

## MEETING MINUTES

### Board Meeting

Date: January 13, 2025 – 4:04 p.m.

#### Attendees:

Liza Veto, (Board Member), Zoom  
Rachel Babcock, (Board Member), at Map Academy  
Kerin McGue (Board Member), Zoom  
Mindy Savage (Board Member), Zoom  
Derek Paiva, (Board Member), Zoom  
Adam Earle (Board Member), Zoom  
Josh Charpentier (Board Member), In-person  
Mike Balaschi (Assistant Director), Zoom

#### **1. Consent Agenda**

##### **a. Finance Reports**

Liza Veto noted that in the Board folder, there were the minutes of the Finance Subcommittee meeting held on October 16, 2024, as well as two sets of minutes from the Board meeting held on October 21, 2024.

##### **b. Co-directors Report**

Liza Veto remarked that she was excited to see the data on Bridgewater State University Dual Enrollment, with Map Academy students taking courses there, plus students who took classes in Fall were going back to re-enroll. She was also delighted to see the updates on Youthworks.

Rachel Babcock said that the YouthWorks grant cycle was coming to an end and by the time the Board met in March 2025, the RFP will have been submitted. Rachel Babcock mentioned that Map Academy was launching another cohort of the existing program, as well as a continuation program for students who had been in Youthworks and had completed the first one.

For the existing program, spanning 80 hours in total, students should be present on-site every day and each session lasts for one hour. Rachel Babcock added that the existing criteria prioritized daily attendance, and the program had shown success and would continue to do so. Map is also exploring the possibility of running a small pilot this spring, whereby students might not need to attend every day and geared more towards older North studio students.

Rachel Babcock said that the grant was not approved for the past summer due to Map not being able to offer enough hours due to the summer schedule and that they plan to incorporate that feedback into this year's proposal in order to hopefully secure funding for the upcoming summer.

The school had learned from prior experience that students should not do the program too early, nor wait too long for it to begin and it was a balancing act of deciding when a student was ready for the program based on several data points. Rachel Babcock noted that Map was in a good place in terms of the existing

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program meeting all the students’ needs. Moreover, the school was working on what adjustments to make for students who would benefit from this type of program but did not attend as regularly.

Liza Veto noted that it seemed that students who engaged with Youthworks were more driven to attend school. Rachel Babcock agreed. She remarked that students who required additional tracking were already working hard and were not yet in a future oriented career-based job, but rather a minimum-wage job. The Co-directors noted that transportation remained a big barrier for Map students and families but what mattered most was not to get the students into school more, but to see how Map could add this opportunity to their existing program.

Regarding the need for additional building space, Liza Veto suggested discussing the meeting with Mass Development during the Executive Session. Rachel Babcock said that the Board should discuss the matter during the Executive Session because of additional conversations concerning the landlord’s thoughts around timelines. Liza Veto agreed.

Regarding the new Learning Management System project, Josh Charpentier remarked that on November 18, 2024, he and Rachel Babcock, plus the Map Academy leadership had the opportunity to spend a full week with a team of developers to talk about the career and next generation learning management system, which he would expand on during the Executive Session.

Liza Veto called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mindy Savage moved to approve, and Rachel Babcock seconded the motion.

For	Against
Liza Veto Kerin McGue Adam Earle Mindy Savage Rachel Babcock Josh Charpentier Derek Paiva	

The motion was unanimously approved.

**3. New Business**

**a. Discussion: January 6 Incident**

Liza Veto noted that an email was sent last week concerning an incident that happened at the school on January 6, 2025 in which a student had a replica handgun at school. No one was hurt during the incident, and it was well-handled by the leadership team at Map.

Rachel Babcock said that the incident was one that required everyone’s attention and was handled smoothly by Map staff and students. She remarked that it was a learning experience and reinforced people’s confidence in making difficult decisions.

Map received lots of positive feedback after the incident from stakeholders. Rachel Babcock pointed out that the two young students involved were charged by police. The two students would attend meetings as part of the disciplinary process, and their cases would likely go to court.

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Map would work with the student's families to ensure they continued to receive education at Map through tutoring. Map said it would not give up on students over one mistake. Rachel Babcock added that Map had moved on from the incident and noted that learning at Map had not been disrupted.

Josh Charpentier mentioned that there was no threat towards any Map students during the incident. Rachel Babcock pointed out that the duo did not intend to cause threat or harm anyone.

**b. Discussion & Vote: School Calendars**

Josh Charpentier then discussed the 2025/26 and 2026/27 calendars. He explained that normally the Board only did one calendar at a time.

Josh Charpentier explained the school normally did one calendar at a time but having two calendars at once was beneficial for staff to plan their personal lives.

Josh Charpentier pointed out that the 2025/26 calendar was a mirror image of the 2024/25 calendar, with little change. He said there were still six weeks of Summer Studio, the same number of graduations, and vacations and holidays remained the same. But for the 2026/27 calendar, because of the way July 4th fell, Map would not be able to start summer studio until July 13th, 2026.

Rachel Babcock said the number of Professional Development days for the 24/25 year was the same, noting that for the 26/27 school year the number of PD days before the start of school will be reduced from six to five days based on the unique nature of that summer's calendar. She noted that the leadership explained to staff we would likely go back up to one more day in the future.

The Board had to make sure it met the 180-day and 990-hour requirements which both of the proposed calendars do. Josh Charpentier remarked that June 30, 2027 would be the 185<sup>th</sup> day. Rachel Babcock noted that Map staff indicated they were excited to have two calendars.

Liza Veto moved to approve the 2025/26 calendar. Kerin McGue seconded the motion.

For	Against
Liza Veto Kerin McGue Adam Earle Mindy Savage Rachel Babcock Josh Charpentier Derek Paiva	

The motion was unanimously approved.

Liza Veto moved to approve the 2026/27 calendar. Mindy Savage seconded the motion.

For	Against

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Liza Veto Kerin McGue Adam Earle Mindy Savage Rachel Babcock Josh Charpentier Derek Paiva	
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The motion was unanimously approved.

Liza Veto mentioned that the two calendars made sense, and it benefited all staff and was a win-win.

c. **Discussion & Vote: Graduation Requirements and Competency Determinations**

Regarding the topic of graduation requirements and competency determination, Rachel Babcock said every district in the state had to vote on this in the near future. This was due to the ballot question that was approved by voters in November which removed the MCAS as an option for competency determination.

Rachel Babcock explained the law remained around students needing to meet competency determination, but the determination was no longer through MCAS. She noted that Map Academy had to certify students graduating from Map Academy beginning with the class of 2025. The first graduation impacted by the new regulations would be happening on January 29, 2025. At today's meeting, the goal is for the Board to approve an initial policy on how the school would handle the impact of this new law.

Rachel Babcock pointed out that administration of MCAS remained mandatory under state laws, and a 95% participation rate in English, Math and MCAS were still required by all schools in grade 10 MCAS, in order to avoid adverse accountability metrics from DESE. Scores on English and Math assessments were rightfully still going to be used to assess whether schools were doing a good job in academically preparing students for life after high school.

Therefore, the department would continue to monitor Map's English and Math scores to ensure Map was providing high-quality education. In sum, the accountability system was not going away.

Rachel Babcock noted the new law stated that CD was to be awarded for satisfactory completion of standard-based coursework, aligned with the Massachusetts 10th grade curriculum frameworks. Map has to attest to a CD in three MCAS subjects, namely English, math, and science.

For English, Map proposes awarding a CD based on the satisfactory completion of four credits of ELA aligned with the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade ELA curriculum frameworks, which is consistent with two years' worth of English.

For Math, Map proposes awarding a CD based on the equivalent of four credits or two years of high school math, which needed to be aligned to integrated math 1 and 2, which encompasses Algebra 1 and Geometry.

For Science, Rachel Babcock said that the requirement differed because the MCAS science test was only on one year and one content area, either biology, chemistry, physics or tech/engineering. Map students would need two credits and one year of Science as the MCAS test was based on one year of science in one of those subject areas. Based on completion of that coursework, Map would be able to report to DESE that students had met competency determination.

Rachel Babcock noted that Map had all of those courses in all three subjects already, and no new courses had to be created in order to meet the new CD requirements.

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Liza Veto asked Rachel Babcock about comparing competency determination and graduation requirement concepts. Rachel Babcock explained that competency determination showed whether students had the skills and knowledge represented by the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and had demonstrated competency in grade 9 and grade 10 English, Algebra 1, Geometry, and one high school science. She added that DESE used to issue a CD based on an MCAS test score and now that CD had to be issued by districts.

Rachel Babcock pointed out that the graduation requirements had always remained the same at Map. To graduate from Map Academy, a student needs eight credits of English (equivalent to four years), eight credits of math (equivalent to four years), six credits for history (equivalent to three years), six credits of science (equivalent to three years), four credits of wellness, 10 credits of electives, two credits of career development, and one credit of Post Secondary Plan.

Rachel Babcock remarked that Map was not proposing any changes to the school's Graduation Requirements. Map students have always needed passing MCAS scores in ELA, math and science to graduate from Map and to graduate from any Massachusetts high school. Map was proposing to maintain the ELA and math MCAS passing scores as local graduation requirements. Whereas Map could not use them to issue the CD, but they could be kept as graduation requirements. Rachel Babcock said that while districts across the Commonwealth are still making plans, it is likely others will also maintain MCAS as a local graduation requirement, and it was in Map's interest to do so.

Rachel Babcock noted that the school was proposing to keep its existing graduation requirement of passing English and math MCAS scores equivalent to the passing scores that were needed up until the law was passed in November. She pointed out that there had always been an option for students to achieve slightly less than the full passing score and fulfill what was called an Educational Proficiency Plan, which was in line with the requirements of the local competency determination described above. If a student passed the equivalent of English 9 and English 10 and earned four ELA credits, they could locally fulfill the graduation requirements.

Rachel Babcock said that Map is proposing an appeal process. In the past, students could not graduate without passing the tests, but that was due to an external expectation. Leadership said it would be in the best interest of Map and its students to hold that graduation requirement and also not allow it to become a barrier which would prevent students from graduating if they have earned their CD via successful completion of coursework. Rachel Babcock pointed out that no students in Map Academy's history had failed to graduate due to MCAS scores.

Rachel Babcock pointed out that under the proposed appeal process, if a student faced challenges, was in at least their fourth year of high school, had not earned the passing score after at least two attempts, but had completed all coursework to earn a CD, then they would meet the local graduation requirements. The student would not have to take the test three to five times, which would be going against the spirit of the law, stating that students should not be prevented from earning their diploma based on a standardized test. Apart from providing relief to students, such a practice would serve Map's flexible, student-centered structure.

Rachel Babcock explained that the reason for excluding the science test from the updated graduation requirements was that it was content-based and linked to a specific course rather than broad skills and was therefore a barrier for many students since they have to retake it when they are no longer enrolled in the course the test aligns to. She said that while math and English were skill-based, science did not follow that but was directly correlated to the time students took the class. In sum, the science test caused a lot more destruction to students' pathway and so leadership recommended against keeping it as a graduation requirement. Rachel Babcock underscored that students still needed to take the science MCAS.

Liza Veto asked if there was science course content for both CD and graduation requirements. Rachel Babcock confirmed that there was. She added that students still had to complete the equivalent of three years of science (six credits) to graduate from Map Academy.

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Mindy Savage asked if tracking and reporting for awarding CDs would change, thus resulting in a higher workload. Rachel Babcock said that Josh Charpentier would have more workload due to the changes in reporting but in general it was unclear for the moment as no information had been released. Nonetheless, there would be additional data reporting. All Map courses are aligned with the NCES codes. Presumably by completing the courses, there will be reporting via SCS.

Mindy Savage mentioned that as a parent herself, she was happy to see MCAS go away and was surprised that students still had to do it and asked if public schools were also going to do the test.

Rachel Babcock agreed with Mindy Savage. She appreciated that MCAS caused a lot of anxiety for students. The leadership was proud of Map because there was far less anxiety for Map students as they could prepare more individually and at their own pace.

Rachel Babcock expected many districts would keep the requirements because they were still being held accountable for participation and for the scores, and they would perhaps create appeal processes but could not comment on that specifically as the requirements are so new. Rachel Babcock added that regarding science, there was likely to be a set of new replacement requirements in a couple of years' time. She said that there is a belief that there would likely be an assessment or portfolio in the pipeline from DESE at some point.

At this point, Mike Balaschi, Assistant Director, joined the meeting.

Liza Veto then noted that Map was in a better position as it already focuses on competency, whereas other districts might struggle with how to measure competency. Rachel Babcock said she expected many districts would have internal assessments of their own because they would be hesitant to say that a final grade of a D showed competency. She added that many schools were set up not to be based on skills but rather on letter grades.

Josh Charpentier noted that it was portrayed in the media that MCAS would no longer exist, which was not the case. Liza Veto said many families might feel confused by the misleading message. Josh Charpentier remarked that a line for "future amendment" had been added to the related document to acknowledge that there are likely to be changes.

Rachel clarified that everyone at Map who had passed MCAS by the end of 2024 was exempt from the new policy. Therefore, there would not be a big operational impact.

Liza Veto called for a motion to approve the updated competency determination and updated graduation requirement policy. Josh Charpentier moved to approve. Mindy Savage seconded the motion.

For	Against
Liza Veto Kerin McGue Adam Earle Mindy Savage Rachel Babcock Josh Charpentier Derek Paiva	

The motion was unanimously approved.

c. **Discussion: Survey for Charter Public School Board Members**

Liza Veto mentioned an email from the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association reminding people to complete a survey. She could forward it to any Board member who did not get the email.

**Old Business**

a. **Board Focus Group - DESE Site Visit**

Liza Veto then mentioned the upcoming DESE charter site visit and focus groups. She explained that DESE visited schools every couple of years and come on site to see how schools were doing as part of the accountability work.

DESE looks at three guiding areas of charter school accountability, namely faithfulness to charter, academic program success, and organizational viability. One criterion, namely governance, was what the Board would get assessed on, and other criteria in general assessed all school operations. Liza Veto noted that DESE used quantitative and qualitative data, plus evidence presented by the school compiled over the course of the school's five-year charter term.

Liza Veto also pointed out that DESE looked at annual reports, charter renewal applications, and timely completion of requirements. The next site visit would take place on January, 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025. A team would arrive at Map observing classes, conducting interviews and focus groups with school leaders and teachers.

The Board focus group would happen virtually on January, 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Adam Earle, Mindy Savage, and Liza Veto will attend on the Board's behalf. Liza Veto explained that there was a limit to the number of participating Board members because the Board did not want to take up everybody's time and it was recommended to not have a quorum.

Liza Veto mentioned that in terms of governance, DESE would look at whether the Board upheld its responsibilities to act as a public agent to help Map Academy provide great schooling to students through competent and appropriate governance. She added that in 2023, Map obtained a "meet expectations" score, which was great.

On the last visit, DESE looked at whether the Board fulfilled its legal and fiduciary responsibilities, which encompassed compliance with the Board's bylaws and open meeting law. DESE also looked at whether the Board approved appropriate school policies, such as the competency determination requirements, oversaw the school's academic performance, co-directors and the school's finances, fostered a culture of collaboration, communicated with other members of the school community, had clear systems for decision-making, fostered open, deliberate, and thorough discussions to facilitate and ensure public accountability, and engaged in strategic and continuous improvement planning.

Liza Veto mentioned that Map did not have a broad strategic plan, but did have a set of strategic goals that the Board assessed at the end of the September meeting. She added that DESE also looked at whether the Board had a plan for succession of Board leadership, recruited members with expertise and skills, and recruited members to provide competent governance, including onboarding process.

Liza Veto noted that school leaders would also be interviewed when the team was on site. The team would also visit classrooms. Afterwards, the team would draft a report. Map Academy would have the opportunity to review the report and make any corrections if there were any errors. The report would later become a final document to be used by the state for evidence of the school's performance, particularly at the time of charter renewal.

Derek Paiva asked what Liza Veto needed from Board members. Liza Veto asked Derek Paiva to share his experience with the last DESE visit. Derek Paiva said that DESE sent three different people to Map. They asked many questions about capacity, including the number of staff members at Map. Derek Paiva noted

that Liza Veto was amazing as she managed to answer all the questions in terms of governance, where Map was at the time and two years ago.

Liza Veto said that DESE appreciated the Board giving them examples and that their answers were not scripted. She added that Board members were expected to give their own flavor in their answers.

Liza Veto asked Mindy Savage and Adam Earle if they needed anything. Mindy Savage said that talking to Liza Veto before would be helpful. Adam agreed.

Rachel Babcock reminded Board members that statutory requirements regarding public access to Map's meetings were stated at the top of Board meeting documents and the Board was vigilant about meeting the requirements.

Liza Veto noted that the Board would be able to read the reports after the site visit. She added that Map had a lot of good work to show to DESE.

Josh Charpentier mentioned that for the purposes of the upcoming visit, Map was exempt from four of the key criteria, namely dissemination, curriculum program, evaluation, and leadership capacity.

Rachel Babcock noted that the upcoming visit would be a routine visit. She added that Map had made great progress in terms of its goals and succession planning.

#### **4. Upcoming Meeting Dates**

Josh Charpentier asked Board members if they wanted to talk about the finance subcommittee dates that were discussed in the previous meeting. The Board wanted to pencil in something on the calendar. If the dates did not work for someone, they could revisit them.

Rachel Babcock noted that the Finance Committee would meet on March 11, 2025, to review and plan the budget season. The other proposed meeting time was June, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025. The Board members decided that the meeting on March 11, 2025, would be held at 4 p.m. and the June 3, 2025, meeting would be held at 9 a.m.

#### **5. Comments & Announcements**

Liza Veto mentioned the upcoming graduation. Rachel Babcock noted that it would be held on January 29, 2025, and that there would also be a March graduation held on March 19, 2025, before the next Board meeting on March 24, 2025. So, by the time the Board met on March 24, 2025, there would have been two graduations. Both would take place at 4:00 p.m. at Hotel 1620 in Plymouth. She would send a calendar to invite people and no RSVP was necessary. She would send an invitation to the June event.

#### **6. Going into Executive Session & Adjournment**

Liza Veto called for a motion to approve the Board going into the Executive Session. The purpose was around proprietary information about technology and real estate acquisition. Rachel Babcock seconded the motion.

For	Against
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Liza Veto Kerin McGue Adam Earle Mindy Savage Rachel Babcock Josh Charpentier Derek Paiva	
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The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.10 p.m.

At 5.58 p.m., the meeting resumed.

Liza Veto thanked everyone. Derek Paiva made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Josh seconded the motion.

For	Against
Liza Veto Kerin McGue Adam Earle Mindy Savage Rachel Babcock Josh Charpentier Derek Paiva	

The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting closed at 5.58 p.m.