

Codman Academy Charter Public School
Board of Trustees

Tuesday, Feb 4 2025
5:00pm

[Virtual Only, join us via Zoom:](#)

Meeting ID: 816 2055 4214

Passcode: board

Board Members: Rick Holden, Bill Walczak, Yves Salomon-Fernandez, Derrick Ciesla, Regina Campbell, Dawn Leanness, Ibrahim Wanu

Other Attendees: Kate Funderburk, Julia Bott, Elizabeth Stasiowski, Kim Williams, Judith Grant, Monet Brathwait, Tryland, Heather Geary, Rosmarie Hunter, Alex Alessi

Minutes:

- I. Call to Order
 - Action Item: Approve minutes from [January 7, 2025](#)
Approved 5:03
- II. General Public Comment
 - Kate Funderburk shared the success of the Book Drive with Neighborhood House and the BTU. Huge thank you to the Codman staff that supported the school and made the event a success.
- III. Board President Report
 - Vote in person BoT meeting March 4th
 - Next meeting will be in person, you are highly encouraged to attend in person. We will still have a
- IV. Head of School Report
 - We are in the process of getting some really exciting acceptances and waiting on the FAFSA which will be a big part of the decision. Shout out to RL who has held this together during some significant staffing changes.
 - The hard work every day is in our classrooms and we have a lot of amazing glows as a result of the hard work.
- V. Finance Committee Report
 - Proposed School Budget SY26
 - Dawn: Update on rent, budget to actual and draft of next year's budget
 - Elizabeth: Shares the vote and the plan for lease update that was voted on by the foundation last month. As a result the rent was previously 240K per month, moving forward that has decreased to 156K. These are funds that can be reallocated
 - Regina: How do you go about comparing previous years with

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- current years with such a big year.
- Elizabeth: The rent cost is relatively tiny in the larger budget. The forgiveness of debt will be picked up as a one time can
 - Rick: We will roll through the proposed budget and our goal would be to approve this as soon as possible.
 - Derrick: Big thank you to the team that worked on this especially Elizabeth it was no small task
 - Elizabeth: We are looking at a 1% increase overall based on conservative guesses around federal support and the current climate. The student funds are just a suggestion, but we feel that these are conservative but safe. Biggest change is the federal funding and grants. We typically budget a flat fund and a small increase. Entitlement has been flat funded, ESSER has been removed and competitive grants have been budgeted conservatively. To take the most competitive grants have been removed to ensure that we are safe and then items can be moved back into the budget if this breaks in a more favorable direction. The CAF support has been budgeted at 350K additionally the food line has been increased but food costs have also gone up and will basically wash itself out. We are seeing about an 11% increase in staffing as a result of normal increases and health insurance.
 - Administrative costs are also up, but virtually all of that increase is in the legal fees which are anticipated fees as a result of the union negotiations
 - Derrick: We put a small slide deck to cover the budget decisions and would be open for questions after we review the budget. We will do an overview of the budget, revenue breakdown and the key priorities we are investing in. As Elizabeth eloquently went through these are the primary budget numbers, over the last three years we had ESSER funding to support the programs in our institutions and this is no more. Now we are seeing the end of ESSER as well as a shift in funding with the new administration
 - Codman was a certified EL school. We want to be able to do the expeditionary learning that our school was funded on, allowing our students to be fully invested in their learning. We are thinking of systems and structures that need to be implemented to support outcomes for students including investment in platforms, professional development and HQIM. When we think about the reality of going into this next school year there are a lot of unknown right now. We are at the negotiating stage and are trying to put forward a contract that is supporting both of our staff and students, this included a quality time review that was conducted to see what is the best option for Codman to maximize time and outcomes for our students. We are also looking to improve on what already exists including investing in out of school time and student

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- athletics. Those were the key factors in developing our budgets
- Out of School: When thinking about the mission and vision of the charter it included the extended day. We currently have one of the longest days in the state, and it is something that our families depend on. We want our students to be engaged in high quality instruction. We know we need to look at a shorter day but we also want to ensure high quality out of school time activities for our students. After researching all options we found it would be most beneficial to house the out of school time activities at the school Monday through Friday. We are thinking about building out an extensive out of school time program which will require a substantial investment.
 - When I came over I saw a need to implement the curriculum with fidelity. At the end of the module and unit there are these end of unit performance tasks that allow us to use our community as a classroom. This year we built these activities into our budget to ensure that they could happen.
 - Our original design was very robust and substantial but we have rolled back to be fiscally responsible, but should the grants break more favorably we have identified areas for additional areas to add back in
 - Athletics: We have added a plethora of athletics that we have added that have substantial involvement. Historically when we think of athletics at Codman it was something that was used to pass the time. But since my arrival students have been very vocal about wanting to develop a more substantial athletic program. When we are looking to fit in and be in school when school can be challenging we still want to feel like we are successful, having a robust offering of athletics helps to build parent, student, family, alumni involvement. Congregating around these activities builds a sense of pride of the school. A well funded athletic program also brings in perspective families. At a recent recruitment event we attended the primary questions were do you have a before/after school programing, questions about athletics and enrichment.
 - First and foremost we are committed to adult learning and professional development, second a strong tier one instruction teaching the curriculum with fidelity and finally supporting the whole student through before and after school, enrichment and athletics.
 - Rick: We are at full enrollment which means we maximized the funds coming in, additionally we discussed the federal funds decreasing. As everyone is aware the last few weeks have shown a significant change in the funding that will be coming in. We are continuing to improve the EL and academics for our students in a different format.
 - Bill: so we have a budget that is more than balance with a surplus at the end of it. What are the changes that are

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included in the budget? We should know what will change if we approve that budget

- Derrick: working with the budget there were things that were antiquated that we no longer use, or are more efficient. Sometime when we looked at platforms we were able to cut chunks of spending. Additionally the heavy lifting with purchasing the equipment and HQIM have been completed so now we are spending significantly less because we are at maintenance. We have also not made any drastic programmatic changes. At the beginning of the year we made an effort to build a fair and equitable budget, then through restructuring we were able to complete the work more efficiently and use people more effectively. This has resulted in a cost saving. For some things we had a hard time filling we have contracted out to meet the needs of our students. We have the same amount of educators moving into next year, we may have some vacancies but we kept those positions.
- Yves: I think it is great that you have very systematically gone through the budget to see what you need. When you look at project 2025 as they relate to K-12 education there are some very troubling implications. Having a more conservative budget puts us in a position that is more stable and sustainable when we are uncertain.
- Derrick: The changes that were made were done based on data and feedback and how we can maximize what we are doing well.
- Dawn: Wanted to appreciate Derrick and RL. Last year the budget was just 3% across the board. They looked at each department while prioritizing academic excellence while ensuring we are stable to move forward in these uncertain times
- Dawn motion to approve the budget, Bill seconds the motion to approve. No discussion. 100% in favor.

VI. Academic Committee Report

- [Quality Time Review Presentation and Recommendation](#)
- Dr. Bott: My goal tonight is to provide you with a high level overview of the work that we have been doing around what the structure of the school day could look like to meet the needs of our community and to provide recommendations.
- See enclosure for committee purpose and overview of the process.
- This was a cross functional process that included BTU members, leadership and family feedback. We gathered a lot of data over the last 5 months
- All conversations came back to what is best for students and learning outcomes.

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- Shared the backward mapping of the process. We started with the deadlines and the process that needed to be followed and then we backward mapped the process.
- In addition to sharing our academic progress we also worked on the achievement committee to understand the use of time and the impact on students.
- 990 Minutes per week in the US and 900 minutes in Elementary. Aside from that there are not actually content minutes. We are also trying to be mass core compliant around the subjects that we are offering.
- We administered surveys to the staff, student and families.
- We researched comparable schools and days and how they fit in all the pieces.
- We created a mock schedule
- In order for DESE to approve the process we need in writing that the sending district transportation can support the shift.
- We hosted focus groups to understand the students and the impact of the current day.
- Our BTU members took a vote with the BTU vote at our PD, I believe that many of them are on this call now. This was a true partnership which is how good decisions and changes are made. All conversations have been grounded in data.
- Shared key findings and highlights from the work.
- Families were in support of a shorter school day as long as options exist for after school care and activities.
- Based on our Learning Research: We are proposing to change our hours for academic teachers and core learning. Bus times would not change, but we would provide enrichment from 3:15 -4:15 and then the option to stay until 5:00 for additional enrichment and care.
- Proposal to move Crew to the opening block
- We are proposing a shift to offering three years of consistent language assessment
- We built the schedule so we can leverage specials across K-12 to allow for student choice.
- We did keep the shorter day on Friday to allow for Professional Development for staff.
- I understand that in a school that is underperforming it might seem counterintuitive to shorten the day. What we actually find is that the last hour of the day is not a high impact time. We also need to ensure that our teachers have adequate time to plan high quality instruction, while still honoring the central tenements of our charter. We also believe this will help us to recruit and retain high quality teachers over time.
- Next step: Complete the charter amendment proposal and bring it to the board for approval in March
- Bill: The purpose of charter is not to be the same as other

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schools but to be different. I find it difficult to grasp the notion that teaching will be better if the day is shorter. The length of the day is also a draw for many of our families. I presume that you would use the after school time to meet this need. The longer school day was core to what the charter was all about. Overall I'm not inclined to favor this.

- Julia: Parents were excited about the proposed change and the opportunity that it would open. The idea or notion that more time results in higher teaching and learning we are just not seeing evidence of this.
- Regina: I don't have as much skepticism about the idea that more focused and higher quality delivery of content, students will be more engaged this could lead to change. Change is hard. This was evident when the school went from having Saturday school that was a huge change. If we are not able to get high quality teachers in critical areas like SPED would help our students. I am coming into this with an open mind about what our parents, teachers and staff have shown in the data.
- Yves: I don't have the same longevity as you at the school. I say this with humility. Julia and I had a pretty at length conversation about this yesterday, I support this proposal. We have evidence from both staff, students and parents that supports. When we look at the data over the year vs what is happening now is that we are seeing an increase in both teacher efficacy and early trends in student outcomes, the early data give me confidence that the early data is supporting the change. Give it time to allow this pilot to see how it goes. I also want to highlight the enrichment and the high quality enrichments that students participate in. My son has an edge over students like me, so unless these opportunities are provided in the school they may not have the opportunity to participate without sacrificing class time without negatively impacting their academic performance. It may be a little bit of a change, and take all concerns into consideration by giving it a time for experimentation that could be a good compromise
- Dawn: I fall someplace in the middle, especially when considering the trends from earlier in my career. However after hearing the shifts this team is making that end of school time has not been effectively used. What could be interesting is to be able to understand what the schedule was used prior to this proposed change. How could this be seen as a better use of time? I would love to see a bit more of a comparison to see where we came from and what is being proposed.
- Bill: I think the fact that we used to have really productive 8 hour days and now we do not have productive 8 hour days like we used to be able to do. We have been reducing our hours for the last few years including eliminating the Saturday program

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and then we eliminated Friday afternoon. I might suggest we go back to a full school day on Friday. We don't have a lot of evidence that we are making progress in student outcomes.

- Derrick: Bill, you raise some really great points. When we think about charter schools we are given the autonomy to make these changes to support our students. Thinking about the staff recruitment and then pay scales of our competitors. I ask myself if you are an educator why are you coming to Codman Academy if you are a parent why are you sending your child to Codman Academy. We have built out a strategic plan that separates us from Boston Public while also emphasizing our core values. If we are spending more time on tasks and engaging students that is good, but if we are not we need to find a way to provide outcomes and also balance work-life balance for our staff while preserving the mission and vision of the school.
- Alex: This is my 7th year teaching at Codman. I have heard a lot about what enrichment used to be at Codman back in the day, but since I have been at Codman I have not seen those high quality programs. I don't know how we would ever have the staff to provide those high quality enrichments that have been shared previously. Unless we can recruit more people I don't see how this would be possible.
- Rick: If people have questions about the proposal I imagine they would reach out to Julia.
- Julia: we will give greater quality and clarity of what enrichment means and what it would look like.
- Rick: Thank you for the hard work over the last many months. Lastly I hear where Bill is, but our goal continues to be student improvement and performance and I believe we are all committed to getting to that goal for our students. What you are proposing is included in this budget and that the opportunity was planned for in the budget.
- Derrick - Agrees that it is included.

VII. New Business

- Monet: Our event, the annual gala will be April 10th. The save the date went out today. If anyone is interested in being on the host committee please contact Monet.

VIII. Adjourn

- Adjournment Regina motion, second Bill adjourned 6:34 PM

Enclosures

- Minutes from [January 7, 2025](#)
- [Budget Proposal SY26](#)

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- [Budget Draft SY26](#)
- [Budget Slides SY26](#)
- [Quality time review summary and proposal](#)

