

Scattergood Friends School
School Committee Meeting
Open Session **Proposed** Minutes
8 November 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: Katie Jacoby, Roy Helm, George Bergus, Eric Stakland, Nancy Jordan, Ruth Hampton, David Wilcox, Monica Beals, Kristin Hilgendorf, Kent Tjossem, Linda Corbin Pardee

Regrets: Alex Lippitt, Nancy Jordan, Aaron Woolfson

Staff Present: John Zimmerman, Chris Searle (consultant)

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

“Growth and comfort do not co-exist” ~ Ginni Rometty

Minute: We approve the minutes, both open and closed, of our meeting on September 20, 2025.

Minute: By email we approved changing the School Committee meeting date from Tuesday, July 28, 2026 to Saturday, July 18, 2026. It will be online-only.

Minute: Kim Jones (Business Office) and Ethan Huelskamp (Development) have both worked closely with the School Committee over many years, and we want to express our deep gratitude and appreciation for all of their dedicated and creative work for Scattergood and its greater community. We wish them well on their next ventures.

Business Office and other Updates

John gave a brief update. Bills are being paid, Ami and Nobel are covering some things and Alicia is helping John with tasks. Next step is to write a job description and job posting. Measey money has arrived: we budgeted for \$750k and it was \$849k, but we need a way to draw down the extra.

On his trip to CA, John met with former SFS Development Director Paul Jolly who will donate his time and expertise, connect us with John Woolman school people (former board members and parents) who may be interested in helping Scattergood either by donations or connecting with students.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION with Chris Searle and John Zimmerman

We’ve come a long way! Congratulations on work over the last 5 years. Now for the next 5 years! As our world changes so rapidly, strategic plans are now 3-5 years instead of 5-10 years. Campus Master plan is the 25-year look-ahead.

- First we reviewed the data from the survey --- see screenshots below
- Then we broke into two groups to brainstorm external Opportunities and Threats---many of the listed items showed up in both Opportunities and Threats----and discussed the results.
- At the end we considered Next Steps

From the Opportunities and Threats brainstorming and discussion

- Political Realities/Climate
- Market Realities- Parenting Shifts, Demographic Shifts, Competitors
- Economic Realities
- Clarifying/Articulating our Mission and Values to facilitate the recruitment of staff/students/SC members
- AI- In class, use by staff, values vs practical needs
- Campus Infrastructure (Farm, Buildings, Maintenance)
- Viewing Scattergood/Farm as a component of positive mental health/antidote to media/tech overload.
- University of Iowa/Local Resources
- Summer Programing- Camp, Professional Development, “Pendle Hill of the Midwest”
- Curriculum/Programing- STEM, Evaluation, Benchmarking, Professional Development
- Engaging the Scattergoodian Community- Mentors, Development, Recruitment, Etc.

John and Chris will compile the rest of the notes taken during our sessions.

ACTION Items

- **SOON ---- before the end of year**
 - A written Admissions Plan in document form---share with SC and Staff in January
 - Figure out Who is on Strategic Planning and Campus Master Planning ad hocs
 - Stratetic Planning: 2 from SC, 2 from Staff, 1 other
 - Campus Master Plan: maybe similar makeup
 - Meet with Dana C (convene Strat Plan) and Eli (convene Campus Master Plan)
 - Meet with U of I students (or their supervisor) to check in --- John, Ruth, and a few others
 - Low hanging fruit
 - What are 5 things in the next 5 months for Curb Appeal Committee
 - Trustees subcommittee work on DEIB plan, next steps
 - They need a contact at the school to communicate with
 - Summer programming --- essential for long term financial health ---
 - Create a 5 year financial outlook with camp at different \$ levels, and a column with \$ with no summer camp. Research if market is expanding or shrinking.
- **JANUARY**
 - At the staff retreat
 - Do this workshop with the staff, get a sense of priorities, mission statemtent
 - Share Admissions (and Marketing?) Plan with SC and staff
 - Give an update on the Annual Fund and other projects of the SC (every January)
 - Form the ad hoc committees:
 - Strategic Planning
 - Create a timeline for the work, when to have goals by
 - Go through remaining 2025 list to see what gets rolled over
 - Start on goals --- more after March meeting
 - Campus Master Plan
 - Campus infrastructure facilities: do they meet program and community needs
 - List of projects and priorities
 - A maintenance schedule for all (including farm bldgs. and equipment)
 - At SC Meeting --- discussion about Mission Statement options, with some staff

- **MARCH**

- SC Mtg: Follow up ---- Mission statement draft? Survey results?
- SC Mtg: DEI workshop
- Strategic Planning committee begin to prioritize goals --- get it down to 3-5 biggies, timeline
- Campus Master Planning continues their work, timeline

- **MAY**

- At SC mtg revisit SWOT analysis, priorities, survey results
- Update from Strategic Planning and Campus Master Plan

- **At some point**

- Mission Statement update---maybe draft in spring, approve in July?
- Discussion on AI and what is our stance
- Comprehensive analysis and assessment of Risks ----- Internal and External
 - Crisis Response, Risk Management --- identify what we need to be prepared for X
- Develop a Parent Network to talk with prospective parents--- testimonials and live
- Continue to develop Friends of Scattergood network
- Market analysis --- we cannot continue to ignore market changes and needs, how do we adjust, and we need to be accurate in our marketing.
 - Create a written Marketing Plan

TASKS for the U of I students

- Survey and compile data:
 - IYMC and other constituents (Foundation, etc) on legal structure, mission, the future
 - Look at risks, compile data
 - Research options, maybe bylaws
 - Help compile the report to IYMC with recommendations
 - Regional alums about being mentors for students and new alums, what do they do
- Opportunities/Threats and Risk analysis: Political realities, Market realities, Economic realities
- Other help with Strategic Planning

We finished the meeting by discussing our SC website and communications. Some suggestions:

- Put links to the reports/docs in our agendas so people can click and view easily --- the agenda on the SC website can be a one-stop-shop for finding ALL info and docs needed for the meeting
- Add the website pwords in our emails for a few months, as a reminder.
- Figure out how to deal with multiple emails, how to find them, etc.--- how can it be better
- We may need a webmaster role to help with some of this

The clerk expressed gratitude for the group, and ended the meeting with a moment of silence.

Ruth Hampton, acting recording clerk

Next Meetings:

- January 17 (*Zoom only*)
- March 14 (*Zoom only*)
- May 9
- **July 18 (*Zoom only*)**



Survey Results

Strengths

- Experiences in and outside the classroom at Scattergood Friends School help to promote a sense of community. **Staff = 4.7 SC = 4.9**
- Quaker values can be seen throughout the Scattergood Friends program. **Staff = 4.5 SC = 4.4**
- The program at Scattergood Friends School teaches students how to think independently. **Staff = 4.4 SC = 4.7**
- The academic program at Scattergood Friends School prepares students well for the expectations of college. **Staff = 3.9 SC = 4.2**



Survey Results

Weaknesses

- Faculty/staff are fairly compensated for the work they do. **Staff = 2.4 SC = 2.4**
- The School's relationship with Iowa Yearly Meeting is clearly understood by Scattergood community members. **Staff = 2.4 SC = 2.9**
- The School has a sustainable financial plan that accounts for faculty/staff salary increases and long-term facilities maintenance under different economic conditions for the next 5 years. **Staff = 2.5 SC = 2.9**
- There is adequate funding to deal with major capital projects over the next 10 years. **Staff = 2.9 SC = 2.7**

Survey Results

Other Notes

- Recurring Comments for Strengths: Farm, community, quaker values, trips, consistency with staffing, flexibility in the curriculum, size (being able to know students well).
- Recuring Comments for Weaknesses: Staff burnout, not enough formal reviews, physical spaces need attention, student recruitment, more diversity among students and staff, financial sustainability and communication
- The mission related questions all landed in the neutral range (3+) with the staff, while the School Committee averages were in the upper 3s to 4. Given the importance of the mission one would want to see these scores more between 4 and 5.
- When asked if there was a comprehensive admissions and marketing plan, the staff's average response was neutral (3), while School Committee members averaged a 3.7 to this question. Creating such a plan and clearly communicating it to staff and School Committee members should be a priority.

Themes for Discussion

- Political Realities/Climate
- Market Realities- Parenting Shifts, Demographic Shifts, Competitors
- Economic Realities
- Clarifying/Articulating our Mission and Values to facilitate the recruitment of staff/students/SC members
- AI- In class, use by staff, values vs practical needs
- Campus Infrastructure (Farm, Buildings, Maintenance)
- Viewing Scattergood/Farm as a component of positive mental health/antidote to → media/tech overload.
- University of Iowa/Local Resources
- Summer Programing- Camp, Professional Development, "Pendle Hill of the Midwest"
- Curriculum/Programing- STEM, Evaluation, Benchmarking, Professional Development
- Engaging the Scattergoodian Community- Mentors, Development, Recruitment, Etc.

01 Does this problem require us to spend more money to fix?

The marketing plan is working it just needs more funds to expand its reach.

02 Does it require more personnel or different personnel?

We need a marketing director.

We need to replace our current marketing director.

03 Is a new set of tactics necessary to address the problem?

We need to market our summer camp in a different way.

Direct mail is not working.

04 Is a whole new strategic vision necessary?

We need to reenvision our summer camp. The current program is not marketable in its current form.