

**FOLK ARTS-CULTURAL TREASURES CHARTER SCHOOL  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPECIAL MEETING**

Wednesday, September 17, 2025, 6:30 p.m.  
1023 Callowhill Street/Philadelphia, PA 19123

**MINUTES**

**Board Present:** Pooja Agarwal, Frank Chism, Jeff Kounig, Xu Lin, Neeta Patel, Thierry Elin-Saintine, Mohan Seshadri (after appointment to the Board, Item

**Board Absent:** Alison Lin

**Staff Present:** David Brown, Pheng Lim, Ellen Somekawa

**Public Present:** Alex Jiang, Mohan Seshadri, Abel Zeng

**I. Call to Order** Thierry Elin-Saintine

**II. Public Comment** [5 minutes]  
Alex Jiang is an interested prospective parent.  
Abel Zeng is a teacher representing the staff union, ACSE Local 6056

**III. Introduction of Prospective Board Member** [10 minutes]  
Presentation by the Nominations Committee Xu Lin  
• Mohan Seshadri  
Self Introductions: Board Members and Prospective Board Member

**IV. Data Presentation: Academic Progress and Equity**  
Presentation [20 minutes] Galen Fitzpatrick  
Discussion [20 minutes]

- What are the correlations between students who are struggling with attendance and those who are struggling academically?
- Many of the students in the newcomer program are in the Hispanic subgroup and language learning takes time.
- Since subgroups are so small, can we look at individual students' progress over time and not mainly compare our school to other schools?
  - [look at metrics other than PSSAs]
- What is the distribution like in the Asian subgroup?
  - Is it a similar distribution to other subgroups?
- Is there a conversation about diversity in teaching staff?
  - Pheng is in the City's talent and recruitment working group. That is focused on recruiting teachers of color.
  - FACTS is 100% staffed. There is a huge problem of teacher shortages nationwide and statewide.
  - We can run numbers of staff composition and student composition.
- There was a restructuring of the school schedule, wasn't there?
  - WIN (What I Need Period) was introduced after the COVID 19 pandemic. It is a way of structuring time into each school day to provide extra supports to students who are struggling while creating space for students who are not receiving extra support to work on their academic skills. It is a time for Special Education, ELD and intervention teachers as well as classroom teachers to provide

small group intensive support to students who share similar learning needs. [I don't know if we actually explained this in the meeting?]

- Galen will send the slides and a feedback form.

**V. Principal's Report [5 minutes]**

Pheng Lim

- Introduction to new staff and changes in staff positions
- Partnership with Philadelphia Ballet: successful after school dance program for Grades 5-8 is expanding to 4th grade this year.
- Algebra 1 Program is continuing. 14 out of 15 of our students in the Algebra 1 Program scored advanced in Keystones; one scored proficient
- Many Points of View Week: Schoolwide Assembly on the last day of the weeklong celebration
- Curriculum Council Project: looking at gaps in content. Lessons in FACTS class to address student needs and FACTS values.

**Board Comment/questions**

- Is Director of School Culture another name for disciplinarian? It sounds like no, it really is about school culture; is that right?
  - The change was made many years ago in response to data and observations we were making. The idea behind the Director of School Culture position is to give teachers the tools and strategies to keep students in class and to work proactively with students and staff to create a positive school climate.
- Is racial diversity a consideration in who participates in Algebra 1?
  - No, there are specific criteria related to math prerequisites
  - There is a more diverse group this year

**Executive Director's Report [2 minutes]**

Ellen Somekawa

**Questions and Discussion [3 minutes]**

**VI. Approval of the Minutes [5 minutes]**

**1. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves the Minutes of the August 20, 2025 Board Meeting.

Moved: Neeta Patel

Seconded: Xu Lin

Voted Yes: Jeff Koung, Xu Lin, Neeta Patel, Thierry Elin-Saintine

Abstain: Pooja Agarwal, Frank Chism

**VII. Approval of the Financial Statements [5 minutes]  
Presentation**

Neeta Patel

There will be a revised budget in October. Adjustments need to be made to account for changes in the per pupil allocation, changes to staff salaries, the impact of negotiations of our lease on rental expenses, and

ED search and expansion expenses. FACTS is in good financial shape. Fully enrolled. Federal Title II and Title III were restored. Will need to convene an audit committee. The Board needs to accept the audit prior to November 30. Will need to convene an audit committee. Thierry will convene the committee.

**2. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves the July 30, 2025 Financial Statements.

Moved: Frank Chism

Second: Pooja Agarwal

Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Frank Chism, Jeff Koung, Xu Lin, Neeta Patel, Thierry Elin-Saintine

**VIII. Other Committee Reports [15 minutes]**

Development Committee

Frank Chism

- [5K Sponsor and Donor Outreach](#)
- [Participant Registration Form](#): We now have over \$28,000 in Sponsorships. It is too late for sponsors to get their names or logos on the tshirts, but it is not too late to sign up as a sponsor. Participants have to register by 9/19 to get a shirt. We are reviewing the decision to leave the old platform. There are pros and cons to using the old platform and the new system. It was nice when teams and the school collectively had thermometers measuring how close we were to meeting goals. On the other hand, the sign on process is much easier this year Development Committee decided not to do a phone calling push.

ED Search Committee

Thierry Elin-Saintine

David Brown and Thierry Saintine are co-chairing the search committee. They are interviewing search firms and have strong candidates. Goal is to contract with firm at the October meeting. Search Committee includes Board Members Frank Chism, Xu Lin, Neeta Patel, Thierry Elin-Saintine; Admin Members: David Brown, Pheng Lim; Parent Member Selina Morales; Staff Member: Marley Asplundh. The first meeting of the Search Committee will be on October 2.

**IX. Nominations Committee [10 minutes]**

Xu Lin

Presentation of Mohan Seshadri, candidate for board membership  
Discussion

**3. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School appoints Mohan Seshadri to a three year term as a member of the FACTS Board of Trustees.

Moved: Neeta Patel

Seconded: Pooja Agarwal

Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Frank Chism, Jeff Koung, Xu Lin, Neeta Patel, Thierry Elin-Saintine

**X. Swearing in Mohan Seshadri [5 minutes]**

Thierry Elin-Saintine

*I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support, obey and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of this Commonwealth, and that I will discharge the duties of my office with fidelity.*

Nomination and Election of Board Secretary

Thierry Elin-Saintine

**4. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School elects Alison Lin to a one year term as Secretary of the FACTS Board of Trustees.

Moved: Pooja Agarwal

Seconded: Xu Lin

Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Frank Chism, Jeff Koung, Xu Lin, Neeta Patel, Thierry Elin-Saintine, Mohan Seshadri

**XI. Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of the 2025 Charter Agreement**

**4. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School i) authorizes the execution and delivery of the 2025 Charter Renewal Agreement; ii) affirms that no members of the Charter Board or their immediate family, as defined under the Pennsylvania Public Official and Employee Ethics Act ("Ethics Act"), will have business dealings with the Charter School, and that the Charter Board will comply with the Ethics Act; and iii) provides the names and email addresses of the officers of the Charter Board and authorizes the following individuals to execute and request payments under the Charter:

- Thierry Elin-Saintine, Chair: [Thierry@board.factschool.org](mailto:Thierry@board.factschool.org)
- Xu Lin, Vice Chair: [Xu@board.factschool.org](mailto:Xu@board.factschool.org)
- Neeta Patel, Treasurer: [Neeta@board.factschool.org](mailto:Neeta@board.factschool.org)
- Alison Lin, Secretary: [alin@board.factschool.org](mailto:alin@board.factschool.org)

Moved: Frank Chism

Seconded: Xu Lin

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Frank Chism, Jeff Koung, Xu Lin, Neeta Patel, Thierry Elin-Saintine, Mohan Seshadri

**XII. Executive Session [10 minutes]**

- Considering the purchase or lease of real property

**XIII. Return to Public Session**

**XIV. Adjournment**

Moved: Pooja Agarwal

Seconded: Xu Lin

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Frank Chism, Jeff Koung, Xu Lin, Neeta Patel, Thierry Elin-Saintine, Mohan Seshadri