Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School
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APPROVED

AKFCS Education Committee Meeting Minutes
Friday, September 11, 2026
ZOOM Webinar
7:30 a.m.
https://akfcs-org.zoom.us/j/94903976779

Chair Karina Abeddy called the meeting to order at 7:31 a.m. Ms. Abeddy welcomed committee members and staff to the first Education Committee meeting for the year. Acknowledged her new role as committee chair.

Chair Abeddy recorded attendance as follows:
Kathleen Greenwood - present Amy Vernon - present Karina Abeddy - present

Staff Members in attendance:
Lauren Blumberg Amelie Cabral Jessica Dolbec Anne Duke
Benjamin Gitkind Grace Howard-Donlin AnnMarie Little Michael Penney
Nardella Thomas Yumei Yao

Attachments
None

Approve the June 11, 2026 Meeting Minutes.
Motion: VOTE to approve the June 5, 2026 meeting minutes.
a. Amy Vernon made the motion.
b. Kathleen Greenwood seconded the motion.
No comments.

Roll call vote:
Amy Vernon - approve Kathleen Greenwood - approve Karina Abeddy - abstain
Action: June 11, 2026 meeting minutes approved.

District Goals - Grace Howard-Donlin
Acting Executive Director Grace Howard-Donlin reviewed the three district goals, Academic Excellence & Family Partnership; Cultivate a Future-Ready, Empowered Professional Culture; and Strategic Infrastructure & Organizational Sustainability, with committee members. The goals are a draft and will be reviewed with Board Chair Shelly Yarnie. No questions from committee members.

IB Results - Michael Penney
IB Coordinator Michael Penney reviewed with committee members the IB data from last year and current IB data for the 2026-2027 year. Committee members asked about the IB Music and Theatre program and the requirements for students. Committee members asked about teacher training - six teachers will be trained in IB this year. Principal Kerr and Acting Executive Director Howard-Donlin will receive training. Mr. Penney explained student requirements for Visual Arts and the submission schedule.

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Mr. Penney explained that in IB Language Arts, students may opt out of taking the IB exam. Mr. Penney explained the Theory of Knowledge assessment requirements and the schedule for students, which begins in the 2nd semester of junior year and the 1st semester of senior year.

SPED Framework - Grace Howard-Donlin
Acting Executive Director Grace Howard-Donlin discussed a summary of the District's updated Special Education structure, focusing on key initiatives to assist students with diverse needs. Mrs. Yumei Yao serves as Director of Student Support for Grades K-6, managing 159 cases, while Mrs. AnnMarie Little is the Director of Special Education for Grades 7-12, overseeing 79 cases. Core objectives focus on establishing uniformity and relying on data to guide administrative decisions, along with expanding the co-teaching approach to better serve students with disabilities. No questions from committee members.

Enrollment - Amelie Cabral
Director of Enrollment, Mrs. Amelie Cabral, reviewed the enrollment numbers across the District and by each school with committee members. The committee reviewed the waitlist and withdrawal data. The committee was apprised of community outreach initiatives and the upcoming enrollment schedule. No questions from committee members.

Principals Report
High School - Benjamin Gitkind
Assistant Principal Benjamin Gitkind reviewed the High School Principal's report in Principal Kerr's absence with committee members. Mr. Gitkind noted the MTSS revamp is going well and new teachers are adjusting well since the start of school.

Middle School - Jessica Dolbec
Assistant Principal Jessica Dolbec reviewed the Middle School Principal's report in Principal Cournoyer's absence. Mrs. Dolbec reported that the reading assessment results will be shared at the October committee meeting, and the writing assessments will be given in October, with the results presented at the November committee meeting.

Elementary School - Anne Duke
Principal Duke reviewed Elementary School highlights with committee members in teaching and learning, staff culture, and community engagement.

Committee members inquired about staffing in each building. Elementary School is currently fully staffed, preparing for a vacancy; an employee was recruited by a headhunter to Worcester Public Schools. Several faculty are expecting children - maternity leave. Middle School - all teaching positions are fully staffed, vacancy for a Technology teacher, and seeking to fill an additional Special Education long-term substitute teacher position. Five teachers are expecting children - maternity leave. High School is fully staffed, with one teacher on maternity leave and one teacher on paternity leave.

Additional Discussions:
Committee members asked about the AKF Academy. Mrs. Howard-Donlin provided a historical reference on the AKF Teaching Academy and its goals to define who is an AKF Teacher and to build the teaching tool and professional development for the AKF teacher profile. It initially supports beginning teachers in years 1-3 and will expand to all faculty in each school. The AKF Academy is different from the Mentor Program, which is part of the DESE standard and has a stipend.

Friday, October 16, 2026: next Education Committee meeting, 7:30 a.m., in person in Mrs. Howard-Donlin's office.

Adjournment - Ms. Karina Abeddy
Roll call vote:
Kathleen Greenwood - yes Amy Vernon - yes Karina Abeddy - yes
Action: Meeting adjourned at 8:28 a.m.