DRAFT

Lawrence Family Development Charter School

Minutes

Nominating & Governance Committee Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday August 25, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Location
Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting
https://zoom.us/j/99834498904?pwd=iu6axQUB5e6LEfobZJB3V9TbU5ibuw.1

Meeting ID: 998 3449 8904
Passcode: 3355Lz

One tap mobile
+13092053325,,99834498904#,,,,*061914# US
+13126266799,,99834498904#,,,,*061914# US (Chicago)

Committee Members Present
C. Needham (remote), E. Nolberto (remote), G. Lopez (remote), L. Perez (remote)

Committee Members Absent
None

Committee Members who arrived after the meeting opened
L. Perez

Guests Present

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 Nominating & Governance Committee of Lawrence Family Development Charter School to order on Tuesday Aug 25, 2026 at 5:46 PM.
C. Needham made a motion to start the meeting.
E. Nolberto seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
C. Needham	Aye
G. Lopez	Aye
L. Perez	Absent
E. Nolberto	Aye

II. Nominating & Governance

A. Guidance on running the election on September 9, 2026

Sally S. thanked the committee members for taking the time to participate in the meeting and expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to assist the committee with the upcoming Board election scheduled for September 9.

Sally S. explained that her recommendations were based on her previous experience serving for nine years on a school committee in another district while also working as an administrator. During that time, she had the opportunity to observe and participate in several board elections and became familiar with various practices and procedures that she believed could be beneficial to the LFDCS Board. In preparation for the upcoming election, Sally S. also consulted with Robert Carpenter of the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association. She also spoke with Darshan Thakkar, who has extensive experience with Board elections and governance through his work with LFDCS and his previous school districts.

Sally S. outlined the primary topics to be addressed during the meeting. The committee would first discuss the process and logistics for conducting the September 9 election. The committee would then review the individuals who had expressed interest in serving on the Board, including several new expressions of interest that had been received since the meeting agenda was originally posted.

Sally S. also discussed important considerations for Trustees when evaluating prospective candidates and determining whether an individual would be an appropriate fit for the Board. She emphasized the importance of considering each candidate's experience, qualifications, perspective, and potential contributions to the Board as part of the evaluation process.
Sally S. further recommended that the committee develop a consistent set of questions to be presented to each candidate. She explained that asking the same questions of all candidates would provide Trustees with a consistent basis for comparison while allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of each candidate's experience, vision, priorities, and overall suitability for service on the Board.
The election is scheduled for September 9 at 5:30 p.m. during the next Board meeting, which is also the Annual Meeting. The committee determined that the election should be conducted in person. Sally S. explained that, for an important decision such as selecting board members, it is beneficial for Trustees to be able to see candidates in person and observe not only what they say but also how they present themselves in real time.

B. Format of election process

Sally S. explained that someone from the committee or Board to serve as the facilitator for the election. She would provide guidance and recommendations, but the election itself is a responsibility of the Board and therefore should be facilitated by a Board member or designated representative rather than by her.

The facilitator would have several responsibilities. At the beginning of the election, the facilitator would explain the process to both the Trustees and candidates, including how the election would proceed and what candidates and Trustee members should expect. The facilitator would also provide the Board with general considerations to keep in mind when evaluating candidates and deciding the best fit for the Board.

The facilitator would then manage the candidate presentations. Each candidate would have an opportunity to come forward and deliver a speech to the Board. After the speeches, the facilitator would ask the questions that the committee developed in advance so that each candidate receives an opportunity to address the same questions. The facilitator would ultimately oversee and conduct the voting process.

Elizabeth N. volunteered to take on the role as the facilitator. The rest of the Committee agreed to assign Elizabeth N. as the election facilitator.

Sally S. explained that she would continue to guide the process and encouraged Elizabeth N. to take notes on the information discussed today so that she could prepare for her responsibilities. If questions came up between now and September 9, or if she needed clarification about any part of the process, Sally S. would be available by phone or email to review the information with her.

Sally S. explained that a letter had been prepared and sent to everyone who had expressed interest in joining the board since the spring. The letter was reviewed by Chris N. and Elizabeth N., and Darshan T. contributed additional information based on his legal expertise.

Sally S. met in person or virtually with many of the individuals who expressed interest. During these conversations, she discussed why each person was interested in serving on the Board, the expected time commitment, the responsibilities and tasks involved, and the areas for which the board is responsible. Her goal was to make sure candidates understood what they would be committing to before deciding whether to move forward.

Recruitment efforts were expanded during the summer to encourage broader participation. Brochures were distributed to new families by the Family Liaisons during home visits. Sally S. also reached out to community organizations and posted recruitment information at locations such as Market Basket, CVS, and other locations throughout Lawrence and Methuen with the goal of increasing community participation.

Sally S. also sent additional information during the middle of the summer to the candidates explaining the next steps in the process. The letter explained the date and format of the upcoming election and gave candidates an understanding of what they could expect during the process. It also included information about the organization's bylaws, along with a link so that they could review them.
Candidates were asked to prepare a speech introducing themselves and explaining whether they were seeking to serve as a parent representative or a community member. Candidates were asked to explain why they wanted to serve on the Board and describe the experience, skills, or background they could bring that would benefit the Board. Candidates were also informed that if they remained interested after reviewing the information and speaking with Sally S., they needed to submit their materials by the previous week. They were also asked to RSVP by the Thursday before the Board meeting so that the necessary information could be included on the meeting agenda in advance.

Sally S. received several responses after the letter was distributed. One individual responded to indicate that they were no longer interested in serving. Another candidate submitted their materials.

Sally S. explained that the letter of intent and resume are required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as part of the Board appointment process. She also emphasized that after the board completes its vote, information regarding the individuals elected must be forwarded to the state Commissioner at DESE for approval. Because of this requirement, the school needs to collect the required documentation from each candidate.

Sally S. hoped to provide the committee with complete candidate information at this meeting. Since one candidate had only submitted materials the day before, she did not

yet have everything available to distribute. In the meantime, she prepared notes from the individual conversations she had held with candidates. She shared the information in a neutral manner to give the committee an overview of the individuals who had expressed interest.

There was currently one definite RSVP. Candidates still had time to confirm their interest. She planned to keep the Committee updated every few days regarding whether additional candidates submitted their materials. Yulissa R. was being kept informed so that any new candidates could be reflected on the meeting agenda.
Chris N. asked how many parent and community-member positions were open. Sally S. confirmed that there were two parent openings and three community-member openings. Chris N. observed that the school appeared to have several potential parent candidates but might have fewer candidates interested in the community-member positions. Sally S. explained that two individuals who had originally been potential community candidates no longer appeared likely to move forward.

Sally S. emphasized that the Board does not have to fill every available position during the September 9 election. If only a small number of candidates participate, or if trustees do not believe certain candidates are a good fit, the board could elect zero, one, or two candidates for a particular category rather than filling every available seat simply because positions are open.
Chris N. asked whether the Board would vote on a slate of candidates or consider each candidate individually. Sally S. confirmed that each candidate would be considered and voted on individually. Every person who is interested in serving should have the opportunity to appear before the board and present their qualifications.
Sally S. explained that Elizabeth N. would begin the election by explaining the process and reviewing the considerations that Trustees should keep in mind. Each candidate would then have approximately five minutes to deliver a prepared speech. Their presentation would address who they are, why they want to serve, whether they are seeking to serve as a parent or community member, and what experience or skills they could bring to the board.

Following each candidate's presentation, Elizabeth N. would ask the two or three standardized questions developed by the Committee. Sally S. explained that asking the same core questions of every candidate would ensure that Trustees had comparable information when making their decisions.

Each Trustee would then be able to vote for up to two candidates for the parent positions and up to three candidates for the community-member positions, assuming there were enough candidates in each category. Sally S. reminded Trustees that they could vote for fewer candidates, including only one or none, if they did not believe additional candidates were a good fit.
Sally S. explained that Trustees would be permitted to ask clarifying questions after a candidate's presentation. For example, if a candidate stated that they had ten years of

educational experience, a trustee could ask what type of educational experience they had, such as whether they worked in administration or as a teacher, what grade level they worked with, or how recently they had worked in education.

However, Trustees should not ask unique or substantive questions that are not asked of the other candidates. Doing so could create an unfair advantage or introduce bias into the election process. Any substantive questions intended to help evaluate candidates should be developed in advance and asked consistently of everyone.

C. Nomination Committee's guidance for BOT to make the following considerations when voting:

Sally S. went over factors that she believed the Board of Trustees should consider when evaluating candidates. She emphasized that the goal was not simply to fill open positions, but to determine whether each individual would be a good fit for the Board and contribute positively to its overall effectiveness.

The first was the importance of avoiding bias. She acknowledged that Board members may personally know candidates or may have recommended individuals for consideration. Knowing someone can provide useful information about their character, reliability, and commitment, and there is nothing inherently wrong with voting for someone whom a Trustee knows.

Sally S. cautioned that personal familiarity should not be the primary reason for selecting a candidate. Trustees should consider whether the person has the skills, experience, vision, and qualifications needed by the Board. If someone is personally known to a Trustee but another candidate appears to be a better fit for the Board's needs, the Trustee should consider the overall qualifications of both individuals rather than simply choosing the person they know.

Sally S. emphasized that the central question throughout the process should be: Is this person a good fit for the Board? The goal is to create a diverse and effective Board made up of individuals with the range of experiences and skills necessary to govern the school successfully.

Another factor Sally S. touched on was the importance of maintaining diversity in skills and professional experience. She pointed out that the Board had recently lost Jose Tejada and Lynette McRae and encouraged Trustees to consider what skills or areas of expertise may have been lost when those members left.

Sally S. shared that although there was a need for additional community members, the Board should not fill a position simply because it is vacant. If qualified candidates do not come forward or if candidates who participate are not considered a good fit, the Board can leave positions open and continue recruitment. The Board could conduct additional

elections in future months if new candidates become interested. Sally S. explained that this flexibility allows the Board to prioritize finding appropriate candidates rather than feeling obligated to fill every position during one election.

Sally S. also spoke about the length of time a candidate could remain involved with the school.
She explained that if a candidate has a child who is already entering seventh or eighth grade, the Board may want to consider the candidate's potential longevity. A candidate with excellent qualifications and experience may still be a strong choice even if their child is nearing graduation, but the Board should recognize that the parent may only be able to serve for a year or two.
Sally S. also raised the issue of language access after speaking with a parent who primarily speaks Spanish. She emphasized that the Board should not want to exclude anyone because of language and that inclusivity is important. However, she explained that LFDCS Board meetings currently do not include translation services, and the training provided by DESE also does not include translation. There is currently no budget allocated for translation services.

Elizabeth N. agreed that this could be challenging for both the Board and the individual candidate. She also noted that there are other opportunities within the school and community where individuals can volunteer and participate.
Elizabeth N. pointed out that some current Board members don't have much time remaining in their parent-member terms. She personally has approximately two more years remaining unless she continues as a community member later.

Sally S. noted that the Board should consider how many years current members have remaining on their terms when making decisions about candidates. Someone who is not selected this year may still be a strong candidate for a future opening. However, candidates who present significant red flags may warrant additional consideration.

Sally S. emphasized that disagreement among Board members is expected and healthy, but candidates should be able to disagree in a positive, professional, and collaborative manner. The Board should consider whether a candidate may contribute positively to the Board’s culture or potentially create negativity or conflict.

Chris N. raised concerns regarding Gregory Del Rosario and whether his employment with Lawrence Prospera could create a conflict, particularly given the school’s ongoing property and purchase-related matters involving Prospera. Sally S. noted that employment information should be included among the questions asked of candidates so potential conflicts can be identified before voting.

D.

Developing 2-3 consistent questions as follow up during elections for each candidate that ask questions that are important to this Board for follow up after they speak.

L. Perez arrived at 6:21 PM.
Elizabeth N. suggested using a standardized rating rubric to help trustees evaluate candidates.

The Committee discussed developing three to five questions for candidates following their five-minute speeches. Elizabeth N. suggested questions like why the candidate is interested in serving on the Board, how they would handle confidential information. Chris N. mentioned it is a good idea to ask those questions, particularly when matters are discussed in executive session, and whether they could separate personal interests involving their child from their fiduciary responsibilities as a Board member. Elizabeth N. also suggested questions asking candidates how they handle disagreement or conflict, what they believe makes an effective Board. Sally S. recommended asking whether they have the time and availability required to fulfill Board responsibilities, including reviewing materials, attending meetings, and potentially participating on committees.

Sally S. offered to type up the proposed questions and send them to Elizabeth N. and the others for review.

Sally S. offered to research whether DESE has an existing rubric or indicator framework for Board members. She also offered to develop a rubric based on the professional development she plans to provide regarding Board responsibilities and share it with the group for feedback.

III. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

Chris N. reminded the other Trustees regarding the annual financial disclosure requirement, which is due September 1, and the conflict of interest training, which must be completed every two years.
Sally S. also shared plans to work with the Communications Specialist to enhance the Board's presence on the school website by adding Board member photographs, information, and possibly quotes.
E. Nolberto made a motion to adjourn.
L. Perez seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

L. Perez	Aye
G. Lopez	Aye
C. Needham	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye

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

- BOT candidate email .pdf