

The Compass School

November 8, 2016 Meeting of the School Council Minutes

Meeting Location: The Compass School, 537 Old North Road, Kingston,
RI 02881

Date and Time of Meeting: November 8, 2016 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Marisa Gallagher (MG), Rachel Axelson (RA), Nicole Gardner (NG), Polly Cuddy (PC), Linsey Trombino (LT), Michelle Salisbury (MS), Nicole Saulan (NS), Evan Pressier (EP)

Others Present: Brandee Lapiskey (BL), Mike Commendatore (MC), Kristen Kardos (KK), Tim Groves (TG), Bob Jones (BJ), Josh McCall (JM), Christine Heart Skeggs (CS), Elisa Lucia (EL)

Presiding Officer: RA

1. Call to Order: Rachel Axelson, Council President, calls the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Consent Agenda
 - a. Discussion/vote to approve Consent Agenda (including agenda of this meeting)

RA entertains a motions to adopt the consent agenda.

NG so moved

NS seconds

Discussion: none

Vote to approve consent agenda

In favor: 6 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion passes. Yes

4. Approval of minutes (2 minutes)

a. Discussion/vote to approve minutes from 10.11.16

RA entertains a motion to approve the open session minutes for October 11, 2016

NG so moved

NS seconds

Discussion: none

Vote to approve the open session minutes for September 13, 2016

In favor: 5 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 1

Motion passes. Yes

5. Tim Groves - RI League of Charter Schools (20 minutes)

a. Special Program

TG introduced himself as well explained the support that the league and he can offer to their members. He explained the meeting that was held with the business managers and how the new formula would be affecting the schools.

How can the league work together to help with employee benefits? The idea of having a big group would be beneficial for the charters in the league. Another area that has been looked into are medicaid reimbursement. Idea would be that the reimbursements could go through the league so all are having the same discussion with medicaid.

Board development is another area that the league is looking into to support this for all charters. There are opportunities for not only to be in person but also through online options as well.

Working on bringing legal counsel in for specific times that those in the organization can connect with when needed.

The league is looking on bring opportunities for all specialty areas of the schools to work collaboratively. Example given is the special ed departments having opportunity to get together and work collaboratively.

b. Discussion

Was wondering at what point do the districts calculate what they will be holding? The districts won't be calculating until the UCOA numbers are in. We did get a satisfactory answer on that question. There will be an estimate that will come out in December.

Is the goal knowing the numbers? Last year was a challenge but at the moment they are waiting for all the schools to report. Target time would be around February for disclosure of budget.

6. Director's Report (10 minutes)

a. Discussion/vote to approve the Director's Report

BL reviewed the Director's report and invited questions. There were not any questions.

RA entertains a motion to approve the Director's Report

NG so moved

NS seconds

Discussion: none

Vote to approve the Director's Report

In favor: 8 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion passes. Yes

7. Bylaws (7 minutes)

- a. Discussion/vote to approve the [updated Bylaws](#)

BL discussed the updates that have been put forward to change the Save the Bay seat on the council.

RA gave some more background stating that contact was made to Save the Bay with no reply by them.

BL is asking to table till all council has had a chance to look at the new amendment.

8. Discuss new information and next steps re: campus facilities evolution (20 min)

- a. Discuss RI Historical Society Visit
- b. Discuss/vote to post the Feasibility Study RFP
- c. Discuss RIDE Building Authority Timeline

BL Discussed the work with Barn and looking to just gather factual information on what can actually happen with the Barn. We have invited the Historical Society to come and see.

EP You can't destroy the barn. If it falls that is one thing. If you put something inside the barn that is fine.

BL if we make the decision that we do not do anything with the barn that it has to remain until it rots.

NG If we let it rot isn't that a liability? BL there would be a high fence needed to be erected to prevent the children and others from getting in.

BL Was told by members of the community that a Feasibility Study has happened in the past. A wide search happened but no documentation has been found from the results of the the study. EP All that was discovered was a letter that was submitted to RIDE. There was one that was submitted 2012 as well it has been presented that an architect in 2008 was brought on to do a new plan.

NS does the seed sorter need to stay? BL can we sell, donate or give away? The historical significance of the seed sorter would have to stay.

NG Is the focus just the barn or also the middle building as well? The middle building is projected to make it use for the farm. The idea would be that it could also be classrooms and offices.

Suggested that there should be an open meeting for all stakeholders to learn more about the bigger picture of both the barn and the middle building.

Tabled till next meeting is the vote on the feasibility study seeing as there might be already one that existed.

9. Discuss Farm Launch progress and next steps (8 minutes)

RA gave information from the clean up and the huge turnout from the community that is involved wanting to keep this moving forward. BL gave an overview of the most latest plan presented by Monique Bosch

10. Revisit final phase of the previously October budget amendment (8 minutes)

- a. Discussion/vote to approve the budget amendment

BL suggesting that bringing the surplus for restoring the development director's position. Another suggestion would be putting that surplus to an organization that would help support in the school day. This would be 3 days a week at subrate pay.

RA entertains a motion to approve the the budget amendment

NS so moved

NG seconds

Discussion: none

Vote to approve the budget amendment

In favor: 9 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion passes. Yes

11. Discuss/vote to approve contracts for the following vacancies (2 minutes)

- a. Jill Rial for the Explorer TA Vacancy

RA entertains a motion to approve the Jill Rial for the Explorer TA Vacancy

MS so moved

NG seconds

Discussion: BL gave some background on the candidate. No other discussion

Vote to approve the Jill Rial for the Explorer TA Vacancy

In favor: 9 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion passes. Yes

- b. Lori Jones for the Music Vacancy

RA entertains a motion to approve the Lori Jones for the Music Vacancy

MS so moved

NS seconds

Discussion: BL gave some background on the candidate. No other discussion

Vote to approve the Lori Jones for the Music Vacancy

In favor: 9 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion passes. Yes

12. Discuss Charter Renewal (7 minutes)

- a. November 1st meeting debrief
- b. December 6th meeting planning

BL discussed in director's report and what will be next steps.

13. New Business

BL discussed the current dispute and related press regarding The Attorney General's complaint against the Compass School dated 11/2/2016.

14. Public Comment

How long is the music teacher contract? For any non tenure teacher if there will be a change in the first 3 years. Automatic renewal otherwise. During public comment, an audience member asked about the length of teacher contracts. BL explained that teacher contracts are automatically renewed by law unless otherwise specified at the time of signing (i.e. 1-year only). The teacher evaluation process outlines the administration's intervention steps.

15. Adjourn 7:40

The public is welcome to any meeting of the School Council or its subcommittees. If communication assistance (readers/interpreters/captions) or any other accommodations are needed to ensure equal participation, please contact the Student Service Coordinator, Julie Wynsen at (401) 788-8322 at least two (2) business days prior to the meeting.

Any changes in the agenda will be posted on The Compass School's website and place of business, and will be electronically filed with the secretary of state at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting.

Director's Report

Provided By: Brandee Lapisky, M.Ed.

Submitted on: 11/3/2016

Council meeting date: 11/8/2016

Enrollment

The enrollment tallies below are updated as of 11/3/2016 .

Step Levels	Grade	Enrollment (Actual by grade)	Enrollment (Actual by step)
Explorers	K	18	36
	1	18	
Adventurers	2	19	19

Discoverers	3	19	38
	4	19	
Investigators	5	19	38
	6	19	
Navigators	7	19	37
	8	18	
Total Enrollment	K-8	168	168

*Note that The Compass School is fully enrolled and our population has stayed stable with no transfer students in or out since the last reporting period.

Strategic Plan Updates

Charter Renewal:

- I submitted the 2017-2022 Charter form to RIDE by the October 31, 2016 deadline.
- I attended the first charter renewal hearing at RIDE on 11/1/16 along with Drew Virbila (Compass teacher/parent) and Linsey Trombino (Compass Council).
- The RIDE charter team presented their findings which can be found in the following documents. The Council of Elementary and Secondary Education did not ask any questions.
 - [Compass School Final Charter Renewal Report: Submitted November 1, 2016](#)
 - [Compass School Final Enclosure: Submitted November 1, 2016](#)
- At this time, we have every reason to expect that Compass will earn a full 5-year renewal at the December 6th meeting.

Development:

- Vision Event: The Vision Event was well-attended on October 28th. There were 108 attendees, which reflects a 4 person increase in comparison with last year's numbers.
- Of note, one of our goals was to include more new Compass families in this event and that goal was achieved. Last year, there were no new families in attendance, where this year there were 10 new families in attendance.
- We kicked off the annual fund by inviting attendees to make pledges. In total, 31 families submitted pledges, which totalled \$6,050.
- Addressed pre-stamped thank you cards were made available to attendees, who then mailed those thank yous to Lynne Phipps, the event sponsor.

Blended Learning

- As a staff, we revisited the academic goal language in our original charter and reflected on the importance of not being swept away by the academic trends that threaten to lift our anchors. All staff completed an anchor activity which described the elements of the work that “ground” them, keeping our charter in mind. These anchors were discussed and displayed at the Vision Event.
- The Compass Blended Learning Leadership Team (Nikki Gardner, Heidi Vazquez, and I) met with our partnering team for the 2nd meeting of the program. Below are some of the outcomes from the half-day experience:
 - Based on our previous discussions, the FUSE team prepared a [Personalized Learning Vision Document](#) which helped to crystalize our vision for blended learning (perhaps better referred to as personalized learning) at The Compass School. Feedback on this document is welcome.
 - Within this document, we also identified specific “look fors” that will help us assess if we are progressing with our vision.
- The teacher program participants have been identified and include: Polly Cuddy, Erica Smith, Nikki Gardner, and Heather Chatterley.
- Future coaching will occur through email, classroom observations and at staff meetings.

Facilities Life Cycle: Current Campus

- Mr. Art is actively working on the walkways to and from the modular buildings by reusing the original railroad ties.
- In their recent visit, the Department of Health was delighted to see the new concrete pads that now reside under the dumpster area.
- The GaGa ball pit was installed this month with the help of the Compass Co-Op, Navigator volunteers, and Mr. Art. It is a very popular attraction for the entire the student body. The volleyball net was also repaired this month.
- Students involved in the Service-Learning elective have proposed a number of small projects that are improvements to the campus. These projects are supported in the classroom.

Facilities Life Cycle: Future Campus

- I called and emailed Joe DaSilva from the RIDE Building Authority to learn more about the lack of response to our [Letter of intent](#) sent this summer. It was sent via post and he indicated that he never received the document as it was addressed to the Board of Regents (former name) of the current Council of Elementary and Secondary Education. I certainly learned the lesson of making sure to send it certified mail in the future along with an electronic communication as well. As a result of not receiving our letter this summer, we were not included in the information communicated to the cohort of schools that did apply and have already missed the first deadline: [the phase 1 application](#). We will not be able to participate in this round and we will need to reapply next summer.
- In this situation, I would typically offer significant pushback to this response, however I did not because in actuality, Compass is not ready. Even if we had the advanced notice,

our physical environment committee would not have been able to thoughtfully prepare all of the Phase 1 documentation to meet this timeline. As I discussed our situation more thoroughly with Mr. DaSilva, and as we discussed the content of my letter of intent, he said that Compass should spend this year doing more research and planning so that we have a more actionable plan come the summer of 2017. The fact that Compass still does not know if it will propose using the barn for the middle school location or an alternate new construction location is indication that we are not yet ready to begin the RIDE process.

- We have continued to speak with a number of professionals about the barn including:
 - RI Historical Society Staff Architects: They indicated that neither the shed nor the barn could be demolished. Additionally, the seed sorter must remain onsite. They thought that the barn building could be renovated to suit the middle school needs. They also indicated that any additions made to the structure would need to be made behind it in order to preserve the original look from the front.
 - Outside Architect: Business manager Mike Commendatore invited an architect in to do an informal walk through of the barn. His informal findings indicate that there is enough possibility of indeed using it for the middle school that we should proceed with the feasibility study.
 - Northeast Collaborative Architects: Evan Preisser, chair of the physical environment committee, read through all of the previous posted minutes of Compass Council on the Secretary of State website and found a reference to the feasibility study that was completed on the barn in 2007. He is in the process of scheduling a meeting for the Northeast Collaborative team to present this information to us at their offices.

Facilities Life Cycle: Compass Farm

- The Farm Advisory Board continues to meet bi-monthly, twice as often as all other Council committees.
- We posted and followed a standard hiring process for a [Farm Launch Director](#). The compensation for this person will be paid from the Lattner Foundation grant that was awarded to strengthen our program's mission.
- Through the process, two very valuable candidates emerged. We moved forward with hiring both candidates following a commitment of matching funding from Main Street Resources.

Staff Configuration:

- I had an initial meeting with the Navigator teachers regarding their part-time status on Wednesday, October 12th. All 3 of the teachers are interested in increasing their FTE status if additional monies were dedicated to a salary position at the Navigator step.
- One informal proposal was for the Navigator teaching team to have an increased FTE and that this time would be dedicated toward including the Navigators in the elective offerings next year.

- At the last Council meeting, there was a request for prior Navigator configuration documentation. It will be provided prior to the next meeting.

STEAM Pilot

- This is an area that needs more Director-level attention. I will provide a more detailed report in December.

Elective Pilot

- Students have responded positively to the Elective program. Parents have also commented on it informally. A formal survey is being prepared and vetted by the learning committee.

Math

- Drew Virbila and I co-hosted a parent Math Night on 10/18/16.
 - The slides from that presentation can be found [here](#).
 - The event was well attended with over 20 families represented.
 - Many offered positive feedback and greater understanding as a result of having attended the event.
- PARCC Math Target: Teachers and I have reviewed prior student scoring and have updated the spreadsheet with target achievement levels for each student.

Other Topics

Special Education Advisory Board

- Under the leadership of Michelle Clifford, Compass parents have formed a special education advisory board called “The Compass School Local Advisory Committee on Students with Exceptionalities (CSLAC)”
- This is a link to [their bylaws](#).

Legislative Updates: No information to report at this time.

League of Charter Schools: Commissioner Ken Wagner joined the 11/1/16 meeting with the charter school directors. One highlight of the meeting was this quote, “Money does not belong to a district. It belongs to the community and its taxpayers and is allocated for the education of their children.” Based on his other talking points, it appears that the concept of Empowerment Schools faced too many barriers from both the Superintendents’ Association and the Teachers’ Unions to take flight.

Community Outreach

- High School Choice Night:
 - This event will take place on Wednesday, November 9th from 6:00 - 7:30 pm at Compass. The event is designed for Navigators (7th and 8th grade are both invited) and their families.
 - The schools who have RSVP'd for the event are listed below. In many situations, the principal him/herself will be at Compass for the High School Choice Night.
 - LaSalle Academy
 - Bishop Hendricken
 - Rocky Hill School
 - The Greene School
 - The Met School
 - Chariho Career & Tech
 - North Kingstown Engineering Program
 - South Kingstown High School
 - North Kingstown High School
 - Chariho High School

- [Letter to the Governor](#): I composed and mailed the linked letter to Governor Raimondo on October 19, 2016, inviting her to visit The Compass School and Kingston Hill Academy.

- Compass teachers Drew Virbila and Nikki Gardner were prepared to present at the RIDE Open Doors Conference in October on project-based learning, however the conference was cancelled. Their ready-to-go presentation would have covered the following information:
 - **Title:** [How to Get Project Based Learning \(PBL\) Off the Ground](#)
 - **Description:** Project Based Learning (PBL) is an instructional best practice where students investigate a complex problem, driving question or challenge. PBL has many benefits for the classroom such as accommodating students with varying learning styles and differences, promoting lifelong learning, allowing for student choice and voice, and providing a means for authentic assessment. However, the implementation of PBL can be challenging. Educators at The Compass School, a K-8 project-based charter school in Kingston, RI, will lead participants through the process of PBL implementation. Highlights will include sharing a model project, explaining and modeling the planning of a project, creating assessments, and leading the participants through the beginning stages of planning their own project.

Committee Reports

Health/Wellness/Farm Launch Committee

Oct. 17, 2016

Mission ideas:

- To develop/strengthen systems in order to fully realize the school's potential
- To engage community partners in our mission of environmental sustainability
- To establish modalities that can be shared with other educators
- Nurture a model that strengthens and builds upon the current curriculum to develop a thriving farm school environment.
- **Develop a model School Farm Program that fully demonstrates the school's mission of environmental sustainability and that connects students throughout the district to the principles of sustainable agriculture and the wonders of the natural world.**
- In order to better educate our students and help other schools we want to develop a model school garden program.
- Brandee writes: "To enhance systems in order to fully realize the school's mission for our own students of environmental sustainability. Once those are established we will develop, present and nurture models that can be shared with other educators."
- As charter school we have a responsibility to share with schools and key organizations our own mission of environmental sustainability.

Goals:

- To excel as the state leader in environmental education, sustainable agriculture
- Unify school staff to create a cohesive curriculum model that fosters a thriving School Farm Program.
- Formalize current curriculum and develop educational materials for sharing curriculum and best practices with District schools
- Formalize a plan that enhances the aesthetics of the school campus
- Focus on low maintenance native plantings, xeriscaping
- Harlyn: "We already do many things well; composting, soil blocking, environmental stewardship. We need to highlight, organize and promote what we are already doing."

Next Steps:

- Continue to map out existing infrastructure and develop plan for School Farm
- Test soil sites around campus (UMASS)
- Contact local professionals to determine the structural status of shed
 - o Rhett Bishop 401-295-1050
 - o Cyrus Beasley
- Organize Fall Clean-Up Day
 - o Sunday, November 6th 10am-2pm
 - o Create Flyer and Press Releases
 - o Recruit volunteers and RINLA members
- Create promotional materials and brainstorming templates for:
 - 1) Teacher/Staff meeting
 - Tuesday, Oct. 25 (11am-3pm)
 - 2) Vision Event
 - Friday, October 28th (6-9pm)

- Start drafting a budget
- Yearly timetable, starting now (ie. crop plan, prepping beds for next season)
- Prioritize areas to work on; for clean up day and moving the project forward

Site Committee

Meeting November 10, 2016

Policy Committee

There were two people who attended Policy Committee (Brandee and I)

- Adoption of Transgender/Non-Bias Policy
 - a. Discussion/vote to approve Transgender/Non-Bias Policy
- Move to pass to Council for final approval
- Upcoming Agenda Items: Homework Policy
- Discussion: inviting public to attend next policy committee to hear thoughts of homework policy, take recommendations to council
- An email was sent out to all people who attended a meeting with Ms. Brandee inviting them to discuss our school homework policy at the upcoming Policy Committee meeting

Development Committee

Write here....

Finance Committee

Notes from 9/23/16 meeting:

- Welcomed Michael to the team.
- Reviewed monthly balance sheet.
- Discussed plan for transitioning from external accounting firm.

Notes from 10/21/16:

- Reviewed monthly balance sheet.
- Discussed amendments to budget that were implemented last council meeting to support Compass Farm Launch.
- Discussed unexpected potential costs in operating, specifically additional one on one support for a student and possible additional transportation requirements. Though we currently still have operating budget surplus, these funds may need to be allocated to one of these

- Discussed outfitting Compass Busses with GPS units to enable parents to more easily track their child on their commute to and from school for easier drop off and pick up.

Learning Committee

The Learning Committee met on October 20, 2016. We had 10 people come to the meeting including 4 teachers and 5 parents, as well as Brandee. We reviewed the charge from the council and the timeline.

Electives

The group reviewed a parent and student survey about the elective program that is being offered to the Investigator step. The goal is to have the survey go out in mid-November and the committee will review the data at the November meeting. The goal is to use this data in order to inform current and future decision making about our piloted elective program.

The group will also gather schedules from other middle schools to see how fit electives into their day and the length of their periods.

Personalized / Blended Learning

The staff's work about what their "anchors" were for students cognitive growth was presented to the committee. Parents on the committee were also asked to complete an "anchor" for their child. This will be further introduced to the parent community at the Vision Event. The goal is to "anchor" our journey to defining personalized learning by staying focused on what we most want for our students. This shared vision will be what we refer to when determining instructional best practices and personalized learning platforms and models. The group will work towards drafting a vision statement for teaching and learning and use this information to create a InfoGraphic to share with the community. The group will also begin to work on gathering information about the blended learning tools staff are already using and begin to develop a system for evaluating those tools effectiveness and how they relate to the school's vision for teaching and learning.