

Report to the Harmony School Board
Michele Blaisdell, Director
Pathways Charter School
June 2024

First, a note:

- Our longstanding relationship with Harmony is extremely valuable to me and to Pathways. I've learned a lot by observing the few Board meetings I've attended, and it is imperative for me to stay in good communication with Harmony's Board membership and the school's leadership.
- It was my intention to attend as many Board meetings in person as possible this year; however, between one thing and another, I've only managed two in-person and one online. I've also been negligent in sending reports.
- As a first-year Director, I've been working out my flow with all aspects of the job, including both regularly occurring and unexpected tasks and responsibilities. However, I want to emphasize that the Harmony Board meetings are important to me. Unfortunately, I let them slip off my radar this past spring, in particular, and for that, I sincerely apologize.
- Due to the conflict with our final staff meeting on Friday, 6/14, I won't be able to attend the Harmony Special Board meeting. I hope and intend to stay in closer communication in 2024-25.
- With appreciation, Michele

Please read on for a few highlights and updates as we wrap up the 2023-24 school year.

ENROLLMENT and STAFFING

- We enroll students as long as we have the teacher capacity to serve them.
 - Current estimates for Fall 2024:
 - Returning students: 250
 - New students: 121
 - Total students: 371
- The 2024-25 budget assumes 352 enrolled students, with an attendance rate of 93% (327 ADA). (2023-24 assumed 334 enrolled students, with 317 ADA.)
- Given the nature of our program, we experience a mobility rate of 10-30%, so we do our best to take that into consideration as we predict teacher capacity, special education coverage, and enrollment space at similar programs serving the four counties that we serve: Sonoma, Solano, Napa, and Marin.

- This year, we're fielding new interest from Compass Charter School families in Sonoma and Marin who will not be able to be served by Compass next year. At the same time, we are contending with more staff turnover than usual for a variety of reasons (medical leave and resignation, release, retirement). We feel optimistic about several recent teacher hires and are in the process of hiring a new case manager.

BUDGET

- I work closely with our Charter Impact account representative on budget development and compliance monitoring. (Pathways has contracted with CI for a number of years, utilizing their business management, finance, and accounting team resources in partnership with our in-house staff.) We had the mandated budget hearing at our Board's regular June meeting on Wednesday, 6/12, and expect the budget will be approved at their special meeting next week on Tuesday, 6/18. For your reference, I've included the *Pathways Charter School Budget Narrative 24/25* as an attachment.

WASC

- Status: Accredited. Next visit: March 2025.
- We are mid-self-study and have been working with our WASC Coordinator all year to prepare for the visiting committee next spring.
- For context, here are the questions we will consider during our final all-staff meeting and in-service this Friday, June 14. Each Focus Group will address the same set of questions from its specific lens (Governance, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Community):
 - *How can we best support students, especially new ones, in academics?*
 - For example, we know that students who are with us for two or more years perform better on Ren and CAASPP.
 - *What parent/guardian supports are effective and how do we share them?*
 - Specific suggestions, which may vary by grade-level band.
 - *How can we modify math classes and supports to increase student proficiency?*
 - We've tried a number of different ways to support struggling math students. What works best?
 - *How do we ensure that test scores accurately reflect student proficiency?*
 - For example, are students motivated to take assessments seriously (whether IXL, Ren, CAASPP, class or course exams, etc.) so that we know the data we do have is reliable?

AUDIT

- We had a successful FY24 Interim audit this spring, and we have just a few bits and pieces to wrap up before the end of the month.
- Next step: New contracts for FY24 Final and subsequent year audits.

GRADUATION



Mid-Tassel Turn
Pathways Charter High School Graduation
Friday, June 7, 2024, at Center for Spiritual Living

An excerpt of my commencement speech:

It shouldn't be surprising, given the nature of our independent study program, the myriad reasons that students come to Pathways, and the different lengths of time they spend with us, but I am always struck by the variety of post-high school choices our students make. You've already gotten a peek into their stories from the slideshow we just watched, and you'll learn a little more about them during their introductions as the diplomas are presented.

Because we rarely come together as a whole school, it can be easy to forget that we serve roughly 350 students across four counties. Today, we gather in recognition and celebration of 47 of those students: The Class of 2024.

Of the 47 graduates, 28 live in Sonoma County, 12 are from Solano, 3 are from Napa, and 4 reside in Marin. One student started at Pathways as a first grader in September 2012, while six graduates joined us just this year as twelfth graders.

Thinking about our students and their differences, I've been pondering whether (or how) we are, in fact, more alike than different. This is not to downplay or disregard our unique characteristics and individual lived experiences, but rather, it is something to consider during these contentious times, when it is easy to judge or take offense, hurt, or be misunderstood.