



Board Meeting Minutes – March 10, 2026

A virtual meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of Creative Minds International Public Charter School (the “School”) was held on March 10, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 6:11 PM.

The following Board Members participated: Yusha Assad, Kelly Carroll, LaShawn Douglas, Corey Gordon, Ebony Vines Jackson, Jonelle Rivas, Holly Oliver and Nicole Willet.

Also participating from CMI school leadership and staff: Candice Bobo (Head of School and Ex-Officio Board Member), Craig Bednarovsky and Nayamka Long.

1. Opening Items

- Board Secretary Holly Oliver conducted a roll call of Trustees in attendance.
- With a quorum present, Board Chair Corey Gordon called the meeting to order at 6:11 pm.
- Corey welcomed the Board and asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the Jan. 13 Board meeting.
- **Motion: Approve minutes from the Jan. 13, 2026 Board meeting.** (Motion by Ebony Vines Jackson and second by LaShawn Douglas.) No discussion. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. Kelly Carroll and Jonelle Rivas abstained as they were not present for the January Board meeting.
- Corey invited Candice Bobo to share updates with the Board.

2. Head of School/Committee Updates

- **Head of School Update:**
 - Candice shared updates from the past quarter.
 - Candice is encouraged by stability in academic progress. In past years there has been regression during the middle part of the year, but student scores have remained flat this year which represents progress. This trend creates a strong foundation heading into end of year assessments.
 - CMI completed its QSR (Qualitative Site Review) process over the past two weeks and is awaiting results, which are expected in May. QSR gave CMI the opportunity to reflect on systems, instruction and culture, and the school will use feedback to strengthen its work internally.

- CMI has officially adopted Aspire as its charter goals which will help more clearly monitor progress, align reporting and ensure strong visibility in academic and organizational goals moving forward.
- Attendance has been strong at the open houses over the past two months. Families have been engaged and the school continued to build relationships and strengthen the school community. Open Houses will continue throughout March and into spring.
- Candice also shared that the school is in the midst of the classroom observation period and that process is going well. Additionally, the leadership team and external partners recently conducted a series of learning walks to create a snapshot of instruction across the building. The team visited 10 classrooms in elementary and middle school and witnessed several encouraging factors including strong student engagement (about 70% of classrooms were rated effective exhibiting calm classrooms, working students and prepared instructional materials.)
- One highlight from the lower school was the 4th grade ELA block which showed a strong example of small group instruction structure. In particular, each station in the student rotation showed a clear purpose, students showed understanding of the expected task and the teacher was able to work directly with a small group while the rest of the class continued learning independently.
- Finally, Candice has begun the strategic planning process for the 2026-2027 school year. The leadership team will be focused on three key priorities: academic achievement, student culture and systems and staff culture. Over the coming months, they will begin building out goals, milestones and implementing plans to support continued growth across the school.
- Ebony Vines Jackson asked for clarity on the QSR. Candice elaborated and shared that the Charter Board will observe 75-80% of classrooms and that they will be rated on the Danielson Framework. Corey Gordon explained that Danielson rates quality instruction and classroom management.
- Corey asked if there is a roll for the Board in supporting the school during Enrollment season? Candice shared that the Board could attend open houses and other events and that it would be helpful to have the Board's attendance. The Board could also record testimonials, especially the parent Board members. STEAM night is April 23, which will present another recruitment opportunity.
- Corey asked if the Board could support enrollment by making phone calls? Jonelle Rivas, Ebony Vines Jackson and Holly Oliver volunteered to join calls.
- Corey asked how the Board could be involved in strategic planning and complimented Candice on the early planning. Candice expected to have an early draft to share with the Strategic Visioning Committee in the near future. She is interested in early reactions to check mission alignment before sharing with a larger group and is excited to have a broader conversation with the Board.

- **Academic Excellence Committee (Corey Gordon)**

- Corey began by announcing that CMI's use of the Aspire goals was approved by the Public Charter School Board.

- The Committee also discussed the plan for snow makeup days and shared feedback. In addition, Candice received feedback from parents on the plan, which was approved by OSSE. Asynchronous learning days went well and spring and summer break will remain intact under the plan. Candice used some of these conversations as an opportunity to consider the plan for next year's professional development schedule and will potentially build snow days into the upcoming school year. The 26-27 schedule will be shared with families in the near future.
 - Corey complimented Candice on prioritizing classroom observations as well as an openness to feedback.
 - Nayamka Long reported on MAP data analysis, which was reviewed for trends and used to create a plan for targeted instruction.
 - Corey asked if there were any questions on the report and there were none.
- **Finance Committee (Kelly Carroll/Craig Bednarovsky):**
 - Kelly Carroll asked Craig to give the report as she was driving.
 - Craig reported that CMI closed the calendar year with 107 days of cash on hand, a \$528,000 net loss and -3% gross margin, all improvements.
 - Decreases in revenue have been driven by lower than expected enrollment, but the school has also created some positive savings in expenses due to the decision to leave several vacancies unfilled.
 - Days of cash has improved from the beginning of the fiscal year when it was estimated to be 98 days.
 - Since the last Board meeting, there has been a \$213,000 increase in revenue due to a change in student numbers on count day.
 - There have been some additional expenses from salary stipends and legal fees.
 - The 990 is due on May 15 and the school year 26-27 budget is due to PCSB on June 15.
 - The school lottery has closed and CMI is beginning to analyze the waitlist.
 - Craig reported that he will be preparing two budgets for the Board's review. One will be based on the PCSB enrollment estimate and the second on CMI's internal projection.
 - Holly asked if it was expected that the budget deadline would be pushed back again this year? Craig answered that the Mayor's budget has not been released and there is uncertainty on that timing. There is also uncertainty on the effect of Congress' involvement in DC tax legislation. Both of these factors could potentially affect the deadline.
- **Governance Committee Report (Ebony Vines Jackson)**
 - In Sandi Soderstrom's absence, Ebony gave the report from the Governance Committee.
 - Ebony reported that the Governance Committee is focused on Board recruitment and that she is reaching out to Board Source and Board Strong to seek new Board members for CMI.
 - The Governance Committee is also reviewing options to streamline Board self-evaluations and there will be more information on that effort soon.

- Kelly Carroll asked Board members to think about their networks, especially those with expertise in Finance or non-profit Board work. Our Board would like to add additional non-parent members as parents are currently well represented.
- Corey suggested that the Board consider a new Ad-Hoc committee, the Ad-Hoc Strategic Visioning Committee. With the 15-year charter renewal approaching, and urgency around the vision in the next iteration of CMI, as well as an increasingly competitive market, it feels necessary to convene a group of Board members to focus on the long-term vision and sustainability.
- **Motion: Create Ad-Hoc Strategic Visioning Committee.** (Motion by Holly Oliver and second by Ebony Vines Jackson). No Discussion. Motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.
- Corey announced that the Board will vote on members and a chair of this committee at the meeting in May, along with members and leadership of the other committees.
- Corey also asked the Governance Committee to consider a potential Vice Chair of the Board. She welcomed Board members to talk with her if they were interested in taking on that role.
- **Motion: Accept Committee reports as presented.** (Motion by Corey Gordon and second by Ebony Vines Jackson). No Discussion. Motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

3. Community Comments

- Corey asked if there were any questions from the community and there were none.
- Corey invited Board parents to encourage the community to join meetings to create connection and due diligence within the school. Corey shared that families, staff and the greater community are all welcome to participate.

4. Closing Items

- Corey announced that dates were being identified for Board members to participate in a school walkthrough and the expectation that Board members participate in a walkthrough once per school year to experience the day-to-day life of the school.
- Corey asked if there were any additional announcements or Other Business and there was none.
- Corey thanked the Board for their participation in the Board retreat and invited Board members to contact her for an update if they were unable to attend.

Motion: Adjourn Board Meeting. (Motion by Ebony Vines Jackson and second by Nicole Willett). Motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

- There being no further public business to be transacted, the Board meeting was adjourned at 6:50 pm.

- The next Board meeting will be held May 12, 2026.

Respectfully Submitted,
Holly K. Oliver, Secretary



Board Meeting Minutes – Jan. 13, 2026

An in-person meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of Creative Minds International Public Charter School (the “School”) was held on Jan. 13, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 6:06 PM.

The following Board Members participated: Yusha Assad, LaShawn Douglas, Art Fields, Corey Gordon, Ebony Vines Jackson, Holly Oliver, Sandi Soderstrom and Nicole Willet. Jonelle Rivas listened to the meeting remotely but did not participate in votes.

Also participating from CMI school leadership and staff: Craig Bednarovsky and Nayamka Long.

1. Opening Items

- Board Secretary Holly Oliver conducted a roll call of Trustees in attendance.
- With a quorum present, Board Vice Chair Corey Gordon called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.
- Corey welcomed the Board and asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the Nov. 12 Board meeting.
- **Motion: Approve minutes from the Nov. 12, 2025 Board meeting.** (Motion by Holly Oliver and second by Sandi Soderstrom.) No discussion. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.
- Corey reminded the Board of Lisa Raymond’s resignation as Board Chair to seek elected office in Washington, DC. Corey thanked Lisa for her leadership and asked for a motion to elect a new Board Chair.
- **Motion: Elect Corey Gordon Chair of the Board of CMIPCS.** (Motion by Sandi Soderstrom and second by Ebony Vines Jackson.) No discussion. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. (Corey Gordon abstained.)
- Corey thanked the Board for their confidence and shared that she looked forward to serving as the next Board leader. She asked the Board for support during the transition to make it smooth and efficient.

2. Head of School/Committee Updates

- In Candice’s absence, Corey Gordon invited Nayamka Long to share any relevant updates with the Board.

- **Head of School Update:**

- Nayamka shared that 3rd and 4th grade students were beginning mid-year Map testing this week. Teachers were working with students to message that they should take their time with the test.
- Open House events have been scheduled to engage the community and encourage enrollment through the winter months. They have been scheduled for Jan. 14, then twice a month through March. These events provide prospective families the opportunity to see classrooms and meet teachers. There are 20 families signed up for the event on Jan. 14. Board members are invited to join. Corey asked if future dates could be shared. They are Jan. 28, Feb. 25, March 11 and March 28. Sandi asked if Board members needed to RSVP and Nayamka shared that they can simply attend.
- Three new teachers have been hired and started this week. They will engage in a 3-week onboarding process as mid-year teacher transitions can be especially challenging. After onboarding they will begin leading instruction. Part of this onboarding allows the new hires to observe current classroom practices so as not to disrupt the classroom midyear. CMI has also hired a Family Engagement Director to lead communications with CMI families.
- CMI's HR Director has transitioned from the school. Craig has been leading HR in the interim and has recently hired Educate HR for support in this critical area.
- The school held a professional development day before winter break to focus on team building and provided time for teachers to plan for the remainder of the year so they did not need to focus on this activity over break. Leadership received good feedback from PD, especially the raffle for staff. CMI is holding its next professional development day this Friday focusing on preparations for the qualitative site review. Leadership is focused on ensuring teachers understand the process. The school will also work on team building and classroom observations. Candice, Jonette and Sarah have recently completed an intense training on the observation cycle in PK and are now bringing that work to the classroom.
- Sandi asked if new hires are given the opportunity to review prior professional development initiatives as part of their onboarding? Nayamka replied that is part of the training, especially as it relates to culture.
- LaShawn asked which grades had new teacher hires and if they were lead teachers? Nayamka shared that they were hired for 1st, 3rd and 4th grades. Grade 5/6 is also bringing in a new ELA teacher shortly. In addition, 1 or 2 aide positions remain open.
- Corey praised CMI on the 3-week onboarding plan and asked if additional coaching was planned by Principals to support new hires in their transition? Nayamka affirmed that will happen and that current classroom staff will remain in place during the transition to maintain stability in the classrooms. Sandi asked if there was any tension with the team members who were temporarily leading the classroom and Nayamka shared that the school had been clear in those discussions that these were temporary assignments.
- Holly shared that she was happy to see so many Open House opportunities for future and current families to engage with the school and Nayamka confirmed that she will be reaching out to current families to invite them to Open House events

along with prospects. The administration was also planning activities for 4th grade families over the summer to strengthen those connections as there can be attrition in that grade. Corey suggested promoting Middle School Open House especially with this in mind and offered to post the information to appropriate neighborhood listservs. Nayamka shared that the new Family Engagement Director will also be posting information on these listservs.

- Yusha asked if the Family Engagement Director will work unconventional hours or if they will have responsibilities at non-traditional times? Craig answered that there is an understanding that part of this position is working during non-traditional times.
 - Corey asked if Educate HR will be doing an assessment of HR policies and systems? Craig responded that is part of the contract. Sandi asked if that audit will extend to compliance with state and federal policies? Craig confirmed that the CMI handbook is maintained by SHRM so those policies are constantly monitored and updated by the professional association when necessary. Sandi reminded the team that it is a good idea to compare policy to practice as well.
 - Corey shared that she is particularly excited about PK assessments.
- **Academic Excellence Committee (Corey Gordon)**
 - Corey began the update by sharing that the committee met last Friday and discussed much of what Nayamka shared in her update.
 - CMI has learned that our ASPIRE application is on the consent agenda with PCSB later this month. That is often an indication that it will be approved and the school is hopeful that will be the case.
 - Corey reminded the Board that a message had been sent to the community announcing Candice's year-long extension as Head of School as well as notification of Lisa's departure.
 - Corey invited Nayamka to share any additional updates and Nayamka shared the desire to be more communicative with families through the Family Engagement position. The school is striving for additional clarity and transparency in communications.
 - Sandi highlighted the importance of discussing communications in Academic Excellence as it is so closely related to academic success. Corey shared that the committee's hope is that families feel like true partners with the school.
 - Yusha asked about the current climate of trust between families and staff members, and Ebony asked if the family climate survey was completed this fall? Corey shared that the committee would look into timing of that survey to evaluate culture through the family lens.
 - Nayamka shared examples of internal trainings on family communications to ensure clarity in messaging. Art shared the importance of focusing on individual

team members that conduct family outreach rather than making this a requirement of positions. Art shared his experience as a therapist in reviewing the strengths of individuals and connecting those strengths to projects.

- Corey asked if family engagement was part of the professional development plan for this year and Nayamka shared that some of that has happened, but the school can plan for more especially in communicating more quickly and evaluating the tone in messages to recognize families as valued partners.
- Art suggested that teachers could potentially rotate through virtual open houses to provide closer associations with current families and that he has seen that done successfully with other schools. Nicole supported the idea noting that it was sometimes difficult to build relationships with the teaching team (outside homeroom) beyond Back to School Night.
- **Finance Committee (Craig Bednarovsky):**
 - Craig shared that he had worked with Holly to find ways to expand the financial information that is regularly available to the Board.
 - As of November close, CMI has 104 days of cash on hand (a 2 day decrease from October), a \$4.7 million cash balance and a 5% gross margin. The school is currently projecting an \$824,000 net loss for the fiscal year. Changes (savings) in expenses have been driven by staffing shifts. CMI has seen some savings by using contracted staff rather than full time employees for specific positions. This has resulted in savings in associated benefits.
 - Key performance indicators show strong days of cash. The gross margin is driven by investments in staff. The low FAR score has been affected by the gross margin and enrollment variance from the original budget.
 - CMI is receiving benefits from the sweep account and treasury bonds, adding cash.
 - The Fiscal Year 25 Audit has been completed with no findings.
 - Budgeting for fiscal year 27 will begin in the next few weeks. There are currently uncertainties based on the PCSB enrollment forecast, which shows a 10% decrease in enrollment for CMI in the upcoming school year. Craig reported he felt this was conservative and would start with that number. He would then create 3 funding scenarios based on expected per pupil funding from the city (-2%, 0% or +2%.) Craig also reported that facility funding could be 0% increase this year and he will be conservative in his estimate.
 - Overall, citywide enrollment is predicted to drop by 5%.
 - Yusha asked if an investment in marketing and outreach was needed to support enrollment? Craig responded that the new Family Engagement Director will work on that plan. There has not been an individual in that role before and they will begin Feb. 2nd. They will have 3 direct reports, 2 in outreach and 1 in attendance. Nicole shared that families would also be willing to help if asked. Sandi noted the progress in attendance (less chronic absenteeism) and offered to support the onboarding of the Family Engagement staff member.
 - Yusha asked about retention goals and Corey shared that they will develop a short-term retention plan with Candice with goals included.

- LaShawn asked about the CFA and shared her willingness to help get that group going again at the appropriate time.
- Holly asked if the audit was available for the Board to review? Craig shared that he would make sure the full audit and management letter were uploaded to Board Book for review.
- **Governance Committee Report (Sandi Soderstrom)**
 - Sandi shared that there would be information coming soon on a winter retreat to discuss the charter renewal.
 - She asked Board members to prioritize open house participation and to attend if at all possible.
 - Sandi also shared that committee assignments were being worked on and asked Board members to contact her if they had questions or interest in specific committees.
 - Corey asked if we need to recruit another Board member to replace Lisa? Sandi replied that we do need one additional Board member. The hope is to find a non-parent member with a background in education and/or finance. Sandi asked Board members to think about their networks to see if we can find someone.
 - Corey also asked if we have a formalized evaluation in place for Candice? Sandi asked for volunteers to support this process. Corey asked if our HR consultants had a framework or tools to use as a starting point? Craig offered to check with the charter alliance in addition to Educate HR. Sandi thought the charter alliance may also have ideas for recruitment.
 - Yusha asked when committee assignments would be made and Sandi offered to share them ASAP.
- **Motion: Accept Committee reports as presented.** (Motion by Holly Oliver and second by Ebony Vines Jackson). No Discussion. Motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.
- Corey thanked the Board for their engagement and robust discussion.

3. Community Comments

- There were no community members present for this Board meeting and therefore no questions or comments.

4. Closing Items

- There were no closing items.

Motion: Adjourn Board Meeting. (Motion by Corey Gordon and second by Art Fields). Motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

- There being no further public business to be transacted, the Board meeting was adjourned at 7:23 pm.
- The next Board meeting will be held March 10, 2026.

Respectfully Submitted,
Holly K. Oliver, Secretary



Approved Board Meeting Minutes – Nov. 12, 2025

A virtual meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of Creative Minds International Public Charter School (the “School”) was held on Nov 12, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM.

The following Board Members participated: Yusha Assad, Kelly Carroll, LaShawn Douglas, Art Fields, Corey Gordon, Ebony Jackson, Holly Oliver, Lisa Raymond, Jonelle Phelps Rivas, Sandi Soderstrom and Nicole Willett.

Also participating from CMI school leadership and staff: Craig Bednarovsky, Nayamka Long, and Candice Bobo (Interim Head of School and ex-officio board member).

1. Opening Items

- Board Secretary Holly Oliver conducted a roll call of Trustees in attendance.
- With a quorum present, Board Chair Lisa Raymond called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.
- Lisa welcomed the Board and asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the Sept. 16 Board meeting.
- **Motion: Approve minutes from the Sept. 16, 2025 Board meeting.** (Motion by Art Fields and second by Corey Gordon.) No discussion. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.
- Lisa requested a motion to approve the minutes from the Oct. 27 Board meeting.
- **Motion: Approve minutes from the Sept. 16, 2025 Board meeting.** (Motion by Holly Oliver and second by Kelly Carroll.) No discussion. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

2. Head of School/Committee Updates

- Lisa Raymond invited Candice Bobo to share any relevant updates with the Board.
- **Head of School Update:**
 - Candice reported that school has been in session for about 10 weeks and classrooms continue to build momentum. School enrollment is 445 and expected to stay steady. The second checkpoint for enrollment happens this Friday.

- Parent Teacher conferences took place earlier this week when families were updated on their child's progress in class as well as their MAP scores.
- CMI's Literacy Night will take place on Nov. 20th. It will be used as a cultivation event for new families as well as a celebration for our community. Several special events are planned as part of the night which will showcase CMI's commitment to literacy.
- Staff participated in a professional development day on Oct. 10 where they focused on expectations and MAP data analysis.
- Staff are in the midst of coaching and observation cycles to support teachers and refine classroom technique.
- CMI's in-seat attendance rate is 92%, which is above both the Charter and DC average.
- As CMI enters enrolment season, staff is working on both responsiveness to current families and outreach to potential new families.
- Middle Schoolers participated at a High School fair to meet representatives from local High Schools before they make their lottery selections.
- Upcoming priorities for the school are Literacy Night, EdFest in December and Open Houses throughout the year, as well as maintaining observation and feedback cycles in the classrooms.
- The mid-semester staff development will focus on co-planning, co-teaching and strengthening family engagement.
- Lisa thanked Candice for the very thorough update and asked if there were any questions?
- Jonelle Rivas asked how many parents attended conferences? Candice estimated that about 50-70% of families participated across all grades.
- Corey Gordon shared that Candice had also implemented a cultural survey as a pulse check with the staff. Candice reported that valuable feedback had been received on cultural progress.
- Nayamka Long thanked Candice for creating time to meet with families on the day of parent/teacher conferences. Candice shared that she heard from families across grades, that she opened 12 slots for meetings and all were filled. She felt it was a valuable experience and will continue the practice.

- **Academic Excellence Committee (Corey Gordon)**
 - Corey reported that the Academic Excellence Committee met last week and had a great conversation building off the retreat. Discussion included the cultural survey and data points received from that outreach, trends from the classroom observations and tactical conversation on how that information is being translated to positive feedback to improve practice in the classroom.
 - The AEC also discussed the Aspire framework and how it would influence our work at CMI as well as the Charter goals. Corey invited Candice to share slides on the Aspire program and how adopting those goals would affect our Charter framework.
 - Candice reminded the Board that CMI's 15-year Charter renewal is scheduled for next school year. This year is the last year to review data before the renewal.
 - Accountability in the sector is shifting to Aspire goals and weighted groups. CMIs current goals don't focus on school growth in year after year data and are heavily focused on the youngest learners. Aspire goals allow schools to monitor data to close growth gaps and allow for greater transparency.
 - Should the Board choose to adopt Aspire goals over our current Charter goals we would vote as a Board then Candice would apply to the Charter School Board to adopt Aspire goals. The Charter School Board would then vote on that application. That process would take about a month. Should we wish to adopt Aspire goals, the process must be completed by May 26th.
 - Lisa Raymond asked if the AEC is recommending action?
 - Corey Gordon shared that the AEC recognizes that the city and PCSB are incentivizing schools to adopt Aspire goals. The AEC also believes that the goals of transparency and growth are positive for the school community and that the current Charter goals are not as balanced across K-8.
 - Corey recommended, on behalf of the AEC, that we vote to adopt the Aspire goals. Candice added that there is an added benefit of reviewing a comprehensive snapshot across all schools allowing for more transparency on culture.
 - Lisa Raymond asked for a motion to adopt the Aspire performance goals.
- **Motion: Adopt Aspire Performance Goals.** (Motion by Ebony Jackson and second by Sandi Soderstrom.) No discussion. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.
 - Lisa shared that she will sign the application and it will be submitted to PCSB.
 - Corey recognized Candice for the extraordinary work she did to educate the Board and staff on this process and shared her appreciation.

- **Finance Committee (Craig Bednarovsky):**
 - Craig shared that he has been working on a new format for the financial presentation and is looking forward to feedback from the Board on this deeper look at finances.
 - As of the end of September, CMI has 120 days of cash and is projecting a \$153,000 net loss with a -1% gross margin. This is an improvement from the previous projection. This projection was affected by updated enrollment, staff updates (in some cases using contracted staff instead of filling full time positions)
 - CMI originally budgeted for 482 students. While that number is down, Special Education student population has increased, which translates to increased funding per pupil. Less enrollment, however, also translates to less facility funding.
 - On the positive side, CMI received increased and unbudgeted funding from the Washington Teachers' Union and from Federal Grants. CMI also projects significant savings in expenses in staffing.
 - The budget originally showed an \$800,000 loss and that is down to \$153,000 loss.
 - Craig is beginning to think about next year's budget. There is uncertainty in the charter community about per pupil funding and whether or not that will remain flat.
 - Craig walked the Board through the forecast history in days of cash from the approved budget (98 days) through Sept. (120 days).
 - CMI's FAR report has been received. FAR is a scorecard of metrics based on financials. It shows how we compare to the previous school year and to other schools.
 - Craig shared that the Finance Committee approved reverting to previous capitalization guidelines that had changed from \$5,000 to \$1,000 threshold. That change had been recommended by EdOps and was approved by the Board earlier this year. Our auditor, however, recommended we not make this change, and the Finance Committee voted to accept that recommendation and change back.
 - The FY25 Audit is in draft and the Auditor is currently working on statements. Craig shared that the Finance Committee will meet early in December to review the finalized draft audit and consider recommending acceptance of that draft. The full Board will review and vote to accept the audit at the regularly scheduled meeting in January.
 - Craig reported that there is a positive return on our Treasury bonds and asked for questions. There were none.

- Board members including Ebony Jackson, Lisa Raymond, Sandi Soderstrom and Art Fields shared that they appreciated the new level of detail in Craig’s report.
- **Governance Committee Report (Sandi Soderstrom)**
 - Sandi shared that she did not have a formal report but asked Board members to please send their committee choices.
 - Lisa asked if new member orientation would be scheduled since there was not time for orientation at the Board retreat and Sandi shared that it would be scheduled soon.
- **Motion: Accept Committee reports as presented.** (Motion by Lisa Raymond and second by Sandi Soderstrom). No Discussion. Motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

3. Community Comments

- There were no questions or comments from community members.

4. Executive Session (Closed)

- At 6:45 pm, Lisa Raymond read the reason for meeting closure for executive session: To discuss the employment, appointment, or resignation of public charter school personnel.

Motion: Close meeting for Executive Session of the Board of Trustees. (Motion by Art Fields and second by Ebony Jackson). Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: Adjourn Executive Session. (Motion by Lisa Raymond and second by Corey Gordon). Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

- Adjourned at 7:14 pm.

6. Closing Items

- There were no closing items.

Motion: Adjourn Board Meeting. (Motion by Ebony Jackson and second by LaShawn Douglas). Motion was unanimously approved.

- There being no further public business to be transacted, the Board meeting was adjourned at 7:18 pm.
- The next Board meeting will be held January 13, 2026.

Respectfully Submitted,
Holly K. Oliver, Secretary



Approved Board Meeting Minutes – Oct 27, 2025

A virtual meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of Creative Minds International Public Charter School (the “School”) was held on Oct 27, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 6:09 PM.

The following Board Members participated: Kelly Carroll, LaShawn Douglas, Art Fields, Corey Gordon, Ebony Jackson, Holly Oliver, Lisa Raymond, Jonelle Phelps Rivas, Sandi Soderstrom and Nicole Wilett.

Also participating from CMI school leadership and staff: Craig Bednarovsky, Nayamka Long, and Candice Bobo (Interim Head of School and ex-officio board member).

1. Opening Items

- Board Secretary Holly Oliver conducted a roll call of Trustees in attendance.
- With a quorum present, Board Chair Lisa Raymond called the meeting to order at 6:09 pm.
- Lisa welcomed new Board members LaShawn Douglas, Jonelle Phelps Rivas and Nicole Wilett to their first meeting. She then invited Candice Bobo to share any relevant updates with the Board.
- Candice shared that the school is having a good week and that CMI would be holding a Storybook Parade on Friday for Halloween. She invited members of the Board to attend.
- Lisa then invited Sandi Soderstrom to present as Chair of the Governance Committee.

2. Committee Updates

- **Governance Committee Report (Sandi Soderstrom)**
 - Sandi reported that she, Lisa, and members of the Governance Committee had met with Yusha Assad and interviewed him as a prospective Board member. Yusha had been recommended to the Board by CMI Board member Art Fields. Board members who had met with Yusha felt he would be a good fit for the Board based on his professional background and recommended him for Board service. Yusha’s CV has been shared with the Board.

Motion: Approve Yusha Assad as a Trustee on the CMI Board for a 3-year term. (Motion by Sandi Soderstrom and second by Lisa Raymond). No Discussion. Motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

3. Community Comments

- There were no questions or comments from community members.

4. Executive Session (Closed)

- At 6:17 pm, Lisa Raymond read the reason for meeting closure for executive session: To discuss the employment, appointment, or resignation of public charter school personnel.

Motion: Close meeting for Executive Session of the Board of Trustees. (Motion by Art Fields and second by Ebony Jackson). Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: Adjourn Executive Session. (Motion by Lisa Raymond and second by Sandi Soderstrom). Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

- Adjourned at 6:23 pm.

6. Closing Items

- Lisa asked Holly Oliver to remind the Board of upcoming events. Holly reported that the Board would meet for a Board Retreat on Nov. 2, and that the next scheduled Board meeting is Nov. 12. It was decided that the Nov. 12 Board meeting would be a virtual meeting.

Motion: Adjourn Board Meeting. (Motion by Sandi Soderstrom and second by Art Fields). Motion was unanimously approved.

- There being no further public business to be transacted, the Board meeting was adjourned at 6:29 pm.
- The next Board meeting will be held November 12, 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,
Holly K. Oliver, Secretary



Approved Board Meeting Minutes – Sept 16, 2025

A hybrid meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of Creative Minds International Public Charter School (the “School”) was held on Sept 16, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 6:11 PM.

The following Board Members participated: Kelly Carroll, Art Fields, Holly Oliver, Lisa Raymond and Sandi Soderstrom.

Also participating from CMI school leadership and staff: Craig Bednarovsky, Nayamka Long, and Candice Bobo (Interim Head of School and ex-officio board member).

1. Opening Items

- Board Secretary Holly Oliver conducted a roll call of Trustees in attendance.
- With a quorum present, Board Chair Lisa Raymond called the meeting to order at 6:11 pm.
- July 22, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes were presented for consideration.
- **Motion: Approve July 2025 Board Meeting Minutes.** (Motion by Sandi Soderstrom and second by Kelly Carroll). Motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

2. Head of School Update

- Candice Bobo shared key priorities for the next few months.
- Current enrollment is 468, which is predicted to remain stable in academic estimates.
- Family turnout was strong for both Open House and Back to School Night.
- Teachers are progressing in classrooms from establishing routines to the core curriculum.
- CMI has begun MAP testing (evaluations in reading and math). CMI has a goal of 100% student participation by Sept. 26 which feels achievable.
- After MAP testing is complete, the staff will analyze data and implement plans established through the analysis. Plan implementation should begin in early October.
- CMI faces two main challenges at this point in the school year-staffing gaps and citywide safety challenges. CMI anticipates filling open lead teacher roles by the end of the month and has contracted with external agencies to fill gaps in other positions.
- Citywide, student in-seat attendance is 85%. CMI is 87%.
- Candice took questions from several Board members:
 - CMI is focused on safe passage to ensure families feel safe arriving and departing the CMI campus. Teachers also serve as an important resource to ensure student mental health support during times of stress.

- The Principal of the upper school, Ayesha Abdul-Rahim, has stepped in to teach a 5/6 grade class while the position is vacant.
- A lead teacher position is open in K.

3. Committee Updates

- **Academic Excellence Committee Report (Nayamka Long)**
 - Last year's DC Cape Data from 3rd-8th grade testing in Literacy and Math has been received.
 - CMI saw significant growth in both ELA and Math. Overall, however, students are performing below their peers across DC.
 - Cape doesn't capture individual data for academic review and has a long delay in transmitting results to schools, so it is difficult to implement timely adjustments.
 - MAP testing will be much more useful to academic leaders as they develop strategies for individual students and classrooms.
 - MAP testing happens 3 times each school year and CMI will be starting review of beginning of year assessments imminently.
 - Nayamka and Candice fielded several questions from Board members.
 - Candice shared that the school is shifting their classroom walkthrough approach from the Danielson framework to Achieve the Core, a more student-centered achievement approach to teaching. This framework will also be used in coaching with teachers.
 - Nayamka shared information on the Gemstone competition that school leaders brought back from a MAP conference last year to help the teaching teams and students celebrate success in MAP achievements and create momentum for continued achievement.
 - The Board expressed interest in participating in classroom walkthroughs this school year.
 - Nayamka closed by sharing that CMI was happy to have had 89 families pre-register for Back to School Night but believes many more participated that evening.
- **Finance Committee (Craig Bednarovsky)**
 - Craig walked the Board through estimates around enrollment, which is conservatively estimated at 463 for budget purposes.
 - The initial FY26 budget was calculated using 482 enrolled students. The school currently has 468 students fully enrolled, but that number will continue to evolve until count day on Oct. 6.
 - CMI's current average class size is 21.
 - CMI maintains 117 days of cash on hand with a Gross Margin of -2%. The Gross Margin includes amortization and depreciation. If those are removed from the budget, CMI achieves a close to balanced budget this fiscal year.
 - The budget has recently been updated with about \$400,000 in revenue that was not originally budgeted. About \$300,000 of that amount will be received from the Washington Teachers' Union, and about \$100,000 from unbudgeted Federal Grants

- Craig shared that about \$100,000 has been moved from money market accounts to T-bonds on the advice of our financial advisor.
- Craig reported that the Finance Committee has approved changes to the CMI financial policies, and that those updated policies are available in the Board Book. Craig highlighted the changes for the Board.
- Craig reminded the Board that there is an RFP outstanding to support the school as it prepares for its charter renewal.
 - Candice noted that the RFP will support academic leadership, coaching and data analysis, and she will be recusing herself from review of 2 submissions as she has a relationship with those entities.
 - Five submissions have been received and an ad-hoc committee of the Board will make a recommendation to the Finance Committee on the selection.
 - Lisa noted that the Board is not usually involved in RFP selection, but is participating as this was part of the plan to support Candice as she identifies and implements plans for significant academic improvement this school year.
- Contracts of \$25,000 or more in the FY26 School Budget were presented for consideration. (A full list can also be found in Board Book.)
- **Motion: Approve FY26 contracts of \$25,000 or more.** (Motion by Lisa Raymond and second by Sandi Soderstrom). Motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.
- **Governance Committee Report (Sandi Soderstrom)**
 - Sandi asked Holly to share a brief report on the Board retreat. Holly thanked the Board for sharing their availability and reported that Board members and CMI leaders should have received a meeting request for Nov. 2nd from 12:00-5:00pm, although the final timing in that window will be determined by the agenda which is still under development.
 - Sandi introduced the 3 parent representatives who the Governance Committee recommended for Board membership; LaShawn Douglas, Jonelle Phelps Rivas and Nicole Wilett.
- **Motion: Approve LaShawn Douglas as a new parent representative on the CMI Board of Trustees for a 3-year term.** (Motion by Sandi Soderstrom and second by Holly Oliver). Motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.
- **Motion: Approve Jonelle Phelps Rivas as a new parent representative on the CMI Board of Trustees for a 3-year term.** (Motion by Sandi Soderstrom and second by Lisa Raymond). Motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.
- **Motion: Approve Nicole Wilett as a new parent representative on the CMI Board of Trustees for a 3-year term.** (Motion by Sandi Soderstrom and second by Lisa Raymond). Motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

- Candice Bobo shared strategic insight about CMI throughout the process and brought a background in building a culture of trust. She maintained a strong, clear and positive leadership presence and the Search Committee feels she is a great choice for the Interim leader role.
 - Corey thanked the staff and Board for their time and shared she is excited about the outcome.
 - Lisa Raymond noted that the Board will be discussing a future committee to consider a permanent Head of School.
- **Motion: Accept Committee Reports.** (Motion by Corey Gordon and second by Sandi Soderstrom). No Discussion. Motion was unanimously approved.

4. Community Comments

- Lisa Raymond invited the community to ask questions or make statements. No community members had comments.

5. Closing Items

- Lisa Raymond announced there was no need for an Executive Session.
- Sandi Soderstrom shared gratitude for the community members who made time to join the meeting and asked them to invite others to participate.
- **Motion: Adjourn Board Meeting.** (Motion by Sandi Soderstrom and second by Kelly Carroll). No Discussion. Motion was unanimously approved.
- There being no further public business to be transacted, the Board meeting was adjourned at 6:54 pm.
- The next Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 16 at 6:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Holly K. Oliver, Secretary



Approved Board Meeting Minutes – July 22, 2025

A virtual meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of Creative Minds International Public Charter School (the “School”) was held on July 22, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 6:06 PM.

The following Board Members participated: Kelly Carroll, Corey Gordon, Holly Oliver, Lisa Raymond and Sandi Soderstrom.

Also participating from CMI school leadership and staff: Craig Bednarovsky, Nayamka Long, and Candice Bobo (Interim Head of School and ex-officio board member).

1. Opening Items

- Board Secretary Holly Oliver conducted a roll call of Trustees in attendance.
- With a quorum present, Board Chair Lisa Raymond called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.
- June 16, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes were presented for consideration.
- **Motion: Approve June 2025 Board Meeting Minutes.** (Motion by Lisa Raymond and second by Sandi Soderstrom). Motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote. (Kelly Carroll abstained as she was absent from the June meeting.)
- June 16, 2025 Committee Reports were presented for consideration.
- **Motion: Approve June 2025 Committee Reports.** (Motion by Lisa Raymond and second by Holly Oliver). Motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote. (Kelly Carroll abstained as she was absent from the June meeting.)
- Lisa Raymond introduced Interim Head of School Candice Bobo. Lisa thanked the full Board for their service in the search, for listening to the school community as a part of the process, especially the Search Committee, Corey Gordon and Holly Oliver as Chair and Vice Chair of the Search. Lisa reiterated how pleased the Board is that Candice has accepted this position and invited Candice to speak.

2. Executive Director Update

- Candice Bobo shared that she is starting week 2, learning quite a bit and has met 1-1 with all senior leadership. Her first team meeting will be tomorrow. Craig Bednarovsky and Nayamka Long have been especially helpful in getting acclimated to the full community culture.

- Teachers return to campus August 11, and Candice is looking forward to meeting staff, parents and families very soon.

3. Committee Updates

- **Academic Excellence Committee Report (Corey Gordon)**
 - The Academic Excellence Committee did not meet this month.
- **Finance Committee (Craig Bednarovsky)**
 - Craig shared that May financials have closed with 95 days of cash. This is helping feed the budget planning for FY26, which is due to PCSB next week. Craig and his team used historic information on trends and estimated enrollment as well.
 - Craig reminded the Board that the school's fiscal year is July 1-June 30.
 - PCSB requires a 2-year budget, but the Board will only vote on the FY26 budget. The FY27 budget is considered an early projection and may be revised as needed.
 - Craig shared an overview of the FY26 budget as presented.
 - Craig projected an ending cash balance of about \$4.75 million and 98 days of cash. Net income is projected at -\$823,736. Estimated enrollment is 482 students.
 - The priorities of the budget have been to support student facing positions, offer an average 3% salary increase to staff while keeping benefits at the same levels. The school is also focused on resources necessary for the accreditation renewal process.
 - Net income includes about \$450,000 in non-cash expenses for depreciation and amortization. The additional deficit is the result of a significant investment in staff 2 years ago, and we are on trend to break even in the coming years.
 - Enrollment will be finalized in early October.
 - The Mayor has proposed a 2.7% increase in per pupil funding in the city budget in FY26. The City Council has not approved this budget yet, but it is expected to pass. Craig noted that this is the lowest increase since FY16 when per pupil funding was flat.
 - The Washington Teacher's Union funding is not yet included in this budget projection, but the school expects about \$600 per student to offset salaries.
 - A staff salary study is planned for the fall to baseline against other charters and remain competitive.
 - CMI has budgeted about \$16.7 million in revenue. The school has removed several Federal grants and revenue programs due to uncertainty in the Federal Government about continuation of those programs. There is potential of an additional \$300,000-\$400,000 in income if those programs do continue.
 - Craig noted that there is a perception that special populations within the school are increasing, but they are expected to be a larger percentage of a smaller enrollment. The actual numbers are expected to stay flat.

- Currently 94% of students are fully enrolled for next year. The school will be at 104% enrollment if all students in process of enrolling complete their enrollment.
 - Craig and his team continue to evaluate the impact of lower enrollment in budget projections and noted that if our enrollment projection is off by 10% or more once final, we will need to submit a revised budget to PCSB. Internally, it is CMI's policy to share major budget changes with the Finance Committee to either build awareness or vote on change.
- FY26 School Budget was presented for consideration.
- **Motion: Approve FY26 CMI School Budget.** (Motion by Lisa Raymond and second by Kelly Carroll). Motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.
- Kelly Carroll thanked Craig for his hard work on the budget. Craig noted that Ed-Ops is also a great support in the process.
- **Governance Committee Report (Sandi Soderstrom)**
 - Sandi shared that the Governance Committee was reviewing dates for a potential Board retreat and would be polling dates with Board members.
 - Four candidates have been interviewed by the Search Committee to serve as parent representatives on the Board. Those candidates will next have a conversation with Lisa Raymond. Sandi is hoping they will be confirmed in time to join the retreat.
 - Sandi also shared that the Governance Committee will be sharing a Conflict of Interest form for signature with Board members. This is a process that happens annually.
 - Kelly Carroll asked if there were any restrictions on when the Board could use CMI on the weekend for a Board retreat, and Craig affirmed that the school should be available.
 - Sandi noted that the Board would welcome Candice Bobo, Nayamka Long and Craig Bednarovsky to participate in the retreat as they have in years past.
 - Kelly Carroll asked if there was anything the Board should be aware of looking ahead to this year's Charter renewal process. Nayamka Long replied that we would be given a check list and plenty of notice if information is required.
- Lisa Raymond explained that the Ad-Hoc Search Committee had completed its objective and asked Corey Gordon, Chair of the Search Committee for a final report.
- **Ad Hoc Search Committee (Corey Gordon):**
 - Corey reported that she was proud of the work of the Search Committee which screened a large number of qualified candidates in an extensive but quick process.
 - The Committee strove to be responsive to the community and to focus on academic improvement and culture building.
 - The selection process included rigorous review of candidates by Board members, school visits and conversations with school leadership and staff.

4. Community Comments

- There were no questions or comments from community members.

5. Executive Session (Closed)

- At 7:08 pm, Lisa Raymond read the reason for meeting closure for executive session: To discuss the employment, appointment, or resignation of public charter school personnel.

Motion: Close meeting for Executive Session of the Board of Trustees. (Motion by Lisa Raymond and second by Sandi Soderstrom). Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: Adjourn Executive Session. (Motion by Lisa Raymond and second by Kelly Carroll). Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

- Adjourned at 8:08 pm.

6. Closing Items

Motion: Adjourn Board Meeting. (Motion by Lisa Raymond and second by Holly Oliver). Motion was unanimously approved.

- There being no further public business to be transacted, the Board meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm.
- The next Board meeting will be held November 12, 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,
Holly K. Oliver, Secretary

Governance Committee shared their proposed goals for the year

Motion: Accept Committee Reports. (Motion by Corey Gordon and second by Neal Brown). Motion was unanimously approved

3. Closing Items

- Navin Nayak's last Board of Trustees meeting was this evening. He was recognized by Chair Lisa Raymond for his years of service to the Creative Minds community and Board of Trustees.
- There being no further public business to be transacted, the meeting was adjourned at 7:48pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Navin Nayak, Secretary