

Draft Minutes – Fiddlehead School Board Meeting

August 20, 2026

Meeting held via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at **6:01 PM**.

A quorum was established.

The Fiddlehead mission was read.

There was no public comment.

Present: Jacinda Cotton-Castro, Allison Moser, Joanne D’Arcangelo, Jamie, Jason Manjourides, Ryan Pelletier, Kate Cass.

Approval of June Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes from the June 11, 2026 meeting.

Jamie moved to approve the June meeting minutes. Allison seconded.

Motion carried. Ryan and Kate abstained as new Board members.

Financial Report

The Board reviewed the May financial report and discussed the school's overall financial position.

The school ended the prior fiscal year with approximately **\$47,000 in the operating account**. The Board discussed the continued impact of Special Education and out-of-district placement costs on the school's cash position and long-term financial sustainability.

The Board also discussed the difference in state funding between regular education and Special Education students and the financial challenges created by the high proportion of Special Education students enrolled at Fiddlehead.

Administration is pursuing available state funding, including **EFS-214**, to help offset out-of-district placement expenses.

The Board emphasized the importance of continued attention to financial sustainability and the need to understand the long-term funding implications for charter schools.

Motion: To accept the financial report.

Outcome: Motion carried unanimously.

Enrollment & School Capacity

The Board reviewed current enrollment and discussed projections for the upcoming year.

Current enrollment is approximately **203 students**, with a goal of approximately 205. The school continues to maintain waitlists in several grades.

The Board discussed enrollment caps and the importance of maintaining manageable class sizes, particularly in grades with higher Special Education needs.

Pre-K and Kindergarten enrollment remains strong, with approximately **20 students per class**.

The Board also discussed the school's approach to middle school enrollment. In recent years, Fiddlehead has limited enrollment of students entering in grades 6–8 in order to maintain program stability and ensure that students and staff have adequate support.

The Board discussed the relationship between enrollment, Special Education needs, staffing capacity, and long-term financial sustainability.

Executive Director's Report

Jacinda provided an update on school operations and the Maine Charter School Commission.

Charter Commission Performance Measures

Fiddlehead successfully met **all of the Board-related performance measures** established by the Maine Charter School Commission for the previous year.

The Board was recognized for completing the required goals, including work related to board development and training.

The school continues to monitor student enrollment and chronic absenteeism as part of its Charter Commission requirements.

Staffing & School Opening

The school welcomed **10 new staff members** through a new staff orientation program. The orientation included school history and philosophy, HR information, team-building activities, lunch, and a building tour.

The Board discussed the importance of staff retention and maintaining the school's culture as new staff members join the community.

Upcoming Events

- Pre-K Family Night: August 27
 - Celebration of Learning/Open House: September
 - Maine Alliance of Public Charter Schools conference: October 23, 12:00–4:00 PM at Maine Arts Academy
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Principal's Report

Jason provided an update on preparations for the 2026–27 school year.

Curriculum & Instruction

The Education Committee completed two summer workdays focused on:

- School-wide scheduling
- Student experience and service coordination
- Professional development planning
- Assessment scheduling
- Integration of local and standardized assessments

The school is continuing to refine its assessment practices to ensure that assessments provide useful information without taking unnecessary instructional time.

Regulated Classroom Professional Development

Fiddlehead will participate in professional development on the **Regulated Classroom** model. The training focuses on creating environments that support the social and emotional well-being of students and staff and allow students to access learning more successfully.

The training is being supported through grant funding and collaboration with the Friends School and RSU 14.

Facilities

The school has completed several summer maintenance projects, including classroom painting and removal of the old playground playhouse due to safety concerns.

The Board discussed the possibility of reactivating the **Playground Committee** to develop future plans and identify funding opportunities for improvements.

Board Committees & Governance

The Board reviewed its current standing committees:

- Finance
- Governance
- Personnel
- Education
- Wellness

The Board discussed the importance of Board members participating in committees and strengthening governance structures as part of the school's long-term sustainability.

A **Development Committee** will be reestablished to support fundraising and development efforts. Ryan's experience in nonprofit development and fundraising was identified as a valuable resource for this work.

The Board also discussed strengthening the **Governance Committee**, particularly around:

- Board orientation
- Board member onboarding
- Bylaw review
- Board membership and succession
- Annual training requirements
- Governance policies and procedures

A "small bites" approach to Board orientation will be developed to provide new members with information and training throughout their first year rather than all at once.

Board Responsibilities & Confidentiality

The Board discussed the importance of confidentiality and appropriate communication when Board members are approached by staff, families, or community members regarding school concerns.

Board members were encouraged not to attempt to resolve individual concerns themselves. Instead, concerns should be directed to the Board Chair or brought to the full Board when appropriate.

New Board members will receive:

- Board email accounts
- Access to the Board shared Google Drive
- Board member materials
- Board-on-Track training information
- Maine Charter School Commission training information

Confidentiality and conflict-of-interest forms will be distributed for completion.

New Board Member

The Board formally welcomed **Kate Cass** as a new Board member.

Kate is a former Fiddlehead parent and former Fiddlehead teacher with extensive educational experience. Her background includes experience with Reggio-inspired and emergent curriculum and previous involvement with Fiddlehead's Education Committee.

The Board approved the recommendation to add Kate to the Board.

Executive Session

The Board entered Executive Session to discuss personnel matters and hiring recommendations.

Upon returning to open session, Jamie moved to approve the hiring slate recommended during Executive Session. Ryan seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Next Steps / Action Items

Jacinda Cotton-Castro

- Send the FY27 budget and performance measures to new Board members.
- Prepare confidentiality and conflict-of-interest forms for Ryan and Kate.

- Coordinate Board member access to required training.
- Share the Maine Alliance conference information with the Board.
- Continue pursuing EFS-214 funding for out-of-district placements.
- Explore reactivating the Playground Committee.
- Provide the Board with additional information regarding Special Education enrollment and classroom composition.

Joanne D'Arcangelo

- Continue planning the Board's next visioning retreat.
- Circulate notes from the May Board retreat to Ryan and Kate.
- Support Board governance and orientation planning.

Board Members

- Complete required Maine Charter School Commission/Board-on-Track training.
- Review Board materials and shared drive resources.
- Consider participation in one of the Board's standing committees.
- Complete confidentiality and conflict-of-interest forms.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned following a motion from the Board.

Next meeting: September 24, 2026 at 6:00 PM at Fiddlehead School and via Zoom.