



Sela PCS Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 15, 2026
Via Zoom
6:45 pm

Board Members In Attendance:

Alen Amini
Amberine Huda
Anika Wilkins
Bryce Jacobs
Ezra Karger
Marisa Tersy
Steve Messner
Tara Cuevas

Others in Attendance

Rachel Sussman
Ryan Benjamin
Katrina Duffy
Janalee Jordan-Meldrum
Katherine Pippert

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:47 pm EST. No public comment for this session, but anyone can reach out to selapcsboard@gmail.com or any individual Board member.

Approval of Various Items: Alen Amini

Upon motion and second, all Board members present voted to approve the agenda as presented.

Upon motion and second, all Board members present reviewed and voted to approve meeting minutes from December 2025.

Upon motion and second, all Board members present reviewed and voted to accept the FY25 Annual Audit.

Head of School Update: Rachel Sussman

Ms. Sussman reviewed school highlights.

General Sela Updates

- Sela's Winter Lights Festival was well attended by students, parents and community members, giving students an opportunity to celebrate Sela's cultural diversity.
- Recruitment season: EdFest 2025 is a day when all DC Schools open their campuses for prospective families to tour schools and ask questions. 75+ families signed up for information about Sela.
- Sela was not closed during Winter Break; Ryan Benjamin led the charge on some critical school renovations, including the front school bathroom, fresh paint throughout Sela's campus, and the playground, which is nearing completion.
- Playground: next step is a safety completion in advance of formally opening the playground to the school. Ms. Sussman praised Mr. Benjamin's efforts to expedite this process.
- Upcoming events: Diversity Day (1/16), Class Spelling Bees (1/23, 1/30)

MAP Testing/Data Overview

- Ms. Sussman offered insight into MAP testing, including what the test is and a current snapshot into last year's data. MAP is administered in Fall/Winter/Spring to test learning growth in grades K-5.
- What is MAP?
 - A nationally normed test that is administered in the Fall/Winter/Spring across K-5 for ELA/Math growth.
 - Predicts proficiency and can sometimes offer a conservative prediction on how students will do on the Spring CAPE test.
 - How do we use MAP data? Identifying trends, looking at student level growth and proficiency, e.g. trend across a grade that may impact instruction, curriculum, staffing, etc.
- Winter ELA MAP Summary, 24/25-25/26
 - Fall to Winter Growth, ELA (K-2): +8.0 points
 - Fall to Winter Growth, Math (K-2): +12.0 points
 - Fall to Winter Growth, ELA (4-5): -2.5 points
 - Fall to Winter Growth, Math (4-5): +3.0 points
- Middle School Update: ongoing conversation for many years, high priority for many parents across the Sela community.
 - MS Research Committee: 5 members, 69 responses to Family Survey.
 - Survey Trends:
 - Families more likely to choose charter over DCPS after graduating from Sela, but interested in ongoing language instruction (not exclusive to Hebrew)
 - Families expressed interest in a "cohort model" where students would move to a middle school together.
 - The biggest priority for Sela families is receiving high-quality academic instruction and support.
 - DCPS Partnerships: Deal MS is not an option, but there are ongoing conversations are happening with the staff of the Deputy Mayor. Opportunities for ongoing Hebrew instruction would be at the discretion of the DCPS principal in the event of a partnership.
 - The committee did not review the feasibility of expansion of Sela to the middle school grades.
- The board moved to create a Middle School Task Force to research the feasibility of expanding Sela to grades 6-8, with a final recommendation to be shared with the board.

HOS Search Updates: Katherine Pippert, TenSquare

- Current talent pipeline is very strong, but are still accepting applications. TenSquare is involved in a rigorous vetting process with these candidates
- Vetted candidates will move forward to review by the HOS Search Committee, who will conduct further interviews.



Committee Updates: Postponed Until February Board Meeting

Motion to Move Into Closed Session: Alen Amini

- Upon motion and second, all Board members present voted to close the open meeting and move into closed session, per Section 2-575 of the DC Open Meetings Act: subsections (b) (12), to “train and develop members of a public body and staff.”

Adjournment: Alen Amini

Upon motion and second, all board members present voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 pm EST.