

RISING TIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

June 17, 2024

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

Chairperson, Chris Schelleng, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

In attendance were Chris Schelleng, Laura Stearns-Flynn, Sean Kelly, Amy Norris, and John Polvere. Also in attendance were Michael O’Keefe, Head of School; Zahra Williams, Principal/Assistant Head of School; and Eric Mello, Business Manager. Dr. Ian Rivera was absent.

ATTACHMENTS/HANDOUTS: June 17, 2024, Agenda; 2024 May Board Meeting Minutes; May 2024 Financial Reports

GUESTS

Theresa Szczepanski, RTCPS STEM Instructional Coach

MEETING MINUTES

Laura made a motion to approve the May Board Meeting Minutes. John seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with Sean abstaining.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

SCHOOL REPORT

STAR Data End-of-Year Report (Theresa Szczepanski)

Theresa reviewed that STAR tests are computerized, adaptive literacy and math screeners administered three times/year (September, January, and April) to students in grades 5-10. She reviewed progress on achievement and growth percentile benchmarks for this year. There was progress made in the High School, but more work needs to be done in the Middle School. Theresa went over goals for next year including using High Quality Instructional Materials

(HQIM) and Castle Learning materials in both general classrooms as well as targeted support to help address shortcomings.

Health Insurance Plan Update (Eric Mello)

The school currently has CIGNA health insurance. They proposed a 23% increase in the premium for next year; our broker negotiated that down to a 12% increase. Ultimately, the broker talked with Harvard Pilgrim and we secured a new plan (which goes into effect in July) that is a 10% reduction of our current premium. This will help lower our costs, since this is one of our largest employee benefits.

Program Update (Zahra Williams)

Zahra confirmed we will continue to offer dual enrollment with SNHU next year. In addition to the 2 advanced Spanish, 2 advanced History and 2 advanced English courses available this year, we applied for and were approved to add an advanced Statistics and advanced Biology course.

Some adjustments will be made next year to the Aviation program with Cape Cod Community College. There will be no more Zoom instruction; instead Chrissy Brodeur will teach 2X/week at the school and 2X/week students will have hands on time at the hangar at the Plymouth airport. In the Fall, Year 2 of the program will be taught, with Year 1 of the program occurring next Spring. This allows Seniors the option to participate in internship programming in the Spring.

We are participating in the State Seal of Biliteracy program, which allows students to get a seal on their diploma as well as a notation on their High School transcript asserting they have literacy skills in 2 languages (can be in Latin or Spanish taught at school, or from language learned at home). We had one senior earn it this year; there are 3 juniors who have already earned theirs and 3-4 sophomores are close.

This is the second year we have offered targeted support in the Middle School to those students marked as needing Urgent Intervention on the STAR assessments. Will try to get this started even earlier next year. Zahra reviewed the Castle Learning system including teacher resources and reporting available that will also be used next year for support.

Staffing changes for next year:

- Theresa Szczepanski will move from STEM Instructional Coach to Academic Dean
- Cindy Favret is retiring (Humanities Instructional Coach)
- Pam Leary will become the Math & Computer Science Department Chair
- Stephanie Orman will become the English Department Chair
- Dr. Ian Campbell will become the Social Studies Department Chair with Andrew Kuech moving out of state
- Barnet Senegal will become Arts Department Chair with Tim Walker stepping out of that role

Enrollment Update (Michael O'Keefe)

Michael stated we continue to have sizeable waiting lists for the Middle School. We have registered 34 new Upper School students. Earlier today we let in about 25 more students to the Upper School (expect not all will register). We are still on target for a carrying number of 620 students for next year.

NEW BUSINESS

Chris mentioned that Board members should have received emails from DESE with Financial Disclosure/Conflict of Interest forms to be completed.

OLD BUSINESS

August 2024 Retreat Date

Michael would like to get 2-3 hours with the Board and Senior Leadership on the calendar (maybe August 7 or 8) to discuss goals for next year. Chris suggested an email go out to arrive at a consensus on a date.

FINANCIALS

May Financials

Eric presented the May financial report. We are still projecting 617 students at \$18,303/pupil. When DESE makes their final payment at the end of the month we will know the final numbers. We will also receive the final bus transportation reimbursement rate at that time.

Total Income is under budget by (\$1,320). Expenses are under budget by \$171,500. Net Income year-to-date is \$170,180. Our cash flow remains strong at \$2,378,929.

The audit will start next month and continue into August. Results will be presented at the October Board meeting.

Laura made a motion to accept the May financials. John seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Nominating and Governance – Have not met.

Communications and Advocacy – Have not met.

Finance and Audit – Nothing to add.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURN

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