

DISCOVERY CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MEETING Minutes

August 15, 2025, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Location for Public Meeting: 133 Hoover Drive, Rochester NY 14615

Remote Attendance for Public Meeting Option: Zoom Link

The meeting information was included in the Public Notice as well as on the school's website:

**Topic: Discovery Charter School- Board of Trustees Meeting
8.15.2025**

8:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86450663136?pwd=RkdPU3dTRGJmNkFzKy9CUlc2Nys0QT09>

Meeting ID: 864 5066 3136

Passcode: Discovery

Trustees Present: L. Lewis, S. Varhus, L. Bridges, S. Fazili, C. Wilkens, M. Galarza-Ruiz, S. Adair

Trustees Excused: J. Johnson, M. Franklin-McDuffie

Participating remotely: S. Polowitz, Board Counsel

Also Present: S. Castner, A. Culver

1. Call to Order—Chair L. Lewis called the meeting to order at 8:13 am.
2. Proof of Public Notice of Meeting--Confirmed
3. Conflict of Interest Reminder—Chair issued reminder.
4. Public Comment—None
5. Consent Agenda (*Action Required*): Approval of Minutes for 6.20.25; Checks over \$5000 Resolution #551. Moved by S. Adair, seconded by S. Varhus, and approved unanimously with no abstentions.
6. Committee Reports:
 - a. Audit & Finance Committee Report: S. Adair reported that our cash balance is currently \$2.1 million; this amount includes funds for cash bonuses for staff.
 - b. Governance Committee Report: S. Varhus advanced the nomination of David Dimpleby to be a trustee. The motion to proceed with this nomination was moved by L. Lewis, seconded by L. Bridges, and approved unanimously with no abstentions.
 - c. Building Committee—S. Adair and S. Castner reported on their recent meeting with J. Martino. The Building Committee will meet to discuss next steps. S. Castner and S. Varhus will visit School #20.
 - d. Executive Committee Report—No report
 - e. Academic Excellence Committee—No report
 - f. Personnel Committee Report—No report
 - g. Community on Community Engagement—No report
7. School Director Report: S. Castner described ongoing staff hiring, itemized in Resolution #552. Approval of Resolution #552 was moved by C. Wilkens, seconded by S. Varhus, and approved unanimously with no abstentions. L. Bridges moved approval of Resolution #553--Family Handbook, C. Wilkens seconded; approval was unanimous

without abstentions. S. Varhus moved approval of Resolution #554--Employee Handbook; S. Adair seconded; approval was unanimous without abstentions. L Bridges moved approval of Resolution #555—Cell Phone Policy; C. Wilkens seconded; approval was unanimous without abstentions. S. Castner reported that there are currently 17 student enrolled; S. Gibbons has advised that DCS can submit a nonmaterial revision to increase enrollments to 345 over two years.

8. Update on Fundraising: SA. Castner and S. Varhus will meet with Marc Misurewicz to learn what services Empreinte might offer in support of fundraising.
9. Board Self Evaluation: the link to the evaluation will be sent out and all should complete it if that have not done so already.
10. Board Retreat: It was concluded that the Board Planning Retreat will take place as part of two upcoming regular meetings. (Sept. 19 and Oct. 17).
11. Motion to adjourn at 9:00 was moved by C. Wilkens, seconded by M. Galarza-Ruiz, and approved unanimously with no abstentions.

Next Regular Meeting: September 5, 2025

DISCOVERY CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING AGENDA

September 5, 2025, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Location for Public Meeting: 133 Hoover Drive, Rochester NY 14615

Remote Attendance for Public Meeting Option: Zoom Link

The meeting information was included in the Public Notice as well as on the school's website:

Topic: **Discovery Charter School- Board of Trustees Meeting
9.5.25**

8:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86450663136?pwd=RkdPU3dTRGJmNkFzKy9CUlc2Nys0QT09>

Meeting ID: 864 5066 3136

Passcode: Discovery

1. Call to Order
2. Proof of Public Notice of Meeting
3. Conflict of Interest Reminder
4. Public Comment
5. Consent Agenda (Action Required): Approve Minutes for Meeting from 8.15.25
6. Committee Reports:
 - A. Audit & Finance Committee Report
 - B. Governance Committee Report
 - C. Building Committee Report
 - D. Executive Committee Report
 - E. Academic Excellence Committee
 - F. Personnel Committee Report
7. Fundraising Process and Board Commitment (Action Required)
8. School Director Report:
 - a) Hiring Update
 - b) Enrollment Update
9. Board of Trustees 2025-2026 Calendar of Meetings (Action Required)
10. Board Evaluation: Link will be resent. **Please fill out if you have not yet done so. If you are not sure, go ahead and fill it out. Duplicate response is not a big problem.**
11. Board Retreat: **September 19, 8:00-9:30, October 17, 8:00-9:30**
12. Motion to Adjourn (Action Required)

Next Regular Meeting: September 19, 2025

DISCOVERY CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MEETING Minutes

September 5, 2025, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Location for Public Meeting: 133 Hoover Drive, Rochester NY 14615

Remote Attendance for Public Meeting Option: Zoom Link

The meeting information was included in the Public Notice as well as on the school's website:

**Topic: Discovery Charter School- Board of Trustees Meeting
9.5.2025**

8:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86450663136?pwd=RkdPU3dTRGJmNkFzKy9CUlc2Nys0QT09>

Meeting ID: 864 5066 3136

Passcode: Discovery

Trustees Present: S. Varhus, L. Bridges, S. Fazili, C. Wilkens, M. Galarza-Ruiz, S. Adair, J. Johnson, M. Franklin-McDuffie

Trustees Excused: L. Lewis

Participating remotely: S. Polowitz, Board Counsel, Bryan Hickman

Also Present: S. Castner, A. Culver, C. Franklin

1. **Call to Order:** S. Fazili called the meeting to order at 8:02 am.
2. **Proof of Public Notice of Meeting:** Confirmed
3. **Conflict of Interest Reminder:** S. Fazili issued reminder.
4. **Public Comment:** None
5. **Consent Agenda** (*Action Required*): Approval of Minutes for 8.15.25--Moved by S. Adair, seconded by C. Wilkens, and approved unanimously with no abstentions.
6. **Committee Reports:**
 - a. Audit & Finance Committee Report: No Report
 - b. Governance Committee Report: No Report
 - c. Building Committee: No Report (Planned to discuss in Executive Session)
 - d. Executive Committee Report: No Report
 - e. Academic Excellence Committee: No Report
 - f. Personnel Committee Report: No report
 - g. Community on Community Engagement: No Report
7. **Fundraising Process and Board Commitment:** (*Action Required*) Board discussed meeting with Empreinte. Emphasized that the Board's commitment is paramount to Fundraising success, regardless of choice of support vendor. Four-month contract would conclude with either hire of Fundraising Leader (part-time or full-time) or the continued use of secondary vendor. Clarified that the company does not take over the fundraising efforts, but provides tools to support, as well as connections to funding sources. Empreinte has not specifically worked with other schools but has done work with large non-profit organizations such as local hospital organizations. Time-sensitivity of efforts was addressed, with an emphasis that time is of the essence and, while we need not rush, beginning the process sooner than

later would be preferred. Clarification to note that the fundraising efforts need not be directly tied to the building purchase effort. S. Adair motioned to approve. Seconded by S. Varhus, and approved unanimously with no abstentions. A confirming resolution will be brought forward at the next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees.

8. **School Director Report:**

- a) Hiring Update: S. Castner described one Sp. Ed. Teacher will be resigning to take position at another district and another staff member is poised to support those Sp. Ed. Students until replacement is secured.
- b) Enrollment Update: S. Castner reported that there are currently 308 students enrolled. 26% of students either ENL or with IEP/504 disability on file.

9. **Board Self Evaluation:** Link will be resent. **Please fill out if you have not yet done so. If you are not sure, go ahead and fill it out. Duplicate response is not a big problem.**

10. **Board Retreat:** It was concluded that the Board Planning Retreat will take place as part of two upcoming regular meetings. (Sept. 19 and Oct. 17).

11. **Motion to Move to Executive Session to discuss a real estate matter:** moved by M. Franklin-McDuffie(?), seconded by M. Galarza-Ruiz, and approved unanimously with no abstentions. **Motion to leave Executive Session:** moved by S. Varhus, seconded by L. Bridges, and approved unanimously with no abstentions.

12. **Motion to submit a purchase offer for 133 Hoover Drive** as discussed in Executive Session: Moved by S. Adair, seconded by M. Franklin-McDuffie, and approved unanimously with no abstentions. A confirming resolution will be brought forward at the next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees.

13. **Motion to Adjourn:** moved at 9:18am by M. Franklin-McDuffie, seconded by M. Galarza-Ruiz, and approved unanimously with no abstentions.

Next Regular Meeting: September 19, 2025

Discovery Charter School Board of Trustees

Calendar of Meetings, 2025-2026

Note: all meetings will take place in 133 Hoover Drive, Rochester, NY, 14615, beginning at 8:00 a.m.

Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86450663136?pwd=RkdPU3dTRGJmNkFzKy9CUlc2Nys0QT09>

Meeting ID: 864 5066 3136

Passcode: Discovery

2025

August 15: Regular Meeting

September 5: Regular Meeting

September 19: Regular Meeting

October 17: Regular Meeting

November 21: Regular Meeting

December 19: Regular Meeting

2026

January 16: Regular Meeting

February 20: Regular Meeting

March 20: Regular Meeting

April 17: Regular Meeting

May 15: Regular Meeting

June 19: Regular Meeting and Annual Meeting



August 27, 2025

Discovery Charter School
C/o Sara Castner
133 Hoover Drive
Rochester, NY 14615

Dear Sara,

Thank you for your interest in considering Empreinte Consulting as a partner to assess and develop a comprehensive fundraising plan for Discovery Charter School ("Discovery"). In response to our recent conversation, I am sending you this proposal which serves as a guide for the services Empreinte Consulting can provide Discovery to assist in enhancing your fundraising. This proposal outlines the specific services to assess your current operational structure while developing a comprehensive strategy to maximize your philanthropic revenue.

Empreinte Consulting is a full-service philanthropic consulting firm that partners with individual philanthropists, nonprofit organizations and corporations that are looking to make an impact on their community. Whether you are giving of yourself to impact an important mission, or a nonprofit organization looking to help those in need, philanthropy is a critical component to your success. Empreinte helps to ensure that interaction is as effective and impactful as possible.

Our proposal to Discovery is that you allow Empreinte Consulting to be your exclusive partner to develop this plan. By partnering with your board members and your leadership, we will work to assess areas of opportunity to implement best practice processes in alignment with your mission. Our years working to develop operational efficiency within nonprofits will allow us to provide an appropriate framework for this analysis.

The cost of services will align with the following structure:

- Beginning in September 2025, Empreinte Consulting, LLC will work monthly under the terms outlined below for a period of four (4) months with an option to extend the relationship to extend the contract upon completion. The expectation is that Pamela White from Empreinte will guide the assessment and create a comprehensive fundraising plan, board development plan and serve as subject matter expert with help from Lauren Apt, VP, Operations. Invoices will be sent on the 1st day of each month with net 15-day term. Either party may terminate this agreement for the life of this contract, for any or no reason, with 30 days' written notice.
 - **\$5,250/month** from September – December 2025 to provide no more than 30 hours per month to complete the assessment
 - Should Discovery need additional services beyond the scope of the contract, you will be charged an additional **\$175/hour** with the approval of School Director.

- If Discovery exercises its option to extend the Agreement beyond its Initial Term, Empreinte and Discovery will endeavor to enter into a subsequent Agreement, in good faith and on terms consistent with this initial Agreement.
- The specific services provided by Empreinte Consulting to Discovery Charter School will be:

Assess operational structure using best practice policies and procedures (Beginning September 2025):

1. Review by-laws and governance policies to confirm alignment with best practice
2. Ensure compliance with NYS and Federal requirements for 510(c)3 nonprofit status
3. Assess Discovery staffing and board structure in support of organizational goals to enhance effectiveness and performance, adapt to change, and grow sustainably
4. Review financial policies and procedures including revenue sources, gift accounts to accept donations and processes for gift entry and tracking
5. Analyze donor database used to track outreach, engagement, and stewardship of donors for Discovery
6. Partner with Discovery School Director and Board to confirm priorities for programs and fundraising in 2026 with a focus on raising money to purchase existing building

Develop comprehensive fundraising and marketing strategy using best practice policies and procedures to guide activity (September – December 2025)

Steps in process:

1. Recommend policies and procedures for annual giving, major/transformational gifts, planned giving, grants and events
2. Collaborate with School Director and Board to create annual budget that clearly identifies the need for philanthropic revenue to support programs, operations and capital investments while building an endowment for sustainability across all organizations
3. Focus on fundraising strategy to maximize philanthropy that will allow Discovery to purchase existing building
4. Analyze donor database, or implement Little Green Light, if necessary, to track donor engagement and giving
5. Develop appropriate annual and capital fundraising goals aligned with strategic plan and priorities
6. Recommend appropriate infrastructure and volunteer management structure including recruitment and training of board members for Discovery
7. Provide prospect research to identify community members, corporations and Foundations that align with the mission of Discovery to include strategy for appropriate outreach and engagement
8. Serve as a subject matter expert to Discovery staff and Board members regarding fundraising strategies and best practices
9. Develop recommendations for comprehensive marketing plan to enhance familiarity and visibility of Discovery across the community using website (SEO), social media, print and digital collateral

Empreinte Consulting members will provide ongoing communication with Discovery Board members and leadership regarding our findings along with recommendations for process improvement. During our

engagement, Empreinte consultants will have regular communication with Discovery Board and leadership with scheduled meetings to ensure proper direction and alignment with expectations.

- In contracting with Empreinte Consulting, LLC, Discovery agrees to the following responsibilities:
 - Provide timely information, feedback, and approvals to facilitate progress and alignment with project goals.
 - Diligently fulfill all roles and responsibilities outlined in the project workplan as assigned to the Discovery team, ensuring tasks are completed accurately, on time, and in accordance with the agreed-upon standards.
 - Timely payment of invoices under the terms of this agreement. Should payment be delayed beyond 7 days of the stated due date, Empreinte reserves the right to pause services until the account is brought current.

* Terms of this agreement are valid if signed by August 31, 2025

Discovery Charter School reserves the right to request additional services from Empreinte Consulting, LLC beyond the scope of this contract, which would initiate a new agreement.

Due to our years of fundraising experience, the team at Empreinte Consulting is well positioned to enhance the structure and efficiencies at Discovery. We would be more than happy to discuss the details of this agreement in greater detail should you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to partnering with you!

Regards,

Acceptance:



Marc Misiurewicz
CEO
Empreinte Consulting, LLC

Sara Castner
School Director
Discovery Charter School

Date