

PVPA Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2021

Beginning Time: 6:03pm Ending Time: 9:28

LOCATION: [https://zoom.us/j/95164196408?pwd=YzVYdUJwSlZrUDhWbTNYOHRvcnZ6dz09 --](https://zoom.us/j/95164196408?pwd=YzVYdUJwSlZrUDhWbTNYOHRvcnZ6dz09--)
PVPA2020 GROUPS: Board

Members present:

Melinda Winter, Jim Barnhill, Andrea Nathanson, Marty Espinola, David Potter, Neil Hede, Shino Yoshen, Jake Rosenblum, Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola, Erin Linehan, Sean Moore, Latrina Denson, Tonya Ward

Members absent:

Other present: Marcy Connor, Brent Nielsen (current Interim Executive Director),

Mission Statement: *PVPA offers its students intensive exposure to the performing arts within the context of an excellent college preparatory curriculum.*

Stated by: Sean Moore

Public Comment –

Pete Casey – supports efforts for in-person learning, concern with constraints of space and staff desire, concern with mental health and isolation of students, looking for a plan, a checklist, reached out to DESE for assistance? Please let us know what you need from the families for support, have you asked DESE for support

Emily Hede – reading a written statement regarding mental health struggles and the impact of the MS schedule on the HS school students – adding Zoom time and cuts time between classes and flex time, results of survey to 9th graders, concern with lack of participation of students and families with re-opening plan

Amy Benoit – parent of a junior, excellent student who is now “going through the motions” without the same enthusiasm – daughter Kalen speaks to the challenges of remote learning, lack of motivation

Trish Hede – parent of ninth grader – woeful lack of meaningful communication from school admin – feels out of the loop – getting all of our students to in-person learning, now, while there is still meaningful time left in the school year – DESE expects planning already – shares numbers of students and a cohort hybrid model at 70% capacity

Public comment closed after 15+ minutes

Topic: Approval of Minutes from March meeting –

Motion to approve: Jenyka, Seconded: Marty

No discussion

Roll call vote: M Winter Yes, Andrea Nathanson Yes, Erin Linehan Yes, J Barnhill Yes, J Rosenblum Yes, D Potter Yes, Jenyka Yes, Marty Yes, Neil Yes, Sean abstain, Tonya Ward YES, Latrina YES, Shino YES

passed with a vote of 12 yes 1 abstention

Motion to approve minutes from March 24, 2021

Marty moves, Andrea seconded

Discussion: none

Jim Y, Mary Y, Neil Y, Erin Y, Sean abstain, Andrea Y, David Y, Jake Y, Jenyka Y, Mindi Y, Tonya Y, Latrina Y, Shino abstain

Minutes approved 11 - 2

Executive Director Report

- Shared Exec Dir report but will speak directly to concerns from comments
- It's been a year of very little communication, takes responsibility for any part of that as part of the admin team
- Feb took over the leadership and first contacted Labor Management committee to collaborate immediately – we decided to meet twice as often as contract stated, to make up for lost time
- We first agreed upon next year's school calendar in order to begin the scheduling process
- Before the commissioner mandated, we began conversations about returning to school
- After a couple of meetings we had a very short window provided by DESE to plan for students returning to the building
- Mandate was for MS full-time five days a week
- DESE offered help but threatened that if you lack space and apply for a waiver then the state will come out and inspect/verify – no offer to help because we are doing what we are expected to do.
- We do not have the space to welcome all of our high school students back, according to CDC and DESE guidelines
- With 3 feet distancing requirement, we are removing furniture and still finding space for 10 students at best – we can fit about 50%
- Incredible disruptions to schedules would have been needed, not the same as what has been happening
- 5.5 hours of structured learning time per day for all students
- New schedule shared in Friday notes, on the agenda tonight
- Longer class periods required to meet DESE mandates
- Asynchronous learning day last Friday to work with teachers on scheduling concerns

- Expectation is not that students will have more screen time, no lecture style 65 minute classes, teachers will have more flexibility to use asynchronous activities, breakout activities, small-group work, more differentiated and more engagement is expected
- Accredited program designed for people working with adolescents to be able to respond to student mental health crises
- Performing Arts – requirements in place for the arts which require more distancing, 7 students can be singing in the largest classroom even with the special masks purchased
- Staffing, not staff preferences, has been one big issue, we need additional staff to support the challenges involved
- Expecting close to 100 MS students, plus about 25 HS students previously identified for in-person support

Enrollment: 70 of 72 7th grade spots are accepted, other grades are filling, healthy waitlists

- Accepted students day June 11th and 12th , including brand-new students who didn't have this opportunity yet
- Student Opportunity Act Plan – a grant proposal for \$40,000 to help recruit and retain BIPOC faculty, focused on evidence-based practices
- Group COVID testing for teachers has occurred, no positives found
- Fundraising Auction in the planning stages occurring soon, more info in Friday Notes

Questions for Brent:

- Andrea- curious to hear from teachers, expressing appreciation for teachers, appreciate Brent's comments describing the new schedule
- Max – exploring outside options with tents? Brent – 2 tents in the fall until Nov 1. Supposed to get 4 tents in April, setting up this weekend – will be the priority spaces for music and singing and dance classes- they should be in place through next November, including summer programming – Lunch and breakfast also under the tents
- Neil – 78% of MS students returning? Is that in line with the survey we sent? How about a HS response? Do we have a plan for the return of HS students? Brent – exact numbers not in front of me, but some things are different. Vaccination is more common now, some MS families changed opinions, we need to know how many MS students are attending before we can consider how many HS students we can fit

Mindi makes a motion to approve the Plan for Re-Entry of Grades 7 & 8

Andrea seconds

Discussion:

- Erin – in favor of the schedule – 4 blocks 55 minutes per wk, but this year it's been 3 blocks of 45 minutes, plus flex time outside of class – but most students don't actually do the flex time work expectations – we thought still 45 min of class plus 20 extra minutes of social/emotional learning – this can bridge the in-person to the remote students, but also keeping the remote

students connected to their school/class – plan activities around social/emotional support and this is for all classes every day

- Fiona – 33 responses to a 9th grade survey show fear, anxiety, depression – this will negatively affect students' mental health – we're struggling – happy to hear that teachers are not going to increase their lecturing – happy that students responded with suggestions and creative ideas to help make things better
- Jenyka – thanks everyone for their hard work, esp students and student reps for courage and strength – there has been a lot of student input on making social/emotional connections –
- David – difficult choices, admin and Board are very constrained, building space is a huge challenge, but this plan is clear, socio/emot issues have been addressed, possible waiver related to bringing HS students to school, this is a plan that I can support
- Mindi – similar sentiments, mentions Youth Mental Health First Aid as not new to us this year
- Neil – concern with 20 minute additional time and how it is used – some teachers may use up the entire 65 minutes? How flexibly will the time be used?
- Erin – plan is to decrease hw, increase socialemotional learning/connections , looking into multiple models for how to do this instructional hybrid model, trying to find a model which supports students emotional health, social connection, and gives them enough time
- Neil – that's the MS – Brent? HS teachers' perspective on the extra 20 minutes?
- Brent – MS instructional challenge is to work with students remotely at the same time as supporting students in school – there is a big difference for planning lessons – in the HS teachers do have a clear plan of how to use their time to maximize the instruction and meet the needs of all teachers –
- Erin – question: all MS acad classrooms will be outfitted with video conferencing systems – sounds very cool, game-changer for hybrid instruction – Are we planning to do the same for the arts classrooms, phasing in? Or can arts classes use, for ex, my classroom to take adv of it?
- Brent – we were able to get 10 of these systems – more systems would have taken much longer for us to acquire and install – but future money is hoped for and could be used for more – arts classes for this spring we have wide-angle web cams

Vote Jim y, Marty Y, Neil Y Erin Y Sean Y, Andrea Y David Y Jake Y Jenyka Y Mindi Y, Tonya Y, Latrina Y, Shino Y

Passes unanimously

SAP Committee –

- Presented draft of SAP Goals 1 and 2 Leadership & Governance and Diversity , Inclusion , Equity, Anti-Racism
- Questions about Dir fo Arts and Dir of Academics – Brent reported his plan to revise leadership team and look to hire for these two positions
- Erin – Paidea concerns could include focus on Social Justice action – Instructional Leadership teams? David said that could be found elsewhere in the document not shared tonight
- Shino took detailed notes for the SAP committee to consider all input received
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Finance Committee –

FY21 3rd quarter projections – not going to go through details of it today

Net income projected to be 135,000 at end of year, ahead of the flat budget anticipated

Tuition (above-foundation) is yet to be finalized – these numbers were not updated recently – the ultimate update could create a drop in revenue

FY 22 budgeting – we had an initial look at it, will be meeting again in next few weeks and we will report at next meeting with more info

Marcy – Charter Scho Assoc is aware that DESE projections are off and they are working to remedy that – told today that DESE will get us updated numbers sometime in April – tentative date for special meeting is April 27 – we might be looking to BoT for an extension of due date for the budget – generally present it at May meeting but without the concrete numbers we may need to push it to a June meeting

Ad Hoc Transitional Leadership Planning Committee

- Marty shared an update, linked to Brent's plans for new hires
- Shino – is there any support that Brent and/or leadership team needs from the board
- Brent – open communication is great – Charter Sch Assoc has been helpful putting together job descriptions

Student Reps

- Jake – shout-out for Spring to Action fundraiser – praise and thanks for teachers – echoes communication concerns already well-expressed in this meeting –
- Max – needs to be imposed sanction of less homework, less screen-focused time and more on kids interacting with each other, social/emotional time, is what most students are wanting, we now understand the state-mandated time on learning
- Fiona – already spoke about students' concerns with schedule change, echo Max's perspectives for less screen time more social/emotional learning

Staff Reps

- Erin – MS teachers are super anxious and also extremely excited to teach in person after April break
- Jenyka – rain date to Saturday for drive-in movie event – concessions (cash only) going to the senior class – looking to create more opportunities for social connections – cap and gown orders for graduation went out last week -

Governance Committee

- Retreat has been a focus of our planning, next item on Agenda relates to this

President's Business

- Board on Track membership – special meeting was held – Jake took great minutes – the agreement is attached –

Mindi makes a motion to approve purchase of Board on Track / David seconds

Jim: not intended to bias the board, but the contract is binding and does not clearly state some of the oral presentations and promises made

Andrea – I also agree we should sign it but I have a question about the amount – I thought we would get a few free months, pay only \$12,000 but this one says 15 months for \$15,000

Mindi- this isn't the actual contract, it show the language but we are voting for the \$12,000 f

Andrea – for starting now and going through June of 22

David – including the retreat?

Mindi- yes

Andrea – this looks like it has all our info in it

Mindi – it's just not updated, I've gotten a DocuSign from them every day

Jim – please put the details into the contract – if we do not include the retreat as a service, they can change their mind

Mindi – they will not change the membership agreement, they have a good connection to the school and there is no reason to think that they will not honor it

David – can it be put into writing in the body of the e-mail sending it back signed?

Mindi – it is already in writing, yes, it is not only and oral agreement

No further discussion

VOTE: Jim Y, Marty Y, Neil Y, Erin abstain, Sean Y, Andrea Y, David Y, Jake Y, Jenyka Y, Mindi Y, Tonya Y, Latrina Y, Shino Y

Motion passes 12-Y 1 abstention

Mindi – invitation will be coming to Board members – Boardable info will be migrated to Board on Track – Thom and I will make sure that our meetings, agendas, minutes will be available on the web re-directing to Board on Track

Mindi – since school is re-opened – a desire to meet back in person –

Mindi - Making a motion to return to in-person meetings as of our May meeting – the way to do that would be for people to sit at the table would be in the building, in one of the rooms with the new setups of tv and camera – one room has enough space, we would wear masks –

David seconds the motion

Erin – voting for Board Members to be allowed but not required to be in-person, still with a Zoom link for the public and non-attending Board members?

Mindi- yes, returning to in-person meetings with a hybrid option for Board members and remote accessibility for the public

Andrea – how will it be for remote Board members

Erin explains the setup – camera zooms in on speaker and out again to see whole room, microphone picks up voices well, a large screen showing the Google Meet, chats, etc.

Andrea – largest capacity classroom?

Brent – 21 students –

Jake – proposing to push the vote so as to not get there next month and it's not quite right and it's actually harder to communicate

David – we could have a Plan B with our laptops to do it as we have been doing it

Jenyka – we'll have been in the building already and can work out the logistics

Neil – we can do this if we can expect the school to work with the technology

Jim – I'm with Jake, I'd like to push the vote and get more information

Jake – I'm concerned mostly with the public access

Andrea – concern isn't about the technology – what the board configuration will look like in the room – not facing each other, with masks on?

Vote Jim N Marty abst Neil Y Erin N Sean N Andrea N David Y Jake N, Jenyka Y Mindi Y Tonya Y Latrina abst Shino Y

6 Y 5 N 2 abst

Vote passes – Main meeting will be in person – more information to be shared

Public Comment

- Janet Casey – students are in crisis and begging to get back into school, the Board is doing a poor job at communicating – I understand space constraints but other schools – kids are in crisis, we're going to lose kids – the PVPA teachers have done a great job, best of the three schools in my house – not feeling good, there are untapped resources, a lot of us stand ready to help
- Edmund – student rep for 9th grade, one of many miserable students, immense pressure to succeed, we are confused which leads to fear and anger

Mindi – no more raised hands -0 adjourned at 9:28pm