

# MEETING MINUTES

## Board of Trustees Meeting

Date: October 21, 2024 – 4:00 p.m.

### Attendees:

Josh Charpentier (Board Member), In-person

Mike Balaschi (Assistant Director), In-person

Mindy Savage (Board Member), Zoom

Adam Earle (Board Member), Zoom

Ryan McLaughlin (Special Ed Coordinator), Zoom

Anre Dowell (Board Member), Zoom

Rachel Babcock (Board Member), Zoom at Map Academy

Liza Veto (Board Member), Zoom

Lauren Turner, Zoom

Jim Powers, Zoom

### **1. Call to Order/Attendance**

#### **a. Public Comment**

**There were no public comments.**

### **2. Consent Agenda**

#### **a. July 29, 2024, Board Minutes**

#### **b. Finance Reports**

#### **c. Co-directors Report**

##### **i. Data Highlight – VOCAL “Views of Climate and Learning” Survey Data**

Rachel Babcock explained that this was a snapshot which was given as part of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS to students across the Commonwealth when they took the MCAS assessment. The data was positive, and students had continued to report that they were happy at Map Academy.

Rachel Babcock added that they were outperforming in all quadrants of the assessment of school climate and culture as compared to state-wide averages. She noted that it was a small sample which probably underrepresented their student body since it was restricted to 10<sup>th</sup> grade students taking the MCAS, however, it was impressive.

**ii. Enrollment Update**

Rachel Babcock reported that they were in the first of their graduation cycles. This meant that they would be turning over some spots due to students graduating. She noted that they were currently at their maximum enrollment.

Rachel Babcock added that they had held the lottery on October 15<sup>th</sup>. She shared that they had a waitlist of 27 and they believed 13 students would graduate the following week, which would free up those spots for seats that had just been offered from the October lottery.

Rachel Babcock explained that the aim was to always remain at maximum enrollment while simultaneously being responsive to students in need on the wait list.

Rachel Babcock highlighted that they had received a commendation from DESE via email for best practices in recruitment and retention efforts for recruiting high-need populations. This included special ed, low income, and students of color, and/or any combination of these situations for students that were considered to be from marginalized groups or who were underrepresented.

Rachel Babcock noted that their data in all these was significantly above their targets, comparison schools, and their comparison index. The commendation had been received from Melissa Gordon, who oversaw this at DESE and commended their exemplary data.

Melissa Gordon had shared that Map Academy had been included in a list which they were using for other schools to emulate in terms of enrolling and retaining.

Rachel Babcock reported that their Education Disruption website had been revamped. She explained that this was the work that they did around storytelling in terms of sharing what was happening at Map as a dissemination practice.

Rachel Babcock shared that they had embarked on a new format for the podcast where topics would be released and focused on every six months.

Liza Veto called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Adam Earle moved to approve, and Anre Dowell seconded the motion.

For	Against
Mindy Savage Anre Dowell Adam Earle Josh Charpentier Rachel Babcock Liza Veto	

The motion was unanimously approved.

### 3. New Business

a. Discussion & Vote: FY24 Audit

Lauren Turner introduced herself and noted that she was with AAFCPAs, Map Academy's outsourced Managed Accounting firm. She explained that their team works very closely with Map Academy leadership to ensure all of the accounting is accurate.

Jim Powers shared that he was the auditor from Marcum's. He noted that they worked to ensure that the financial statements were in accordance with externally accepted accounting principles.

Jim Powers added that the Audit opinion which was shared was unedited and dated as of that day. If the report was accepted, they would send a representation letter the following day. He explained that, Map Education, Inc. as a small non-profit, generally accepted accounting principles required that they did combined financial statements as a blended component unit of the school.

Jim Powers reported that the school had had an increase of net position of \$426,000. Hence, they had a strong financial position which showed that they were managing the operation well, self-supporting, and showed no risk of any financial concerns if they remained on the same path.

Jim Powers noted that Map Academy's internal controls, reconciliations throughout the year, and the status of their financial condition at the end of the year, showed the results of a well-managed year.

Josh Charpentier shared that he and Lauren Turner met at least once a month to go over the financials, with a particular emphasis on grants. He reported that this was the seventh consecutive year where they had grown their net position.

Liza Veto explained that the Map Academy Foundation was a separate body which had been established to receive grants and donations. She clarified that neither Josh Charpentier nor Rachel Babcock received any benefit from those funds.

Liza Veto noted that the audit included the regular Map Academy operating expenses plus the finances of the Foundation.

Liza Veto called for a motion to approve the FY24 Audit. Josh Charpentier moved to approve. Adam Earle seconded it.

For	Against
Mindy Savage	
Anre Dowell	
Adam Earle	
Josh Charpentier	
Rachel Babcock	
Liza Veto	

The motion was unanimously approved.

Jim Powers and Lauren Turner left the meeting.

**b. Discussion & Vote: Capital Account Deposit**

Josh Charpentier reported that Map Academy has had an increase in net position annually since opening in 2017. He explained that, as a charter school, they were only allowed to carry a certain amount of money from year to year as an excess surplus.

Josh Charpentier reminded the meeting that they had had an excess surplus of around \$300,000 in 2023, which prompted the creation of the Capital Plan.

Josh Charpentier explained that they had created the Capital Plan so that they could begin saving to purchase the building. He noted that, while they were ahead of timeline in this regard, he had wanted to bring it to the Board's attention because they would have to submit the Charter School End of Year Report before their next board meeting.

Josh Charpentier described how the excess surplus calculation worked. He noted that they were between \$215,000 and \$220,000 over the amount that they were allowed to carry as per the State of Massachusetts. However, since they had an approved Capital Plan, they were allowed to take money away from that excess surplus and deposit it into their Capital Account, which would drop their excess surplus. This was Josh Charpentier's recommendation as those funds would be saved for their capital expenditure.

Josh Charpentier explained that they would be voting to deposit \$250,000 into the approved Capital Plan.

Liza Veto added that the State did not want schools to just accumulate funds, as they should spend them on their students' betterment.

Liza Veto moved to approve a capital account deposit of \$250,000. Rachel Babcock seconded it.

For	Against
Mindy Savage Adam Earle Anre Dowell Rachel Babcock Josh Charpentier Liza Veto	

The motion was unanimously approved.

**c. Discussion & Vote: Compro Technologies Contract**

Rachel Babcock noted that they had discussed this previously. She explained that this was an instrumental project to scale in order to grow Map Academy's ability to serve the students they had, grow their program, and to serve additional students and continue to meet the demand for their model.

There were two considerations: expansion of space and developing a new learning management system. Rachel Babcock shared that the Board had voted previously to do an investigatory contract to determine a scope for that development.

Rachel Babcock reported that they had found a vendor, which she and Josh Charpentier had met at a tech conference in June of this year. Rachel Babcock added that their experience spanned around four decades, where they had worked with large educational entities.

Rachel Babcock shared that they had a modular learning management system which already did a significant percentage of what they needed their future-oriented tracker to do. They had the ability to customize the features that Map needed.

Rachel Babcock informed the meeting that they were asking the Board to approve a discovery phase contract, which had been included in the Board folder. This contract would utilize the work that they had obtained from a previous consulting firm which had helped them to identify their requirements.

This contract would create a plan to determine whether or not this company could undertake the project and deliver on what Map needed. The deliverable would indicate the scope, timeline, and milestones for this project, as well as the support it would require to launch and maintain it, and the prices associated with that.

Rachel Babcock noted that they expected this engagement, as was stated in the contract, to last less than two months as the report was expected in December. This team is planning to be on site in November.

Rachel Babcock remarked that this would cost Map a fraction of what it would cost to build and maintain a system from scratch.

Josh Charpentier reminded the meeting that the contract needed Board approval because it surpassed \$25,000

Josh Charpentier moved to approve the contract. Adam Earle seconded it.

For	Against
Mindy Savage	
Anre Dowell	
Adam Earle	
Josh Charpentier	
Rachel Babcock	
Liza Veto	

The motion was unanimously approved.

**d. Discussion: DESE Charter Site Visit**

Liza Veto explained that DESE did visits to schools in the interim between charter renewals. Map was on target to have an accountability visit on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Liza Veto clarified that this was part of the accountability cycle and that they were not in trouble or anything to raise concerns. She added that the Board usually participated in a focus group as part of these visits. Rachel Babcock emphasized that they assumed this visit would have a board focus group component. However, they did not have a scope of the visit yet, but it was likely that it could require a subset of the Board to participate in said focus group.

Liza Veto noted that their winter board meeting had been planned for February originally. However, they had thought it would be helpful to reschedule the board meeting to before the DESE visit to ensure they had everything on track for it. Rachel Babcock explained that they should have received the scope of the visit by their next meeting.

The next board meeting would be held on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

#### **e. Discussion: Special Education and Civil Rights Monitoring Review**

Rachel Babcock explained that Map was under review with special ed and civil rights under the tiered focus monitoring process of DESE. They had recently finalized a cycle and had been issued a report.

Josh Charpentier reported that they had been given a CR 16, Notice to students 16 or over leaving school without a high school diploma, certificate of attainment, or certificate of completion. This was the only finding that had been given to Map and the finding was that the criteria was "partially implemented"

Josh Charpentier explained that he had debated this with the Commonwealth because, as a school that worked with students who were at risk of dropping out of high school, their letter told students that they were mindful of the fact that life could get in the way that they would work with them and extend the meeting to whenever they want to meet.

Rachel Babcock clarified that this letter was sent to students when they had been absent for 15 consecutive days and were at risk of dropping out.

Josh Charpentier added that their letter was very empathetic, compassionate, and understanding of their students' lives. He noted that it was grounded in the reality of their student population. However, their letter did not explicitly state that the meeting would not be extended beyond 14 days.

Josh Charpentier noted that he had shared his reservations in this regard as the 14 days deadline was not adequate given the circumstances. Essentially, they wanted the Map letter to be stricter.

Rachel Babcock explained that they needed to update the letter. Also, she noted that this had come with an acknowledgement from the Department that Map's practices were in fact validating their students and families' rights in every way. Their practices around how they handled students' engagement was not in question and they continued to receive accolades for how they handled these situations.

Liza Veto commended Ryan McLaughlin and his team for their work on this.

Ryan McLaughlin shared that 56% of their student population were special ed.

#### **4. Old Business**

**a. Discussion: 24-25 Calendar Update**

Rachel Babcock explained that they had made a change to the school calendar. November 5<sup>th</sup> had already been marked off for Election Day. November 4<sup>th</sup> had now been added as a day off to invite their instructional staff to attend the Aurora Institute, which was the premier competency-based innovative instructional conference which aligned perfectly with their emphasis on the competency work they have been embarking on as a staff. This would in turn make June 20, 2025, the last day of school as of this board meeting.

The conference would be held in New Orleans this year, starting on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> and ending on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup>. Travel costs would be covered by Map and Rachel Babcock noted that the staff was very enthusiastic to participate in the conference.

**b. Discussion: Finance Committee Meeting Update**

Josh Charpentier reported that the Finance Committee had met on October 16<sup>th</sup>. The points had been discussed elsewhere during the board meeting – particularly the audit review and capital plan update. Josh mentioned the presentation utilized during this meeting was in the board folder if anyone was interested.

Josh Charpentier would circulate an email with potential dates and times for the next meeting.

**5. Upcoming Meeting Dates**

- a. Monday, January 13, 2025
- b. Monday, March 24, 2025
- c. Monday, May 19, 2025
- d. Graduations – Wednesday, October 30, 2024
- e. Graduation – Wednesday, January 29, 2025
- f. Graduation – Wednesday, March 19, 2025
- g. Graduation – Wednesday, June 18, 2025

**6. Comments & Announcements**

**There were no comments or announcements.**

Liza Veto called for a vote to enter Executive Session.

For	Against
Mindy Savage	
Anre Dowell	
Adam Earle	
Josh Charpentier	
Rachel Babcock	
Liza Veto	

The motion was unanimously approved.

**7. Executive Session for discussion of non-union personnel negotiation and purchase of real property**

- a. Discussion & Vote: Co-directors Evaluation Bonus Compensation
- b. Discussion: Appraisal of building

**8. Adjournment**

Rachel Babcock moved to adjourn the meeting. Adam Earle seconded it.

For	Against
Mindy Savage	
Adam Earle	
Rachel Babcock	
Anre Dowell	
Liza Veto	
Josh Charpentier	

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 pm.