

## MEETING MINUTES

### BOARD of TRUSTEES MEETING

Date: March 24, 2025 – 4.02 p.m.

Location: Hybrid – 11 Resnik Rd. Plymouth & Zoom Virtual

Attendees:

Liza Veto (Board Member), Zoom

Rachel Babcock (Board Member), Zoom

Josh Charpentier (Board Member), In person

Mindy Savage (Board Member), Zoom

Derek Paiva (Board Member), Zoom

Adam Earle (Board Member), Zoom

Kerin McGue (Board Member), Zoom

Anre Dowell (Board Member), Zoom

Mike Balaschi (Assistant Director), In person

Steve Sell (Assistant Director), Zoom

Ryan McLaughlin (Special Education Coordinator), Zoom

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

Liza Veto called the meeting to order at 4:02pm and conducted roll call.

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

No public commenters were present.

#### **2. Consent Agenda**

Liza Veto introduced the consent agenda, which included the finance reports for November, December, and January, and the Co-directors' Report. Rachel Babcock highlighted a disaggregated data point from the report related to the DESE accountability framework, noting that stronger academic outcomes, attendance, and progress were linked to students' connection to Map Academy. Liza Veto observed that enrollment was at full capacity with a waitlist of 40. Rachel Babcock confirmed the waitlist for the current school year was established during the February lottery and that additional applications continued to be received which will be included in the next lottery.

Liza Veto thanked Adam Earle and Mindy Savage for their participation in the board focus group for the DESE site visit and reported that the draft report had been received, with Map meeting expectations on governance. Rachel Babcock also thanked Liza Veto for her coordination efforts.

**a. Finance Reports**

Liza Veto invited questions on the finance reports. Josh Charpentier stated there was nothing out of the ordinary. Rachel Babcock clarified that the consent agenda also included two sets of minutes from January, one from the executive session and one from the regular meeting.

**b. Co-directors Report**

Liza Veto moved to approve the consent agenda, including the finance reports, co-directors' report, and both sets of minutes. The motion was seconded by Josh Charpentier.

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

The motion was unanimously approved.

**3. Old Business**

**a. Discussion: Building Update**

Rachel Babcock provided an update on the building expansion. The landlord had begun a feasibility study and was working with a site engineer to bring the proposal before the town's conservation department within the next month. Once plans were finalized, discussions about an updated lease would follow. Rachel Babcock stated there were no current financial implications and that the impact was projected for two fiscal years ahead.

Rachel Babcock also stated that, while the long-term goal remained for Map Academy to purchase the building, the landlord has made it clear he intends to keep the property as investment for now.

**b. Discussion: LMS Contract Update**

Rachel Babcock and Josh Charpentier provided an update on the LMS contract. Rachel Babcock stated that the attorneys were continuing to work on the agreement, focusing on the scope of work, intellectual property, and ownership terms. Josh Charpentier presented a slide referencing the board's January vote to allocate \$1.35 million over three fiscal years, with \$480,000 initially scheduled for FY25. Rachel Babcock noted that, due to contracting delays, the FY25 investment would instead begin with a reduced amount of \$270,000 – 20% of the total project cost – with the remaining funds shifted to FY26 and beyond. She stated this adjustment aligned with the timing of the work and would be reflected in the upcoming budget presentation.

Rachel Babcock confirmed that the revised approach would have a short-term cash flow impact but would not affect the budget overall, as the project remained fully fundable. She stated that the team was excited about the project's progress and anticipated sharing wire frames of an initial version of the platform within the next four to six months. She confirmed that no additional vote was needed at this stage, as the original board vote had not been broken down by fiscal year, and any related approval would occur through the overall budget vote.

**c. Discussion: July 28, 2025 Proposed Board Meeting**

Rachel Babcock proposed holding a board meeting on July 28, 2025, to review and approve the annual report, which was due to DESE by August 1. She shared that formal meeting dates for the next school year would be finalized at the July meeting as well. She asked board members to confirm availability for July 28 to ensure quorum, noting that no vote was required at this stage. Josh Charpentier added that an earlier start time could be arranged if needed. Rachel Babcock confirmed that the 4.00 p.m. slot would be held and that there were no objections from the board.

**4. New Business**

**a. Discussion & Vote – FY25 Amended Budget**

Liza Veto stated that they were now moving to the budget discussion and noted that she, Adam Earle and Mindy Savage had spoken with Schoolworks during the DESE site visit about how the board typically engaged in learning through meetings rather than formal training programs. She invited members to ask questions throughout, particularly as charter school budgets could be more complex than personal or workplace budgets. She clarified that the conversation would focus first on amending the current FY25 budget, followed by a discussion of the proposed FY26 budget.

Josh Charpentier explained that the FY25 budget, originally approved on March 18, 2024, now reflected some adjustments on both the revenue and expense sides as is to be expected over the course of a fiscal year. He stated that these updates would inform the FY26 proposal and emphasized the importance of incorporating developments related to the building project and LMS contract. He confirmed that the board would vote on both the amended FY25 and proposed FY26 budgets.

Josh Charpentier stated that a link to the full budget was available for members wishing to follow along. He noted that FY25 total revenue had increased from the originally projected \$7.79 million to approximately \$8.1 million, an increase of \$316,000. He explained that tuition funding, comprising 85% to 90% of the school's revenue, had initially been budgeted conservatively at \$6.5 million, a 5% reduction from the January 2024 projection. However, the actual amount was expected to be closer to \$7 million, which was \$454,000 above the budgeted figure and \$108,000 more than the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's original estimate. He noted that this conservative approach to budgeting allowed for greater financial stability.

Josh Charpentier further described revenue sources as including tuition, facilities, state and federal grants, nutrition reimbursements, transportation reimbursements, and interest from cash held in reserve.

Josh Charpentier reported that personnel costs were projected at \$374,000 under the approved FY25 budget due to the school being currently understaffed. He emphasized that they prioritized mission fit and did not hire just to fill positions. He stated that the proposed FY26 budget included funds to reach full staffing. He confirmed that the LMS investment of \$270,000 was included in non-personnel costs, which were up by \$357,000, alongside a \$125,000 contingency not yet spent. Josh Charpentier projected a \$641,000 surplus and stated that Rachel Babcock and he were monitoring excess surplus limitations. He

previewed that the July 28 meeting would include a capital plan amendment to incorporate the LMS project and broaden the facility expenditures to include fit out supplies.

Liza Veto invited questions and then moved to approve the amended FY25 budget. The motion was seconded by Mindy Savage.

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

The motion was unanimously approved.

#### **b. Discussion & Vote: FY26 Proposed Budget**

Josh Charpentier noted that the FY26 budget was the first year without student growth, holding steady at 300 enrolled students as per the school's approved charter. He reported projected total revenue at \$8.4 million and explained that the tuition budget had been level-funded in lieu of the typical 5% reduction, which would have shown an inaccurately lower amount. Rachel Babcock added that tuition was tied to the state budget process and funding formula.

Josh Charpentier stated that while federal and state grants remained uncertain, the budget accounted for expected amounts. He referenced the YouthWorks grant as a significant funding source for career development student stipends and noted that while an increase had been requested, no confirmation had been received. Rachel Babcock clarified that Map's fiscal health was strong regardless of grant outcomes and that operational stability was not dependent on such funding. She emphasized that the YouthWorks program had been successful and an increase would be valuable, but not essential.

Josh Charpentier reported that in the proposed FY26 budget, the YouthWorks grant was budgeted at \$137,000, representing a 25% reduction from the \$183,000 originally requested, creating a built-in buffer. He stated that federal grants remained uncertain and that the budget had been developed with a conservative assumption, including only IDEA and Title I, which comprised approximately 80% of Map's total federal grant funding. He noted these programs were generally predicted to remain stable.

Rachel Babcock explained that, while delays were possible due to potential restructuring within the U.S. Department of Education, the impact on Map would be minimal due to the size of the school's projected surplus and the conservative budgeting approach. She confirmed that no additional federal or state grant funding had been assumed beyond the known amounts.

Derek Paiva enquired whether the full \$336,000 in federal grants could be absorbed if lost. Josh Charpentier responded that it could be absorbed if necessary. Rachel Babcock added that while all special education costs were critical, Map could manage the loss operationally, and Josh Charpentier confirmed that \$205,000 of the \$336,000 related to special education and \$85,000 related to Title I.

Liza Veto provided a clarification for the board, explaining that entitlement grants such as IDEA, Title I, and McKinney-Vento were based on student demographics and differed from competitive grants. Rachel Babcock noted this category was at the center of national discussions around converting federal

entitlements to state block grants, but added that Massachusetts had continued expressing commitment to funding these services.

Josh Charpentier stated that \$290,000 of the \$336,000 was still anticipated.

Josh Charpentier explained that the FY26 "Other Income" line showed a notable increase due to interest from cash accounts and the allocation of an additional \$240,000 in existing cash on hand to support the LMS project. Liza Veto noted that the interest income was the result of Map's banking transition to BayCoast following earlier instability in the banking sector and stated that the new interest earnings represented "free money" due to this change.

Rachel Babcock confirmed that Map earned \$101,000 in FY25 from interest alone. Josh Charpentier credited Derek Paiva for raising the original question about account interest and prompting the switch, and Rachel Babcock acknowledged Adam Earle's contributions during the transition process.

Liza Veto noted for the record that Steve Sell, Assistant Director, had joined the meeting.

Josh Charpentier continued the FY26 budget presentation, stating that nutrition funding remained level at \$100,000 and transportation reimbursement was reduced by 5%, from 87% to 81%, to conservatively reflect anticipated state reimbursement.

Josh Charpentier reported a \$642,000 increase in FY26 personnel costs, which included planned expansion of YouthWorks participant wages, uncommitted funds for hiring, a 4% cost-of-living adjustment for all staff, and previously approved incentives for additional licensure and master's degrees. He also noted allocations for longevity bonuses, tuition reimbursement, and student loan repayment benefits, the latter of which had been especially popular among staff.

For non-personnel expenses, Josh Charpentier reported a \$270,000 increase, driven primarily by the \$480,000 LMS investment. He confirmed that the \$125,000 contingency remained in the budget but unspent. Total expenses were up \$915,000.

Josh Charpentier highlighted increases in contracted student support services, stating that an additional \$45,000 had been allocated to address growing social-emotional needs. Career development funding was decreased by \$30,000 due to anticipated reductions in state grant support. Capital expenses for furniture were reduced as original assets began to depreciate according to Map's fiscal policy.

Josh Charpentier presented a comparison of staffing expenses from FY19 through FY26 and emphasized that the proposed budget aimed to return to full staffing. In response to a question from Derek Paiva, Josh Charpentier explained that the cap on excess surplus was based on a complicated formula and confirmed that he, Rachel Babcock, and Map's accountants were closely monitoring this.

Josh Charpentier noted Map's projected net position at the end of FY25 would be \$4.36 million, up from \$0 in FY17, and stated that this strong position would allow the school to absorb potential federal funding volatility. He clarified that the FY26 surplus was lower than in previous years due to plateaued enrollment according to the school's approved growth plan and a level-funded tuition projection. However, he stated that if tuition projections increased and contingency funds were unused, the surplus could reach approximately \$600,000.

Liza Veto asked for a motion to approve the FY26 budget.

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

The motion was unanimously approved.

**c. Discussion & Vote: PeopleJoy Benefit Data**

Liza Veto referenced the PeopleJoy benefit data available in the board folder. She stated this program provided Map staff and their families with financial education and support related to student loans and higher education expenses and was part of Map's tuition reimbursement package. She noted that the data reflected strong engagement from staff and aligned with Josh Charpentier's earlier comments about the popularity of this benefit.

**d. Discussion: Guidance/FAQ Regarding Student Immigration Status**

Rachel Babcock stated that, due to increased questions and national developments related to student immigration status, Map had prepared a guidance document with legal counsel. She noted that while Map did not serve a large number of students affected by immigration concerns, they had a few, and the guidance was developed in response to shifting state and federal dynamics and would help ensure staff and leadership were aligned in their understanding. She stated that no vote was required for the FAQ, which outlined that immigration status was protected under FERPA and that Map would only release information if compelled by a federal judge's warrant. Rachel Babcock noted that the document was intended to provide internal guidance and, while no immediate need existed, the school would implement it if necessary.

**e. Discussion: Map Academy Visitor Policy**

Rachel Babcock explained that during the preparation of this guidance, legal counsel identified the absence of a formal visitor policy. She reported that although Map had always maintained a visitor system in practice, no policy had been formally adopted. The new visitor policy, drafted by Map's school attorneys, outlined procedures for restricting school access to unauthorized individuals, including federal immigration enforcement agents, who would require a judicial warrant to enter. Rachel Babcock added that the policy reflected Map's current practices and would be included in the Student and Family Handbook. She also noted that additional policy updates may follow, including the potential of exploring an MOU with the Plymouth Police.

Josh Charpentier clarified that the vote was to approve the visitor policy and include it in the Student and Family Handbook. Liza Veto moved to approve, seconded by Adam Earle.

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

The motion was unanimously approved.

Liza Veto asked if there were any questions about the immigration status FAQ. She inquired whether staff had been informed. Rachel Babcock confirmed that the document had been discussed with the leadership team and receptionist and would be shared with the wider staff, likely at the following day's morning meeting.

Liza Veto thanked Rachel Babcock for sharing the policy and noted the importance of legal guidance.

#### **5. Upcoming Meeting Dates**

Liza Veto confirmed upcoming meetings: the next full board meeting on May 19, 2025; the Finance Subcommittee on June 3, 2025; and Map Academy's graduation on June 18, 2025.

#### **6. Adjournment**

Before adjourning, Josh Charpentier reminded the board that minutes must include the meeting location and a list of documents referenced in the agenda. Liza Veto acknowledged the reminder. Rachel Babcock moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 PM, seconded by Adam Earle.

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

The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.

#### **Document list:**

- March 24, 2025 Agenda
- January 13, 2025 Minutes (2)
- March 24, 2025 Co-directors Report
- November 2024 Financial Statements
- December 2024 Financial Statements
- LMS Project Update Handout
- PeopleJoy 2024 Engagement Report

- FY25 Amended Budget & Presentation
- FY26 Proposed Budget & Presentation
- Map Academy Visitor Policy
- Guidance/FAQ Regarding Student Immigration Status