This summer, the school offered five programs. Two full-day programs, ESL and enrichment, and three half-day programs for academic, attendance, and a new theater program. Weekly themes were incorporated into the lessons and activities across the programs. Meredith D. noted that most groups were kept relatively small so staff could provide more individualized support to students.

The academic program served 54 students from kindergarten through seventh grade. Students were identified based on their spring MAP results, specifically those scoring in the 20th percentile in both reading and math. The program focused on supporting academic growth and preparing students for the next grade through ELA, math, and writing instruction. Overall attendance was 94%, while students who were required to attend had a 98% attendance rate.
The attendance program had 31 students from K1 through seventh grade who were required to participate based on attendance. Students received instruction in all subject areas, and the program had a 93% attendance rate.

The ESL program served 36 students in K1 and K2 and focused on literacy, enrichment, and language development. Students participated in three field trips to the Boston Children’s Museum, Smolak Farms, and the Boston Aquarium. ESL teachers also completed pre- and post-assessments to measure student growth in areas such as letter recognition, letter sounds, and beginning sounds.

The largest program was enrichment, which served 134 students from K1 through sixth grade. Students participated in four rotations: cooking, arts and crafts, science, and sports and movement. The program focused heavily on hands-on activities and also included three field trips to the Ecotarium, Wamesit Lanes for bowling, and an on-site Knuckle Bones obstacle course.
The school also introduced its first theater program this summer, led by Ms. Pawlyk with assistance from Ms. O’Toole. The afternoon program ran from 12:00 to 3:00 and had 15 students. During the four-week program, students prepared and performed Beauty and the Beast. Meredith D. praised Ms. Pawlyk for the work she accomplished with the students in a short period of time and said the performance was very successful.

The summer program concluded with a field-day-style closing event that included inflatable games, shaved ice, and other activities for students. Photos from the summer activities were also shared with parents through the school’s Facebook page.

VII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

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

Roll Call

D. DeFillippo Aye
C. Needham Aye
R. Almanzar Aye

Roll Call

J. Cedeno	Aye
L. Perez	Absent
E. Nolberto	Aye
J. Henriquez	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 6:34 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Y. Rodriguez

Documents used during the meeting

- IMG_0229.jpeg
- FY27 Federal Grant Allocations.pdf
- Parent Survey 2026.pptx
- Summer 2026 Board Summary.pdf