Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School
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APPROVED

AKFCS Governance Committee Meeting Minutes
Friday, October 2, 2026
ZOOM Webinar
10:00 a.m.
https://akfcs-org.zoom.us/j/99831292091

Chair Margaret Asante called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. Mrs. Asante recorded attendance as follows:

Kathleen Greenwood - present Shelly Yarnie - present Margaret Asante - present

Staff Members in attendance:
Grace Howard-Donlin Kim Nobrega AnnMarie Little
Nardella Thomas

Attachments
Open Meeting Law Minutes Checklist
Student Accountability Plan

Materials Included
AKFCS Employee Handbook
Summary Charter School Annual Report Guidelines 2025-2026
AKFCS Year 27 Virtual Visit Report
Executive Summary: Guidelines for Application for Renewal of a Public School Charter (2026)

Approve the September 2, 2026 Meeting Minutes.
Motion: VOTE to approve the September 2, 2026 meeting minutes.

a. Kathleen Greenwood made the motion.
b. Shelly Yarnie seconded the motion.
No comments.

Roll call vote:
Kathleen Greenwood - approve Shelly Yarnie - approve Margaret Asante - approve
Action: September 2, 2026 meeting minutes approved.

Employee Handbook Review - Kimberly Nobrega
The committee reviewed recent updates to the handbook since the September Governance meeting. Mrs. Nobrega clarified the escalation and grievance procedures, including pathways for complaints involving the Executive Director and the Director of Human Resources

- Escalation procedures clarified:
  - Step 1: Direct report
  - Step 2: Written complaint to supervisor
  - Step 3: Appeal to HR Director

Mrs. Asante flagged an inconsistency in the use of a personal name versus a job title in the Title IX section (page 33 of handbook, section EE). Mrs. Nobrega will seek clarification from the school attorney

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and make adjustments based on advice of counsel. Committee agreed to present to the full board for approval at the October Board of Trustees meeting.

AKF Charter Renewal - AnnMarie Little

Mrs. Little provided an overview of the Charter Renewal process. The renewal application is expected to be received from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) within November. The submission window occurs between April and August 1st. The renewal process includes a review of 5-year performance; site visits - interviews with staff, administration, trustees, students, and parents; review of school finances; review of the Accountability Plan; and dissemination of best practices.

Mrs. Little explained AKF is an established school with a historical record of "good standing"; the renewal process is less intensive unless a specific concern has been identified by DESE. Mrs. Yarnie raised the concern of the number of "Not Met" areas listed on the Accountability Plan and the impact it would have on the Charter Renewal process. Mrs. Little stated the MCAS scores are more of a concern for DESE than the "Not Met". Mrs. Little quoted that AKF overall accountability progress reflects "significant progress towards targets"; no state intervention is required. Mrs. Howard-Donlin added that MCAS scores are a concern amongst schools across the State; AKF is working to close the gap. Ms. Greenwood noted that time is needed to improve MCAS scores.

Mrs. Little noted monitoring of the new curricula and the changes in leadership to address academic performance. Mrs. Little reported that the high staff turnover is a measure DESE will review; she reported the turnover is a high trend nationally. Mrs. Little explained that the goals in the Accountability Plan were difficult to amend during the current charter term. The hope is that a new Accountability Plan will be drafted after Charter Renewal in February 2028.

Mrs. Howard-Donlin shared the current Accountability Plan; Mrs. Thomas will email the plan to the committee members. Mrs. Asante will add the Accountability Plan to the November agenda for committee review and feedback. Mrs. Asante will add the Charter Renewal as a standing agenda item for the committee, with the "Not Mets" tracked for progress.

Review Year 27 Mid-Cycle Charter School Site Visit - AnnMarie Little

Mrs. Little provided an overview of the mid-cycle site visit. The committee focused on the findings in detail, discussing Criteria Two, Three, Five, and Nine.

Criterion 3 - Compliance

a. ESL Teacher Licensing - One English as a Second Language (ESL) Teacher did not have their current license at the time of the DESE site visit.
    i. ESL teachers are the only staff required ot be licensed in Charter Schools. Mrs. Howard-Donlin reported AKF is short-staffed in ESL/Multilingual Language Learners (MLL) due to high maternity leave in elementary school, and an upcoming leave expected in the high school. Mrs. Howard-Donlin said 13 candidates have been offered positions; however, the challenge is licensure requirements and competitive salaries, identifying the salary gap between teachers and paraprofessionals. Currently, AKF is seeking a waiver for one teacher working with Mrs. Cabral, Director of MLL, who leads the ESL program. The committee asked for the number of positions not filled; administration will provide that information. Some positions are filled on a stipend basis.
b. Open Meeting Law Document Logging - AKF was inconsistent in documents attached to meeting minutes.
    i. Mrs. Little provided an overview of the noncompliance and that documents are to be attached during meetings.

- Clarification from the then Executive Director that describing documents as "presented" in the minutes means they are shared, not listed.
- Distinction of recording documents presented during meetings are now listed in the Attachment section of the minutes.
- Concerns that board packets and documents discussed at meetings are not listed on public agendas or the school website.
- Open Meeting Law checklist was reviewed, which states that minutes must list all documents used during a meeting, but do not need to include the documents as attachments.

Mrs. Yarnie raised concerns about documents that are sensitive in nature.

Mrs. Asante inserted two links for the committee to review.
hopkingtonk12.ma.us/about/district-at-a-glance/school-sketches

https://gopublicschools.org/who-we-are/

Ms. Greenwood suggested the committee reach out to legal counsel and trustees receive Open Meeting Law training. Mrs. Howard-Donlin stated she is receiving training materials from her mentor Julia Bowen and Rob Carpenter at MCPSA. Mrs. Howard-Donlin will share an upcoming professional development link with committee members.

Mrs. Asante suggested consulting with Robert Carpenter before engaging legal counsel. Mrs. Yarnie will reach out to Robert Carpenter.

Criterion Two - Access and Equity

a. Language/Translation - The enrollment application translation was not converting correctly through PowerSchool.
    i. School has converted back to paper enrollment applications. The hard copies were an alternative solution.
    ii. The issue has since been resolved.

Criterion Five - Student Performance

a. Academic Performance - The data reflects AKF was at the 79th percentile during the time of the site visit (February 2025).
b. Considered satisfactory, 64% of the threshold.
    i. Committee has asked for regular updates.

Criterion Nine - Governance - Oversight

a. Annual report requirements are outdated (law from 1993).
b. Report includes accountability plan results, recruitment & retention, staffing, governance, discipline data, and financial summaries.
    i. Committee agreed Key Performance Indicators from the Annual Report raised at the September board meeting will be reviewed regularly.

Other Business: School Building Naming - Grace Howard Donlin
Interim Executive Director stated that, due to the grade reconfiguration, which involves K–3, 4–6, and 7–12 groupings, it is necessary to update building names. This change will affect several areas, including registration documents, scheduling, DESE reporting, and signage.

a. Options discussed:
    i. Lower Elementary / Upper Elementary

ii. Primary / Intermediate
iii. Junior–Senior High School (already approved for signage)

b. Interim Executive Director will research DESE requirements and present recommendations.

Mrs. Asante recapped meeting actions:

- Employee Handbook updates accepted, pending attorney clarification on Title IX naming. Handbook will be presented at October board meeting.
- Open Meeting Law compliance requires further clarification; Mrs. Yarnie will consult MCPSA.
- Mid-Year Site Visit - Criterion Two, Three, and Five will remain a standing agenda item.
- Admin Council will continue monitoring accountability metrics.
- Accountability Plan "Not Met" items will remain on the Governance agenda.
- Annual Report Key Performance Indicators will be reviewed once the updated Annual Report is provided.
- Building naming will be researched by Mrs. Howard-Donlin and brought to the board for discussion.

Adjournment - Mrs. Margaret Asante
Motion: VOTE to adjourn the meeting.
Kathleen Greenwood - yes Shelly Yarnie - yes Margaret Asante - yes

Action: Meeting approved to adjourn at 10:32 a.m.