



Watershed Public Charter School provides an interconnected learning environment, where hands-on exploration and creative expression foster the learning process. Our community promotes rigorous academic achievement, meaningful outdoor experiences and continuous growth for all students.

Watershed Public Charter School July 2025 Board Meeting Agenda

July 29, 2025

6:00pm, virtual

Time zone: America/New_York

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/mwz-pnbu-goz>

Or dial: (US) +1 574-328-1083 PIN: 935 869 373#

Board Member	Attendance
Baze, Crystal	Present
Freedman, Laurel	Present
Keniston, Charlotte	Present
Gilbert, William	Present
Magness-Hill, Sage	Present
Smolinski, Ann	Present
Thompson, Raven	Present
Ex-Officio Members	Attendance
David Miller	Present
Lori Widney	Present

Start Time: 6:02 p.m. Open session notes taken by Christina Sawyer.

Board Norms

- *Come to meetings with an open-mind*
- *Prepare to actively listen*
- *Trust collective wisdom that is shared*
- *Strive for consensus and clarity*
- *Be willing to accept feedback and ask questions*
- *Value all lived experiences and perspectives*
- *Use cultural humility when engaging with others*
- *Be conscious of "air time"*

Upcoming Key Dates:

August 6 @ 4:30 pm – New Student/Family Orientation

August 12 @ 6:00 pm – Governance Committee Meeting

August 18 – Teachers return to school

August 21 @ 12:00 pm – Finance Committee Meeting

August 25 – First Day of School for Students

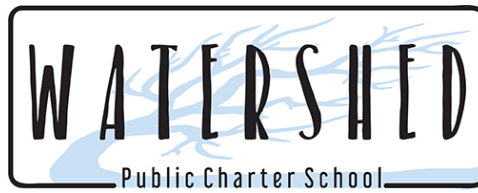
August 26 – August Board Meeting

August 27 – First full day of School for Kindergartners

September 1 – Labor Day Holiday, Schools and Offices closed

September 2 @ 6:00 pm – WPTO General Meeting

September 9 @ 5:30 pm – Governance Committee meeting



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September 23 – Schools Closed/Teachers on Duty (Rosh Hoshanah)

September 30 @ 6:00 pm – September Board Meeting (virtual)

Public Comment

- No public comment.

Consent Agenda (2 min)

- Approval of [June 2025 Board Meeting Notes](#)

Board Member	Vote to approve consent agenda
Baze, Crystal	Yes
Freedman, Laurel	Yes
Keniston, Charlotte	Motion to Approve
Gilbert, William	Yes
Magness-Hill, Sage	Yes
Smolinski, Ann	Seconded
Thompson, Raven	Yes

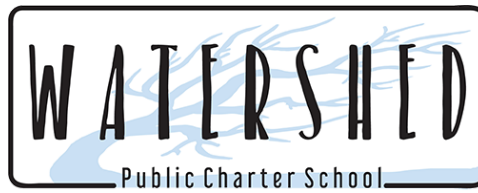
Old Business (10 min)

- *Maryland Nonprofits Board Excellence Training*: September, January and May.
 - Three Board members can attend each session
- *Charter Renewal Agreement with Baltimore County Public Schools*- Dave said that there was back and forth language with BCPS' lawyer with no real significant changes. Watershed did request 3 significant waivers. One waiver was granted and Watershed can submit our own accountability report yearly. Watershed also asked for a different reporting structure for Principal Widney to have within BCPS. Dave said that we are within west zone elementary schools and that BCPS didn't agree to approve the waiver per se but in the charter agreement, the language is that BCPS and Watershed will talk about it. We will continue to press that we have a better alignment in the BCPS reporting structure.

New Business (15 min)

- *Advocacy* – Proposed MSDE Charter School Regulations
 - [Draft Charter Funding Regulation 2025_07_10](#)
 - [Charter Funding Workgroup Brief](#)

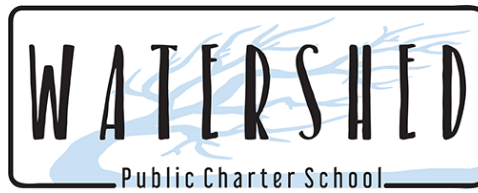
Dave said that MSDE's main proposed regulation is a restructuring that would allow the LEA to raise the administrative fee. This fee could be raised from 2% to 5% with no explanation of why or where that money goes. In BCPS, there is one person who manages charter schools. Dave said that this also goes against the City Neighbors decision that put in the 2% as the guideline. The other items MSDE is proposing: allow districts to deduct county-wide obligations (a loophole to allow the



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funding structure in the blueprint and not from the Frederick Co decision stating that school systems don't have to take up to 25% of costs); it allows for debt service deduction (charters in LEA owned or formerly owned LEA buildings) which would provide a disadvantage to places like Watershed that lease from a private companies/organizations; administrative costs and multistep funding formula. Dave said that this is a real pushback against charter schools and the current funding in place but that there will be avenues for advocacy. Dave will frame out Watershed's budget with 5% decrease and work from that. Laurel sat in on one of the meetings as well. This is a quick overview of what might happen if the MD Board of Education follows through on this. Sage asked if this is because of funding issues federally and Dave said blueprint funding was the genesis of this meeting. Dave said that the last two years, there was a lot of back and forth between school systems and charters. In Baltimore City, city schools administration want to move to that 5% model and argue it takes a lot more to administrate and manage the charter schools. Discussion of charter schools in the city pushing back against the larger cuts (such as taking 25%). Laurel said there were folks in the work group who asked about the justification from 2-5% and the MSDE staff in that room (during the MSDE meeting) didn't know. Charter schools are being well-represented by The College Park Academy by asking questions. Laurel says Watershed will join in on whatever the advocacy efforts are. Ann asked if there are for-profit charter schools in Maryland and Dave said no, all charter schools in Maryland have to be non-profit. Laurel said that Mackenzie Allen briefed the board last year about charter school funding and the Watershed Board will have Mackenzie back again this year. Laurel asked if there were any more questions about MSDE and hearing none, moved on to the next topic.

- **New Prospective Board Member Sasha Magruder** - Laurel said we have a new prospective board member and that there are others who are talking to Laurel. Watershed's Board lost 4 members this summer and will be tiny but mighty for a while. Sage has volunteered to do the role that Eric Ford has done in the past, to interview and get to know candidates. Sage will talk about prospective board member Sasha McGruder. Sage said that Dave and Laurel talked to Sasha and then Sage talked to her. Sasha has a niece and nephew at Watershed, she is a lawyer, and lives in the area. Sage said that Sasha has a good sense of what Watershed is about, she is professional, clearly very smart and having her on the board would be beneficial. Sage would recommend Sasha to join the board. When the Board has her resume, the Board will send it out and Sasha has received an invite to attend the next board meeting.
- **Board Meeting Cadence**- Laurel said that she is looking for feedback about board meeting cadence and asked if the board is ready to move to every other month meetings with committee meetings or task forces in between? Sage said yes, especially as the board is onboarding new folks and the standard of our culture. Sage mentioned that the board had monthly committee meetings, kind of like governance meetings, that would meet and then report to the whole board about their meeting. Sage added that "as we are adding folks, we are no longer putting out as many fires as we used to and a full Watershed Inc staff" and thought the board meeting schedule could change. Raven said not yet. Raven said that she and Sage can work on this together. Raven thinks the board still needs a few months to get the committees more robust, that they don't know whose leading things, who the chairs are, and that the board has new members and the board doesn't know their

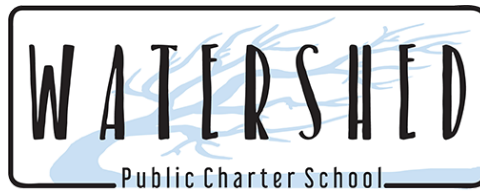


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interests. Laurel said that was good feedback and added that some of the implications suggest that all of the meetings for the board would be in-person, that when students present, it would be in-person. Ann asked how would that change her roles and responsibilities as teacher representative on the board? Ann wanted to know if she would be on a committee. She also asked what that would mean for reporting back to teachers and what would Ann be reporting to the Board? Laurel said that her instinct is that committee meetings would be virtual and board meetings would be in-person. To Ann, Laurel said that "if there is a committee that makes sense for you to participate in, I would love for you to be on any committee." Charlotte said that she agrees with Raven that the board is "not quite there yet." Charlotte suggested that perhaps this new board meeting schedule could happen in January. Charlotte added that she thinks that the board's in-person meetings are much more productive and suggested putting dates on calendars two years out, checking for holidays and comparing them to work calendars. Laurel said let's see how this committee work rolls out over the next few months and see where we are in January. Laurel said, "I am willing to cancel meetings if there is no agenda but I feel like there is always something to talk about."

Reports

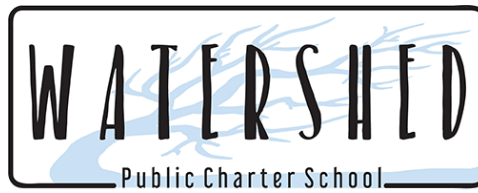
- **July PTO Report (5 min)**-Bernadette Clark is the new co-PTO president and was present for the meeting. Bernadette said that the PTO is working on summer events, working on a calendar for the school and was popping into the meeting to say hi. Laurel thanked Bernadette and looks forward to hearing more from you in the coming months. Dave asked Bernadette if the PTO General Meetings are still Tuesdays at 7 p.m. and she said yes.
- **July Principal's Report (15 min)** -
 - Lori said that MCAP scores are embargoed until August 8 but staff is able to use them in planning this summer. The school will look at the measures of progress in the schoolhouse that ILT reviews monthly and teachers provide feedback. Writing is a core component of the project based system and students work through feedback, drafting and writing. The goal is to see progress from the first unit to the 3rd unit. Lori said that one of the areas that Watershed is changing is adding more content specific standards. Have been focused on mechanics of writing but now also looking to see if they can take their content knowledge and share it. Proficiency improvement is seen across grades and student progress is tracked by race and gender across grades. Proficient is 4s and 5s; below grade levels is a 1, 2 or 3. Lori said that Watershed is trying to predict what happens on MCAP by what's happening in our rubrics and that there are a lot of numbers and data for the reading specialist, math specialist, academic director, AP and special educator. MISA is given in 5th grade and again in 8th grade (2nd-5th and then 5th-8th). There is a space where our curriculum has to do some cyclical work to refresh students. Last year, 9 students were proficient and this year there were 6 students who were proficient and that was a big drop. Watershed wants to continue to provide exposures to concepts. DIBELS is a set of tests for early exposures to reading. It is very focused on foundational skills. In K we are seeing great strides from beginning to middle



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to end of the school year. (Showing a chart), Lori said that green and blue is the goal where we want students to be and it is a moving target as students grow. In 1st grade, the school saw an interesting dip in the middle of the year that we recovered from at the end of year. Some students move in and out of green, depending on their ability level in different subtests. Our 1st students are the first students who are a part of the Ready to Read act and would be automatically retained if they are not reading by the end of 3d grade. We also measure the ability of our students to read and decode especially in our upper grade students. ORF and MAZE are used in 4-7th grade but goes to 8th grade and asks students to fill in missing words and do silent reading comprehension. Older students may need to practice fluency. In math for 7th and rising 8th graders, Watershed will be doubling down and adding a second teacher in that space. We have noticed that as we open a grade, it takes about a year to settle into that grade.

- o *Research for Better Teaching and the Skillful Teacher* is about aligning their teaching ability so that the criteria for success is clear, the objective is clear, and feedback enough to self-correct or accept and move to the next level. At the August meeting, Lori will share MCAP data.
- o *Overview of principal's summer-* 11 days of vacations, 16 days in PD/coverage, 25 days in building to plan, hire and enroll. Fully hired teaching staff as of July 17. Lori is in a partnership with Christina Easton and Christina is doing exit interviews with teachers who left this year (4 of them) and coaching for ILT.
- o Lori said that her last presentation slide is a *huge thank you to teachers*. Over 85% of teachers have been in over the summer to plan for either their class or the whole school house. It is an amazing thing that our teachers are committed to do. Laurel asked Lori if there is something that she is most proud of and Lori said using rubrics to give feedback to students so that students know exactly what teachers are looking for and what to do to keep cognitive demand on our students. Laurel asked Ann for reflection on successes that data shows. Ann said its a real team effort, to communicate with each other and what needs are and emphasized the collaboration that happens at Watershed. Lori said that she would like to say that groups of students who are marginalized will see more success.
- [July 2025 Executive Director's Report 07.25.25](#) (15 min)-
 - o Dave said that 50 new students have enrolled out of 58 seats for SY26 and the school has now moved to an open enrollment. The wait list is currently at 411 students and calls are being placed daily to potential enrollees. New student and family orientation will be held on August 6 and another one was held on July 2.
 - o *Grants review-* Watershed put in an application for CBT for Youth Education Grant to support field trips with PHG to Patapsco State Park for stream clean-up and invasive species clean-up. Dave is doing research now about the Campbell Foundation. Watershed received \$2,500 from the Annie E Casey Foundation as a result of a volunteer day this spring coordinated with Maryland Business Volunteers and added that hopefully established a relationship between Watershed and Annie E Casey. Submitted final grant



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report to Middendorf Foundation for cameras and security system. Final report is pending for Baltimore County Community Improvement Grant. Dave provided a grant summary chart.

- o *Construction Financing Update-* Dave said that Watershed is deep into the underwriting process. Seeking financing up to \$1.3 million for hard and soft construction costs. There have been three meetings with Enterprise Community Loan Fund counsel and Watershed counsel, an appraisal site visit, and an environmental assessment visit. The goal is to close the loan in August.
- o *DOE-* Watershed had a monthly meeting on Monday and Dave said that the good news is that DOE is anticipating approving the extension of budget approval. Happy that Watershed's TPO is still at DOE and working through the process of approving grant extensions and then working through the approval of the TEN group as the design-builder. Once approved, TEN can complete their planning and design work and official cost estimate. A financial report was submitted to DOE this month. Anticipate HVAC and door work next summer.
- o *Facility Updates-* City Wide is doing impressive work with the deep cleaning that they are currently doing. They did keep Ms. Rebecca on their crew. Dave said that if you walked into the building now, the floors are quite shiny. Pavion began work on the intercom system today. The school had 3-4 inches of standing water in the boiler room in June that was related to some work that had been done the week before with a spillage valve. The school shut down the building for a day but did get the situation resolved within 24 hours with our plumber. HoCo Haulers has removed water damage items from the boiler room and from around the exterior. Watershed's annual fire extinguisher inspection has been completed.
- o *Summer Projects-* Dave said that the Google Drive has been cleaned up, reorganized and old files archived. Watershed, Inc. staff is revising some standard operating procedures focusing on financial procedures; there will be 2 procedures on procurement that were never finalized by the board. Crystal has already jumped in and reviewed our budget structure and looked at how Quickbooks is structured; she will work with Bern and Dave. Dave is working on a marketing plan and revamping the Watershed website. Dave met with Sage and Alecia Rives to improve the website and improve ways to highlight volunteer opportunities for families. Dave showed slides with financial summaries with payroll representing 79.75% of total expenses. The very successful fundraising efforts for Watershed community raised \$13,659 for computers and they have been delivered. Facility projects- \$472,995 modular and elevator projects. Dave also presented slides of cash flow overview from July 2024-June 2025.
- o Ann said that Davion has had his hand raised for some time and Laurel stated that Board policy is that you have to sign up for public comment and mentioned that she did put an email in the chat for public comments. Ann said that her own question is about the upper school modulars and I don't see anything in Dave's presentation. Ann said that there is growing anxiety over the timeline. Dave said that will be moving into closed



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session to talk about that and then school communication will follow. Ann said that teachers have been meeting and planning for the coming year. Teachers report back the week before the 1st and Ann said the main thing that I am hearing from people is that they haven't seen any progress at school.

Open session adjourned at: Open session ended at 7:08 p.m. and Will moved for the Board to go closed session.

This meeting will only be closed under the provision or provisions checked below, all from General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b):

(1)___ "To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals"; (2)___ "To protect the privacy or reputation of individuals concerning a matter not related to public business"; (3)___ "To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto"; (4)___ "To consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State"; (5)___ "To consider the investment of public funds"; (6)___ "To consider the marketing of public securities"; (7)___ "To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice"; (8)___ "To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation"; (9)___ "To conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations"; (10)___ "To discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to the public or to public security, including: (i) the deployment of fire and police services and staff; and (ii) the development and implementation of emergency plans"; (11)___ "To prepare, administer, or grade a scholastic, licensing, or qualifying examination"; (12)___ "To conduct or discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct"; (13)___ "To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter"; (14)___ "Before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, to discuss a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, if public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process"; (15)___ "To discuss cybersecurity, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to" (i) "security assessments or deployments relating to information resources technology"; (ii) "network security information," such as information that is related to passwords, personal ID numbers, access codes, encryption, security devices, or vulnerability assessments or that a governmental entity collects or maintains to prevent, detect, or investigate criminal activity; or (iii) "deployments or implementation of security personnel, critical infrastructure, or security devices."

Citation (insert # from above)	Topic	Reason for closed-session discussion of topic -