

2024 School Committee Report to IYMC

With so much instability in the world, we are grateful for the relative stability within Scattergood that has enabled the school and School Committee to continue the work of strengthening our structures and foundations—both physically and organizationally—to help us thrive for years to come.

The Facilities team and subcommittee have been updating the 20-year Facilities Replacement Plan, and will begin the process of a Campus Master Plan to guide campus choices. We are excited to share the big news that 281 solar panels were installed last fall in three locations. The price was \$298,000, including installation. We have been approved for federal rebates, and a \$280,000 loan was secured to cover expenses in the interim which will be repaid with rebate money and electricity savings. Solar panels have been on the wish-list for many years; they will significantly reduce the school's dependence on fossil fuels, and the school has already seen a reduction of thousands of dollars a month in electric bills. Much is happening in the planning phase for the state-mandated sprinkler system and other dorm updates. Due to construction during the summer of 2025 and probably 2026, there will likely be disruption in dorm use during those IYMC annual sessions.

The Consultation and Finance subcommittee has been working with the Business and Development offices to update current policies, and create the numerous needed ones such as an Investment Policy, a Cash and Debt Management Policy, and a statement on Non-Disclosure Agreements, among others. Financially the school continues to be in a more stable position. You may remember the lean reports from four, five and six years ago, and we are grateful to be proceeding with both optimism and prudence.

After hosting the ISACS visiting team as part of our accreditation cycle, we happily received news that the school has been re-accredited and we now look to their recommendations. The school also hosted a site visit from Friends Council on Education for renewal of our membership with FCE as a Quaker School. A formal response is coming, but in the meanwhile Jane Fremon of FCE sent a personal letter relaying how moved she was by the school, its vibrant sense of community and of place, its spirit of positivity, and the commitment to Quaker testimonies. She calls Scattergood one of the “best kept secrets within the network of Friends schools”. We can share this letter if Friends are interested.

Strengthening relationships has been part of this quieter, organizational work. Following the All-School Arts Reunion last August, the alumni-based “Friends of Scattergood” group was formed to cultivate connections with former students and staff. In May, the group raised money to provide gifts (a class photo and custom printed shirt with design input from the students) to Scattergood's graduating seniors, welcoming them into the alumni community. We also applaud Scattergood's numerous efforts to build partnerships and affinity with the other Quaker schools in the midwest. The Open Book project was yet another example of relationship building. This story-telling project, funded by the Yearly Meeting as a way to reconnect with Scattergood, was an exercise in compassion, listening and understanding others. We are grateful for this community-building venture with the students and look forward to more activities with the Yearly Meeting.

Internally, the School Committee is taking a deeper look at how we, as a governance body, can best support the mission of the school. We are examining our subcommittee structure, asking what format supports the work we need to do, and what shifts might enable that to happen. During the year we will test the changes, then next spring review what worked well and what needs adjusting. For example, the Spiritual and Community Life subcommittee will now turn more attention towards nurturing connections between Scattergood students and members of IYMC, as well as the wider Quaker world. They hope to re-establish the Friends in Residence program, inviting Quakers to spend time on campus and be in community with students. These built-in bonds used to be more inherent when more kids from IYMC and other Yearly Meetings attended Scattergood. As that has changed, we feel that re-invigorating these relationships needs to be an overt and intentional part of the School Committee's work, and we want to continue to find creative ways to invite each other in. What perfect timing for the Open Book project this

year, and for the interest and investment by the Yearly Meeting in such ventures. These interactions help us to listen deeply and prayerfully **in both directions**, so we can learn from and understand each other. This keeps us open.

Additionally, the School Committee has formed an ad hoc subcommittee to explore business structures that reduce the risk to both the school and the Yearly Meeting, and specifically to explore the incorporation of the school separate from the Yearly Meeting. This is something that has been strongly recommended at least twice by ISACS, and most recently by FCE. We call it the Structure and Governance Exploratory ad hoc, or SAGE for short. Currently SAGE members are Katie Jacoby and Ruth Hampton from the School Committee, with Karen Greenler and Catherine Dorenbach serving as non-School Committee members, with input from Jim Cottingham, IYMC Trustees and others. The SAGE ad hoc will host a short presentation at this year's annual session introducing the current structure and its challenges, then there will be opportunities for feedback and conversation during the year. We are grateful to **not** be in crisis mode and thus able to tenderly hold these larger questions.

Bob Dylan once said "There is nothing so stable as change". Many things at Scattergood have changed over the decades, it has experienced numerous phases, with highs and lows. But throughout, the foundation of Quakerism has, and will continue to, support the structures of this school where young people may become truer versions of themselves, more accepting of others, be challenged academically **and** grow spiritually by listening for that "still small voice". They can develop habits that foster a sense of purpose and connection to the world, which builds their resilience to adversity and the pressures of today's realities. These young people are greatly needed, and the School Committee wants to express our deep appreciation for the staff and leadership of the school, who lovingly carry out this mission.

For the School Committee,
Ruth Hampton, clerk