

Rising Tide Charter Public School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

February 24, 2025

(Virtual meeting)

“Rising Tide Charter Public 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 7:02 PM.

In attendance were Chris Schelleng, Laura Stearns-Flynn, John Polvere, Chris Talamo, Amy Norris, Erin Koh, and Sean Kelly. Also in attendance were Michael O’Keefe (Head of School), Eric Mello (Business Manager). There was a quorum.

ATTACHMENTS/HANDOUTS: February 24, 2025 Agenda; 2025 January Board Meeting Minutes; January 2025 Financial Reports

GUESTS: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

MEETING MINUTES:

Laura made a motion to approve the January Board Meeting Minutes. Sean seconded the motion. All voted in favor to approve.

SCHOOL REPORT: Michael O’Keefe

- **Enrollment:** Enrollment applications for the upcoming school year 2025-2026 are remarkably similar to numbers from last year. Few highlights:
 - 9th grade is down 30 applications compared to last year
 - 10th grade has a few additional
 - 11th has a few less
- Overall, 30 less than last year for a TOTAL of 393 applications (At this time)

Q: from Chris S. - Do we have a solid idea of how many current students from our current 8th grade class will be staying at RT for 9th grade?

A: from Michael - 95 students currently enrolled in 8th grade

- We are aware of 20-25 applying elsewhere (not aware of their acceptances or their decisions yet; 5-10 applied to Sturgis)
- RT Accepted Students Day is scheduled for next week, ALL students from 5th to 12th are invited, including the current RT 8th graders as “new students” for the RT high school. This day typically helps us get a clearer picture of who is a more solid commitment to attending RT
- Based on applications, RT anticipates letting in 20-25 students for 9th, and all the applicants for the 10th, 11th, 12th grades

Discussion around the possibility of being able to swell that number as our total enrollment is around 620 students and historically we have a matriculation of about 40%. We have the space to accommodate a larger number. We can build on positives and positive momentum and offer more initially off the waitlist.

Michael restated that the enrollment concerns around the 8th to 9th grade transition is a common concern across most schools with a middle school to high school range. RT would love to have a goal of 65% retention. Last year, we had 50% - tech programs are having a significant impact, athletics - we are continuing to market, explore these issues.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Nomination/Governance Committee discussed the idea of a Board of Directors Portal where one central location would hold old minutes, helpful attachments, relevant links all easily accessible to all Board Members.
- Michael gave a walk through of the mock-up, highlighting such links as the Strategic Plan, Accountability Plan, old minutes, Calendars, Handbooks

Discussion followed noting how helpful this would be. Michael will work with the RT IT department to solidify a working link for all Board members.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Discussion regarding potential new developments RE student competencies for student graduation requirements following the November vote to remove MCAS as a requirement. Michael reviewed DESE’s current stance, which is still in flux. DESE has a meeting schedule for the beginning of March 2025, and preliminary agendas seem to highlight language around a two tiered requirement:

- Student “mastery of skills” AND “Satisfactory completed coursework”
- 4 Board Members (Erin, Laura, Chris T. Chris S.) have shown interest in an additional meeting to explore this further following the DESE meetings and their guidance to further RT’s policy around this matter, finalize our requirements.
 - Some discussion as to how RT might define “student mastery”
- Also, there is a DESE focus group with a few RT Board Members as part of this years site visit on 3/20/25 via Zoom (Chris S., Sean, Laura to attend)

FINANCIAL MATTERS: (Eric Mello)

- Presentation of the January 2025 Financial Statements (see attached for details)
- Overall, this year had been shaping up “really well” and are within our projections of 618 students, and we are projecting ending with 614 students at a higher than anticipated rate per student (Total income of +\$67,557 largely due to the higher tuition rate)
- Had some savings due to lower administration salary to an unfilled role, and a significant decrease in a special education transportation need that is no longer necessary (saving of \$14,000 YTD)
- Net income YTD is + \$168,757

Erin motioned to accept the January 2025 financials. Amy seconded the motion. All voted in favor to approve.

BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Nominating and Governance:** No news.
- **Communication and Advocacy:** No news.
- **Finance and Audit:** Nothing to add.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Dr. Ian Rivera will be stepping down from his role on the board due to professional and personal reasons. We all want to specifically thank him for his time and energy while on the board. We have greatly appreciated his insight and perspectives.

ADJOURN

Sean made a motion to adjourn. Erin seconded the motion. All voted in favor to adjourn.