



Palisades Charter High School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday January 23, 2024 at 5:00 PM

Location

Gilbert Hall, Palisades Charter High School 15777 Bowdoin Street, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION WILL BE PROVIDED FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY:

Pursuant to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, any individual with a disability who requires reasonable accommodation to attend or participate in this meeting of the Governing Board of Palisades Charter High School may request assistance by contacting the Main Office at (310) 230-6623 at least 24 hours in advance.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:

Supporting documentation is available at the Main Office of the School, located at 15777 Bowdoin Street, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272, (Tel: 310- 230-6623) and may also be accessible on the PCHS website at http://palihigh.org/boardrecords.aspx.

ALL TIMES ARE APPROXIMATE AND ARE PROVIDED FOR CONVENIENCE ONLY:

Notice is hereby given that the order of consideration of matters on this agenda may be changed without prior notice. All items may be heard in a different order than listed on the agenda.

Trustees Present

Andrew Paris, David Pickard IV, Karen Ellis, Kiumars Arzani, Kristina Irwin, Maggie Nance, Melissa Schilling, Sara Margiotta, Tyler Farrell

Trustees Absent

Robert Rene, Rustin Kharrazi, Saken Sherkhanov

Ex Officio Members Present

Dr. Pam Magee, Juan Pablo Herrera

Non Voting Members Present

Dr. Pam Magee, Juan Pablo Herrera

Guests Present

Jeff Roepel, Martha Monahan

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

Sara Margiotta called a meeting of the board of trustees of Palisades Charter High School to order on Tuesday Jan 23, 2024 at 5:07 PM.

B. Record Attendance and Guests

Rustin Kharrazi is being represented by the ASB Vice-President Shira Berukhim.

C. Public Comment

Daliah Setareh - As a Jewish community they are afraid. Jewish students and parents are afraid to speak up and are hide because of concerns that students will be adversely impacted at Pali. She loves Pali and how they boast about a diverse student body. But, she feels like the Jewish students have been excluded by the Campus Unification Director. As an immigrant, she left Iran because of the Jewish oppression in schools. Her family also escaped from Germany because of oppression. She feels like her students are having a similar experience and it is affecting her students mental health. She doesn't feel like the Campus Unification Director did not embrace everyone in Pali's diverse student body. She states that after there was a complaint regarding the behavior of the Campus Unification Director and investigation was launched. She notes that the investigation did indication that students had been excluded from an event but that the report said that it was a "technical glitch". The report also states that his behavior was not a bias but that he was following the Ethnic Studies curriculum. It is hard to imagine a curriculum that said don't even ask me how I feel about Israel because they would not like his response or Jews are not a minority, they have not suffered. Wants to know what Ethnic Studies program that Pali has adopted allowed for this to happen.

Bahareh Aslmand - Definition of unify make or become united, uniform or whole. The Unification Director did not do so. He has caused division and made/makes students feel excluded, disliked and unsure about what they have been taught by their parents/teachers and religious leaders. He excluded Jewish students from the Living Justice Wall last year and again this year. She investigated and found out that he said that the Jewish community were not a minority and have not suffered. They are looking to Pali to have a sense of moral clarity. It is important to teach correct history because spreading misinformation leads to hate, intolerance and insights harassment. Jewish people constitute 2% of US population but 1/2 of hate crimes were against Jews.

Concerned about Ethnic Studies Curriculum that is referenced in the Investigation report. She feels that this should not be taught at Pali. Need Unification Director that promoted inclusivity and that makes all students feel valued and connected.

Douglas Weston - Here on behalf of his daughter and the larger community. He heard about what the 2 previous speakers were talking about and is concerned. He holds Pali in high esteem. He has spent his professional life fighting for those who are marginalized in school settings. He feels like his daughter is now being forced to defend her identity. He went to a Boarding school when he was one of a very few Jewish students. He came to America because we stand for a different set of ideal. He didn't expect to find someone who was antisemitic and was justifying this through the curriculum.

Nancy Goodstein: Deferred time to Daliah Setareh - Want to know what Ethnic Studies Curriculum Pali has adopted. Parents and students have not been informed about how the school is addressing this issue with Campus Unification Director returning from his leave of absence and expressing that he felt that there had been a misunderstanding. They would like the urgent issue to be put on the agenda for the next Board meeting. How will Unification Director be a role model who will foster unification ad not exclusions and discrimination. They want to be part of the ethnic studies curriculum discussion. The Jewish faith is associated with antisemitism and wants the Jewish students to feel safe and respected like any other affinity group.

Mark Karlan - He praised Dr. Magee. His family has been at Pali for 6 years with 2 students. He also praised Karen Ellis for her efforts with his son Senior year. His son was co-President of Jewish student union and went to the Justice League and was told that Jewish students didn't belong because they hadn't experienced discrimination or oppression. His family was stunned by these comments. How can anyone think Jews have not experienced oppression, the Holocaust and thousands of years of other incidents of discrimination. Son took time to work with Unification Director and was finally allowed to join. He reports that this happened again this year days after the Oct. 7th massacre. They were told they could not be part of the Unification Wall. Asked how that was possible. The power of our community is in our unity. Everyone belongs, including the Jewish students.

Sylvia Karlan- Echo's her husband's statements. Thanking everyone at Pali for the wonderful years her students had. Wants to ensure that Jewish students are included in Justice League and all the other activities. Wants this to be included on next month's agenda to see how this is going to be addressed.

Pauline Hamid - Pali has been home away from home for her children. She knows that Dr. Magee is always there ready to help along with the counsellors. To hear what has happened to the Jewish students breaks her heart. Can't believe there is antisemitism and swastikas on campus. To have the Jewish told they don't belong days after the Oct. 7 massacre is wrong. We need to education the children and staff a little bit more so that history doesn't repeat itself. The Hollocaust isn't repeated and Jewish students are not called pigs and should be burned. She wants to help to come up with a solution where all students to be heard. Thanked Pali for trying to spread awareness and wants a solution where everyone feels safe, included and loved.

Jennifer Sternberg - Wanted to be here to support. Born in South Africa and understands what discrimination feels like. She went to Pali High and never experienced anything like this. Her son, co-President of JSU was not told about representation at Back to School Night by the Campus Unification Director. Wants a person in this position that will unify the students vs. being divisive. What parameters are being set around the Ethnic Studies course that Unification Director was following? Wants to see what he is basing his views off of.

Aviva Hayempour - She has 1 student complete Pali and 2 currently enrolled. She reported that this is something the students discuss. They talk about the Campus Unification Director and what he does. Her son reports that he doesn't wear his Star of David around this individual because he isn't sure about what this individual may say to him or how he will react. Concerned she has a child who is hiding being Jewish because he has worked closely with the Campus Unification Director with Linkcrew and expresses concern about how his Jewishness will affect those interactions or whether the Director will sign off on his hours. She reports that this has been going on since her daughter was here (currently a Jr. in college) and concerned about the comments he has made. Doesn't believe it has to do with the Ethnic Studies curriculum because of off handed comments that have been made. This is an important position to bring the campus together and the students don't have confidence in the current Unification Director. This affects the attitude the kids have an whether or not they want to participate in some of the activities.

Shab Kerendina - Daughter was one of the 2 girls who was involved in this situation. After they heard the comments from Mr. Stewart they went to their counselor and counselor brought matter to the attention of Dr. Magee. He noted that the matter was handled very nicely at that point. Daughter was crying. They thought the matter was put to rest by Mr. Stewart not coming back to school anymore for the type of comments he made which were inappropriate. He is now back and stated that he didn't receive any

letter or did his daughter. His daughter does not feel safe. Mr. Stewart has a position of authority and has a right to dictate what happens as a person in charge. Because of this his daughter does not speak and just sits respectfully. His daughter told him that he kind of apologized saying he was sorry that she misunderstood him. That is more of an insult than it is an apology. Not sure what Mr. Stewart's believes are but they are affecting how he performs his duties at school. Doesn't think this matter is over yet.

Carolin Bakhani - As her husband mentioned, they have been victims of antisemitism. When her daughter came home crying her eyes out, she has been waiting to see how the school will be handling it. She thanked Dr. Magee for how she has been handling it but when Mr. Gio came back to school she wanted to know where we are headed with this. Her kids are scared and she had been a proud parent that her kids had been students at Pali. She has sacrificed to get to the United States. She has been arrested and put in prison for being Jewish. Expressed concern about her child coming home crying and telling her about how her teacher treated her just because she was Jewish. Wants to know how school is going to handle the situation. She is very uncomfortable sending her kids to school knowing kids are not being treated equally. Wants someone in this position to make students feel safe at school. This is not the situation right now. Her students won't wear their Jewish stars to school at this point because their Director is treating them this way.

Kim Loppard: All DEI does is divide people more. We don't need to tell anyone they are superior or oppresses. Everyone is unique and everyone, independent of skin color or religion faces problems in their daily life. Stop telling kids one group is better or luckier than another. If someone is doing well it's because they worked hard.

October 7th was a devastating day for Israel. If that happened to Americans we would be at full scale war now and our attackers would be decimated. Let those countries figured it out. We don't need someone at Pali leading our kids in either direction. Parents can discuss this at home.

Niloufar Berukhim: I believe that Jewish students at Pali have a place in DEI, because one of its' goals is to become aware and respectful of ALL people. Jewish people have often been questioned when we say we have been oppressed, because many have been able to rise again and become successful members of society. For example, my husband had to escape Iran at the age of 17, because of being Jewish. He arrived in the US with \$100 in his pocket, started working jobs the next day, moving from state to state until he found a place where he could effort to live, work and go to college. Staying a victim and blaming his past for consistent setbacks was never a choice. His story speaks for most parents of the Iranian Jewish students here at Pali. In the past few months my daughter has faced antisemitism and middle-eastern hate here in the US, more than ever. I am hoping that the Pali administration will offer the support my daughter needs at this time. Giving her a chance to raise awareness of her people as stated under DEI goals.

Bren Boston: As a Jewish parent, it is important that DEI include Jews, a tiny minority on Earth who have been persecuted over and over again. Jewish students need to feel safe on campus and in the curriculum. Any curriculum that paints Jews as an oppressor is false and inappropriate and should not be tolerated. Jews have a right to exist and to defend themselves in person and in conversation but they should not have to constantly defend their right to exist, especially not on campus.

Janet Lamden: Hi dear parents,

please come to the PALI board meeting on Tuesday, January 23 at 5 PM at Gilbert hall. We will be able to submit verbal and written comments during the public comment segment, which is right at the beginning of the board meeting at 5 PM.

Specifically, this is to address the issues with the DEI Campus Unification Director. As you know, he has repeatedly excluded the Jewish students and has made comments such as: Jews are not an oppressed minority but rich white people. This after he had been admonished and had been trained at the Wiesenthal Museum of Tolerance. And independent investigation concluded that although his behavior was not right, it was because he was following the Ethnic Studies Curriculum.

We basically just want the board to see that we want to be seen and heard and we do not feel safe. we need the board to see that there is a lot of support behind us. People will be able to make a two minute verbal comment. And there is a google form below to make written comments for anyone not able to attend the meeting in person. These comments are read as part of the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

It is important to stay positive and not be threatening in any way. WE DO NOT WANT TO THREATEN A LAWSUIT.

Suggested talking points:

- 1. we need a Director of campus unification, who knows how to unify rather than create disunity.
- 2. Since the independent investigator stated that Campus Unification Director's actions were not based on his personal bias but were based on the Ethnic Studies Curriculum, we want clarification on what ethnic studies curriculum Pali is implementing.
- 3. We want Pali to be transparent about what it is doing to make Jewish students feel safe
- 4. We want Pali to be engaged and committed to programs that teach cultural competence that includes the Jewish community.

WE DO NOT WANT TO THREATEN LAWSUITS at this time.

Thank you

Anonymous:

I am writing as a concerned stakeholder within the Palisades Charter High School community to express my deep concerns regarding recent information that has come to

light. It has come to my attention that stakeholders and parents have been informed that the Unification Director is involved in teaching an ethnic studies curriculum. This revelation is deeply upsetting for several reasons that I would like to outline below:

1. Lack of Teaching Credentials:

Firstly, it is disconcerting to learn that the Unification Director, does not possess the necessary credentials to be a qualified teacher. The role of a teacher requires specific training and certification to ensure that students receive a high-quality education. It is essential that individuals with the appropriate qualifications and expertise are entrusted with the responsibility of educating our students.

2. Absence of an Established Ethnic Studies Curriculum:

Secondly, it has been made clear that no ethnic studies curriculum has been developed at our school at this time. It is perplexing to hear that the Unification Director is purportedly involved in teaching a curriculum that does not even exist yet. An essential part of any educational program is the development and implementation of a well-structured curriculum, and this should be undertaken by educators with the necessary qualifications and experience in the subject matter.

3. Limited Relevance of Book Club Participation:

Lastly, I would like to point out that the Unification Director's involvement in a book club, while commendable, does not grant him the authority or expertise to develop or teach an ethnic studies curriculum. Ethnic studies is a complex and specialized field that requires educators with a deep understanding of the subject matter and the ability to engage students effectively in meaningful discussions and learning experiences.

In light of these concerns, I urge the Palisades Charter High School Board to thoroughly review and reconsider the role of the Unification Director in matters related to curriculum development and teaching. Our students deserve the best possible education, and it is essential that qualified educators are entrusted with the responsibility of shaping their educational experiences.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to hearing how the Board plans to address these concerns and ensure the quality of education at our school.

Janice Kamenir-Reznik: I graduated Pali High in 1969. I was very surprised to learn of the recent conduct of the campus' so-called unification director. By excluding the Jewish students from fully participating in various aspects of programming within the ambit of the unification program he has bullied and intimidated jewish students, creating anxiety, hurt and disunity. Such a practice on the part of faculty should be unacceptable to the administration of the school. His unfortunate personal bias should clearly disqualify this person from holding the job he holds. It is truly shocking to think that this offensive behavior is taking place at Pali High. I join those who vociferously protest his continued employment at Pali in this position.

D. Approve Minutes

Kiumars Arzani made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 12-12-23. Kristina Irwin seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Tyler Farrell Aye Kiumars Arzani Aye Karen Ellis Aye Sara Margiotta Aye Melissa Schilling Aye Robert Rene Absent Maggie Nance Aye David Pickard IV Aye Saken Sherkhanov Absent Rustin Kharrazi Absent Kristina Irwin Aye **Andrew Paris** Aye

II. Organizational Reports

A. Student Report

Shira Berukhim:

- -Valentines Day: Wednesday Feb 14: Gram selling will start soon, Teddy bear walk, post it board, senior dating same
- -Holocaust Remembrance Day zoom with Holocaust survivor, Morris Engelson, on Jan 30 during lunch (location tbd) most likely in mercer
- -Palipalooza: February 29; auditions Jan 29-31 at lunch; sign ups open now
- -Gracias Señor Senior Fundraiser; Jan 29-Feb 10; all grades can participate
- -Freshman class bake sale this Friday January 26; first class of 2028 fundraiser
- -New club informational meetings are happening this Wednesday, January 23 in F104 at lunch; Applications to become a Pali club are due January 31 by the end of nutrition in F104; Our service club day will be February 7 and our interest club day will be February 8!

В.

Parent Report

Melissa Schilling, Kristina Irwin:

- Parents concerned about academic performance in the area of math, which I believe we will hear about later this evening.

C. Represented Classified Staff Report

Andy Paris: Nothing to report at this time.

D. Unrepresented Classified Staff Report

Karen Ellis: Nothing to report at this time.

E. Faculty Report

David Pickard IV, Tyler Farrell, Maggie Nance:

- Grade appeal process is not communicated well to faculty. There does not seem to be a screening process before a meeting is scheduled. There needs to be some oversight into whether a grade appeal is valid and worth discussing. At the very least, we need to be sent the list of definitions, i.e. incompetence, bad faith etc. when the grade appeal is scheduled.
- Faculty is concerned with gaps in the administration team and what is the timeline to address this.
- Concern about the rigor of Pali's online program.

F. Human Resources Director (HR) Report

Martha Monahan: Report stands as submitted.

G. Director of Operations Report

Report stands as submitted.

H. Admin. Safety and Security Team

Brooke King: We have an item on the agenda this evening and will report out then.

I. Director of Development Report

Report stands as submitted.

J. Chief Business Officer (CBO) Report

Juan Pablo Herrera: Report stands as submitted.

- The governor released information for the state budget for 24-25 fiscal year. The COLA proposal is estimated at 0.76%.
- LAO issued a report that there was a deficit in CA, but the governor reported 38 billion dollar deficit, which is more favorable.

- The development committee has set a \$400,000 fundraising target and we are at \$242,000.
- We did get a large donation to support the choir program for their trip to New York, NY.

K. Executive Director/Principal (EDP) Report

Dr. Pam Magee: Report stands as submitted.

- I do want to draw attention to the Ethnic Studies curriculum update. There is a team of teachers, administrators, and professionals that are developing this curriculum for our school.
- Pali does not have a DEI program.

III. Academic Excellence

A. Academic Department Mid-Term Presentation

Dr. Chris Lee, Monica Iannessa, Larry Weiner, and Randy Tenansnow presented the Academic Department Mid-Term Presentation, which can be found in the board materials.

B. College Center Presentation

Karen Ellis presented the PCHS School Profile and College Center Data, which can be found in the board materials.

IV. Board Committees (Stakeholder Board Level Committees)

A. Academic Accountability Committee Update

Tyler Farrell: Nothing to report at this time.

B. Budget & Finance Committee Update

Sara Margiotta:

- -Committee reviewed the 2024/2025 Budget Calendar and is recommending it to the BOT for approval.
- -We discussed transportation and requested that this be put out for RFP.
- -Committee reviewed and approved the Virutual Curriculum contract with APEX noting that the additional \$4500 for the current school year can be covered by the Credit Recovery grant as it was originally unbudgeted.

C. Election Committee Update

David Pickard IV: The first Election Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, January 30, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. in F106.

D. Charter Committee Update

Sara Margiotta: Has not met yet because renewal is not until 2025.

V. Board Committees (Board Members Only)

A. Board Members Only- Committee Updates

Audit Committee - Has not met yet, we were given a 2 month extension.

Grade Appeal Committee - There were more grade appeal in the Fall semester of 2023 than previous years.

Risk Management - We are going to meet by the end of January. A schedule will be sent out.

Survey Committee - We will meet by the end of January.

VI. School Emergency Operations Plan

A. School Emergency Operations Plan

Brooke King presented the School Emergency Operations Plan, which can be found in the board materials.

Maggie Nance made a motion to approve the PCHS School Emergency Operations Plan for 2024.

David Pickard IV seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Andrew Paris Aye Robert Rene Absent David Pickard IV Aye Melissa Schilling Aye Kristina Irwin Aye Tyler Farrell Aye Karen Ellis Aye Rustin Kharrazi Absent Sara Margiotta Aye Maggie Nance Aye Saken Sherkhanov Absent Kiumars Arzani Ave

VII. PCHS Cafeteria Menu

A. Update on the Implementing a Meatless Monday

Juan Pablo Herrera: Meal distribution is relatively flat on Mondays. We still distribute meat at the windows, but for the most part it is well received and doing well! Next month they will have a test kitchen come and try new meatless options.

VIII. Finance

A. 2023-24 Budget vs Actuals

Juan Pablo Herrera presented the 2023-2024 Budget vs. Actuals, which can be found in the board materials.

B. 2024-25 Budget Development Calendar

Juan Pablo Herrera presented the 2024-2025 Budget Development Calendar, which can be found in the board materials.

Sara Margiotta made a motion to approve the 2024-25 Budget Development Calendar.

Kiumars Arzani seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Melissa Schilling Aye Kiumars Arzani Aye Tyler Farrell Aye Andrew Paris Aye Sara Margiotta Aye Kristina Irwin Aye Maggie Nance Aye Saken Sherkhanov Absent David Pickard IV Aye Rustin Kharrazi Absent Robert Rene Absent Karen Ellis Aye

C. 2024-25 Transportation Update

Juan Pablo Herrera presented the 2024-2025 Transportation Update, which can be found in the board materials.

D. Virtual Curriculum Contract

Juan Pablo Herrera presented the Virtual Curriculum Contract, which can be found in the board materials.

Kiumars Arzani made a motion to approve the APEX license for 2023-24 and 2024-25. Melissa Schilling seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Robert Rene Absent
Saken Sherkhanov Absent
Sara Margiotta Aye
David Pickard IV Aye
Melissa Schilling Aye

Roll Call

Kiumars Arzani Aye
Andrew Paris Abstain
Rustin Kharrazi Absent
Maggie Nance Aye
Tyler Farrell Aye
Karen Ellis Aye
Kristina Irwin Aye

IX. Consent Agenda: Finance Items

A. School Organized Conferences/Trips

David Pickard IV made a motion to approve the consent agenda items including: March 7 - March 10 | Anaheim, CA - DECA Conference | Supervising Teacher: Mr. Kolavo & April 24 - April 26 | Austin, TX - College Board Preparate Conference | Attendees: Ms. Cervantes, Ms. Ramzi, Ms. A. Pereyra, Ms. L. Pereyra, Mr. Buckman, Ms. Saxon, Ms. Martinez.

Karen Ellis seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Tyler Farrell Aye David Pickard IV Aye **Andrew Paris** Aye Karen Ellis Aye Robert Rene Absent Maggie Nance Aye Melissa Schilling Aye Saken Sherkhanov Absent Sara Margiotta Aye Kiumars Arzani Aye Rustin Kharrazi Absent Kristina Irwin Aye

X. PCHS Self-Initiated Conference and Professional Development Requests

A. Self-Initiated Conference and Professional Development Requests

Melissa Schilling made a motion to approve the PCHS Self-Initiated Conference and Professional Development Request, specifically February 6-February 10 | Kansas City, MO: Association of Writers and Writing Programs Annual Conference | Attendee: Karen Perkins.

Kristina Irwin seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Robert Rene Absent

Roll Call

Sara Margiotta Aye Saken Sherkhanov Absent Karen Ellis Abstain Maggie Nance Aye Melissa Schilling Aye **Andrew Paris** Aye David Pickard IV Abstain Kiumars Arzani Aye Tyler Farrell Abstain Kristina Irwin Aye Rustin Kharrazi Absent

XI. New Business / Announcements

A. Announcements / New Business

The date of next board meeting is Tuesday, February 27, 2024 @ 5:00 p.m. in Gilbert Hall.

B. Announce items for closed session, if any.

XII. Closed Session

A. Conference with Legal Counsel - Anticipated Litigation

Entered closed session at 7:46 p.m.

B. Employee complaint/Assignment/Discipline/Dismissal/Release

C. Potential Litigation

XIII. Open Session

A. Return to Open Session

B. Report Out on Action Taken In Closed Session, If Any.

The Board of Trustees is requesting Dr. Magee to re-evaluate the Justice League programming to ensure it is inclusive to any group who wants to actively participate.

XIV. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:49 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, David Pickard IV

Documents used during the meeting

- Human Resources Board Report 01_23_2024.pdf
- Operations Board Report 01_23_2024 .pdf
- CBO Board Report 01_23_2024.pdf
- EDP Board Report 01_23_2024.pdf
- AA_PCHS School Profile 2023-2024.pdf
- · College Center Data.pdf
- 2024 Board College Center Data.pdf
- 2023 AP Subject Totals.pdf
- PCHS SEOP 2024.pdf
- 2023-24 First Interim & Actuals as of 12_31_2023.pdf
- 2024-25 Budget Development Calendar 1-22-24.pdf
- PCHS School Bus Program Communication for 2024-25 SAMPLE-DRAFT.pdf
- PCHS School Bus Program Calendar 2024-25 school year REVISED.pdf
- PCHS Virtual Curriculum APEX Proposal & other quotes REVISED.pdf
- · School Trip and Conference Requests.pdf
- PD-Conferene Request-Perkins.pdf