Board Meeting Minutes March 23, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

Board Meeting

Date: March 23, 2026 – 4:00 p.m.

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

<u>Attendees:</u>

Liza Veto, (Chair), Zoom

Rachel Babcock, (Co-Director and Board Member), In-person (Zoom)

Anre Dowell (Board Member), Zoom

Adam Earle (Treasurer), Zoom

Josh Charpentier (Co-Director and Board Member), In-person (Zoom)

Steve Sell (Assistant Director), Zoom

Mike Balaschi (Assistant Director), In-person (Zoom)

Shaun Adamec (Board Member), Zoom

Mindy Savage (Board Member), Zoom

<u>Absent</u>

Kerin McGue (Board Member)

Aja Isaacson (Board Member)

1. **Call to Order/Attendance**

Liza Veto called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm. Attendees introduced themselves.

a. <u>Public Comment</u>

Liza Veto and Rachel Babcock confirmed there were no public commenters.

2. **Consent Agenda**

   a. **Co-Director's Report**

      i. **Data Highlight**

Liza Veto introduced the Co-Director's report, highlighting catchment area data and explaining that Map had expanded its region at renewal and now served a greater number of towns, with data on students from within and outside the catchment area to follow. She noted ongoing FileMaker work with weekly sessions and mid-year staff progress check-ins aligned with goals, explaining that staff engaged in professional development and coaching. She added that graduation was scheduled for next week at Hotel 1620 and invited board members to attend, then asked for additional comments.

ii. Enrollment Update

Rachel Babcock gave an enrollment update, explaining the statutory obligation to hold a primary enrollment lottery each year, which had been delayed due to a blizzard and held on 26th February. She stated that all applicants were offered spots for the fall, noted recent student cohorts due to graduations, and reported that as of 17th March enrollment stood at 322 students (including pending graduates), with a waitlist of 32, 11 applications for the next lottery, and 22 graduates so far this year. She clarified multiple lotteries occurred annually.

Liza Veto highlighted that maintaining maximum enrollment was critical, especially for budget discussions, as tuition depended on full enrollment and continuous intake after graduations. Rachel Babcock added that enrollment was a complicated puzzle, with students sometimes disengaging or unenrolling, requiring active management of waitlists and transitions.

Josh Charpentier noted there were 300 graduates to date.

b. December 2025 and January 2026 Finance Reports

Josh Charpentier stated there was nothing out of the ordinary, and a detailed discussion would follow in the budget reports.

c. January 12 Board Meeting Minutes

Liza Veto stated that the board meeting minutes appeared accurate and asked for questions. Hearing none, she requested a motion to approve the consent agenda, which Adam Earle moved, and Mindy Savage seconded. Members then voted.

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

3. New Business

a) Discussion and Vote: Snow Day/Calendar Changes

Liza Veto asked for an update on the snow week, describing it as an insane week of the blizzard, and asked how students and families were doing and what it meant for the calendar. Rachel Babcock stated that the impact in Southeastern Massachusetts across the region was dramatic and explained that the school had been closed for the first three days due to impassable conditions, and although snow removal had progressed by Thursday, roads and bus stops were still not passable, so the school followed the lead of the Plymouth DPW and remained closed the whole week. She explained that this occurred immediately after February break, which was highly problematic for students, and stated that two straight weeks of closure, combined with a long winter break, had caused a significant dip in engagement, noting they were still digging out from an engagement perspective and hoping to turn the corner with spring.

Rachel Babcock stated that there had been seven snow days to make up and explained that the approved 185-day calendar would have extended to 29th June, which was not desirable. She described how the team adjusted the calendar by converting 1st April and 17th June from professional development to school days, adding days in the final week of June, and surveying staff on whether to use 24th April or 29th June as a make up day, noting a strong preference to avoid the last week of June. The consensus on the staff was to use April 24, the Friday of April break. She stated that accommodations were given to staff with prior plans and confirmed graduation was rescheduled to 25th June at Hotel 1620 with two ceremonies, and that day 180 would be 26th June. She added that further snow would have required using more April break days.

Liza Veto asked if there were any questions and, hearing none, stated appreciation for staff flexibility given the difficult conditions. Rachel Babcock agreed. Liza Veto moved a motion to approve the amended school calendar, which Adam Earle seconded, and members voted.

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

b) Discussion: Pre-Enrollment Data Highlight & Catchment Area Implications

Josh Charpentier then introduced pre-enrollment data and catchment area implications, explaining that enrollment drove tuition. He reminded the Board that while DESE requirements state that 80 percent of students are expected to come from a charter school's designated catchment area, the school serves students not successful in traditional settings and maintains open enrollment with only two criteria: living in Massachusetts and completing or attempting to complete eighth grade. He explained that the catchment area provides lottery preference, but students outside the area are still admitted depending on timing, and highlighted challenges with transportation and expansion, noting the school aims to provide transport rather than expand the catchment area without providing transportation to students in those towns. Josh Charpentier stated that the leadership team would go through every couple of months to look at enrollment look at this data, but explained that it had been a time-consuming process. He explained that they had created a website to leverage technology to analyze where students were coming from and what implications that might have on the catchment area, and described that he had pulled two Excel files, the pre-enrollment data, and the current enrollment, to inform the tool. He described that dropping the pre-enrollment data for the upcoming 26-27 school year into the tool showed 300 students from 40 different towns, with a visual split between catchment area towns in green and non-catchment towns in red and orange and added that the tool allowed the leadership team to see exactly which students were from each town. He explained that the tool also mapped student addresses in real time, showing students coming from areas such as Yarmouth, Plainville, and Lowell, and highlighted that this leveraged technology to inform decision-making.

He stated that they had taken it further by leveraging AI to run a catchment area analysis, which produced scenarios showing that they are currently slightly below the 80% target, and identified towns that could be added based on where out-of-catchment students live and proximity to existing transportation hubs. He explained an example scenario -- adding three towns would bring the catchment area to 80% and would not be a significant lift because transportation already existed nearby and noted that this would add 11 students based on that snapshot. He asked Rachel Babcock if he had missed anything.

Rachel Babcock responded that towns would be added by district and clarified that regional districts could include multiple towns, which explained earlier references to 10 towns.

Josh Charpentier then described refreshing the tool with current enrollment data, noting that the percentage remained around 76% and had consistently been between 75% and 78%. He explained that one scenario showed removing non-catchment students only for illustration, as there was no mechanism to do so, and clarified that although enrollment could exceed 300, funding was capped at 300, with over-enrollment used to account for dips. He added that the tool again generated different towns based on updated data, including some farther locations, and concluded that the tool enabled real-time analysis and supported data-informed decisions without manual effort. Josh Charpentier stated that the process could now be done by dropping a spreadsheet into the tool and asked if there were any questions or comments. Liza Veto stated that during conversations with board members the previous summer, some had been interested in whether Map might want to expand its catchment area at the time of the next charter renewal and explained that this kind of data access would help determine whether expansion should occur, and which towns would make the most sense.

Rachel Babcock stated that they would have to continue monitoring the data, noted that they had been running at 75 to 78 per cent, and explained that DESE would push them toward the required 80 per cent. She clarified that if this trend continues they would have to expand and added that expansion has had a positive impact on enrollment because giving priority in the lottery to more students reduced waitlist delays and improved engagement, making it more equitable.

Josh Charpentier explained that small pockets of one or two students from multiple communities adds up and noted that many of these communities lacked alternative programs, reinforcing that Map provides the only free public option in the region. Rachel Babcock stated that this showed they were on mission as a regional option but added that as is often the case with this type of policy, Map is a unique model and often an outlier in terms of policy, requiring the school to balance compliance and mission.

Anre Dowell asked whether students from Medford and Boston provided their own transportation. Rachel Babcock responded that many had moved after enrollment due to housing instability, noted that some were over 18 and used Uber transport provided by the school, and explained that others relied on family transport or faced challenges, highlighting New Bedford as an opportunity area. Anre Dowell added that Plainville could be helpful, and Rachel Babcock agreed, noting that some families could transport, but it was not sustainable.

Liza Veto asked whether Cape students were all driving to Bourne, and Rachel Babcock explained that there were bus stops in Bourne and Wareham, while Josh Charpentier added that there was a stop at the Sagamore Park and Ride, and they did not go over the bridge. Rachel Babcock stated that expanding to the Cape was an option and highlighted broader mission-driven considerations, including potential expansion to 320 students to support the budget and reduce waitlists, which would require a separate approval process with DESE.

Discussion and Vote: FY26 Budget Amendment and FY27 Budget proposal

Liza Veto explained the process of reviewing the current year and next year budgets and stated that Map was in a strong financial position and encouraged questions as part of embedded professional development.

Josh Charpentier stated that the first budget action item of the meeting was to amend the FY 26 budget, noting that many changes had occurred since the board approved it in March 2025, affecting both revenue and expense sides. He stated that after discussing the amendments, they would present the proposed FY 27 budget and follow the usual process of voting to approve both the amended FY 26 and proposed FY 27 budgets. He explained that, in addition to presenting the budget, the presentation was designed to provide professional development for board members by illustrating how items discussed in meetings translated into costs and affected the overall budget. Josh Charpentier described that any expense at Map Academy was coded to a budget account and a class item representing the funding source, including grants from private, federal, or state sources. He noted that all expenses were formally closed each month with AAFCPAs, including grant drawdowns, as most grants were reimbursement-based, requiring detailed tracking to ensure proper requests to the Commonwealth.

He stated that starting each December, he and Rachel Babcock performed a deep dive into the budget, reviewing every line item and class item to determine if sufficient funds existed to cover expenses and identifying line-item amendments. He explained that this process included a comprehensive salary review for cost-of-living adjustments, master's degrees, and licensures, and comparisons to local districts to remain competitive. He added that they also projected funding for the following year despite uncertainties around state and federal allocations and health insurance costs, which were not finalized until July. Josh Charpentier noted that they had been running scenarios on purchasing the building and iterated the budget in three rounds; December, January, and February, to ensure accuracy before presenting it to the board. He stated that the current presentation reflected stable enrollment and fewer budget shifts compared with prior years of rapid growth, highlighting the process of board approval in March, monthly finance reports, the October independent audit, the December end-of-year finance report including surplus calculation, and the current amendment and approval cycle.

He then explained charter school funding, noting that approximately 85 percent of revenue came directly from the Commonwealth rather than sending districts, with a per pupil tuition rate calculated through a complex formula by DESE. Josh Charpentier offered additional resources for those interested in detailed formula calculations and clarified that per-pupil calculations applied to 300 students, and also include facilities funding at $1,188 per student, which partially offset building costs. He stated that the remaining 15 per cent of revenue was derived from grants, donations, and other income. He concluded by stating that the first part of the discussion would focus on reviewing the FY 26 budget. Josh Charpentier stated that FY26, the current fiscal year, began on 1st July 2025 and would conclude on 30th June 2026. He explained that the FY26 budget approved in spring 2025 projected total revenue of $8,411,000, whereas the current projected revenue for the year was $9,015,000, reflecting an increase of $603,000. He clarified that a large portion of the increase came from tuition and facilities, which made up 85 per cent of the budget, and that the unexpected grant revenue accounted for about another $160,000. He detailed that tuition projections from March 2025 had been $7,043,000, while DESE projected actual tuition for the year to be $7,353,000, and reminded the board that the school always budgets conservatively by intentionally underestimating revenue when building the budget.

Adam Earle asked whether the 4.2 percent reduction in tuition revenue used to build the budget was based on a formula, or a set percentage applied each year when receiving DESE's estimate. Josh

Charpentier explained that they had previously used a 5 percent reduction during growth periods, but as enrollment stabilized at 275 to 300 students, they adjusted the reduction through a backward design by reviewing the full budget, determining necessary expenditures, and then deciding the revenue cut, citing that for FY27, they reduced it by $250,000. He emphasized that they budgeted conservatively because DESE projections, though stable, were not guaranteed, and continued to adjust the revenue source to ensure a surplus at year end. He noted that even after trimming $309,000 from the DESE projection of $7,353,000, the actual tuition came in at $7,461,000, $108,000 above projection, reflecting full enrollment. He further stated that other state grants had been budgeted at $287,000 but came in at $363,000, federal grants exceeded expectations, and private grants, initially budgeted at zero, produced $85,000.

He explained that nutrition revenue from the National School Lunch Program reimbursed about 50 percent of meals purchased and that other income, including interest and LMS reserves, remained stable. He stated that transportation reimbursement covered about 78 to 82 percent of prior-year expenses, supporting the discussion of future expansion to additional towns because reimbursement offset increased transportation costs.

Adam Earle asked whether state and federal grants were all reimbursement-based and whether private grants were restricted. Josh Charpentier confirmed that state and federal grants were reimbursement-based and that private grants depended on the funder. Rachel Babcock clarified that most private grants were now very specific because the organization no longer required unrestricted capital, noting that early unrestricted funding helped establish sustainability. Shaun Adamec added that unrestricted private funds were expected for startups but not a long-term budget solution.

Josh Charpentier stated that the organization was thus now less reliant on private grants, with current private funding being a specific reimbursement-based life sciences grant. He noted that total FY26 expenses were $7,538,000, with the amended budget at $7,958,000, driven by $160,000 in unexpected revenue, a $60,000 grad path LMS contract timing adjustment, and a $50,000 health insurance contingency. Josh Charpentier stated that uncertainty in faculty switching to family plans and in the workers' compensation balance at year-end necessitated maintaining a small cushion. He explained that personnel costs comprised about 51 per cent of the budget, with the presented budget at $4.5 million in personnel costs and actual coming in at $4.6 million, noting that the FTE count remained approximately the same and some personnel shifts occurred due to hiring and some staff not returning, and that the figure included a $50,000 contingency. Charpentier stated that non-personnel expenses were budgeted at $3 million but came closer to $3.32 million, reflecting a $296,000 difference. He explained that $540,000 of this was LMS development, which would appear differently in the audit as a capitalized asset but was budgeted as a cash expense. He added that $160,000 in grant-specific expenditures included a $125,000 contingency, part of which had already been spent on snow removal due to an unusually expensive winter, marking the first expenditure of this contingency in the organization's history. He clarified that the amended non-personnel budget was $3.327 million, with LMS expenses spread across FY25, FY26, and FY27 at $270,000, $540,000, and $540,000, respectively, aiming for GradPath to become a revenue source in FY29.

Adam Earle confirmed that the capitalized expense would be depreciated and amortized over time, meaning the full cash outlay, including snow removal, would not appear immediately in financials. Josh Charpentier highlighted noteworthy non-personnel amendments over $10,000, including a $60,000 difference for LMS development, $15,000 each for miscellaneous building supplies and maintenance due to rising material and service costs, and increased utilities. He added a nominal increase for information management and technology and explained that $160,000 of expenses were for unexpected grant-specific expenditures with offsetting revenue accounts. Charpentier stated that column E of the spreadsheet highlighted all changes and projected a surplus of about $313,000, noting that the $125,000 contingency and a $50,000 health insurance contingency would likely remain unspent, suggesting the surplus could be closer to $500,000 while still within allowable carryover.

Liza Veto explained that Map was in a strong position, with the surplus demonstrating that the budget strategies implemented by the Map team have worked as intended, accounting for full enrollment and unexpected costs such as snow removal. She highlighted staff stability as contributing to predictable personnel costs and noted that annual budget adjustments based on actual expenditures were expected. She invited questions about the budget. Adam Earle commended the work in keeping enrollment stable and tracking expenses carefully, highlighting the iterative approach and multiple budget reviews. Josh Charpentier asked if there were further questions before voting. Liza Veto proposed a vote on the FY26 amended budget, which Adam Earle seconded. Members then voted.

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

Liza Veto stated that with the current year adjusted, the discussion now needed to focus on the next year, starting 1st July 2026. Josh Charpentier confirmed and explained that the proposed FY 27 budget would be discussed, spanning 1st July 2026 to 30th June 2027. He stated that total revenue in the presentation had shifted, with the amended FY 26 column now on the left and the proposed FY 27 column added. He reported that amended FY 26 revenue had been $9,015,000 and proposed FY 27 revenue was projected at $9,063,000, noting a $48,000 increase and explaining that tuition had stabilized over the last few years. Charpentier highlighted that FY 27 tuition and facilities allocation, based on DESE figures released 23rd February, was $7,686,000, a $250,000 reduction from the DESE allocation of $7,936,000, yet still $225,000 above FY 26. He explained that dividing $7,936,000 by 300 students produced $26,456 per student, emphasizing the importance of full enrollment and credited Rachel Babcock and Mike Balaschi for maintaining it. He asked if there were any questions regarding this per pupil tuition approach.

Liza Veto noted that the same strategy from the current year's budget of assuming less revenue than expected would be applied to FY 27 to achieve a surplus. Charpentier confirmed and explained that DESE provided quarterly updated figures in a downloadable spreadsheet and detailed that state grants were projected at $227,000 for FY 27, down from $363,000, including $77,000 in YouthWorks funding and $150,000 of projected non-committed funds. He highlighted YouthWorks as a career readiness program funded by CommCorp through South Shore Mass Hire. Charpentier addressed federal grants, stating a projected $14,000 decrease in Title I due to federal poverty allocation changes impacting Massachusetts, and noted following DESE's guidance of budgeting for the hold harmless amount at 85% of prior year funds. Other income sources were projected at $400,000, including $150,000 interest on cash and $250,000 from reserves for LMS. Nutrition and transportation reimbursements were expected to remain stable.

Charpentier explained that personnel costs were projected to rise to 56% of the budget, reflecting Youthworks participation wages, $150,000–$175,000 in non-committed salary funds, 4% COLA increases, Master's degree and licensure adjustments, longevity bonuses, new benefit rates, and projected PeopleJoy tuition reimbursement and student loan repayment. He stated that PeopleJoy supported loan forgiveness for staff, projecting $644,000 in loan relief for eligible teachers. Rachel Babcock added that PeopleJoy adapted to federal regulatory changes, ensuring employees benefited and highlighted that staff stability and investments in personnel were central to Map Academy's effective operations. She emphasized that the ability to invest robustly in compensating and valuing the team was critical to the organization's function and that the positive feedback around financial management reflected the team's work. Josh Charpentier stated that the PeopleJoy package contained more information for those wishing to review it. He explained that FY27 non-personnel expenses were proposed at $3,143,000, a $184,000 reduction from the amended $3,327,000, mainly due to two non-recurring grants. He added that the contingency would be reduced to $100,000 because $125,000 had never been fully spent, reflecting a tighter and more accurate budgeting approach. Charpentier highlighted that non-personnel expenses included grants and that salaries were not charged to state and federal grants. He reported that FY27 total expenses would rise from $7.9 million in FY26 to $8.1 million, with personnel increasing by $415,000 and non-personnel decreasing by $184,000, producing a net change of $231,000. He noted that changes above $10,000 were minimal, primarily the grants and contingency reduction of $25,000. Charpentier referenced the personnel graph from FY20 through COVID years, emphasizing the importance of investing in staff stability, and presented the net position chart, noting that FY17 net position was $0 and FY26 projected at $4.9 million, highlighting its significance for bank evaluations and the organization's financial stability, celebrating the ninth consecutive year of strong financial growth.

Adam Earle stated that he wanted to comment on expenses, highlighting that managing expenses was critical for borrowing and building acquisition. He added that while revenue and full enrollment were important, keeping expenses controlled while maintaining staff satisfaction was equally vital. Adam Earle reported analyzing year-over-year percentages of expenses relative to revenue, noting that the trend line and balance sheet reflected careful expense management. Charpentier acknowledged the comment and expressed appreciation.

Liza Veto asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the budget for the year starting 1st July 2026 and ending 30th June 2027. Josh Charpentier explained that the FY27 budget was linked and largely stabilized with contingencies built in, noting that the surplus was minimal, essentially a zero-based budget, with $1,600 remaining if fully spent, excluding the $250,000 reduction in projected tuition and $100,000 contingency. He explained that including those amounts could raise the surplus to $351,000, emphasizing a conservative approach aimed at investing in people rather than creating large surpluses.

Liza Veto opened the floor for a motion to approve the FY27 budget. Adam Earle made the motion, and Shaun Adamec seconded it. Members then voted.

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

c) Discussion: New Secretary of Education

Liza Veto provided updates, noting the appointment of a new Massachusetts Secretary of Education, Steve Zrike, formerly superintendent of Salem Public Schools and receiver for Holyoke Public Schools, highlighting her experience working with him in the past and her first hand knowledge of his focus on innovation and support for schools doing things differently. Rachel Babcock and Steve Sell confirmed familiarity with Zrike, with Steve Sell offering to contact him if needed. Liza Veto noted working on arranging a potential visit to Map Academy in 2026.

4. Old Business

a. Discussion: Building Update

Liza Veto provided a brief building update, stating further details would be shared at the May board meeting. Rachel Babcock added that weekly check-ins with Map's attorney were ongoing to determine next steps following the building owner's decision not to renovate.

b. Discussion: DESE Approval Updated CD & Expulsion Policies

Liza Veto stated that the final business item was the previously voted Map's competency determination policy and invited Rachel Babcock to provide an update. Rachel Babcock explained that the school's policy previously approved by the board has officially been approved by DESE as well, closing the loop on this process for now. She also highlighted that it's likely future changes might occur due to the statewide graduation committee reviewing graduation requirements across the Commonwealth. She also shared that Map's updated Expulsion Policy was also approved by DESE.

5. Adjournment

Liza Veto asked if there were any other comments or announcements for the good of the order. Rachel Babcock noted the change in graduation dates in June with two ceremony options on 25th June. Liza Veto opened the floor for a motion to adjourn. Rachel Babcock moved to adjourn and Josh Charpentier seconded it. Members then voted.

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 PM.

Document List:

- March 23, 2026 Agenda
- March 23, 2026 Co-directors Report
- January 12, 2026 Meeting Minutes
- December 2025 Finance Report
- January 2026 Finance Report
- FY26 Budget Amendment and FY27 Proposed Budget Presentation
- PowerPoint Presentation Material
- FY26 Amended Budget
- FY27 Proposed Budget
- FY26 Updated DESE tuition spreadsheet
- FY27 DESE projected tuition spreadsheet
- Updated school calendar 3.9.26
- Secretary of Ed Press Release
- Map Academy CD Policy DESE Approval