FINAL APPROVED- Board Meeting Minutes

Date: August 25,2026
Meeting Called to Order: 5:15PM
Attendance: Matthew Nittoly, Anne Dichele, Deborah Walen, Amariz Videz, James Martinez, Kevin Forget, Kimberly Grimm, Nel Conroy, Amanda Magnusson, Paul Viscontini, Nicole Shagoury
Guest Appearance - Mary Newbery

Approval of Previous Meeting Notes

- Kevin stated meeting notes for June will be brought to next meeting to be approved for the September meeting.

Office Nominations

- Anne opened nominations for officer nominations as the acting chair with the opening of a chair
- Anne was nominated for chair by Nichole and seconded by by Kim, Anne accepted
- Community members eligible for Vice Chair include: Deborah Whalen, Kimber Grimm, Adam Norris and Jessica Vonshek. Adam was noted that he already is the Treasurer.
- With no other nominations, Anne will be distributing bylaws and collect self-nominations by email before the September meeting so that nominations can be finalized then.

Director's Update – Matthew Nittoly

- Enrollment: School has reached the maximum enrollment of 236 students (236/236). Matthew cautioned numbers may change after the first day of school because of withdrawals.
- Staffing: No certified teaching vacancies; four Quinnipiac resident interns placed in grades 1–4; social work intern (NYU) continuing part-time support.
- Renewal application and documentation due end of month
    - Public hearing: scheduled for October 1, 2026
    - Site visit: Tuesday, October 6, 2026 from 9:15 a.m.–3:30 p.m. — includes school tour, classroom observations, faculty & student focus groups, parent focus group, business office meeting, and meeting with board of directors. Board representation expected
    - Matthew noted prior renewals resulted in corrective action lists for administrative/documentation items; he and Mary expressed confidence in the school's data and special education readiness.

Construction / Neighboring Development (Chestnut Street; 8 Chestnut St.)

- Matthew reported new neighboring development: Sound Communities / Norwalk Housing Authority plans a seven-story, 68-unit senior affordable housing project directly adjacent to the school (on the other side of the playground fence). Demolition of the existing site is scheduled for early November and ground-breaking in October (per the developer's timeline in Matthew's written update).
- Key concerns: Student safety, access to playground (possible temporary loss of outdoor play), noise, traffic, demolition hazards, and vetting/management of residents/guests at the new property.
- Actions:
    - Schedule a parent forum and invite developer + Norwalk Housing Authority representatives to present and answer questions (Matthew has requested they attend September 22 public session).
    - Host the September meeting in the gym to accommodate parents and the developer's reps and prepare succinct questions in advance for that forum.
    - Board member Amariz offered assistance using her Norwalk Housing experience to facilitate further contact or clarity..

School Climate Legislation & Special Education – Mary Newbery

- Mary summarized changes in state legislation: shift from broad "bullying" terminology toward "challenging behavior" frameworks and required documentation / school climate plans. These changes are statutory and require prompt implementation.
- Actions: Formation of a climate committee; updated procedures and documentation to align with the new requirements; plan for a parent forum to explain the distinction between "challenging behavior" and "bullying" and the school's investigation/response protocols.
- Mary emphasized that Side by Side already uses tiered supports and that special education compliance is strong; Norwalk special ed liaison (Danielle Williams) has been supportive and will be available during renewal activities.

Financial Report – Matthew Nittoly

- Matthew summarized finance in Adam's absence minimal activity in August; July and August financials will be reviewed at the September meeting. Preliminary EFS (educational financial submission) and year-end auditor activity underway.

Fundraising & Events – Deborah Whalen

- • reported plans for two major fundraisers:
- Space Cat (annual November event): securing a Friday night date.
- Spring gala: Deborah recommended pursuing the Route 7 venue that previously offered free space; the venue suggested specific days (Monday/Friday) and requires a site visit before committing. The venue will provide a no-fee space but parking constraints mean a valet service (approx. $1,200 quoted) and typical catering costs will apply.
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New Business

- Amariz Videz raised concern about an uptick in ICE activity targeting immigrant/Latino families, Matt will review Norwalk Public School email and will coordinate with Anne for next steps for September meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:01 PM (Motion: Deborah Whalen 2nd : Kevin Forget)
Next Meeting: September 22, 2026 (in person)
Agenda for 5:30pm 9/20/26 (in person):
Roll Call
Public Session
Call to Order
Review/Approval of June & August Meeting Minutes
Construction Update
New Business
Director's Update
Finance Committee
Fundraising Update