

# Scattergood Friends School

## School Committee Meeting Open Sessions Minutes 13 May, 2023

Hybrid Meeting

### Mission Statement

**Scattergood Friends School challenges students with a college-preparatory curriculum, farm experience, a shared work program, and community living in the spirit of Quaker faith.**

Members Present: Ruth Hampton (clerk) Roy Helm (assistant clerk), Laël Gatewood, Kris Hilgendorf, Katie Jacoby, Alex Lippitt, Eric Stakland, Kent Tjossem, George Bergus, Linda Corbin-Pardee, Aaron Woolfson, Karen Greenler, Nancy Jordan

Staff Present: Kim Jones, John Zimmerman, Sonja Spondheim, Matt Gauder, Ethan Huelskamp, Jamie Newton

Regrets: Matthew Gillespie, David Wilcox

The Clerk opened with the following:

*"It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad."*

C. S. Lewis

**MINUTE: We approve the minutes, open and closed, of the 18 March, 2023 meeting.**

**Academic:** The committee discussed the math graduation requirement. Currently, the requirement is Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. (Pre-calc and calculus are available for those students who desire them.) Is it a desirable change to allow students to complete a statistics or computer class instead of Algebra II as a graduation requirement? It would allow another way to earn quantitative skills for those not needing the abstract conceptual math of Algebra II and ease the way to graduation for students who struggle with math. Would there be resulting problems for college admissions? This requires more investigation. Students who need to attend non-credit developmental classes in college are often at a disadvantage. Will some students opt out and later regret the choice when their college choices require further math? No decision has been made and the change is at least a year out.

There was discussion about how to get students involved in academic competitions, like the National History Day projects in which two middle school projects went to state. It's can be a great opportunity for blending social sciences, language arts, and the students' interests, while giving them a chance to polish a presentation and excel at something. Often Scattergood encourages students to participate despite polish (like in a coffeehouse presentation), but it's also good to engage in the process of editing and fine tuning for excellence.

**Development:** Ethan is reviewing a number of policies such as naming rights and reviewing the Gift Acceptance Policy. The Spring Appeal letter was paired with a letter outlining the school's policy around transgender concerns, and has received positive feedback. The Comprehensive Campaign is underway and with the hiring of Dana Smith, our new Marketing and Communications Director, Ethan will be able to hone his focus more closely on the campaign.

**Spiritual and Community Life:** Student writings about community life have indicated a positive attitude about the solid framework the school has built for nurturing students. Students report formation of emotional growth, understanding collection with greater depth, and learning to listen to themselves and others. Sonja and Sadie have been doing research on slip system and using a restorative rather than a punitive framework, which is working quite well. It has been a great year for students and staff.

**Admissions:** It was a tough and somewhat disappointing recruiting season and we find ourselves without the numbers that we would like to have at this point. There is still time, since the state education savings account will roll out at the end of May, giving about one month to recruit students. There is still some confusion about the process, and John is working with other Heads of private schools to clarify and publicize the new effort. The program might begin its rollout without all questions answered, so the state's private schools are working together to help families understand the requirements and their options.

The legislation around the education savings account is separate from other legislation around LGBTQ+ issues that are being debated at the statehouse. John will monitor the politics of the situation carefully and be sure we don't run into unintended complications that compromise who we are as a school.

The school wants to continue charging the same rates for AY '24-'25 as we are charging for AY '23-'24. We are not seeing a lot of students who are maxing out the upper end of the tuition scale and it's causing sticker shock for families of more modest means. If we can bring up our enrollment, bring in some upper end students or increase the number of international students, this will make up for the freezing of tuition rates. Although we are still underpriced in the national market, we need to stay competitive in the Iowa market. Next year we hope to create a 5-year plan for tuition upon which we can build a longer term budget. The increase in Measey Foundation money will help with all of this.

**MINUTE: We will keep '23-'24 tuition rate at the same rates as the '24-'25 academic year: \$13,500 for MS, \$19,000 for HS Day, \$37,000 for HS boarding, and \$42,000 for HS international.**

The school is also going to experiment with a new team approach to Admissions, with John taking an outward facing roll, Jamie and Sam working with inquiries, interviews, and acceptance, and new marketing efforts. Mark Blackman will be leaving in June so now is a good time to try a new approach. The team will meet weekly to be sure that this complicated process stays in focus, with hopes of increasing the yield from the admissions funnel.

Farm: Everything seems in good shape. The second tractor is fixed, but it's good that we bought another. Because the newer (to us) tractor is actually older than the older (to us) tractor. It was suggested that the students could name the tractors to distinguish between them. These are important and also expensive tools for the school.

Facilities: Matt and the committee have identified maintenance tasks that need attention and have been getting quotes as reported in the written report. There was discussion about the driveway as an example

of different approaches that could be taken on several of the items. A full re-asphalting of the driveway will cost about \$80-90K. Chip and seal, which consists of spreading tar and then embedding gravel is cheaper, but doesn't last as long.. Also mentioned were the siding on the instruction building, AC in the Berquist House, and the solar installation. There are several options for the latter, including a lease to own program offered by the utility or soliciting specific donations for this project. In any case the solar will not come from the Capital Budget. Eli has been big help, especially as he has a lot of contacts with contractors that are willing to work with the size of project that we present, somewhere between "residential" and the larger "commercial" projects that are common.

**MINUTE: We approve the draft capital budget, as sent out in the facilities report. (This includes capital monies from the remainder of funds from the '22-'23 FY and also FY '23-'24.) We will not exceed the capital budget total for the two years and will maintain emergency funds. Facilities will prioritize the projects.**

**To Note:** Next May we might consider calling this a "**Capital Maintenance Proposal**" instead of a Capital Budget. Facilities needs to stay within the budget total, but as these are generalized estimates we do not know the exact cost of each item, so perhaps "proposal" may be a better term than "budget".

HOS: Preparation for next year has been top priority: deepening academic programs and increasing services to students while evening out the workload in order to reduce burnout. General health indicators of success are good (staff retention, student surveys, reduction of slips etc.) Moving away from a siloed approach to admissions to a team approach should keep retention and recruitment at the forefront of everyone's mind. For summer marketing and admission events John and Dana Smith will be point people. Sam and Jamie will handle inquiries with help from Sonja and Dana Foster. Kim, Katie, and John will make tuition assistance decisions. Once school starts in fall, duties may change, but the team approach will continue.

**Tues July 25th 1 pm is the last School Committee meeting of this academic year.**

**Dates for next year's School Committee meetings:**

- September 16
- November 4
- January 20, 2024
- March 16 (last day of Spring Break)
- May 11
- July 23 (Tues of IYMC)

**For the March meeting, subcommittees are urged to meet during the week before Spring Break (March 4-11) so staff are able to enjoy their break. It may help to schedule all meetings ahead.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Greenler  
Recording Clerk