

The Compass School

February 14, 2017 Meeting of the School Council Minutes

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

Date and Time of Meeting: February 14, 2017 6:00 p.m.

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

Others Present: Brandee Lapisky (BL), Mike Commendatore, Hilary Downes Fortune (HF), Harlyn Beneth (HB), Heather Chatterley (HC)

Presiding Officer: RA

1. Call to Order Rachel Axelson, Council President, calls the meeting to order at 6:03 PM
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Consent Agenda (2 minutes)
 - 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: 7 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion passes. Yes

4. Public Comment
5. Approval of minutes (2 minutes)

- a. Discussion/vote to approve minutes from 01.10.17

RA entertains a motion to approve the open session minutes for January 10, 2017

PC so moved

NS seconds

Discussion: none

Vote to approve the open session minutes for January 10, 2016

In favor: 6 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 1

Motion passes. Yes

6. Director's Report (10 minutes)

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

BL reviewed the Director's report and invited questions.

Discussion on how the council can support with the annual fund to encourage Compass families to contribute. With the deadline soon the last push will be to fill a backpack at pick up. BL welcomes ideas for higher participation numbers for next year.

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. Director's recommendation to not renew teacher's .3 STEAM position contract for the 2017-18 school year (9 minutes)

a. Discussion/Vote to approve Director's recommendation to not renew teacher's .3 STEAM position contract for the 2017-18 school year/dismiss from service in this .3 position at the conclusion of the 2016-17 school year

BL presented the issue that the local share revenue for FY18 is still unknown. As a result, she recommends eliminating the STEAM pilot program with the intention of recalling the position if the funding is available. Hilary Downes Fortune read a statement requesting that Council preserve the program. Council members inquired about other possible cuts including teacher assistants and health care, other funding sources, the impact on student learning, etc.

RA entertains a motion to approve the Director's recommendation to not renew teacher's .3 STEAM position contract for 2017-18 school year

MS so moved

LT seconds

Discussion: Yes

Vote to approve

In favor: 4 Opposed: 2 Abstain: 3

Motion passes. This motion passes on the information that came from Tim Groves that the motion passes with the way that it stands

8. Selection of the Feasibility Study bid (20 min)

- a. Discussion/vote to approve the bid submitted by Saccoccio & Associates for the 2017 barn renovation/middle school feasibility study.

EP stated the steps that the site committee took to narrow down this decision and supports that this is the best firm to work with for the feasibility study.

RA entertains a motion to approve the bid submitted by Saccoccio & Associates for the 2017 barn renovation/middle school feasibility study.

NS so moved

PC seconds

Discussion: No

Vote to approve the Director's Report

In favor: 9 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion passes. Yes

9. [Standards-based progress reports](#) (20 minutes)

- a. Discussion/vote to endorse standards based reports

NS discussed the process that the whole teaching staff went through to develop the new reports along with making sure that they maintained the social emotional focus and emphasized the importance of showcasing the standards.

RA entertains a motion to endorse the standards based reports

NG so moved

NS seconds

Discussion: No

Vote to approve the standards based reports

In favor: 9 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion passes. Yes

10. Policy Committee [Leave Policy Revision](#) (10 minutes)

- a. Discussion/vote to approve a revision regarding unpaid leaves of absence

BL this grew from just one leave into what about other scenarios. In a review of other district contracts, teacher leaves of actions are allowed.

RA it says that I am interpreting it that by the end of the school year they will have to let the director know if they will be returning. It would need to have an earlier date than the end of the year.

RA entertains a motion to adopt the revision in the Leave Policy regarding unpaid leaves of absence with the removal of "the not later than the school year on which the teacher is on leave." and replace with May 1st of the school year in which the teacher is on leave.

NS so moved

EP seconds

Discussion: none

Vote to approve motion to adopt the revision in the Leave Policy regarding unpaid leaves of absence with the removal of “the not later than the school year on which the teacher is on leave.” and replace with May 1st of the school year in which the teacher is on leave.

In favor: 9 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion passes. Yes

11. Polly Cuddy’s leave of absence (5 minutes)

- a. Discussion/vote to approve Polly Cuddy’s request for a one-year leave of absence

SS clarity on the recommendation of Matt Plain. BL from discussion with Matt that the school is not obligated to allow the leave by statute. She noted that this practice is prevalent in our sending district teacher contracts.

RA entertains a motion to approve Polly Cuddy’s request for a one-year leave of absence

NS so moved

MS seconds

Discussion: Yes

Vote to approve the Director’s Report

In favor: 8 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0 Recuse: 1

Motion passes. Yes

12. [Cold Weather Advisory Guidelines for Recess & Outdoor Physical Activity](#) (8 minutes)

- a. Discuss/Vote on adding the Cold Weather Advisory Guidelines for Recess & Outdoor Physical Activity to the Student/Parent Handbook

RA entertains a motion to approve adding the Cold Weather Advisory Guidelines for Recess and Outdoor Physical Activity to the Student/Parent Handbook

NS so moved

MG seconds

Discussion: none

Vote to approve

In favor: 9 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion passes. Yes

13. [Calendar Revision](#)

- a. Discussion/vote to approve the calendar revision to reflect recent cancellations due to snow.

RA entertains a motion to approve the calendar revision to reflect recent cancellations due to snow

MS so moved

NS seconds

Discussion: none

Vote to approve

In favor: 9

Opposed: 0

Abstain: 0

Motion passes. yes

14. New Business

Look into building extra days for the calendar next year in case of snow

MG would like to invite Mike to the table in order to discuss the budget in the future to balance the Director's responsibility to this topic.

15. Public Comment

16. Adjourn 8:08

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

Director's Report

Provided By: Brandee Lapisky, M.Ed.

Submitted on: 2/9/17

Council meeting date: 2/14/17

Enrollment

The enrollment tallies below are updated as of 2/9/17 .

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 1st day of school.

Strategic Plan Updates

Development:

- *Annual Fund*
 - The Annual Fund was launched on 12/9/2016.
 - To date, we have the following statistics to report:
 - **34.23%** of staff and families have contributed.
 - **\$9,176.00** has been secured to date.
 - **45.88%** of our financial goal has been secured.
- *Main Street Resources:* Dan Levinson has pledged an additional \$25,000 for the 2018 calendar year if Compass can secure 100% participation by March 1st and another major donor to the farm project.
- *Lattner Foundation:* Brandee submitted a report to the Lattner Foundation to update on our project work accomplished thanks to their \$25,000 FY17 donation. We are in the progress of preparing our FY18 application, which is due on March 1st. We've been encouraged to make a large ask as the foundation is impressed with our decision-making regarding the FY17 donation.
- *Grant submission progress:*
 - To date, we have submitted grant applications totalling \$131,750.
 - Notification for nearly all of these grants will occur in summer 2017, with some offering notice in late spring.

Blended Learning

- Our FUSE fellows and early adopters continue to meet again this month for instructional coaching and staff-wide training on 2/1/17.

- On 2/13/17, our 4 early adopter teachers will travel to other FUSE districts to observe a variety of blended learning models.
- Multiple surveys re: the student/family experience with blended learning initiatives to date and at-home technology access are in development.

Facilities Life Cycle: Current Campus

- *Tree update*
 - Paul Collis, a Compass grandparent and professional arborist presented a tree inspection report based on his August 2016 inventory of the trees on campus.
 - By the time Paul returned to deliver his report in January 2017, The Compass School had already addressed or had plans to address the primary concerns.
 - The report is available upon request.
- *Town Hall Information Gathering Update:* Mike Commendatore offers the information below per Council request following a visit to the South Kingstown Town Hall.
 - The modular permits do not have an expiration date.
 - The only stipulation in the documentation is that trees need to be maintained per the submitted planting design along the access road and the floodlights must be turned off by 7pm.
 - No permits are required to build the fence.
 - No permits are required to remove the interior of the farm headquarters.
- *Main Building Dormers*
 - There has been an ongoing issue for multiple years with leaks in the main building dormers. The integrity of the roof could be jeopardized without a permanent solution.
 - Our facilities manager sought bids and solutions from multiple vendors.
 - To date we have one quote from Ocean Breeze in the amount of \$9300.
 - 3 other vendors have inspected the job and we anticipate their bids.

Facilities Life Cycle: Future Campus

- The [Request for Proposals for the Barn Feasibility Study](#) has been posted on our website.
- Mike Commendatore led tours through the barn for interested architects.
- 6 architects submitted proposals.
- Brandee submitted the top 3 choices of the committee to the RIDE team for review.

Facilities Life Cycle: Compass Farm

- [Farm Headquarters Executive Summary](#): This summary was prepared by Farm Launch Director Monique Bosch.
- *Soil Update:*
 - Monique sent multiple soil samples to UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory to determine the quality of the soil in multiple areas around the farm.
 - The majority of areas have been determined to be prime agricultural soil, however there was one area of concern.

- In the area between the barn and farm headquarters, lead levels are elevated are elevated. We anticipated this might be the case as this is where the farm equipment was stored when the land was actively used for farming.
- The lead number is 191 ppm per the [Soil report](#). As a result, we will not move forward with the row crop plan originally intended for that area. It is advisable to not disturb the soil in that area without an approved dust minimization plan.
- **USDA Visit**
 - On 2/18/17, Melissa Hayden from the USDA visited Compass to receive our three applications for financial assistance in the areas of high tunnel installation, irrigation and soil health.
 - The visit was very positive. Melissa said she looks forward to working with our organization and reported that our likelihood of receiving funding for these areas is very high based on our engaged community, Council-level commitment and the project scope.
- **Farm Headquarters Interior Demolition**
 - All of the items formerly contained in farm headquarters have been removed.
 - Demolition, which consisted of removing wall boards, insulation, ceiling, etc. is complete. The total cost for this project was \$2,350 and included removal of the debris.
 - Viewing the status of the materials extracted from the farm headquarters confirmed that the decision was made in the best interest of the health and wellness of anyone entering the building.

Staff Configuration:

- **Schedule Analysis**
 - Brandee requested 3 schedules from each of our school's sending districts in order to complete a comparative schedule analysis.
 - South Kingstown and North Kingstown responded to the request.
 - Mary Ackermann has been compiling the data, which was challenging due to the differences in schedule frameworks. For example, some schools have a 6 day schedule rotation.
- All four members of the Navigator team are interested in increasing their FTE status and believe it is in the best interest of the step.

STEAM Pilot

- Students, Discoverer teachers and our STEAM teacher report that the pilot is running smoothly in their step. Discoverer students consistently report that STEAM is the highlight of their day. Hard-to-reach students display few behavioral challenges during this time of the day.
- Their trimester focus is on erosion, but they are also learning coding and the program Scratch.
- A field trip to the Fab Lab in Newport will take place later this month.

Elective Pilot

- Brandee met with Steve Osborne, the chief for Innovation at the RI Dept of Ed to review the elective program offerings.
 - His feedback was, “This is exactly what we’re trying to get both charters and district schools to do. Please consider sharing your best practices.”
 - He maintained that the BEP does not prescribe “seat time” for core content areas.
 - Steve noted that the elective course descriptions I provided indicate that the electives provide the opportunity for core content skill application, blended with 21st century skills.

Math

- One of the biggest gaps in last year’s math scores is that students had not yet been exposed to some of the content. Multiple teachers have noted that they are further ahead in the math curriculum this year in comparison to last year.

Other Topics

Policy

- [Handbook Online](#)
 - The student handbook is updated in an online, hyperlinked format that strives to be more accessible for families to find the specific information they seek more clearly in comparison to the scrollable pdf format.
 - The handbook has been reorganized by policy, protocol, etc.
- [Teacher tenure law](#): It is important to note that RIGL 16-13-3 Part C, the opportunity for a teacher to take an unpaid 3-year leave of absence, may come into play at The Compass School. Should this happen, the position shall be posted as 1 year only for the duration of the teacher’s leave.

Free and Reduced Lunch Update:

- In response to the discussion of the low percentage of free/reduced lunch eligible students at The Compass School, I proposed the following [Letter to Commissioner Wagner](#).
- I sent this [Letter to Head Start Directors](#) in the Washington County area in advance of our February Open House.
- I have reviewed the [Intentionally Diverse Charter School Toolkit](#)
- On 2/16, I will meet with Washington County Superintendents and RIDE at Compass to discuss Compass’ plan to increase our FRL eligible population.

RI Legislative Updates:

- [S0142](#): Facilities Support for Public Charter Schools

National Education Updates:

- Betsy Devos was confirmed as Secretary of Education. Though she is a charter school advocate, we will wait to see how the policies and values of the current administration impact Compass.

Learning Committee Report

Submitted by Nikki Gardner

The Learning Committee held its monthly meeting on January 19, 2017. The committee voted to accept the Vision of Teaching and Learning statement and send to the parent community for feedback. The survey for parents has been created and will be going out shortly. We have begun work on creating another survey to gather information about families access to technology and internet. Teachers that are being coached by FUSE fellows will be visiting schools to observe blended learning in action and the committee has also identified other schools to visit that are a good fit for Compass to observe in regards to blended learning. Brandee has gathered several middle school schedules from our sending districts but is still waiting to receive others in order to make some concrete observations on how our schedule compares to the received schedule.

Farm Advisory Board

Submitted by Rachel Axelson

The Farm Advisory Board met on January 30, 2017. Items discussed were: fencing for deer and woodchucks, reviewed updated executive summary, and the integration of the Farm Launch at the EcoFair on May 20, 2017 (including plant sale, the hopeful inclusion of animals, ribbon cutting for the farm headquarters). The pine tree debris will be turned into tables and seats, and garden space planning may begin next week.

Site Committee Report

Submitted by Evan Preisser

The Site Committee met on February 8th, 2017 to evaluate the six proposals submitted in response to our Feasibility Study RFP. While all of the proposals were excellent, only one was ranked first or second by all five members of the committee present at the meeting. The committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Compass Council award the Feasibility Study project to the firm of Saccoccio & Associates, Architects.

Policy Committee Report

Discussion/Vote of Holiday Observance Policy:

- We decided to keep the Holiday Policy as is but refer to it when deciding events that are sponsored by the Co-Op, they would need to have an educational component.

Discussion of Leave Policy

- We reviewed policies from Narragansett, North Kingstown and South Kingstown in regards to revising our existing Leave Policy.
- As a committee we decided to add an unpaid leave section which we will present to Council at our February meeting. We will ask Council to review adding a maternity and a parental leave section to our existing leave policy. We used the South Kingstown policy for a model.
- We discussed how these were benefits of Compass School employees and many other places of employment do not offer these benefits.
- Brandee will be sending out a copy of the revised Leave Policy in her Sunday Special.

Discussion of Student-Parent handbook:

- We reviewed the following sections; Family and School Communication Policy, Grants and Funding, Social Behavior Policy, Transgender Non-Discrimination Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.
- In the Grants and Fundraising section we changed the wording to state “prior to initiating process”
- Brandee created a [Compass School Student/Family Handbook Dashboard](#) and we discussed if we should have larger sections with subsections. Such as a policy section and then a procedure section.
- Decision made to continue to review sections of the handbook for each meeting

Development Committee Report

Submitted by Michelle Salisbury

The Site Committee met on February 2nd, 2017 and discussed the following topics:

- The 2016-17 Annual Fund goal is \$20,000. To date we have raised \$9,176 from 56 people (30% of all families; 56% of staff have donated). At this time last year we had raised \$17,411. Dan Levinson of Main Street Resources (who pledged \$25,000 for this year’s farm launch) issued a challenge ... MSR will donate another \$25,000 next year if we secure another major funder for 2017-18 and show 100 percent Annual Fund participation by **March 1st**. Dan’s challenge grant will be highlighted in the next A Note from Brandee.
- Business/Vendor Solicitation. We hope to have the mailing out by late February. Last year we mailed to our 120 vendors and 90 additional business prospects. Abby will send a link to the list for the team to review and add new names, need be.
- Grant Proposals. Last month, Abby submitted grants to Ocean State Charities Trust (facility upgrades), Captain Planet Foundation (farm) and Lowe’s Toolbox for Education (farm). Over the next month, we will be submitting a few more proposals in support of the farm. Going forward, we will diversify our foundation prospect efforts to fund other programs, including STEAM.