

# **RISING TIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL**

## **Minutes**

### **Board of Trustees Meeting**

**December 19, 2022**

*Virtual Meeting*

#### **Narrative Mission Statement:**

##### **What is the purpose of the school?**

**“...The Rising Tide Charter School provides students with community-based education each day, using the Town of Plymouth as a local yet dynamic textbook which will provide fertile ground for the development of higher-order thinking skills.”**

##### **Leadership and Governance:**

**“In accordance with MA Charter School Law, the Board of Trustees is ultimately accountable for the school’s educational mission, performance and adherence to its Charter.”**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman, Chris Schelleng, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. In attendance were Chris Schelleng, Norm DeCoste, Sean Kelly, Sandy Kozlowsky, and Amy Norris. Also in attendance were Michael O’Keefe, Head of School; Eric Mello, Business Manager; and Maureen Herrmann, Assistant to Head of School.

#### **GUESTS**

Shawna Weekly, Director of Wellness, Safety, and Equity

#### **MEETING MINUTES**

**Attachments/Handouts:** November 21, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes

Sandy made a motion to approve the November Board Meeting Minutes. Norm seconded the motion. All voted in favor to approve.

#### **SCHOOL REPORT**

##### **Update from Shawna Weekly**

**Attachments/Handouts:** RTCPS DBIE Commitment

Michael stated that Shawna has been with Rising Tide for 10 years with increasing responsibilities. Shawna reviewed the 3 areas she currently oversees – Wellness, Safety and Equity.

Wellness – We have hired 2 Wellness Educators; one is Caroline Cartmill. In addition to teaching Grades 6 and 8, she teaches the Upper School as part of Plymouth Fitness. As a

Behavior Specialist, she completes behavior observational reports, preliminary assessments, and functional behavior assessments. She also works closely with students on behavior plans.

The nursing staff has been reduced from 2 full-time to 1-1/2, which has been working well.

Shawna continues to run the Health Advisory Committee, which meets 4 times/year. The committee's goals this year are to increase parent engagement, community involvement, and to promote a sense of belonging for all students. There will be a Health & Wellness Fair in the Spring. As part of that, Kelsey Kincade, Athletic Director, is organizing a Fun Run. At the conclusion of the run, there will be 15+ community partner vendors to educate parents/families about their services.

Shawna applied for and received a Grant from DESE for a social/emotional screener, which measures social emotional learning for each student and the school as a whole. It was implemented this Fall for grades 5, 8, 9, and 10 and will be performed again in the Spring to evaluate growth. The second part of the grant involves analyzing the data to identify the social emotional needs of the students so wellness staff can create appropriate teaching units to address those needs.

Safety – Teachers are trained every year on emergency protocols. Each classroom has red Emergency Response Protocol Binders, which are reviewed and updated each year. We have collaborated with Navigate 360 to come up with a phone app. All of our emergency protocols were put into the app, which also connects with student rosters. Teachers can get real time alerts on their phones on what is happening in an emergency, as well as know if any student is missing. Staff completed ALICE training in the Fall and there was a recent ALICE drill for the students. Two fire drills have been performed with the Plymouth PD, and the phone app was used for that. The Crisis Response Team (which Shawna now oversees) debriefed the drills and use of app to troubleshoot any issues that might come up.

As Title IX Coordinator, Shawna had our attorney, Michael Joyce, come in and train staff on bullying prevention procedures as well as Title IX regulations.

Lastly, Shawna oversees the Chemical Safety Officer, which is a staff member who took on this additional responsibility. She had training to meet OSHA protocols for chemical storage and disposal in our science labs.

Equity – Shawna took a certificate program this summer through Cornell on inclusion and equity. She is available to assist staff on any equity issues that arise, and also oversees the DBIE Faculty Work Group (in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year). The group set up bias incident reporting protocols last year, so any race-based issues are reported and addressed timely. In support of the Strategic Plan, the group will be meeting in January looking closely at measurable goals.

She shared the final version of the RTCPS DBIE Commitment, which was started last year, and fine-tuned with input from many stakeholders. After discussion, Sandy made a motion to support the DBIE Commitment statement. Amy seconded the motion. All voted in favor. This will be added to the school's website as part of a dedicated DBIE page.

Shawna left the meeting.

### **Update from Head of School**

Michael reviewed the December 7<sup>th</sup> Professional Day. Teachers gathered into curriculum teams where they analyzed MCAS data looking at areas of growth. Teachers then chose from Best Practices Workshops led by school and faculty leaders. In the afternoon, they broke up into Middle School and Upper School groups for specific focus on how to support students in each division, as well as continued work between Learning Specialists and teachers.

We should receive the preliminary summary of review for our 5-year charter term in early January, and we will review for factual accuracy. It will be presented with other applicants to the Commissioner. No signs to be worried about renewal; they are being mindful of the impacts of COVID. Michael will share updates at the next Board meeting.

Winter sports are up and running, including Girls Varsity and Middle School basketball and Boys Varsity, JV, and Middle School Basketball. Boys Varsity got their first win on Friday night.

There's an Upper School winter play up and running. The Middle School talent show will be this Friday. There will be an Arts Showcase in January.

We are having a down year with enrollments. Current enrollment is 630. We are doing well with our enrollment applications for the upcoming school year. Michael presented a comparison of annual enrollment applications by grade from 2017/18 through 2023/24 from data compiled by Melissa Jackson, Data Assessment Manager. We are on pace with our applications to date. We had 2 Open Houses, but attendance was not as great as we typically get but hasn't impacted enrollment applications. Martha Popoloski, part-time Communications Coordinator, has been actively posting on social media, and we are trying out paid ads in digital media. We also saw a rough cut on the promotional video we've been working on. We hope to push that out soon as we head towards the final 6 weeks before the February lottery.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Head of School Goals for 2022-23**

Michael reviewed the goals he developed while keeping within the context of the school's Mission, Key Design Elements, Charter School Performance Criteria, DESE Standards for Effective Administrator Leadership, and our 5-Year Strategic Plan/Key Strategic Initiatives. He presented 4 goals with specific action items for each. Goals included:

- 1) Build and align Rising Tide long-term and short-term goals, priorities, and practices to build greater clarity, focus, transparency, and accountability.
- 2) Strengthen a culture of collaboration and support for our professional community.
- 3) Further develop a rigorous academic program with appropriate support that leads to improvement in outcomes for all students.
- 4) Build increased capacity at Rising Tide to grow towards modeling DBIE as a school community.

Sean made a motion to approve the Head of School goals. Sandy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

## **FINANCIALS**

### **November 2022 Financial Report**

**Attachments/Handouts:** RTCPS Financial Reports for the period ending November 30, 2022

Eric presented the November financial report, which is for the first 5 months of the Fiscal Year. Martha Dennison joined the Finance Committee meeting prior to the Board meeting.

Our approved budget was based on 640 students; we are currently at 629. Total income to date is under budget by (\$61,070). Expenses year-to-date are under budget by (\$59,611). Our Net Income is (\$1,459) year-to-date. Our balance sheet continues to be stable at \$2,180,121.

We are spending the rest of our ESSER III Grant money this year in the amount of \$252,248.

Under Income, Eric stated that we added another regional bus because we maxed out the Cape Cod route. State tuition is (\$65,202) under budget, but all other items are within the budget. There is a Grant we received that Shawna spoke about earlier that we didn't budget for that will help us.

On the Expense side, our biggest savings under Fixed Charges (\$45,073) is mainly due to insurance savings being lower than budgeted.

We hope to have updated per pupil rates from DESE by the next meeting. Michael and Eric are already in discussions about starting the budget process for next year to make appropriate adjustments as needed.

Amy made a motion to accept the November financials. Sandy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

## **BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Nominating and Governance** – Since the last meeting, we have hit dead ends with potential new Board members. Martha Dennison, parent of a sophomore, participated for the first time in the Finance and Audit subcommittee meeting.

**Finance and Audit** – Nothing to add.

**Communications and Advocacy** – Met November 28. Sandy mentioned the Open Houses that Michael covered in the meeting earlier. The parent interested in joining the subcommittee was unable to attend the meeting due to her work schedule. Sandy is waiting to hear back from her as to her availability for future meetings. Michael commented that the Charter School Association is unsure what impact the new Governor will have on any legislature involving Charter Schools. Amy stated the subcommittee will be discussing plans for Rising Tide's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary at their next meeting.

**Strategic Planning** – Hope to meet in January.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Marisa Ronan, President of the Rising Tide SEPAC, hopes they will attend future Board meetings to apprise the Board of goals they are working on. Michael will reach out to her to get the group on a future Board meeting agenda.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

None

## **ADJOURN**

Amy made a motion to Adjourn. Norm seconded the motion. All voted in favor to Adjourn.