

Scattergood Friends School
School Committee Meeting
Open Session **Proposed** Minutes
22 July 2025

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.

Present: Aaron Woolfson, Katie Jacoby, Roy Helm, Alex Lippitt, George Bergus, Linda Corbin-Pardee, Eric Stakland, Ruth Hampton, David Wilcox

Guest: Petra Lang

Regrets: Kristin Hilgendorf, Monica Beals, Nancy Jordan, Kent Tjossem,

Staff Present: Ethan Huelskamp, Matt Gauder, Sam Taylor, John Zimmerman, Sonja Sponheim

Friends settled into silent worship in a timely manner. The clerk shared with us:

*“Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all.”*
— Emily Dickinson

Minute: We approve the minutes, both open and closed, of our meeting on May 10, 2025.

Minute: We approve the Farm Report to IYMC.

Question about large grant for trees – how to best share happy information.

Minute: We approve the Head of School Report to IYMC.

The work of the school, instruction, programs, culture of school – all very strong. Overall, 2024-25 very good year. Biggest issue is enrollment – we’d like 20 more kids. *Fan the flame of school spirit.* Word of mouth very important. Quaker youth retreats – 3 years now, takes time to grow these types of efforts. We feel that one of lessons learned is open houses aren’t working. We need events and opportunities to visit that aren’t recruitment oriented. This may give us more day students who offer things that offset lower tuition fees.

MS Numbers: 2- international students; 3 more potential international students. Several other families deciding. A couple of MS students are waffling. 8-11 MS; 28-34 HS; 36-45 total.

ICON – is a for profit school, conservatory arts emphasis – competition for SG school. They are losing money, but have investors to keep funding. Now 1-4 students in MS are choosing ICON over SG. Some MS are looking for the gap between elementary and HS. We are losing some of these students. We have stronger academics, the farm, how to market how we’re better.

Minute: We approve the 2025-2026 Operating Budget.

Note: we have a soft approval of the subcommittee slate/we reviewed the subcommittee slate and will approve it via email or at our September meeting.

Minute: We approve/reviewed the Strategic and/or Campus Master Plan ad hoc

Development notes: Sam has joined the team. We've begun Roots & Wings travel *and* local folks. Dev. & Admissions – create events that can happen in DSM and Grinnell. Kate has left – filled roles to connect systems – work in progress on replacing her role. 250k is too high for the annual budget. We want a level that can “easily” be met in an average year, without looking like we are always begging for money.

Facilities Report: 566k, budgeted 700k. All budgets are intermingled, one big pot. The greenhouse means the science building will no longer be the seed starting space.

Farm classroom with a unique design - that type of project may have grants available.

Ad hoc: Campus Master plan – what are priorities, institutional priorities – be proactive.

Next year – three threads

1) SAGE;

2) Campus Master plan: serve as a roadmap for various sections of campus. Will we need staff housing, etc

3) program sequences,

Solicitation for input in the fall, winter prioritize, in spring develop a comprehensive plan in conjunction with law students at UI (especially for SAGE). A lot of listening, tracking trends, inclusive, succinct,

We may need to hire consultants for Zoning, staging, etc.

Next two months, decide on members of committee.

Having a presence at FGC activities are good but needs funding.

Revitalize Young adult friends group participation.

Budget Report: 500k deficit. 200k overshoot tuition expectations.

Personnel changes, best practices re: labor law resulted in extra staff costs.

Does not mean we lost 500k.

Learned a lot re: manage cash flow, strategic planning, budgeting.

ESA – we froze tuition during the three year roll out. Other schools were raising tuition by the ESA amount. There was legitimacy to increase but it looked bad. This freeze affected our ability to draw down ESA and Measey money. Many of the students who left because we couldn't meet their needs were full-pay. Inflation is high and our rates were frozen. We need to either raise tuition, staff cuts, or close. We looked at:

1) budget that is balanced (w/ Measey)

2) Tuition freeze needs to lift or we will have (450k) deficit

Minute: We approve raising tuition, not to exceed \$50k per year.

Minute: We authorize Head of School John Zimmerman to adjust tuition rates to match the disbursement of external funding with the intention of keeping the cost to the families the same. Rates for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 academic year will not exceed 55k for boarding students and 25k for day students.

Minute: We are grateful to the SG Foundation for their one-time disbursement of 100k for the 2025-26 academic year.

We need to raise tuition by an average of 10k per student. These will be balanced by financial aid. Tuition will be frozen for the rest of MS or HS. We are asking the Foundation to unrestrict dollars for tuition assistance– SG Foundation forming a group, won't take effect before 2026-27. The Foundation gave us a one-time disbursement of 100k. There will be a Staff salary freeze, cuts from attrition, and staff are concerned with some aspects.

Remain committed to affordability, but we have to base tuition on needs, not appearance of tuition amount.

- 1) The tuition page on website needs nuance – 75% get assistance, 90% boarding avg 16k, day students and it is a generous amount.
- 2) Low tuition implies to some that we're budget rate/not as good.
- 3) We need to strongly convey the average amount families are paying.

Note: We will begin work on forming a Campus Master Plan and a Strategic Plan ad hoc committees.

Note: Law students from the U of I will help us with these projects and possibly help with the SAGE work.

This will be through the College of Law Clinical Law Program's Community Empowerment Program, and with help from the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities. We will meet with them this fall to plan for second semester.

Note: We will review the subcommittee definitions and discuss at our September meeting.

The clerk proceeded into closed session.

Katie Jacoby, recording clerk

Next Meetings: We forward to meeting on the dates in 2025-26, God willing.

- September 20
- November 8
- January 17, 2026 (Zoom only)
- March 14 (Zoom only)
- May 8
- July 28 (Possibly Zoom only)