

# RISINGTIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

## Minutes

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

June 20, 2023

*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 7:04 PM. In attendance were Chris Schelleng, Norm DeCoste, Sandy Kozlowsky, and Laura Sterns Flynn. Also in attendance were Michael O'Keefe, Head of School; Eric Mello, Business Manager; Maureen Herrmann, Assistant to Head of School; Zahra Williams, Interim Principal and Assistant Head of School; and Theresa Szczepanski, Instructional Coach for Math and Science. Amy Norris and Sean Kelly were absent.

#### **GUESTS:**

None:

#### **MEETING MINUTES**

Attachments/Handouts: [June 20, 2023 agenda](#); [May 15, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes](#); [May 2023 Financials](#); [STAR Assessment slide deck](#)

Maureen shared the May 15 Board Meeting Minutes on screen.

Sandy made a motion to approve the May 15 Board Meeting Minutes. Norm seconded the motion. All voted in favor to approve.

#### **SCHOOL REPORT**

Zahra Williams was introduced by Michael O'Keefe as the new Interim Principal and Assistant Head of School. She spoke to the Board in her capacity as World Languages Curriculum Coordinator during the past 2 years. She notified the Board of the plan, commencing in the 2023-2024 school year, to switch 7<sup>th</sup> grade world language instruction from Latin to Spanish I. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students will have Latin I. Currently, the program includes two years of Latin in Middle School. This switch will give them equal footing in both languages and an equally strong foundation in both languages. They can then decide which language to pursue in high school. This shift is also connected to the program moving to incorporate the MA Seal of Biliteracy for high school students.

Chris asked what this might mean for staffing. Ms. Williams explained that the current grade Latin teacher is not returning to Rising Tide, which provides an opportunity to make a change to a 7<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish teacher. The position has been posted.

There's a lot of excitement from Middle School kids for this change, Laura Stearns Flynn commented. She felt it brings a balance to the Middle School curriculum.

### **STAR Assessments**

Theresa Szczepanski explained that STAR Assessments were in their inaugural year at Rising Tide. Piloted last spring with limited testing in reading, the assessments were used three times this year in reading and math for grades 5-9; this year the testing has shown reliability as a metric on literacy and algebra readiness. There is a focus on the median growth percentile and, this year.

Results allowed Theresa and her Humanities colleague, Cindy Favret, to identify "pathways to proficiency" for both students and teachers. Results allowed them to identify teachers and student subgroups in need of support. Further, it allowed for the identification of target skills for students and the measurement of the effectiveness of interventions over time.

From her perspective, Theresa found the tool helpful for math placement discussions. She and Cindy will measure STAR against MCAS scores. She noted the assessments are easy to administer, taking only about 20-30 minutes per administration. For the upcoming year, they will be scheduled with attention to the timing of MCAS and other classroom activities. She explained that while it's a light lift for administering, the data is actionable. Laura asked if the assessment of the tool was true for the literacy part? Theresa acknowledged the intervention time was the same for both math and literacy. Theresa expressed excitement about the things they will be able to do with the data – to see the skill needs at each level - to get a perspective on things. We only had anecdotal stories before about student progress. We'll now be able to show institutional improvement.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Introduction of Laura Stearns Flynn. Chris noted it was great to have new perspectives – great to have a new face. Laura has a child entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade and another who graduated in 2022. Laura is a long-time educator of the "little ones" and is currently Assistant Director at the Woodside School. Laura expressed her appreciation for the opportunity and noted that Rising Tide met each of her children's individual needs in a great way.

### **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

Eric shared that for the period ending May 31, 2023 – our 11<sup>th</sup> month – we started with a planned deficit budget. Enrollment has been down – we are struggling with enrollment – and total income as of May 31 is now under budget by \$194.5K. Savings were realized this year in expenses of snow removal and health benefits. As of May 31, net expenses are under budget by \$112.5K. Net income compared to budget is a deficit of \$81.9K. At the fiscal year-end, Eric anticipates we should be around a \$500K deficit. The good news is our cash balance is at \$2M mark. Tuition payments anticipated from the state should further help with that amount.

We are on target with state reimbursement for transportation. Eric noted [the state] has a decent amount of money so we expect full reimbursement. We are still behind on enrollment. We've saved

some on instructional services but that will even out. Operations and maintenance were a savings. One fixed charge is health insurance and we've saved a bit there. We are currently at a net deficit of 81,890 and Eric expects we will be about the same in June. Eric is gearing up for auditors in June and continuing to work on the budget for next year – a new, updated version will be issued closer to the start of the new school year.

There were no questions regarding the financials.

Norm moved to accept the May financials. Sandy seconded the motion. The financials were unanimously approved.

#### **BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

Nominating and Governance Committee – have not met.

Finance and Audit Committee – nothing from finance.

Communications and Advocacy Committee – working on gala for September 28. We're getting the ball rolling.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No attendees – no comment.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS NOT ANTICIPATED**

No other business was brought to the Chair's attention.

#### **ADJOURN**

Sandy made a motion to adjourn at 7:55 p.m.; Norm seconded the motion. All voted in favor of adjourning.