



Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

Board of Trustee Retreat 2024

Published on July 24, 2024 at 9:47 PM EDT

Date and Time

Saturday July 27, 2024 at 8:30 AM EDT

Location

Mount Holyoke College
Betty Shabazz Cultural Center
2 Dunlap Place
South Hadley, MA 01075

Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
I. Opening Items			8:30 AM
A. Welcome/Breakfast	Discuss	Board of Trustees	15 m
B. Record Attendance		LATRINA DENSON	1 m
C. Call the Meeting to Order		LATRINA DENSON	1 m
D. Read the Mission Statement		A member of the Board	1 m

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

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
E. Approve Minutes- May 14 2024	Approve Minutes	LATRINA DENSON	2 m

Please read minutes and prepare concerns or questions prior to the meeting.

F. Approval of the Minutes- DESE Core Criteria Site Visit May 8, 2024	Approve Minutes	LATRINA DENSON	2 m
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II. Head of School Report 8:52 AM

This is based on the Board's approved amendment of the charter which was approved at the May 2024 Board Meeting

A. Approve the Student Opportunity Act Plan	Vote	Brent Nielsen	10 m
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This is based on the Board's approved amendment of the charter which was approved at the May 2024 Board Meeting

B. Additional Head of School updates		Brent Nielsen	5 m
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III. Retreat Topics and Activities 9:07 AM

A. Team Builder/ Ice- Breaker	Discuss	LATRINA DENSON	30 m
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B. Trustee agreement/expectations		LATRINA DENSON	60 m
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- Discuss role of the Board of Trustee
- Discuss the workload, with a minimum in-person requirement for meetings.
- Discuss Committees
- Schedule time to have Board on Track meeting with Mike Mizzoni

C. Develop Board of Trustee Goals		LATRINA DENSON	60 m
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- Review the PVPA Strategic Action Plan - SY 2023-24
- Review DESE Core Site Visit Report
- Fundraising

D. Develop Goals for Head of School		LATRINA DENSON	30 m
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Goals will align with the Accountability Plan for DESE, the Strategic Action Plan,

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
IV. Lunch and Team Building with PVPA Administrators			12:07 PM
A. Break for Lunch	Discuss		30 m
B. Welcome, Introductions and Team Building Activity	Discuss	Board and PVPA Admin	45 m
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions, Roles and responsibilities • Drumming Circle and Sharing Activity Reflecting On the Following: • What drives your passion to education through the integration of creativity to the performing arts; If you are a board member, to the board board? • What does it mean to support PVPA in fulfilling its promise? 			
V. Closing Items			1:22 PM
A. New Business- Additional topics for discussion	Discuss	Members Of The Board	10 m
B. Adjourn Meeting	Vote	A Member From The Board	1 m

Coversheet

Approve Minutes- May 14 2024

Section:	I. Opening Items
Item:	E. Approve Minutes- May 14 2024
Purpose:	Approve Minutes
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Minutes for May Board Meeting on May 14, 2024

APPROVED



Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

Minutes

May Board Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday May 14, 2024 at 6:00 PM

Location

Zoom Account is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: My Meeting

Time: May 14, 2024 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89230834572?pwd=VHk0ZEICWDJodDBINzRldlhFQW9CZz09>

Meeting ID: 892 3083 4572

Passcode: 6Q8cmx

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,89230834572#,,,,*575967# US (Washington DC)

+13052241968,,89230834572#,,,,*575967# US

Dial by your location

• +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

• +1 305 224 1968 US

• +1 309 205 3325 US

- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
- +1 646 931 3860 US
- +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)
- +1 253 205 0468 US
- +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
- +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
- +1 360 209 5623 US
- +1 386 347 5053 US
- +1 507 473 4847 US
- +1 564 217 2000 US
- +1 669 444 9171 US
- +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
- +1 689 278 1000 US
- +1 719 359 4580 US

Meeting ID: 892 3083 4572

Passcode: 575967

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89230834572>

Trustees Present

Azizah Yasin (remote), David Cavallin (remote), David Potter, Fiona Yates (remote), LATRINA DENSON, Mindi Winter, Neil Hede (remote), Sasha Viands (remote), Shino Pichette (remote), Tim Cable (remote), Vanessa Ford (remote)

Trustees Absent

None

Ex Officio Members Present

Brent Nielsen (remote), Marcy Conner (remote)

Non Voting Members Present

Brent Nielsen (remote), Marcy Conner (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

Visitors: Craig Santos, as a potential new trustee.

B. Call the Meeting to Order

David Potter called a meeting of the board of trustees of Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School to order on Tuesday May 14, 2024 at 6:07 PM.

C. Read the Mission Statement

David Potter read the mission statement.

D. Approve Minutes

LATRINA DENSON made a motion to approve the minutes from April Board Meeting #2 on 04-16-24.

Sasha Viands seconded the motion.

Note: Tim Cable not yet eligible to vote.

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

Roll Call

David Potter	Aye
Neil Hede	Aye
Fiona Yates	Aye
Sasha Viands	Aye
Shino Pichette	Aye
LATRINA DENSON	Aye
Mindi Winter	Aye
Azizah Yasin	Aye
David Cavallin	Aye
Vanessa Ford	Aye

II. Public Comment

A. Brief comments and/or questions welcomed.

Carissa Dagenais:

Shared a prepared statement. She's an alumni. Discussed her credentials. She shared her experience witnessing and participating in the conversation around Paideia at the board. The issues shared about Paideia's presence at the school did not seem to be addressed in an open way. She felt her engagement was dismissed. She mentioned gaslighting after the kind words of encouragement she initially received compared to the way she was ignored. She accepts that Paideia is likely not able to be saved, she accepts that. But she wants to work to repair and notes that she stays committed to PVPA and the coming alumni. She hopes leadership can reflect and proceed differently in the future.

Maggie Solis:

Shared a prepared statement. She's a parent of two current students. She notes the harm done to the community in the way in which the Paideia change happened. She notes the danger of the idea that the board shouldn't weigh in on a decision like this. The board should be setting policy and ensure that PVPA operates in a way that is consistent with its charter and strategic action plan. What precedent is set if the board doesn't weigh in on this decision? She highlighted two other changes that have occurred at PVPA that weren't shared openly, or were obscured. A change in ELA classes for 11th graders. A

change in the way independent study credit may or may not be available. The way she learned about these changes impacted Maggie's impression of the school's environment and investment in community engagement. If accountability to transparent communication isn't enforced, it can easily slip away.

III. Head of School Report

A. Brent's Report

Brent Nielsen:

The site visit from DESE occurred. Charter schools are on a 5 year renewal cycle, and we're on year three. Another visit will happen before the charter is renewed. The site visit team wanted a lot of documentation in preparation for the visit. During their full day visit they also visited classes, conducted focused groups, and reviewed facilities and policies. The purpose of this visit is to review PVPA's core criteria (instruction, governance etc). The full report comes out in 6-8 weeks - which will include notes about weaknesses the school needs to work on before the final charter review. They gave Brent a very quick overview at the end of their visit. They said the mission and vision is very much alive in everyone they met with.

There was a middle school dance a few weeks ago.

St. Joan, the HS theater production just happened. Frank and Brent got to participate in the show.

Recipients of the Florence Bank grants were invited to a Look Park reception.

The Iron Horse is reopening. Preparing to have PVPA students perform there again, like they used to. Frank is at the soft opening tonight. :)

The prom is happening on Friday.

There's an ultimate tournament on Sat.

Accepted Students night is happening soon. We are very on track with enrollment!

Enrollment:

84 new students for next year already confirmed their enrollment. And there are still folks on the wait list. We are prepared for 415 students to start the year. This puts us in a great place, planning for standard "melt" of enrollment. Hats off to Sandra as the enrollment coordinator. Sandra, as also the communications coordinator, is doing a great job of getting the word out.

Scheduling:

The scheduling process is already happening. Students used to receive their schedules on the first day of school in the fall. Now, the whole process is done before summer. Sophomores, juniors and seniors are already done and have their schedules. This is a huge difference and works much better for everyone. Now, given the way the master schedule has been updated, there are far more options for students, so student satisfaction is higher.

Hiring for 24-25:

The school is working on diversifying our workforce. We were part of a professional learning community, and we attended some workshops on this - learning tips and strategies for recruitment, and learned about pitfalls to avoid. PVPA now has a recruitment calendar to increase the diversity of the applicant pool. The applicant pool for the art positions is deeper than Brent has ever seen it. The pool for academics teachers is still fairly small.

Attendance:

An ongoing concern that we continue to work on. We are struggling to get back to pre-pandemic levels of attendance. Our averages are lower than the state. Working to address chronic barriers. Stressors from the pandemic remain for many students, and this impacts attendance. Attendance is important for student achievement and our accountability measures as a school (like test scores etc).

IV. Board Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee

Neil Hede:

Revenue is up. We budget conservatively. We propose a 2.5% increase, we don't usually go above 4%. The state projections suggest we should be conservative, but we are in good shape. It's not as big of an increase as we have had in past years, but we are increasing.

Marcy Conner (prepared a presentation shared with the board in the agenda):

Most charter schools saw a decrease in revenue for this year, which is directly related to "above foundation" levels across the state. Covid funds have dried up. The language being used referring to next year is very pessimistic about what might happen. We're still waiting to hear from the state about funds for next year, so our budget is based on guesses about what we'll get. We'll hear in July about the final state budget. We anticipate that the state will continue to fund the Increase for Education Act. A difference from this budget to past year, is that this is not a level funded budget. We increased some areas that support arts integration, DEI work, and SAP initiatives.

Reviewed the highlighted areas of the revenue section such as:

1. Per Pupil Income – On April 30, 2024 the Finance Committee voted to set the FY25 tuition budget increase at 2.5% of the DESE projected tuition for the third quarter of FY24. Total \$7,719,979.
 2. Grant Revenue – grant funding levels for FY25 have not yet been released by DESE. The \$285,227 budget figure represents FY24 level funding for ESSA, IDEA and CSHS grants.
 3. Student Activities Revenue – student fundraising adjusting downward to be more in line with current activity.
 4. Interest – will continue to roll over certificates of deposit as they mature however interest rates are projected to go down so the return will not be as much as FY24.
- Overall increase of 5.93% proposed in revenue as compared to FY24.

Review expenses section of the budget such as:

1. Salaries & Benefits - increase FTEs overall. This is the first time we'll do step increases on the first day of school.
2. General Education Expense - \$15,000 increase over FY24. \$5,000 for field trips and \$10,000 for curriculum development.
3. Grant Expenses – grants are paid as reimbursements. Expenses reduced to match revenue.
4. Education Other – increases built in for Library books, Nursing Office software, DEI training for staff and funds for Arts Integration expenses.
5. Production – increase in stipends and additions/changes to the production calendar
6. Technology – significant increase due to FY24 evaluation and application for eRate program. Required updates to infrastructure and security monitoring contract.
7. General Administration - \$8,500 decrease to adjust closer to actual.
8. Recruitment of Employees – increased efforts in diversity recruitment and retention to include funds for advertising positions and career fairs.
9. Business Office Expense – increase for annual audit and required MCPPO certification
10. Facilities Expense – overall increase of 3.04% to cover rising cost of contracts and utilities.
11. Depreciation – adjusted closer to actual
12. Transportation – annual increase in bus contract (we're in the middle of our transportation contract)

It is a balanced budget proposed, with a small surplus of \$12,000.

The capital budget:

- Last year we projected a 3 year capital budget, so there aren't any big changes this year. The finance committee is coordinating with the Friend of PVPA about facilities uses / costs because the building is technically owned by the friends. The proposed capital budget is consistent with expectations.

PVPA salaries:

- The proposed version is based on the union negotiation.

5 Yr History of Cash Reserves:

- Have healthy cash reserves. It has been growing over the last five years.

Discussed health insurance rates & tuition increases from prior years. The FY24 numbers are not yet final.

Q: What do you mean about this is not level funded? This year we didn't budget everything at the same levels as past years. This year we changed some areas, so that we could increase in strategic areas.

Shino Pichette made a motion to approve the FY24-25 budget as presented.

Mindi Winter seconded the motion.

Fiona Yates notes: Comprehensive presentation, thank you so much for your work, finance committee!

Note: Tim not able to vote.

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

Roll Call

LATRINA DENSON	Aye
Mindi Winter	Aye
Vanessa Ford	Aye
Neil Hede	Aye
Shino Pichette	Aye
Fiona Yates	Aye
Azizah Yasin	Aye
David Potter	Aye
David Cavallin	Abstain
Sasha Viands	Aye

B. Governance Committee

Latrina Denson:

Last meeting we discussed upcoming officer positions for the board. Will vote in June.

For new members, the goal is to bring all potential new members to the meeting in June for voting.

The employee handbook updates were shared with the committee by Brent. We recommend that the board approve the updated employee handbook.

Tim Cable was nominated by staff for membership on the board through the 24-25 school year. Note: that is also true for David Cavallin.

LATRINA DENSON made a motion to approve the updated employee handbook.

David Potter seconded the motion.

Brent: Changes that were made were mostly to bring the employee handbook into alignment with our union contract. The changes have already been happening in practice since they are connected to the union contract.

Tim Cable not able to vote.

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

Roll Call

Vanessa Ford	Aye
David Potter	Aye
Mindi Winter	Aye
Neil Hede	Aye
Shino Pichette	Aye
Fiona Yates	Aye
Sasha Viands	Aye
LATRINA DENSON	Aye
Azizah Yasin	Aye
David Cavallin	Abstain

LATRINA DENSON made a motion to vote in Tim Cable for membership on the board through 2025 June.

David Cavallin seconded the motion.

No discussion.

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

Roll Call

Fiona Yates	Aye
David Cavallin	Aye
LATRINA DENSON	Aye
Shino Pichette	Aye
Sasha Viands	Aye
Vanessa Ford	Aye
Neil Hede	Aye
Azizah Yasin	Aye
Mindi Winter	Aye
David Potter	Aye

C. Head of School Support & Evaluation Committee

David Potter:

We have received the leadership survey which was completed by ALMOST everyone it was sent to. The committee is working to process all the info received to synthesize it and bring a report to the board for approval. And we will have to set goals for the next year for Brent. This will come at the June meeting.

This committee will be looking for some new members starting next year. Committee members do not have to be board members.

V. Internal Stakeholders

A. Staff Reports

David Cavallin:

Early in the year, David had an idea to do a skate party with live music. We we hosted a fundraising event at interskate 91 for gig band. It went super well! Insterskate 91 wants to hire Gig Band for one of their own events in the future. The funds raised will be used to secure venues in advance, for more fundraisers and music activities. The kids played 90 minutes of music which is a lot!!

The music showcase opens next week (Fri and Sat). Friday will be the audition groups. Spring visual arts showcase will be the following week. The MAPS showcase is next Wednesday during community time.

Lots coming up, it's going to be a BUSY end of school.

(Brent: MAPS is "Music And Poetry Synchronized" - poems from kids in other schools and then PVPA kids put them to music. PVPA has been working with kids in Puerto Rico on this. This year, the change is that now our students take a music theory class to give them song writing skills before working with the poems. Now they are writing out the music to these songs and sharing with musicians to perform. It will make it a more professional experience for the kids.)

Tim Cable:

Shout out to the Mock Trial team!!!!

PVPA has a 3D printer, so folks are working on how to use it more! The music department has printed whole instruments!

B. Student Reports

Fiona Yates:

So much to share!!

Mock Trial!!!! Did a good job in DE. They didn't get as far as they had hoped at Nationals (after winning States), but it was an amazing experience.

Seniors got their caps and gowns. Senior spirit week is next week. College decision day is May 15... IG is sharing some of the senior's decisions. Tomorrow is the last open mic for seniors.

Graduation is Thursday June 6. The grad show is going to be amazing. The show is at PVPA, the show is at the Academy of Music.

Shout out to Brent: He is always participating in events. And that is seen and appreciated by students.

Saint Joan was amazing.

VI. President's Business

A. SY 24-25 Calendar

David Potter made a motion to vote to approve the 24-25 calendar as presented.

LATRINA DENSON seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

David Cavallin	Abstain
LATRINA DENSON	Aye
Vanessa Ford	Aye
David Potter	Aye
Mindi Winter	Aye
Shino Pichette	Aye
Sasha Viands	Aye
Azizah Yasin	Aye
Fiona Yates	Abstain
Neil Hede	Aye

B. Strategic Action Plan - Check-in on Leadership and Governance

David Potter leading the discussion. Discussion of SAP Leadership & Gov section.

Reviewing what has been done.

Goal 1: Prioritize PVPA mission.

- Objective 1.1: Done

Goal 2: improve transparency and increase the use of inclusive, collaborative decision-making.

- Shino Q: Has 2.3 been made? - flow chart of how decisions are made. Not yet made. Everyone is working together well. This will also be handled in the curriculum days next year. It will be shared once it is written up. Note that it needs to be made transparent.

Goal 3: cultivate and maintain our leadership position in the community etc.

Goal 4: improve overall effectiveness of the board etc.

Fiona: What is the status of the policy handbook? We have been approving policies, but do we have a handbook yet? What's the status? Brent: They are included on the website.

It's not a "handbook", but they are all available there. We'll never be done with policy updates... but we are well on the way to having formal policies that need to be there.

Fiona: Can Brent give an update about Arts Integration? (3.1) Brent: It is still in the works, but well into the process. The plan is in line with the SAP and the original application for our charter. It will create a mechanism to ensure that arts integration is actually happening. It will require teachers to be involved in an arts integration project every year. Example: History teacher and Visual Arts teacher and Math teacher collaborated on an Islamic Tiles learning project. The school will be gathering data about these projects and they will be archived for sharing out best practices etc. This arts integration is one of the things that makes us most unique. We should be doing it the best!

Q about updates to this or should updates be made to future SAPs? The MATRIX can be updated, but the SAP content cannot be changed because it was already approved by DESE. The Matrix should be how we track and evaluate how we are working towards the objectives listed.

NEWS BREAK: 3 out of 5 of the performers for the soft opening of the Iron Horse tonight, are PVPA alumni! So cool.

Let's keep revising the SAP to review what has been done and what needs to be worked on.

C. Paideia - Review of Decision-Making Process

David Potter:

Over the course of the past few meetings, the board has voiced concerns about how the Paideia decisions have evolved to where they are right now. Information was shared with the board (Frank Newton's presentation about the progression of PVPA) was helpful. Quality education is at the core of PVPA. The admin team reviewed the concerns and considerations and made the decision to remove Paideia from the calendar.

Shino Pichette: I hope that this can be a learning experience and that big decisions can be made with more community involvement. Even when hard decisions need to be made, we should ensure that voices can be heard before changes are made. In the Values section of the SAP, we note that "we value all voices being heard when important decisions are made" and it seems like that didn't happen here. We want the community to thrive and this process created some real pain and turmoil, and I hope that this can be a learning experience so other things can be done differently.

Mindi Winter: PVPA is a build your own adventure school. The more you put in, the more you get. Mindi has been involved in the schools for over a decade and see a lot. Mindi is on the side of keeping Paideia, but also understands why it has to change. Audition

groups didn't used to use Paideia in the way they have been. Everything changes. We don't use Paideia the way we used to use Paideia. That's not a problem. The problem is the way in which this change occurred. The community wasn't involved in all the internal conversations, and they don't see all the changes over time. So it feels sudden now, even though internally it wasn't. Communication has to be better. As the governing body of the school, we have to take responsibility for that. Arts integration is in our mission statement.

Fiona Yates: She's going to talk about the communication issues, not the merits or challenges of Paideia. Fiona remembers the conversation from the beginning of her time at PVPA (when there was a consideration to move Paideia to the end of the year). The issue was maybe that there were too many points given for the reason to remove Paideia. Some of the reasons seems like they were solvable, so students would maybe brainstorm reasons just to be told there was no other option. Also, what is the difference between formal and informal surveys for staff and students. Folks did not realize that the decision was so near.

Shino: She thinks that the board **SHOULD** be included in big decisions like this. It felt like the board was not properly notified / included in the decision.

David Potter response: The calendar should have been brought to the Governance Committee before the board. Then it could have been explored more before the board was asked to vote on it. Process has its place.

Azizah Yasin: Azizah has heard some passionate experiences over the past months about Paideia. It shows how special a community we are. We should try to restore trust so that folks understand the roles of the board vs. administration more. Azizah wants to share what her 7th grade son shared with her. He needs special support who needs some scaffolding around learning. Her son learned during Paideia that he is bad at chess. He didn't have a very engaged Paideia experience. He didn't get the academic support he usually gets. The board retreat can be a time when we discuss when the board should get involved in decision making and communication vs. when we defer to the administration. We should move past criticizing people and build the community we want. This can be an opportunity to work cohesively and connect with the broader PVPA community.

David Potter wants to thank everyone for their participation. Hopefully we all continue to learn.

VII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

David Potter made a motion to adjourn.

Shino Pichette seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

David Cavallin	Aye
Shino Pichette	Aye
Azizah Yasin	Aye
LATRINA DENSON	Aye
Fiona Yates	Aye
Sasha Viands	Aye
Neil Hede	Aye
Mindi Winter	Aye
Vanessa Ford	Aye
David Potter	Aye

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:26 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Shino Pichette

Coversheet

Approval of the Minutes- DESE Core Criteria Site Visit May 8, 2024

Section: I. Opening Items
Item: F. Approval of the Minutes- DESE Core Criteria Site Visit May 8, 2024
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material:
Minutes for Board Meeting with DESE - Core Criteria Site Visit on May 8, 2024

APPROVED



Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

Minutes

Board Meeting with DESE - Core Criteria Site Visit

Date and Time

Wednesday May 8, 2024 at 10:00 AM

Location

VIRTUAL ONLY

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81618189058>

Trustees Present

Azizah Yasin (remote), Fiona Yates (remote), LATRINA DENSON (remote), Mindi Winter (remote), Shino Pichette (remote), Vanessa Ford (remote)

Trustees Absent

David Cavallin, David Potter, Neil Hede, Sasha Viands, Tim Cable

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Shino Pichette called a meeting of the board of trustees of Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School to order on Wednesday May 8, 2024 at 10:06 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

DESE Review Visit:

Janice Pamphile and Melissa Gordon from DESE introduced themselves.

Charter School Performance Criteria Review.

- Discussed highlights
- Discussed board composition
- Discussed school mission, how does the school meet goals
 - Schedule creates space for academic excellence. Review academic achievement & make management plans to improve as needed.
 - Arts Integration for intensive exposure to arts.
 - Supportive of IEP and 504s. Also the curriculum allows space for various approaches to students. Dual enrollment courses. Lots of group learning where students can do individualized study.
- How does the board oversee school maintaining of the mission.
- How is academic oversight done.
- How do we oversee the head of school?
- How is financial oversight done?
- Data for school climate?
 - Classroom environments need to be safe for all students. How are we ensuring the environment in the school is safe.
 - We review attendance and suspension data.
- How do we make decisions as a board?
 - Work done in committees then bring content to the board. Full discussion at the board, and then voting at the board level.
- Board communication with the public and community about what we're doing.
 - Invite community to our board meetings. Public comment. Emails available.
- Union negotiations. Labor management committee works with administration. Not negotiating current contract. We're in the middle of a 3 yr contract.
- Strategic Action Plan review
- How we plan for board succession planning.
- What about HOS succession planning.

II. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

Shino Pichette made a motion to Adjourn.

Vanessa Ford seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Vanessa Ford	Aye
Fiona Yates	Aye

Roll Call

Neil Hede	Absent
David Potter	Absent
Azizah Yasin	Aye
Mindi Winter	Aye
Sasha Viands	Absent
Shino Pichette	Aye
David Cavallin	Absent
Tim Cable	Absent

LATRINA DENSON Aye

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 10:52 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Shino Pichette

Coversheet

Develop Board of Trustee Goals

Section:	III. Retreat Topics and Activities
Item:	C. Develop Board of Trustee Goals
Purpose:	
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Strategic Action Plan Tracker Spring 2023.docx Final SAP 21-26 Matrix.pdf PVPA Y28 SVR FINAL JUL24.pdf

PIONEER VALLEY PERFORMING ARTS PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL



STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN 2021-2026

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FOREWORD:

The 2021-2026 Strategic Action Plan (SAP) for PVPA focuses on strengthening the current school culture, and it emphasizes three important frameworks that are weaved throughout the document: re-calibrating our practices; increasing inclusivity; and committing to more transparency across our community. The recurring expectation of this SAP is for the school leadership to assess programs and resources by listening to a broad diversity of perspectives and transparently implementing plans to systematize what is working. The previous SAP (2016-2021) launched PVPA along many important paths of improvement, and it helped to guide the school through significant leadership changes, the creation of a teachers' union, and the COVID-19 pandemic. With this SAP, we attempt to capture the spirit of drilling down to further clarify, strengthen, and sustain the work that has already been set in motion.

The SAP was developed with the collaboration and contributions of a broad range of stakeholders, and it attempts to distill those voices and concerns into a practical and meaningful path forward. Many members of the community gave invaluable input to the SAP Committee along our journey of investigation, and we truly appreciate their work. The committee particularly wishes to thank the many people who participated in the Focus Group gatherings -- it was inspiring and wonderfully productive to hear views from so many people working together in the same virtual space! Additionally, there were many people who completed our Community Survey in the spring of 2020, and who met or corresponded with the committee -- we thank you all for those important contributions as well.

MISSION:

The Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School offers its students intensive exposure to the performing arts within the context of an excellent college preparatory curriculum.

The goal is to provide students with a supportive and challenging environment that

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is responsive to multiple learning styles, emphasizes learning through the arts, and integrates critical and creative thinking throughout the curriculum.

VALUES:

During the time of writing the 2011-2016 Strategic Action Plan, the committee members attempted to capture the intangible aspects of the school treasured by the community. These values continue to be alive in the PVPA community in 2021, at the time of drafting this Strategic Action Plan; we keep them in this current plan because we hope they will continue to hold a central place in our school.

–Critical and Higher Order Thinking Skills: These include searching for and evaluating sources, holistic analysis, the ability to ask appropriate questions, the capacity to

evaluate and judge, and openness to outliers of thought and minority opinions. We value rigorous thinking and approaches to learning such as the recognition of connections between one's own life and the larger society, willingness to embrace paradox and ambiguity without rushing to conclusions, and an ability to recognize multiple perspectives—all of which are foundations for students' future education.

–Creative Thinking: We value experimentation, risk-taking and mistake-making, interdisciplinary approaches, collaboration between co-creators, divergent as well as convergent thinking, and the ability to draw from oneself the material for creating and for making new and essential connections.

–A Passion for Inquiry and Self-Reflection: We value the right to question assumptions and to demonstrate knowledge in a variety of forms. This passion is modeled by the outstanding educators at PVPA—teachers who, in their fields of expertise, are enthusiastic facilitators of student learning. Passion and learning go hand-in-hand and are compatible with rigorous standards and expectations.

–A Loving Community: Students, faculty, families, administrators, Board members, people from various social classes, ethnicities, life experiences, and with a variety of learning styles are respected. We value all voices being heard when important decisions are made and expect community members to support the school's mission and values. PVPA aspires to be a safe environment for students and encourages them to develop their own ideas and opinions.

–School as One Part of a Larger Learning Community: We believe that education goes on all the time and everywhere. We value our essential connections with the broader

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community and with artists in various disciplines. PVPA is committed to being part of a community of artistic organizations, where our approaches to education are shared, where our students present arts performances, where we both receive and give. We seek to enhance our visibility in the communities where our students reside and in other public schools.

VISION:

The 2021-2026 Strategic Action Plan builds on the foundation set by the previous plan. In continuing the school's growth and progress, we see three primary areas of focus: recalibrating our practices; broadening our understanding and implementation of inclusivity; and committing to more transparency across our community.

Our first objective is in the spirit of offering PVPA an opportunity to recalibrate by focusing attention to the areas that need it most. A robust commitment to education and students has led to the creation of a number of quality programs and initiatives that have been started, and not yet fully realized. We now have the opportunity to refocus and intentionally embed these programs into our school culture.

Our second objective—centering equity and inclusivity—aims to expand resources and initiatives in support of all members of the PVPA community. Through these goals and objectives, we will make an intentional effort to uphold diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our mission. By committing to these practices, we will be poised to better serve marginalized populations and ensure that all students are empowered to create a path to success.

Our last objective seeks to address an area of growth within the PVPA community, transparency of leadership. During times of change, trusting and understanding structures of leadership is key in maintaining a healthy school environment. In this Strategic Action Plan we aim to outline both broad goals and specific strategies to accomplish transparency and build clearer structures of leadership within PVPA at all levels. The onus of responsibility for implementing and creating success with the plan rests with the head of school, the administrative team, and the Board of Trustees.

Leadership & Governance

Goal 1: Prioritize PVPA's mission in every aspect of the school community. **Objective 1.1:** Maintain a Director of Arts and a Director of Academics as key leadership positions.

Goal 2: Improve transparency and increase the use of inclusive, collaborative decision-making.

Objective 2.1: Clearly define leadership positions, roles, and responsibilities in a solidified organizational and leadership structure and share this openly with the greater PVPA community.

Objective 2.2: Develop a Policy Handbook to clearly delineate school practices and procedures.

Objective 2.3: Work with the Labor-Management Committee to create a flow chart of how decisions are made.

Objective 2.4: Ensure the successful implementation of the PVPA Student Opportunity Act Plan.

Objective 2.5: Create a plan for systemic growth and share the plan openly with the greater PVPA community.

GOAL 3: Cultivate and maintain our leadership position in the community as a faithful adherent to, and innovator of, best practices.

Objective 3.1: Support the successful implementation of Restorative Practices, Arts Integration and prioritized curricular approaches including Universal Design. **Objective**

3.2: Provide relevant professional development, coaching, and mentoring to all staff, faculty and administrators to support leadership growth and to ensure effective outcomes.

GOAL 4: Improve overall effectiveness of the Board, through consistent communication, community engagement, and increased Board accountability for promoting, protecting, and ensuring PVPA's mission of academic excellence.

Objective 4.1: Board representatives will communicate regularly with the head of school to review progress on priorities set by the school administration.

Objective 4.2: Board members should prioritize attending school events and activities and engaging with community members outside of Board meetings.

Objective 4.3: The Board will create and promote an avenue for community members to communicate with the board beyond attendance at Board meetings.

Objective 4.4: Board subcommittees will support and monitor academic concerns such as MCAS, Charter School directives, grades, and college acceptance/attendance.

Objective 4.5: Recruitment for Board of Trustee membership and Senior Administration will include arts experience considerations as well as diversity and

student identity representation in the hiring / selection process.

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Diversity, Equity, Anti-Racism & Inclusion

Goal 1: Strategically expand representation in all parts of the PVPA community. **Objective**

1.1: Continue to prioritize efforts to recruit, hire, and retain teachers, administrators, staff, and Board Trustees whose identities are reflective of the student body.

Objective 1.2: Update and continue implementation of the [PVPA Diversity Plan](#).

Objective 1.3: As the Board of Trustees, share openly with the PVPA community detailed

steps the board is taking to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion at a board level.

Objective 1.4: Create/Update and publish a statement on commitment to diversity and inclusion, including benchmarks with specific goals and timelines. (For the school and Board of Trustees.)

Goal 2: Increase opportunities for students to learn about social justice issues, and to engage in social justice action.

Objective 2.1: Provide social justice education to middle school students, with opportunities for a culminating social action project by the end of 8th grade.

Goal 3: Openly acknowledge and address challenges in the community related to diversity, equity, anti-racism and inclusion.

Objective 3.1: Acknowledge achievement gaps that exist in an effort to overcome barriers to learning and create an equitable educational space.

Objective 3.2: Name racism, ableism, and inequity when it is seen.

Goal 4: Increase opportunities for staff, faculty, administrators and board members to develop anti-racism skills.

Objective 4.1: Plan regular anti-racism professional development.

Objective 4.2: Include racial sensitivity training as part of the on-boarding or hiring process (including for new board members).

School Climate

GOAL 1: Deliberately and demonstrably create a safer, more supportive, and more inclusive school environment.

Objective 1.1: Continue to implement PVPA's Restorative Practice initiative that includes school-wide positive behavior plans; restorative justice; and a peer mediation program. **Objective 1.2:** Improve how the PVPA community is supported to enact the values represented by PVPA C.A.R.E.S. **Objective 1.3:** Identify harmful behaviors; create and share an equitable system to determine the range of potential responses to such behaviors. **Objective 1.4:** Support and further develop the 7th and 8th grade advisory program, with an aim toward broadening arts exposure and improving rates of student retention.

Objective 1.5: Consider how to create an advisory for high school grades. **Objective 1.6:** Increase diversity, anti-racist, and anti-bullying trainings for students and staff.

GOAL 2: Work towards creating a space that inspires students, staff, faculty and administrators.

Objective 2.1: Hire a diverse group of professional performing artists to teach students. **Objective 2.2:** Encourage staff, faculty, administrators and board members to engage in and experience student creative works.

GOAL 3: Maintain full student enrollment and implement efforts to increase student retention as compared to the previous 5 years.

Arts and Academics

GOAL 1: Analyze achievement data to understand and address trends for specific demographic groups.

Objective 1.1: Create and develop a team of school personnel to analyze school data. **Objective 1.2:** Provide professional development for teachers to become more comfortable with data analysis (trusting the data).

Objective 1.3: Identify changes to be made at any/all levels (within curriculum to new school policy) based on school data.

GOAL 2: Improve the shared understanding of Standards Based Grading and increase consistency of implementation across all classes.

Objective 2.1: Use professional development to improve shared understanding and implementation for all teachers and administrators.

Objective 2.2: Increase education opportunities and communication about Standards Based Grading for students and families.

Objective 2.3: Use professional development to ensure that implementation of the Standards Based Grading is consistent.

Objective 2.4: Develop a common understanding of what represents high-quality evidence of learning within subject areas.

Objective 2.5: Establish clear expectations for communication through Powerschool.

GOAL 3: Work to develop a school culture in which all students are expected to do quality, meaningful work.

Objective 3.1: Support teachers to design instructional environments that ensure appropriate levels of challenge for students using Universal Design for Learning as a framework.

GOAL 4: Evaluate scheduling system and course offerings to improve overall timeliness of scheduling and access to classes.

Objective 4.1: Ensure students can access required courses.

Objective 4.2: Work to balance class sizes.

Student Support

GOAL 1: Increase the integration of trauma-sensitive practices and social-emotional learning school wide.

Objective 1.1: Assess and report on the current status of implementation. **Objective 1.2:** Create a plan to further support successful implementation.

GOAL 2: Expand the use of a school wide Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to improve student outcomes as measured by academic performance, attendance, and behavioral incidents.

Objective 2.1: Create an MTSS team to assess student needs and implement support.

Faculty/Staff Support and Development

GOAL 1: Clarify a framework and implement a process of support and evaluation whereby faculty and staff can successfully implement the following prioritized initiatives: Universal Design for Learning; Restorative Practices; School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention Support.

Objective 1.1: Evaluate the current status and effectiveness of the above-named initiatives/programs.

Objective 1.2: Use the findings from 1.1 to develop a plan to dedicate time and create opportunities for faculty and staff members to implement the initiatives successfully.

GOAL 2: Articulate teacher leadership roles and responsibilities.

Objective 2.1: Clarify role of Department Leaders.

Objective 2.2: Re-establish the Mentor Program as an effective peer guidance program.

Communication and Outreach

GOAL 1: Increase accessibility to school communication and engagement with families with language and/or communication barriers.

Objective 1.1: Identify, increase and promote pathways for caregivers with language and/or communication barriers to engage with school communications, interact with faculty and administration, give feedback, and participate in providing student support. **Objective 1.2:** Maintain a student recruitment and enrollment plan that supports a diverse student applicant pool, including ELL students.

GOAL 2: Increase PVPA's engagement with the wider community and raise awareness of PVPA's strengths and resources.

Objective 2.1: Continue to produce PVPA performance and showcase opportunities that take place in the wider community.

Objective 2.2: Highlight information about PVPA's arts and academics programs, student

supports, restorative practices, diversity initiatives, and opportunities for engagement on the PVPA website.

Objective 2.3: Create and strengthen partnerships with local/regional entities, both artistic and not, to support student engagement in the community and foster an opportunity network for creative showcasing.

Objective 2.4: Continue fostering relationships with local media to better broadcast stories and examples of student success - artistically, academically and otherwise.

Technology, Facilities, & Services

GOAL 1: Work with the Friends of PVPA to maintain aspects of the building that are up to code, and update areas as needed to bring the entire infrastructure up to current operating standards.

Objective 1.1: Establish a consistent schedule and a committed membership for the Long Range Infrastructure Planning Task Force, considering all diverse members of the PVPA community.

Objective 1.2: The Long Range Infrastructure Planning Task Force will seek community input to weigh infrastructure ideas, evaluate costs associated with building needs based on Strategic Action goals, and create proposals for administration and board review.

GOAL 2: Offer EdTech Professional Development focused on student learning, enhancing sustainable instructional practices that support equity and inclusion, and promoting individualized learning.

Objective 2.1: Re-establish the Tech Steering Committee.

Objective 2.2: Improve day-to-day technological support.

GOAL 3: Continue to improve the school meals program in order to increase equitable access to healthy food options.

Objective 3.1: Clarify the lunch program process for families and students, especially protocols for ordering and paying.

Objective 3.2: Evaluate options beyond ordering from South Hadley PS, Family Pizza, and current vending machines.

Objective 3.3: Assess long-term options for internalizing as much of the meals program as possible (eating space, hot/cold storage, heated serving area, etc.).

GOAL 4: Maintain a state-certified school librarian to foster the community network of libraries and bring awareness to internal capacity for community and library curriculum.

Objective 4.1: Maintain participation in CW/MARS consortium by keeping up the library's Mass Library System membership.

Objective 4.2: Support the Librarian to offer curriculum to each grade annually.

Objective 4.3: Increase awareness of the community network of partner libraries and of how our library can foster community within PVPA.

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Strategic Action Plan Committee

The SAP Committee was originally formed in the fall of 2019, and the membership of the committee evolved over time. This list comprises all the members, past and present, and also includes our invaluable Focus Group facilitators.

David Potter, Chair Board Member, Parent
Loris Bjorkman-Joslyn, Co-Vice-Chair Staff
Shino Yoshen, Co-Vice-Chair Board Member, Alumna 2007 Jacob
Rosenblum, Secretary Board Member, Student 2021

Marcus McLaurin Board Member
Laura Davis Staff
Demetria Shabazz Parent
Analua Moreira Student 2021
Thom Vreeland Staff
Shannon Materka Staff
Frank Newton Staff
Lissa Pierce Boniface Staff, Parent
John Kulas Staff, Parent

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Leadership and Governance**Years 1-3 Implementation Strategies****Years 4- 5 Implementation Strategies**

Goal 1: Prioritize PVPA's mission in every aspect of the school community.		
Objective 1.2: Maintain a Director of Arts and a Director of Academics as key leadership positions.	<p>1.2.1 Analyze CMAPs to increase opportunities for interdisciplinary work and examples of (or room for) arts enhancement and/or integration.</p> <p>1.2.2 Conduct annual evaluations of these roles.</p>	
Goal 2: Within the School: Improve transparency and increase the use of inclusive, collaborative decision-making.		
Objective 2.1: Clearly define leadership positions, roles, and responsibilities in a solidified organizational and leadership structure and share this openly with the greater PVPA community.	<p>2.1.1 Prioritize including diverse voices from within the entire PVPA community before making big decisions and in received feedback after decisions are implemented.</p> <p>2.1.2 Implement a collaborative team approach to ensure that leadership tasks are distributed appropriately and performed effectively.</p> <p>2.1.3 Share clear and actionable priorities for senior administrative work openly and regularly with the PVPA community.</p>	
Objective 2.2: Develop a Policy Handbook to clearly delineate school practices and procedures.		
Objective 2.3 Work with Labor-Management Committee to create a flow chart of how decisions are made.		

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Objective 2.4 Ensure the successful implementation of the PVPA Student Opportunity Act Plan.		
Objective 2.5: Create a plan for systemic growth and share the plan openly with the greater PVPA community.		
GOAL 3: Best Practices, Forefront, Leading Edge: Cultivate and maintain our leadership position in the community as a faithful adherent to, and as innovator of, best practices.		
Objective 3.1: Support the successful implementation of Restorative Practices, Arts Integration and prioritized curricular approaches including Universal Design.	3.1.1 Attend and provide professional development opportunities that support implementation of Universal Design, Restorative Practices, and Arts Integration	
Objective 3.2: Provide relevant professional development, coaching, and mentoring to all staff, faculty and administrators to support leadership growth and to ensure effective outcomes.		
GOAL 4: Board Leadership: Improve functionality of Board leadership responsibilities and accountability for promoting, protecting, and ensuring PVPA's mission of academic excellence.		
Objective 4.1: Board representatives will communicate regularly with the head of school to review progress on priorities set by the school administration.		
Objective 4.2: Board members should prioritize attending school events and activities and engaging with community members outside of Board meetings.		
Objective 4.3: The Board will create and promote an avenue for community members to communicate with the board beyond attendance at Board meetings.	4.4.1 Make board member contact information easily accessible. 4.4.2 Board will create an online "suggestion box" to give direct messages to board	

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	members, and accept emailed public comment statements. 4.4.3 Ensure that board meetings are publicly accessible online live even when meetings are in person.	
Objective 4.4: Board subcommittees will support and monitor academic concerns such as MCAS, Charter School directives, grades, and college acceptance/attendance.		
Objective 4.5:Recruitment for Board of Trustee membership and Senior Administration will include arts experience considerations as well as diversity and student identity representation in the hiring / selection process.		

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Diversity, Equity, Anti-Racism & Inclusion Years 1-3 Implementation Strategies

Years 4- 5 Implementation Strategies

Goal 1: Strategically increase representation in all parts of the PVPA community.		
Objective 1.1: Continue to prioritize efforts to recruit, hire, and retain teachers, administrators, staff, and Board Trustees whose identities are reflective of the student body.	<p>1.1.1 Update the faculty and staff hiring process to allow for acceptance of non-traditional certifications/qualifications.</p> <p>1.1.2 Develop a bank of questions to ensure that hiring interviews address how a candidate handles issues of diversity.</p> <p>1.1.3 Ensure diversity in hiring committees, using representation of the student body that is diverse, considering ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation and gender.</p> <p>1.1.4 Write job descriptions, prerequisites and application questions with the goal of attracting a diverse applicant pool.</p> <p>1.1.5 Include questions about diversity issues during exit interviews and track the data.</p> <p>1.1.6 Develop a matrix/rubric, with the input of the Diversity Committee, designed to document PVPA's growth/success in areas of diversity, equity, anti-racism and inclusion.</p>	Report to the PVPA community on progress relating to the diversity growth matrix.

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	1.1.7 Create a process to track application and hiring data related to increasing representation of the PVPA community.	
Objective 1.2: Update and continue implementation of the PVPA Diversity Plan .	<p>1.2.1 Evaluate the current curriculum for cultural and social diversity in support of the PVPA Diversity Plan.</p> <p>1.2.2 Include members of the Diversity Committee in hiring committees for administrative roles.</p>	Modify curriculum based on evaluation of cultural and social diversity in the curriculum.
Objective 1.3: As the Board of Trustees, share openly with the PVPA community detailed steps the board is taking to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion at a board level.	<p>1.3.1 Create goals and a plan of action to address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion for the board of trustees.</p> <p>1.3.2 Evaluate how well the board meets diversity, equity and inclusion goals.</p> <p>1.3.3 Evaluate the internal processes and protocols to consider changes and upgrades in accordance with diversity, equity and inclusion goals.</p> <p>1.3.4 Update BoT processes and protocols based upon the results and analysis of the evaluation of internal processes</p>	<p>Create a plan for holding the board accountable for meeting outlined diversity goals.</p> <p>Update Board of Trustees processes and protocols based upon the results and analysis of the evaluation of internal processes.</p> <p>Include on-going conversations and development of anti-racist processes on the Board of Trustees as well as regular (at least annual) diversity and anti-racism focused training.</p>
Objective 1.4: Create/Update and publish a statement on commitment to diversity and inclusion, including benchmarks with specific goals and timelines. (For the school and Board of Trustees)		
Goal 2: Increase opportunities for students to learn about social justice issues, and to engage in social justice action.		

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Objective 2.1: Provide social justice education to middle school students, with opportunities for a culminating social action project by the end of 8th grade. (For example, consider using Paideia / clubs.)		
Goal 3: Openly acknowledge and address challenges in the community related to diversity, equity, anti-racism and inclusion.		
Objective 3.1: Acknowledge achievement gaps that exist in an effort to overcome barriers to learning and create an equitable educational space.		
Objective 3.2: Name racism, ableism, and inequity when it is seen.		
Goal 4: Increase opportunities for staff, faculty, administrators and board members to develop anti-racism skills.		
Objective 4.1: Plan regular anti-racism trainings.		
Objective 4.2: Include racial sensitivity training as part of the on-boarding or hiring process (including for new board members).		

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School Climate**Years 1-3 Implementation Strategies****Years 4- 5 Implementation Strategies**

GOAL 1: Deliberately and demonstrably create a safer, more supportive, and more inclusive school environment.		
Objective 1.1: Continue to implement PVPA's Restorative Practice initiative that includes school-wide positive behavior supports, restorative justice, and a peer mediation program.		
Objective 1.2: Improve how the PVPA community is supported to enact the values represented by PVPA C.A.R.E.S.	1.2.1 Increase culturally accessible community building opportunities to practice and reflect the values represented by PVPA C.A.R.E.S.	
Objective 1.3: Identify harmful behaviors; create and share an equitable system to determine the range of potential responses to such behaviors.	1.3.1 Address areas of confusion regarding harmful behaviors and consequences both at the all-school level and in specific circumstances as needed.	
Objective 1.4: Support and further develop the 7th and 8th grade advisory program, with an aim toward broadening arts exposure and improving rates of student retention.	1.4.1 Develop a peer mentor program to connect students in different grades.	
Objective 1.5: Consider how to create an advisory for high school grades.		
Objective 1.6: Increase diversity, anti-racist, and anti-bullying trainings for students and staff.		
GOAL 2: Work towards creating a space that inspires students, staff, faculty and administrators.		
Objective 2.1: Hire a diverse group of professional performing artists to teach students.		
Objective 2.2: Encourage staff, faculty, administrators and board members to engage in and experience student creative works.		
GOAL 3: Maintain full student enrollment and implement efforts to increase student retention as compared to the previous 5 years.		

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Arts and Academics**Years 1-3 Implementation Strategies****Years 4- 5 Implementation Strategies**

GOAL 1: Analyze achievement data to understand and address trends for specific demographic groups.		
Objective 1.1: Create and develop a team of school personnel to analyze school data.	1.1.1: Provide support (time, professional development) for the data team to become proficient at analysis and sharing findings.	
Objective 1.2: Provide professional development for teachers to become more comfortable with data analysis (trusting the data).		
Objective 1.3: Identify changes to be made at any/all levels (within curriculum to new school policy) based on school data.		
GOAL 2: Improve the shared understanding of Standards Based Grading and increase consistency of implementation across all classes.		
Objective 2.1: Use professional development to improve shared understanding and implementation for all teachers and administrators.		
Objective 2.2: Increase education opportunities and communication about Standards Based Grading for students and families.		
Objective 2.3: Use professional development to ensure that implementation of the Standards Based Grading is consistent.	2.3.1 Revisit course specific Standards Based Grading metrics to align the standards across subject matters.	
Objective 2.4: Develop a common understanding of what represents high-quality evidence of learning within subject areas.		
Objective 2.5: Establish clear expectations for communication through Powerschool. (Examples: -- at least 1 formative assessment per week and 2 Summatives per reporting term M1,S1,M2,S2		

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-- Grades will be updated by 5pm on Friday the current week.)		
GOAL 3: Work to develop a school culture in which all students are expected to do quality, meaningful work.		
Objective 3.1: Support teachers to design instructional environments that ensure appropriate levels of challenge for students using Universal Design for Learning as a framework.		
GOAL 4: Evaluate scheduling system and course offerings to improve overall timeliness of scheduling and access to classes.		
Objective 4.1: Ensure students can access required courses.		
Objective 4.2: Work to balance class sizes.		

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Student Support**Years 1-3 Implementation Strategies****Years 4- 5 Implementation Strategies**

GOAL 1: Increase the integration of trauma-sensitive practices and social-emotional learning school wide.		
Objective 1.1: Assess and report on the current status of implementation.	1.1.1 Gather community feedback to assess the effectiveness of current implementation of trauma-sensitive practices and social-emotional learning.	1.1.1.1 Gather community feedback as to the effectiveness of the plan referenced in 1.2
Objective 1.2: Create a plan to further support successful implementation.	1.2.1 Evaluate and incorporate relevant curricular resources. 1.2.2 Provide appropriate professional development to support implementation.	1.2.1.1 Incorporate community feedback gathered (as referenced in objective 1.1.1.1).
GOAL 2: Expand the use of a school wide Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to improve student outcomes as measured by academic performance, attendance, and behavioral incidents.		
Objective 2.1: Create an MTSS team to assess student needs and implement support.	2.1.1 Define a menu of interventions relative to each tier of support. 2.1.2 Clarify a process to orient students, staff, and families.	

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Faculty/Staff Support and Development Years 1-3 Implementation Strategies

Years 4- 5 Implementation Strategies

GOAL 1: Clarify a framework and implement a process of support and evaluation whereby faculty and staff can successfully implement the following prioritized initiatives: Universal Design for Learning; Restorative Practices; School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention Support.		
Objective 1.1: Evaluate the current status and effectiveness of the named initiatives/programs.	1.1.1 Present a report to the Board of Trustees and Staff/Faculty which outlines the findings of the evaluations.	Determine a plan for sustaining a process of ongoing evaluation of said programs/initiative/curricula.
Objective 1.2: Use the data from 1.1 to develop a plan to dedicate time and create opportunities for faculty and staff members to implement the initiatives successfully.	1.2.1 Update professional development plans as needed.	Create a plan for evaluating the success of each initiative
	1.2.2 Present to the Board of Trustees the plans and programming as relates to furthering these initiatives	Report to the Board of Trustees the outcomes of the evaluations and how the outcomes may impact each initiative.
GOAL 2: Articulate teacher leadership roles and responsibilities.		
Objective 2.1: Clarify role of Department Leaders.	2.1.1 Share with the Board of Directors & Staff/Faculty a presentation outlining roles and responsibilities and chains of command.	
Objective 2.2: Re-Establish the Mentor Program as an effective peer guidance program.	2.2.1 Present to the BoT and Faculty an updated operations manual that outlines the programs and procedures of the Mentor Program.	Create and implement a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the Mentor Program and present the findings on a yearly basis to the Board of Trustees.

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Communication and Outreach**Years 1-3 Implementation Strategies****Years 4- 5 Implementation Strategies**

GOAL 1: Increase accessibility to school communication and engagement with families with language and/or communication barriers.		
Objective 1.1: Identify, increase and promote pathways for caregivers with language and/or communication barriers to engage with school communications, interact with faculty and administration, give feedback, and participate in providing student support.	1.1.1 Evaluate common and recurring school-wide communications and create a strategy to increase accessibility, considering translation, technology and other needs. <i>For example, provide accessible alternatives to school wide surveys, aim to keep written messages concise and spoken messages clear and slow.</i>	Create a database of translation templates for communications.
	1.1.2 Ensure translated communications and translation services are consistently available to students and families.	Secure appropriate technology resources as determined by the assessment detailed in Objective 1.1.3.
	1.1.3 Assess our current technology resources, and determine which translation, language and accessibility tools could be implemented to increase accessibility.	
	1.1.4 Increase diverse parent membership and participation in school groups such as the Diversity Committee, PTO, SpEd PAC, EL PAC, and hiring committees, among others.	
Objective 1.2: Maintain a student recruitment and enrollment plan that supports a diverse student applicant pool, including ELL students.	1.1.2 Review and update recruitment materials to include other languages based on recruitment goals.	
GOAL 2: Increase PVPA's engagement with the wider community and raise awareness of PVPA's strengths and resources.		

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Objective 2.1: Continue to produce PVPA performance and showcase opportunities that take place in the wider community.		
Objective 2.2: Highlight information about PVPA's arts and academics programs, student /supports, restorative practices, diversity initiatives, and opportunities for engagement on the PVPA website.		
Objective 2.3: Create and strengthen partnerships with local/regional entities, both artistic and not, to support student engagement in the community and foster an opportunity network for creative showcasing.		
Objective 2.4: Continue fostering relationships with local media to better broadcast stories and examples of student success - artistically, academically and otherwise.		

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Technology, Facilities & Services**Years 1-3 Implementation Strategies****Years 4- 5 Implementation Strategies**

GOAL 1: Work with the Friends (owners of the building) to maintain aspects of the building that are up to code, and update areas as needed to bring the entire infrastructure up to current operating standards.		
Objective 1.1: Establish a consistent schedule and committed membership of the Long Range Infrastructure Planning Task Force, considering all diverse members of the PVPA community.		
Objective 1.2: Long Range Infrastructure Planning Task Force will seek community input to weigh infrastructure ideas, evaluate costs associated with building needs based on Strategic Action goals, and create proposals for administration and board review.	<p>1.2.1 Conduct a community survey about the building and what needs are being met or need attention.</p> <p>1.2.2 Determine space needs to figure out whether or not the existing space is sufficient.</p> <p>1.2.3 Focus on maintenance and development of technologies supporting health and safety.</p>	
GOAL 2: Offer EdTech Professional Development focused on student learning, enhancing sustainable instructional practices that support equity and inclusion, and promoting individualized learning.		
Objective 2.1 Re-form Tech Steering Committee.	<p>2.1.1 Charge Steering Committee with exploring technology learning options for students and creating the long-term ed-tech vision.</p> <p>2.1.2 Charge Steering Committee with exploring technology learning options for</p>	Determine and execute an action plan based on the Tech Steering Committee research and recommendations.

PVPA 2021-2026 STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN: GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY MATRIX

FINAL

	students and creating the long-term ed-tech vision.	
Objective 2.2 Improve day-to-day technological support.	<p>2.2.1 Explore ways to provide additional technological support beyond the Tech Director, for example consider student support.</p> <p>2.2.2 Designate a team of staff who are available for tech support needs.</p>	
GOAL 3: Continue to improve the school meals program in order to increase equitable access to healthy food options.		
Objective 3.1: Clarify the lunch program process for families and students, especially protocols for ordering and paying.		
Objective 3.2: Evaluate options beyond ordering from South Hadley PS, Family Pizza, and current vending machines.	3.2.1 Consider adding a permanent cafeteria.	
Objective 3.3: Assess long-term options for internalizing as much of the meals program as possible (eating space, hot/cold storage, heated serving area, etc.).		
GOAL 4: Maintain a state-certified school librarian to foster the community network of libraries and bring awareness to internal capacity for community and library curriculum.		
Objective 4.1: Maintain participation in CW/MARS consortium by keeping up the library's Mass Library System membership.		
Objective 4.2: Support the Librarian to offer curriculum to each grade annually.		
Objective 4.3: Increase awareness of community network of partner libraries and community outreach including how the library can foster community in the PVPA community.		



PIONEER VALLEY PERFORMING ARTS CHARTER SCHOOL

YEAR 28 CORE CRITERIA SITE VISIT REPORT

South Hadley, MA
May 8-9, 2024

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
135 Santilli Highway
Everett, MA 02149
Phone: (781) 338-3227



This document was prepared by the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Russell D. Johnston
Acting Commissioner

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ABOUT SITE VISITS

In conducting site visits, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) is carrying out the requirements of the charter school regulations (603 CMR 1.00), which outline the ongoing review of charter schools. Site visits take place at least once during a charter term and may be conducted at additional times when deemed necessary by the Department. Site visits vary in length depending on the size, location, age, and/or specific conditions of a particular school.

The [Charter School Performance Criteria](#) (Criteria) form the foundation of the site visit process. The Criteria give definition to the three areas of charter school accountability defined in 603 CMR 1.00: faithfulness to charter, academic program success, and organizational viability. During the site visit, the school is assessed on all or a subset of the performance indicators contained in the Criteria. The types of site visits conducted by the Department and the methods used to assess a school's performance are described in the [Site Visit Protocol](#).

The product of each site visit is a site visit report such as this one. Site visit reports are one of the means by which the Department documents each charter school's performance and progress over time, corroborating and augmenting the information reported each year in the school's annual report. Site visit reports generated by the Department are important components of the body of evidence used by the commissioner and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) to make a renewal determination or inform other authorizing actions pertaining to the school.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Massachusetts Charter School Performance Criteria		
Faithfulness to Charter		Rating ¹
Criterion 1: Mission and Key Design Elements <i>In Year 28, school stakeholders share a common understanding of the school's mission. The school is operating in a manner that is faithful to its mission and is implementing its key design elements.</i>		● Meets
Criterion 2: Access and Equity <i>PVPA seeks to ensure access to the program and equity for all students eligible to attend the school. The school provides some information to the public regarding non-discriminatory enrollment practices and the availability of programs for students with disabilities and English learners. The school provides translated materials in Spanish, and the school's website includes a translation function. The school has been successful in retaining students.</i> <i>The school's rates of in-school and out-of-school suspension were consistently below the third quartile for all comparison schools in 2020 through 2023.</i>		● Meets
Criterion 3: Compliance <i>PVPA did not submit accountability documents according to state statute and regulations. PVPA is out of compliance with state statutes and regulations regarding teacher qualifications. The board of trustees operates in a manner that is not fully in compliance with the Open Meeting Law (OML).</i>		Not Rated ²
Academic Program Success		
Criterion 5: Student Performance	2023 Overall Classification:	Not requiring assistance or intervention
	Progress Toward Improvement Targets:	31% - Moderate progress toward targets
	2023 Accountability Percentile:	57
Criterion 6: Program Delivery		
Key Indicator 6.2: Instruction <i>Observed instruction reflected high expectations for all students in most observed classrooms. Site visitors observed some examples of instructional practices that reflected cultural proficiency. Almost all observed classroom environments were conducive to learning.</i>		Not Rated ³

¹ Rating Key:

- **Exceeds:** The school fully and consistently meets the criterion and is a potential exemplar in this area.
- **Meets:** The school generally meets the criterion and/or minor concern(s) are noted.
- **Partially Meets:** The school meets some aspects of the criterion but not others and/or moderate concern(s) are noted.
- **Falls Far Below:** The school falls far below the criterion and/or significant concerns are noted.

² Due to the number of items required for a public school and charter school to be in compliance with state and federal regulations and guidance, the Department does not rate this category as a composite.

³ This site visit report does not include a rating for *Key Indicator 6.2: Instruction* due to the limited scope of the visit.

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Criterion 7: School Climate and Family Engagement	
Key Indicator 7.1: Safe and Supportive Environment <i>The school's program includes elements designed to foster a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment that supports students' sense of belonging. The school's behavioral management system is generally supportive and responsive for all students.</i>	● Meets
Organizational Viability	
Criterion 8: Capacity	
Key Indicator 8.1: School Systems and Leadership <i>The school clearly defines and delineates roles and responsibilities among leaders, staff, and board of trustees members. The school has clear and well-understood systems for decision-making and effective processes for communication between all members of the school community. School administrators have taken concrete steps to close identified achievement, access, and opportunity gaps. School administrators have set goals and established systems and structures for the recruitment, development, and retention of educators reflective of the racial and ethnic composition of students and families the school serves. School administrators ensure an inclusive, respectful environment for all staff.</i>	● Meets
Criterion 9: Governance <i>The board of trustees fulfills its fiduciary responsibilities and most of its legal responsibilities. The board of trustees fosters a culture of collaboration. The board of trustees engages in strategic and continuous improvement planning.</i>	● Meets

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School
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INTRODUCTION

SCHOOL PROFILE

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts (PVPA)			
Type of Charter	Commonwealth	Location	South Hadley
Regional or Non-Regional	Regional	Districts in Region	See below ⁴
Year Opened	1996	Year(s) Renewed	2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021
Maximum Enrollment	400	Current Enrollment	399 ⁵
Chartered Grade Span	7-12	Current Grade Span	7-12
Students on Waitlist	171 ⁶	Current Age of School	28
Mission Statement: PVPA offers its students intensive exposure to the performing arts within the context of an excellent college preparatory curriculum.			

SCHOOL HISTORY

- Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School (PVPA) first received its charter as Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter High School in 1996 to serve 280 students in grades 9 through 12. The school opened in 1996 serving 64 students in grade 9 and added one grade level each year until it reached its chartered grade span during the 1999-2000 school year.
- In November 2000, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) approved an amendment to increase the school's maximum enrollment from 280 to 300 students and increase the grades served from grades 9 through 12 to grades 7 through 12.
- In March 2003, the Board approved an amendment to increase the school's maximum enrollment from 300 to 400 students.
- In September 2004, the commissioner of elementary and secondary education (commissioner) approved an amendment to change the school's name to Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School.
- In December 2010, the Board renewed PVPA's charter with a condition requiring improvement in the school's mathematics program. In January 2013, PVPA had not met the condition and the Board imposed a set of three conditions regarding the school's mathematics program. In 2015, the school met two of the three conditions, and the third was extended. In 2016, the Board

⁴ Agawam, Amherst-Pelham, Belchertown, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Erving, Frontier, Gateway, Gill-Montague, Granby, Greenfield, Hadley, Hampden-Wilbraham, Hampshire, Hatfield, Holyoke, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Mohawk Trail, Monroe, Monson, Northampton, Palmer, Pioneer Valley, Ralph C. Mahar, Rowe, South Hadley, Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional, Springfield, Tantasqua, Ware, West Springfield, and Westfield.

⁵ This is the number as of October 1, 2023. Source: [Profiles](#)

⁶ This is the number as of March 15, 2024. Source: [Massachusetts Charter School Waitlist Initial/Updated Report for 2024-25](#)

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renewed the school's charter and extended the academic condition on the school. The school met the condition in 2018.

- In November 2020, the board unanimously voted to approve a three-year collective bargaining agreement between the school and a union representing PVPA teachers, UAW International Union Local 2322. The board voted to approve an updated collective bargaining agreement in October 2023.
- There have been a number of transitions in key leadership positions during the previous years. The head of school resigned in October 2016 and was replaced in July 2017 by a new head of school who served until February 2018. The next head of school began serving in April 2018 and announced his intention to resign on January 31, 2021. On December 8, 2020, the board voted to appoint the school's director of student services as acting head of school, effective February 1, 2021. On April 26, 2022, the board voted to make the acting head of school the permanent head of school.
- The school's board of trustees oversees the executive director, who in turn oversees the director of student services, the dean of students, the director arts, the chief financial officer, the director of curriculum and instruction, the technology coordinator, restorative practices coordinator, and the enrollment and communications coordinator. The director of curriculum and instruction oversees academic teachers and the assessment coordinator. The director of student services oversees the special education teachers, school psychologist, counselors, social worker, and school nurse; and the director of arts oversees the arts teachers.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Student and Staffing Data by Race/Ethnicity (2023-24)		
Race/Ethnicity	Percentage of Student Body ⁷	Percentage of Staff ⁸
African American	8.3	3.8
Asian	1.3	2.6
Hispanic	24.1	6.4
Native American	0.3	1.3
White	59.1	82.1
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0.0	1.3
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	7.0	2.6

⁷ Source: [Profiles](#)

⁸ Source: [Profiles](#)

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Selected Student Populations (2023-24) ⁹	
Title	Percentage of Student Body
First Language not English	3.0
English Language Learner	0.8
Low-income	43.4
Students with Disabilities	22.1
High Needs	53.1

METHODOLOGY

As stated above, the [Charter School Performance Criteria](#) (Criteria) form the foundation of the site visit process. The Criteria give definition to the three areas of charter school accountability defined in 603 CMR 1.00: faithfulness to charter, academic program success, and organizational viability. During the site visit, the school is assessed on all, or a subset of the performance indicators contained in the Criteria. The *Executive Summary* indicates the criteria and key indicators included within the scope of this visit.

The following participants conducted the visit:

- Patrick Buckwalter, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign (OCSSR)
- Melissa Gordon, DESE, OCSSR
- Janice Pamphile, DESE, OCSSR

The visit was conducted on May 8 and 9, 2024. Some focus group interviews were conducted remotely.

Team members used the [Site Visit Protocol](#) to plan for and conduct the visit. Prior to the visit, team members reviewed documents and other information related to each of the criteria and key indicators listed in the *Executive Summary*. On the days of the visit, team members held focus group interviews and conducted classroom observations using a form developed by the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign.

Key documents and other information reviewed by the team:

- The school's most recent annual report
- The school's website
- The school's most recent Summary of Review
- Recruitment materials
- Translated materials
- Student enrollment data
- Student indicator data

⁹ Source: [Profiles](#)

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- Staff qualifications
- Student academic performance data
- A written description of the school's programming designed to foster a safe and supportive environment for students
- The school's student/family handbook
- The school's organizational chart
- The school's 2022-23 Student Opportunity Act Progress Report
- Board of trustees meeting minutes and other board materials

Focus group interviews held by the team:

- Board of trustees: The team interviewed six board members, including the vice-president, the clerk, a student representative, and two additional members. This focus group was conducted remotely.
- School administrators: The team interviewed the executive director, the chief financial officer, the director of curriculum and instruction, the director of arts, and the director of student services.
- Teachers: The team interviewed four general education teachers, including teachers representing grades 7 through 12 and the following content areas: English language arts and music. The team also interviewed one special education teacher and the school librarian.
- Students: The team interviewed nine students, including students in grades 9 through 12.
- Families: The team interviewed three family members of students in grade 9. This focus group was conducted remotely.
- Student and family support services staff: The team interviewed the dean of students, the restorative practices coordinator, one school social worker, two school counselors, one adjustment counselor, and the school psychologist. This focus group was conducted remotely.

The team's analysis of the evidence related to each of the criteria and key indicators included in the scope of the visit is presented below.

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RATINGS, FINDINGS, AND EVIDENCE

FAITHFULNESS TO CHARTER

CRITERION 1: MISSION AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS	
The school is faithful to its mission, implements the key design elements outlined in its charter, and substantially meets its accountability plan goals.	● Meets

Finding: In Year 28, school stakeholders share a common understanding of the school's mission. The school is operating in a manner that is faithful to its mission and is implementing its key design elements.

School stakeholders share a common understanding of the school's mission as outlined in its charter.

- All stakeholders interviewed during the site visit described the school's mission in ways that reflect a common understanding. The school offers dual enrollment options at local community colleges, supports students through the college counseling department, audits the curriculum to ensure it prepares students for college-level work, and provides students with several opportunities to engage in the arts through electives, clubs, after-school activities, productions, showcases, field trips, open mics, and community meetings.

The school is operating in a manner that is faithful to its mission and implements its key design elements (KDEs). In describing how the mission is realized in the operation of the school, stakeholders described aspects of all key design elements articulated in the school's Accountability Plan. Evidence of the school's implementation of each key design element is discussed below.

College preparatory curriculum (KDE 1)

- School administrators, teachers, students and family support staff reported that the school implements a college preparatory curriculum. Teachers reported that school staff create curriculum maps for each course that are reviewed and updated at the end of each academic year to check for vertical and horizontal alignment across grades and subject. Teachers reported that the curriculum map review allows teachers to ensure the classes are preparing students for college level work. Students reported, and a review of the school's course catalog confirms, that the school does not offer traditional Advanced Placement classes at the school, and that this can be challenging when applying to colleges. Students reported that they must explain to colleges that the school does not formally offer Advanced Placement classes through the traditional schedule. School administrators reported that some students choose to engage in independent study or work with a teacher in preparation for taking an AP exam. According to the school's 2022-23 Annual Report, the school continued to be a member of Virtual High School (VHS) which provides opportunities for Advanced Placement courses, and that the school hosted several AP exams in the spring of 2023. School administrators reported, and students confirmed, that the school offers an honors option in each class. The school's 2022-23 Annual Report and the 2023-24 Course Catalog describe that students can earn an honors credit by completing 20 hours of additional work for a course.
- School administrators, teachers, student and family support staff, and students reported that the school offers dual enrollment opportunities to students in grades 11 and 12. School administrators and students reported that the school has partnered with local community colleges, including the Holyoke Community College and Greenfield Community College, so that

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students can participate in higher level courses not currently offered at the school. Students reported that the school is flexible with students' individual schedules to accommodate for dual enrollment courses.

- The school offers a college counseling department to support students in applying to college. School administrators, teachers, and student and family support staff reported that the school employs two college counselors and those counselors support students in completing college applications and financial documents and assist students in obtaining teacher recommendations. School administrators reported that one of the two college counselors will be designated for grades 10 through 12 for the 2024-25 school year, which will be a change from the current model.

Intensive exposure to the performing arts (KDE 2)

- Board members, school administrators, teachers, and students reported that the school is making changes to the art concentration requirements to increase rigor and ensure students receive intensive exposure to the performing arts. The new arts concentration requirement will be implemented during the 2024-25 school year and would require student participation in at least two mainstage productions in grades 9 through 12, and students in grade 9 would declare a concentration in one of the four areas by the end of the school year. There are five possible concentrations to choose from including dance, theatre, music, film, visual arts, and technical theatre. The school is also requiring all incoming students in grade 7 to participate in “arts core,” which is a yearlong required course where students rotate through short courses focused on dance, music, theater, and visual arts, and engage in activities focused on creative collaboration and skill-building in each discipline. School administrators reported that arts core exposes students to various disciplines and may help them declare an arts concentration. According to the school’s 2022-23 Annual Report, 100 percent of PVPA students were enrolled in at least two performing arts classes each semester in the 2022-2023 school year; additionally, 100 percent of students who graduated from grade 12, completed the arts concentration requirement.
- All stakeholders reported that the school is working on integrating the arts into core content classes. School administrators and students reported that a few staff members are undergoing certification in arts integration to then lead arts-integration-focused professional development sessions for teachers. Board members described examples of arts integration in history and English language arts classes (ELA), such as learning about romantic poets in ELA classes, and then learning about romantic dance style in dance classes.
- School administrators and teachers reported that the school partners with local artists and arts organizations. Teachers reported that these partnerships provide students with an opportunity to perform in the local community outside of the school building. School administrators and teachers also reported that the school partners with organizations who often provide arts materials, costumes, and resources that students can use at the school. School administrators, teachers, families, and students reported that the school partners and hosts local artists to expose students to various forms of art. According to the school’s 2022-23 Annual Report, the school hosted nine guest artists during the 2022-23 school year. These artists included choreographers, Indigenous professional dancers, musicians, and dance companies.

Students’ individual learning styles will be respected and supported. (KDE 3)

- School administrators, teachers, student and family support staff, families, and students reported that the school supports and respects students individual learning styles. School administrators and teachers reported that teachers and staff provide students with the

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appropriate accommodations and modifications needed in both academic and arts classes. Families reported, and site visitors observed, students working in small groups and more than one teacher present in some classes. See *Key Indicator 6.2: Instruction* for more information about instruction. Teachers and students reported that students in grades 7 and 8 have a homework support block where teachers provide small group and one-to-one instruction to students, and teachers are willing to provide one-to-one support when available. School administrators reported that special education teachers participate in grade level team meetings to support general education teachers in meeting the academic needs of students with disabilities. School administrators reported that general education teachers are committed to supporting students individual learning styles. According to the school's 2022-23 Annual Report, data from the school's evaluation tracking system, 100 percent of teachers who have taught three or more years at PVPA received a rating of Proficient or higher for Standard II, Teaching All Students on their end-of-year summative evaluation in 2023.

Accountability Plan

PVPA's approved Accountability Plan sets goals for the school's current charter term and includes 4 objectives and 12 related measures. Charter schools endeavor to meet the Accountability Plan goals by the end of the charter term. In its Annual Report for 2022-23, PVPA reported that it met 10 out of 12 goals. Please see the school's [2022-23 Annual Report](#) for more information.

CRITERION 2: ACCESS AND EQUITY	
The school ensures access and equity for all students eligible to attend the school.	● Meets

Finding: PVPA seeks to ensure access to the program and equity for all students eligible to attend the school. The school provides information to the public regarding non-discriminatory enrollment practices and the availability of programs for students with disabilities and English learners. The school provides translated materials in Spanish, and the school's website includes a translation function.

- The school has received approval from the Department for its Recruitment and Retention Plan for the 2023-24 school year.
- The school provides information to the public regarding non-discriminatory enrollment practices and the availability of specialized programs and services at the school to meet the needs of students with disabilities and English learners. The school's website includes a non-discrimination statement and general information about services available for English learners and students with disabilities.
- The school provides translated materials for families whose first language is not English. The school provides recruitment materials and flyers and the application for enrollment in Spanish. The school's website can be translated into many languages.

Finding: The school has been successful in retaining students.

- Attrition rates¹⁰ for all students and for students in the high needs group were above the third quartile in 2021 and below the third quartile in 2020 and in 2022 through 2024.

¹⁰ Attrition rates are the percentage of attrition from the end of one school year to the beginning of the next school year.

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- Stability rates¹¹ for all students was consistently above the first quartile in 2019 through 2023. Stability rates for students in the high needs group were below the first quartile in 2019, but above the first quartile in 2020 through 2023.

Please see the [Charter Analysis and Review Tool \(CHART\)](#) and [Profiles](#) for more information.

In the tables below, percentages that meet Department expectations are highlighted in green, while percentages that do not meet Department expectations are highlighted in red.¹²

All Students (Percent Attrition)					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
PVPA	10.4	12.1	9.2	11.5	11.3
Median	8.0	6.8	8.7	8.4	8.9
Third Quartile	13.4	10.5	13.6	14.3	14.8

High Needs (Percent Attrition)					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
PVPA	9.4	13.6	10.5	13.0	11.7
Median	9.7	7.4	9.9	9.9	10.3
Third Quartile	15.1	11.1	15.3	15.1	15.0

All Students (Stability Rate Percentage)					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
PVPA	90.5	93.0	94.7	91.0	92.1
Median	94.5	94.8	95.9	92.7	93.6
First Quartile	89.0	89.9	93.0	88.6	89.0

¹¹ Stability rates measure how many students remain in a school throughout the school year.

¹² With respect to attrition, percentages at or below the third quartile are highlighted in green; those above the third quartile are highlighted in red. The third quartile is the middle number between the median and the highest number for all comparison schools. With respect to stability, percentages at or above the first quartile are highlighted in green; those below the first quartile are highlighted in red. The first quartile is the middle number between the median and the lowest number for all comparison schools. Comparison schools include all of the public schools in the charter school's district or region (if the school is a regional school) that serve at least one grade level of students that overlaps with the grade levels served by the charter school.

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High Needs (Stability Rate Percentage)					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
PVPA	86.0	90.1	93.0	88.9	89.0
Median	91.8	92.6	93.9	90.4	91.5
First Quartile	87.2	88.1	91.8	87.2	87.0

Finding: The school's rates of in-school and out-of-school suspension were consistently below the third quartile for all comparison schools in 2020 through 2023.

- The school has implemented a variety of measures to reduce discipline rates. See *Key Indicator 7.1: Safe and Supportive Environment* for more details.

In the tables below, percentages that meet Department expectations are highlighted in green, while percentages that do not meet Department expectations are highlighted in red.¹³

In-School Suspension (Percentage)				
	2020	2021	2022	2023
PVPA	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Median	0.9	0.0	1.6	1.3
Third Quartile	3.2	0.0	4.1	3.3

Out-of-School Suspension (Percentage)				
	2020	2021	2022	2023
PVPA	2.7	0.0	0.0	3.8
Median	3.2	0.0	5.7	4.8
Third Quartile	6.9	0.3	8.7	8.8

Discipline rates for student groups that are higher than the discipline rate for all students are highlighted in red.

¹³ Percentages at or below the third quartile are highlighted in green; those above the third quartile are highlighted in red. The third quartile is in the middle number between the median and the highest number for all comparison schools. Comparison schools include all of the public schools in the charter school's district or region (if the school is a regional school) that serve at least one grade level of students that overlaps with the grade levels served by the charter school.

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2022-23 Student Discipline Data Report ¹⁴¹⁵					
Student Group	Students	Students Disciplined	Percent In-School Suspension	Percent Out-of-School Suspension	Percent Emergency Removal
All Students	418	19	1.0	3.8	0.0
English Learner	2				
Low Income	173	12	1.2	6.4	0.0
Students with Disabilities	99	5			
High Needs	213	13	0.9	5.6	0.0
Female	272	12	1.5	3.3	0.0
Male	137	7	0.0	5.1	0.0
American Indian or Alaska Native	1				
Asian	5				
African American/Black	38	1			
Hispanic/Latino	92	5			
Multi-race, Non-Hispanic/Latino	30	2			
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0				
White	252	11	1.6	3.2	0.0

¹⁴ Source: [Profiles](#)

¹⁵ Data in this report are suppressed (cells are blank) for a variety of reasons. More information about the data may be found [here](#).

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CRITERION 3: COMPLIANCE	
The school operates in compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable federal and state laws and regulations regarding public charter schools.	Not Rated¹⁶

Finding: PVPA did not submit accountability documents according to state statute and regulations.

- The school did not submit its Student Opportunity Act Plan to the Department in a timely manner.

Finding: PVPA is out of compliance with state statutes and regulations regarding teacher qualifications.

- Per state regulations (603 CMR 1.06 (4)), all teachers beyond their first year of employment must have taken and passed the Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure (MTEL). As of the date of the site visit, 8 teachers (out of 35) beyond the first year of employment had not passed the required MTEs.

Finding: The board of trustees operates in a manner that is not fully in compliance with the Open Meeting Law (OML).

- Board meeting minutes do not include a list of documents and other exhibits used at the meeting as required by the OML. Board meeting minutes from October 26, 2023, show that the board voted to approve a union contract without a quorum present, according to the roll call in the meeting minutes.
- Board meeting minutes include evidence that the board did not operate in a manner that is fully in compliance with the OML when entering executive session. Meeting minutes from October 2023 do not explicitly state the reason for entering executive session, and minutes from March 2024 do not provide a reason for entering into executive session.

¹⁶ Due to the number of items required for a public school and charter school to be in compliance with state and federal regulations and guidance, the Department does not rate this category as a composite.

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ACADEMIC PROGRAM SUCCESS

CRITERION 5: STUDENT PERFORMANCE		
The school consistently makes progress in student academic achievement for all students as defined by the statewide accountability system.	2023 Overall Classification:	Not requiring assistance or intervention
	Progress Toward Improvement Targets:	31% - Moderate progress toward targets
	2023 Accountability Percentile:	57

The purpose of the statewide accountability system is to provide clear, actionable information about school performance. The accountability indicators used for each school depend on the grades served. More detailed information related to the school's student performance is included in [Profiles](#).

CRITERION 6: PROGRAM DELIVERY
The school delivers a high quality academic program that meets the needs of all students.

Key Indicator 6.2: Instruction	
The school staff has a common understanding of high-quality instruction. Instructional practices are aligned to this common understanding. Instructional practices are based on high expectations for all students and reflect cultural proficiency. Instruction fosters student engagement. Classroom environments are conducive to learning.	Not Rated¹⁷

Finding: Observed instruction reflected high expectations for all students in most observed classrooms. Site visitors observed some examples of instructional practices that reflected cultural proficiency. Almost all observed classroom environments were conducive to learning.¹⁸

Instruction reflected high expectations for all students in most observed classrooms.

- In 16 out of 19 classrooms, site visitors observed teachers utilizing instructional practices that reflected high expectations for all students. Site visitors observed teachers calling on diverse voices, encouraging the use of academic vocabulary when explaining an answer, and providing feedback on student work. Teachers reinforced behavioral expectations, asked higher-order thinking questions, and challenged students to explain their responses and connect their ideas to previous work.
- In 3 out of 19 classrooms, site visitors observed instruction that did not reflect high expectations for all students. In these classrooms, teachers provided students with work that did not require

¹⁷ This site visit report does not include a rating for *Key Indicator 6.2: Instruction* due to the limited scope of the visit.

¹⁸ The site visit team gathered evidence related to a subset of the elements included in *Key Indicator 6.2: Instruction*.

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higher order thinking, such as students copying notes for most of the lesson; and teachers did not communicate high standards for student work of effort. In one classroom, the teacher provided limited redirection or did not address students who were off task. In another classroom, the teacher did not provide opportunities for students to engage or practice the concepts and skills that were being taught. The teacher lectured students, and it was unclear if students understood the content.

Site visitors observed some examples of instructional practices that reflected cultural proficiency.

- Prior to the site visit, school administrators indicated that site visitors should see examples of the following instructional practices that the school believes reflect cultural proficiency: evidence of strong relationships between students and teachers and a curriculum that is inclusive. During the site visit, school administrators added that teachers are intentional about getting to know their students and understanding all aspects of their identities, and the school aims to implement a diverse curriculum that encourages self-reflection and allows students to learn about different cultures other than their own. School administrators reported that students complete biannual surveys that include questions about culturally proficient practices, specifically whether students see themselves reflected in their learning materials. School administrators reported teachers review the survey results and adjust their curriculum to ensure students see themselves reflected in curriculum materials.
- During the site visit, teachers reported that they seek to have instruction reflect cultural proficiency. Teachers reported that they aim to expose students to the diversity in the community and the world through the curriculum and through the books students read in classes, particularly in English language arts classes. Teachers also reported that the arts classes aim to select music and productions that reflect diverse communities and relevant to student experiences. Teachers added that as the school's student demographics change, the school will continue to create a learning environment that is reflective of all students' identities.
- During classroom observations, site visitors observed some examples of instructional practices that reflected cultural proficiency. Site visitors observed texts in classroom libraries with main characters from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and/or written by authors of color; student artwork in classrooms and hallways that featured and celebrated students' diverse backgrounds and identities; some teachers embedding topics that reflect a variety of cultures and perspectives, such as discussing the history of dance in Guinea; and teachers playing music and making connections to students' lives.

Almost all observed classrooms were conducive to learning.

- In 17 out of 19 classrooms, site visitors observed learning environments that were conducive to learning. In these classrooms, site visitors observed teachers maintaining intellectually and physically safe environments by providing opportunities for students to work in groups, redirecting student behavior, and reinforcing high expectations for student's behavior. Site visitors noted examples of positive student-student and student-teacher interactions, such as teachers joking with students and calling students by their pronouns and preferred names. Site visitors also observed classrooms decorated with inspirational quotes and soft lighting.
- In 2 out of 19 classrooms, site visitors observed learning environments that were not conducive to learning. In these classrooms, teachers were unsuccessful in redirecting student behaviors that were disruptive to the learning environment. For example, students engaged in off-topic conversations, but the teacher did not attempt to check in or redirect those students.

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CRITERION 7: SCHOOL CLIMATE AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The school creates safe, positive, healthy, culturally responsive, inclusive, and welcoming learning environments. These environments cultivate supportive, authentic relationships and a strong sense of belonging and connection, which value the diverse assets and voices of all students, staff, and families.

Key Indicator 7.1: Safe and Supportive Environment

The school ensures that school and classroom environments are safe, supportive, culturally responsive, welcoming, respectful, inclusive, and reflective of the community and students' cultures and identities. The school creates an environment that supports all students' sense of belonging and helps students develop social and emotional knowledge, skills, and competencies for a multicultural world.

● **Meets**

Finding: The school's program includes elements designed to foster a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment that supports students' sense of belonging. The school's behavioral management system is generally supportive and responsive for all students.

The school's program includes elements designed to foster a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment that supports students' sense of belonging.

- School stakeholders reported that the school seeks to ensure the physical and social-emotional safety of students. School administrators reported that the school partners with local law enforcement to practice emergency drills, and the front office was recently remodeled for security purposes. Student and family support staff and teachers reported that school staff are constantly present in school hallways during transitions, and that teachers use walkie talkies when outside of the school building to readily communicate with staff inside of the building. All stakeholders reported that the school has a wellness team who support the social-emotional health of students. The wellness team consists of a social worker, two school counselors, an adjustment counselor, and a school psychologist.
- The school's program includes multiple elements to foster students' sense of belonging. School administrators, student and family support staff, teachers, and students reported that the school has a weekly community time where students can perform or present on various topics and staff can share announcements with the entire school community. School administrators and teachers reported that the school offers approximately 15 student-led clubs that also meet twice per month, and that students are always welcome to start new clubs based on their personal interests. School administrators, teachers, and students reported that the school hosts community events such as open mics, community day, unity day, or Oktoberfest to create fun and educational opportunities for the school community to come together. School administrators and students reported that the school has a student council, and that one student council representative from each grade in grades 9 through 12 sits on the school's board of trustees.
- School administrators, families, teachers, students, and student and family support staff reported that students' culture and identities are reflected in the learning environment, and that the school is continuing to strengthen these efforts. School administrators, teachers, families, and student and family support staff reported that the school offers six affinity groups for students, including Asian, Black, Latinx, neurodivergent, feminist coalition, and gender and sexuality diversity student union. The affinity groups meet twice per month to provide students

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with an opportunity to engage with each other and discuss any recommendations they wish to make to the school administration that strengthens their sense of belonging at the school. Some of the student unions also coordinate schoolwide programming for Black History Month, Women's History Month, and Hispanic Heritage Month. School administrators and teachers reported that the school staff have focused on providing a less Eurocentric perspective in history classes and is embracing a global perspective that is rooted in social justice. Teachers reported that arts teachers are also focused on incorporating more culturally responsive materials, such as including the work of African American composers in music classes and introducing art projects that include social justice themes. School administrators reported that they are hoping to continue hiring diverse staff who are reflective of the student body. See *Key Indicator 8.1: School Systems and Leadership* for more information about the school's teacher recruitment efforts.

- All stakeholders reported that relationships between students and staff are strong. School administrators and teachers reported that the school is a small environment with a one to four staff-to-student ratio that allows teachers to get to know individual students and their families well. Families and students reported that teachers and staff are responsive to the needs of students and work to ensure students' social-emotional needs are being met. Students reported having at least one adult they could connect with if they needed help and reported that teachers are accessible and make themselves available to students, as needed.

The school's behavioral management system is generally supportive and responsive for all students.

- According to the student and family handbook, and confirmed by school administrators, teachers, and student and family support staff, the school uses a restorative practices framework as the school's behavioral management system. The student and family handbook describes the schoolwide positive behaviors support systems, the restorative practice structures, and the trauma-sensitive informed practices that support the restorative practices framework. Student and family support staff reported teachers may use class circles to address whole-class issues, but if there is conflict between students or teachers and students, that school staff will facilitate restorative circles to resolve an initial conflict. Student and family support staff reported that traditional discipline methods are used in partnership with restorative justice principals when necessary. School administrators, teachers, student and family support staff, and students reported that when further intervention is needed, the dean of students meets with families to discuss the student's behavior, and will hold disciplinary hearings, as necessary. Students reported that there are clear consequences for certain actions and the student and family handbook describes expectations for non-negotiable behavior and lists consequences associated with engaging in those behaviors.
- The school's behavioral management system is generally implemented consistently across classrooms and grade levels. School administrators reported, and school climate documents submitted by the school confirm, that this is the first year the school has fully implemented a restorative practices program. Teachers and student and family support staff reported that teachers were trained in the school's restorative practices approach in the beginning of the school year, but some new teachers are still learning how to successfully implement the restorative practices. Teachers reported that the follow up process with students can be inconsistent and sometimes there is no clear and final resolution after the use of restorative circles; however, teachers reported that the dean of students is working to address those concerns. Students reported that the behavioral management system is mostly implemented

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consistently across classrooms and grade levels, but there are some inconsistencies among teachers.

- School staff review some disaggregated discipline data and are in the process of strengthening systems for accessing and reviewing discipline data. Teachers reported that school staff review attendance and tardiness data, as well as suspension rates that are disaggregated by race, sending district, and student groups, such as students with disabilities and low-income students. Teachers reported that attendance data is often reviewed at least four times per year when grade reports are released. School administrators reported that some of the discipline data is incomplete because the data is not consistently collected or added into PowerSchool. School administrators and student and family support staff reported that PowerSchool is a new system, and that teachers are still getting acclimated to the data collection processes. Student and family support staff reported that school administrators plan to review discipline data from PowerSchool during the professional development sessions held at the beginning of the school year. School administrators also reported that teachers administer student surveys for each class two times per year, and that the student surveys include questions specific to the school climate. School administrators reported that student responses are collected in a spreadsheet that allows each teacher's supervisor to review the data and share student responses with teachers. School administrators reported that the student survey responses are aligned to the teacher evaluation cycle.
- School administrators, teachers, student and family support staff described ways in which the school has made changes to reduce discipline rates. Student and family support staff reported that the higher rates of suspension were primarily found in grades 7 and 8, but that the school is currently collecting data to understand and respond to trends in behavior across all grades. Student and family support staff reported that the school has partnered with AmeriCorps and currently has two AmeriCorps members on staff that focus on implementing restorative practices and helping students build restorative relationships. These AmeriCorps members conduct one-on-one check-ins with students, lead restorative circles, and offer push-in support in classrooms.

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ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY

CRITERION 8: CAPACITY

The school sustains a well-functioning organizational structure and creates a professional, inclusive, respectful, and welcoming working climate for all staff.

Key Indicator 8.1: School Systems and Leadership

<p>a. The school's leadership team implements school academic programming and operations in a manner to meet a clearly defined mission and set of goals. The school defines and delineates clear roles and responsibilities among leaders, staff, management, and board of trustee members. The school has clear and well-understood systems for decision-making and communication processes among all members of the school community.</p> <p>b. School administrators foster a culture of accountability, trust, and collaboration with school stakeholders to promote joint responsibility for student learning. Based on data, school administrators take concrete and ambitious steps to close identified achievement, access, and opportunity gaps. School administrators set goals and establishes systems and structures for the recruitment, development, and retention of educators reflective of the racial and ethnic composition of the students and families it serves. School administrators ensure an inclusive, respectful environment for all staff.</p>	<p>● Meets</p>
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Finding: The school clearly defines and delineates roles and responsibilities among leaders, staff, and board of trustees members. The school has clear and well-understood systems for decision-making and effective processes for communication between all members of the school community. School administrators have taken concrete steps to close identified achievement, access, and opportunity gaps. School administrators have set goals and established systems and structures for the recruitment, development, and retention of educators reflective of the racial and ethnic composition of students and families the school serves. School administrators ensure an inclusive, respectful environment for all staff.

The school clearly defines and delineates roles and responsibilities among leaders, staff, and board of trustees members.

- The school's organizational structure for the current school year is described in the *School History* section.
- Administrators and teachers reported that most of the roles and responsibilities of administrators, teachers, and other school staff are clear and well understood. Teachers reported that the organizational chart is reflected in the current union contract, and that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined in that contract. Student and family support staff reported that some staff are not members of the union, but that their roles and responsibilities are also well understood. Teachers also reported that some new roles have been created in the past two years and that members of the school community are still learning the responsibilities of those newer roles, such as the dean of students.
- The board of trustees demonstrates a clear understanding of its roles and responsibilities. The board fulfills its fiduciary responsibilities and most of its legal responsibilities and engages in

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governance tasks rather than management of day-to-day operations at the school. See *Criterion 9: Governance* for more information.

The school has clear and well-understood systems for decision-making and effective processes for communication between all members of the school community.

- The school has clear and well-understood systems for decision-making. School administrators, teachers, and student and family support staff reported that the school provides multiple opportunities to provide input on decisions that impact the school community, such as frequent surveys, all-staff meetings, and monthly union management committee meetings. Teachers and student and family support staff reported that school administrators aim to ensure all staff feel included and consider their feedback when making decisions. For example, teachers reported that school administrators created many opportunities for teachers and staff to engage in discussions about union contract negotiation before it was finalized.
- The school has effective processes for communication among all members of the school community. Teachers and student and family support staff reported that school administrators provide many opportunities to discuss various decisions before they are made. School administrators and teachers reported that discussions are sometimes held in small groups, all-staff gatherings, and department meetings. Teachers reported that there were not enough all-staff meetings during the 2023-24 school year, but that school administrators plan to increase the number of all-staff meetings for the following school year to ensure more frequent communication with staff. Families reported that the school sends emails with both school and board updates and a weekly parent bulletin that shares specific information about the school and upcoming events, as well as lists volunteer opportunities available at the school.

School administrators have taken concrete and ambitious steps to close identified achievement, access, and opportunity gaps.

- During the site visit, administrators and teachers identified the following achievement, access, and opportunity gaps for their student population: MCAS results for students with disabilities, low-income students, Hispanic/Latino students, and African America/Black students; and writing and literacy skills for students in grades 11 and 12. Administrators reported that they have taken steps to close identified achievement, access, and opportunity gaps. For example, school administrators and teachers reported that the school is changing the English language arts curriculum for grade 11 to address the growing writing and comprehension needs, and the school aims to prepare students to write strong college essays before they begin grade 12. Teachers also reported that the school implements small scale after school tutoring, offers homework support to students and April Academy during school break to allow students to make up missed work, and provides targeted teaching opportunities for teachers. Teachers also reported that the school aims to ensure all students have access to participate in the arts by providing students access to musical instruments, building partnerships with local organizations that can provide costumes and materials for student productions, and fundraising to ensure students can attend field trips.
- The school's 2021-23 Student Opportunity Action (SOA) Plan identified achievement gaps between statewide averages and the school's Hispanic/Latino students, African American/Black students, low-income students, and students with disabilities. In the SOA Plan, the school reports that administrators will focus on the following to address the identified achievement gaps: diversifying the educator and administrator workforce through recruitment and retention; increasing staffing to expand student access to the arts, athletics, and enrichment; strategic

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scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers; monitoring success with outcome metrics and targets; and engaging all families. In the SOA Plan, the school described strategies to recruit staff reflective of the student body as well as strategies for increasing staffing capacity and providing more common planning time for teachers. The SOA Plan also includes the academic data the school reviews to monitor student outcomes. Please see *Key Indicator 7.1: Safe and Supportive Environment* for more information about the school climate data school administrators review.


School administrators have set goals and established systems and structures for the recruitment, development, and retention of educators reflective of the racial and ethnic composition of students and families the school serves.

- According to Profiles data, the school staff is somewhat reflective of the racial and ethnic composition of students and families that the school serves. The school's 2023-24 [student population](#) is 8.3 percent African American, 1.3 percent Asian, 24.1 percent Hispanic/Latino, 0.3 percent Native American, 59.1 percent White, and 7 percent are Multi-Race/Non-Hispanic, while the [school staff](#) is 3.8 percent African American, 2.6 percent Asian, 6.4 percent Hispanic, 82.1 percent White, 1.3 percent Native American, 1.3 percent Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 2.6 percent Multi-Race/Non-Hispanic.
- School administrators reported multiple ways the school has been working to recruit and retain educators reflective of the student population. School administrators reported that the school developed a recruitment calendar that highlights events that school administrators attend to recruit teachers and staff. School administrators also reported that members of their leadership team attended professional development, sponsored by the Department and [NEMNET](#) Diversity Recruitment, that focused on best practices for recruiting a diverse workforce and on the impact of implicit bias. Board members, school administrators, and teachers reported that the school received a teacher diversification grant from the Department and have used those funds to offer signing bonuses and education reimbursements to support staff who may want to further their education. School administrators reported that they have included salary increases and stipends as a strategy to retain teachers. For example, school administrators reported that the most recent union contract includes a seven percent raise over the next few years, and that they are providing stipends for longevity at the school and to licensed teachers.

School administrators ensure an inclusive and respectful environment for all staff.

- Administrators reported that they strive to create an inclusive and respectful environment for all staff in the following ways: creating meaningful opportunities for teacher and staff collaboration, changing the master schedule to allow for more planning time during the school day, creating more space for all staff meetings, and providing relevant professional development to staff and teachers. During the site visit, teachers and student and family support staff reported that administrators create an inclusive and respectful environment for staff by emphasizing all-staff discussions, allowing teachers and staff to collaborate during the school day, creating clear and transparent systems for decision making, and supporting the teacher's unionization process.

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CRITERION 9: GOVERNANCE	
Members of the board of trustees uphold their responsibilities under Massachusetts law and regulations to act as public agents authorized by the state and provide competent and appropriate governance to ensure the success and sustainability of the school.	 Meets

Finding: The board of trustees fulfills its fiduciary responsibilities and most of its legal responsibilities. The board of trustees fosters a culture of collaboration. The board of trustees engages in strategic and continuous improvement planning.

The board of trustees fulfils its fiduciary responsibilities and most of its legal responsibilities.

- The board acts in a manner that is not fully in compliance with the board's bylaws. The board has 14 approved members at the time of the visit, of which 11 are voting members. The board bylaws require a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 20 members and require different constituents of the school community to be represented on the board. The board bylaws require the board to have three or more parents of current students, no more than five students, four or more community members, and no more than two teachers and/or staff members. Board members reported that the board currently has four parent representatives, one student, one teacher/staff member, and eight community members. The Board Members Management System (BMMS) currently lists four approved student representatives. The board consists of the chair, vice chair, treasurer, and clerk, as required by the bylaws. The board does not require standing committees, but the board reported, and meeting minutes confirmed, the following active committees: governance, finance, head of school evaluation, long-range infrastructure planning task force, and bylaw review. The board bylaws require the board to meet monthly, and board meeting minutes show that the board met monthly, more specifically the board met 11 times between September 2023 and April 2024, more frequently than is required by the bylaws. Board members reported that committees meet monthly and board meeting minutes show that committees mostly meet monthly.
- The board acts in a manner that is not fully in compliance with the Open Meeting Law (OML). Board and committee meeting minutes consistently include the date, time, and location of each meeting, a list of members present, a record of decisions taken, and a sufficient summary of the discussions of each topic, all requirements of the OML. Board meeting agendas include a list of documents or exhibits the board planned to use during meetings, but board meeting minutes do not include a list of documents or exhibits used or referenced, as required by the OML. Meeting minutes from October 2023 do not explicitly state the reason for entering executive session, and minutes from March 2024 do not provide a reason for entering into executive session. Board meeting minutes from October 26, 2023, show that the board voted to approve a union contract without a quorum present, according to the roll call in the meeting minutes.
- Board meeting minutes include evidence that the board approved appropriate school policies, including the budget for the 2024 fiscal year, the capital budget, and the 2023-24 school calendar.
- The board demonstrates appropriate oversight of the school's efforts to be faithful to the mission. Board members reported and meeting minutes confirmed that the head of school and some school administrators provide regular, detailed updates about activities related to the school's mission and key design elements at board and committee meetings. For example, the head of school and director of arts provide updates on the arts, student productions, standard-based grading system, and strategic plan goals related to the school's mission. Board meeting

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minutes show that the school's mission statement is read at the beginning of every board meeting.

- The board demonstrates appropriate oversight of the school's academic performance. Board members reported that the board reviews academic data when mid-semester grades are released. Board meeting minutes demonstrated that the board reviewed MCAS data during the November 2023 and February 2024 board meetings. Board meeting minutes confirm that the board reviewed chronic absenteeism data, graduation rates, and report card data. Board meeting minutes also confirmed that the director of academics shared plans for academic interventions which included hiring new mathematics and English language arts intervention teachers, implementing tutoring programs, and using the Acceleration Academy during April break.
- The board reviews some disaggregated student data. Board members reported that the board compares the school's data to other charter school and traditional public schools and reviews student data disaggregated by grade level, race, ethnicity, sending districts, and student groups, such as low-income students. Documents submitted by the school show that the board reviewed student data by grade level and subject, but not by student groups. It is unclear if the board reviewed additional disaggregated data because board meeting minutes do not consistently include a list of exhibits or documents referenced during the meeting.
- The board demonstrates appropriate oversight of the school leader. Board members reported, and meeting minutes confirmed, that the process is conducted annually by the head of school evaluation committee. The school leader reported, and meeting minutes confirmed, that the head of school evaluation committee meets almost monthly to discuss the timeline for the evaluation and discuss next steps in the process. School administrators reported that the head of school meets with the head of school committee to develop goals at the beginning of the school year. The committee then meets with the head of school in January to review and discuss progress on meeting the established goals, and the head of school provides artifacts and documentation to show progress toward meeting those goals. In March, the committee invites the school leader to complete a mid-year self-assessment, and in April, the head of school's direct reports and the full board are asked to assess the head of school using a survey on BoardOnTrack. The school leader then meets with members of the head of school evaluation committee to discuss the self-assessment, review the documents and artifacts that were presented, and discuss the evaluations from the direct reports. The head of school evaluation committee then summarizes the findings in a formal report that is presented to the full board, discussed, and voted on. Board meeting minutes show that the head of school evaluation committee provided regular updates to the full board throughout the school year, and the full board discussed and voted on the head of school's evaluation during the board retreat in September 2023.
- Board meeting minutes include evidence that the board engages in governance tasks rather than management of day-to-day operations at the school.
- The board demonstrates appropriate oversight of the school's finances. Board members reported that meeting minutes confirmed that the finance committee meets monthly to review the budget and financial statements. Board members reported, and meeting minutes confirmed, that the finance committee reports out to the full board quarterly, and that board members have an opportunity to review financial data, ask questions, and engage in discussions about the budget and expenditures. Board meeting minutes show that the finance committee shared updates about the capital budget, grants received, and facilities expenses.

The board of trustees fosters a culture of collaboration.

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- The board communicates regularly with other members of the school community. Board meeting minutes include evidence that the board seeks and frequently receives input from school stakeholders, including school staff, families, alumni, and students. According to board meeting minutes, the head of school presents school updates at every board meeting and administrators regularly attend board meetings. As noted above, the board currently has four parents, one student, one teacher/staff member, and eight community members on the board. Board members reported that the school shares board specific information through social media postings and via website announcements.
- Board members reported and meeting minutes confirm that the board has clear and well-understood systems for decision-making. Most decisions consist of a committee conducting research and in-depth conversations before presenting a proposal to the full board for a vote.
- According to board meeting minutes, board of trustees meetings foster open, deliberate, and thorough discussions to facilitate and ensure public accountability. Board and committee meeting minutes include sufficient summaries of each topic, as required by the OML. The school's website lists the name and roles of board members and all board and committee meeting agendas and minutes. Board meeting agendas include time for public comment, and the school's website includes the email that members of the community can use to contact the board.

The board engages in strategic and continuous improvement planning.

- The board has a strategic plan for 2021 to 2026. Board members reported that the goals of the strategic plan are reviewed annually during the summer months to assess what progress has been made. Board members reported that different committees are tasked with meeting different goals included in the strategic plan. For example, the long-range infrastructure committee is focused on meeting the facilities goals of the strategic plan, among others. Goals described in the strategic plan are related to leadership and governance; diversity, equity, anti-racism, and inclusion; school climate; arts and academics; student support; communication and outreach; student support; faculty and staff supports and development; and technology, facilities, and services.
- The board has a clear, but informal plan for board leadership succession. Board members reported they had recently conducted an audit of current board membership to assess whose term will end soon. Board members also reported that the board's vice chair typically trains under the current chair to have time to understand the chair's role and can assume the chair role when necessary.
- The board has a clear plan for succession of school administrators and is in the process of formalizing this plan. Board members reported that members of the board have attended school administrators' succession planning workshops offered through the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association and are working with the head of school to finalize that plan. Board members reported that the plan consists of a team of people who would assume various responsibilities at the school while the board conducts a search for the head of school.
- The board recruits and selects new members that are reflective of the community and have expertise and skills that support the needs of the board. . Board members reported they had recently conducted an audit to understand how many parent, staff, student, and community member representatives were on the board and used the information to decide how to focus their recruitment efforts. Board members reported that the board uses a few different strategies to recruit board members including sending weekly email advertisements, making announcements before student performances, advertising in local newspapers, and board

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members tapping into their personal networks. Board members reported that the board reviews prospective candidates resume, asks the candidates to complete a questionnaire, and asks candidates to attend a board meeting before they are discussed at a board meeting and board vote is taken.

- The board trains members to provide competent governance. Board members reported that the board asks new board members to review documents found on BoardOnTrack which include information about the obligations of a board member, the strategic plan, the school's original charter, and a review of the Open Meeting Law.

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APPENDIX A: FINANCE

Massachusetts Charter & Virtual School Financial Dashboard The Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign



Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

Indicators

Audit Review

Financial Highlights

Data Downloads



Financial Indicators

The metrics below measure potential financial risk, using the following indicators:

● Low Risk ▲ Moderate Risk ◆ High Risk

Metric	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5 Year Avg	FY23 MA Avg
Current Ratio	3.9 ●	4.0 ●	5.4 ●	8.7 ●	7.2 ●	5.8 ●	4.1 ●
Unrestricted Days Cash	78 ⓘ	108 ●	125 ●	145.2 ●	153.1 ●	133 ●	108 ●
% of Program Paid by Tuition	91% ●	96% ●	100% ●	96% ●	98% ●	96% ●	88% ▲
% of Program Paid by Tuition & Federal Grants	93% ●	99% ●	100% ●	100% ●	100% ●	98% ●	96% ●
% of Total Revenue Expended on Facilities	11% ●	11% ●	10% ●	11% ●	13% ●	11% ●	12% ●
% Change in Net Assets	-2.5% ◆	1.9% ●	7.1% ●	6.8% ●	6.1% ●	3.9% ●	3.9% ●
Debt to Asset Ratio	0.20 ●	0.19 ●	0.15 ●	0.09 ●	0.10 ●	0.15 ●	0.50 ●

Contextual Commentary from School:

School did not submit comment.

Unrestricted Days Cash Note for FY19:



Due to a delay in June tuition payments, there was a significant negative affect on Unrestricted Days Cash. For this reason, a risk indicator will not be applied for FY19. As a result, the 5-year avg for this metric will only be for the 4 years available.

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Massachusetts Charter & Virtual School Financial Dashboard The Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign					dese MASSACHUSETTS Department of Elementary and Secondary Education	
Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School ▼					Indicators	Audit Review
Financial Audit Review					Financial Highlights	Data Downloads ⓘ
Audit Measure ▼					2019	2020
Is the audit free of Questioned Costs?					2021	2022
Is the audit free of Instances of Noncompliance under GAAS?					2023	
Is the audit free of findings of Significant Deficiency?					✓	✓
Is the audit free of findings of Material Weakness?					✓	✓
Did the audit include an unqualified opinion?					✓	✓
Contextual Commentary from School:						
School did not submit comment.						

Financial Metric	Definitions	Low Risk	Moderate Risk	Potentially High Risk
1. Current Ratio	Current Ratio is a measure of operational efficiency and short-term financial health. CR is calculated as current assets divided by current liabilities.	>= 1.5	Between 1.0 (inclusive) and 1.5	< 1.0
2. Unrestricted Days Cash	The unrestricted days cash on hand ratio indicates how many days a school can pay its expenses without another inflow of cash. Calculated as Cash and Cash Equivalents divided by ((Total Expenses-Depreciated Expenses)/365). Please note that the Department of Revenue was late making June, 2019 tuition payments to many charter schools.	>= 60 days	Between 30 (inclusive) and 60 days	< 30 days
3. Percentage of Program Paid by Tuition	This measures the percentage of the schools total expenses that are funded entirely by tuition. Calculated as (Tuition + In-Kind Contributions) divided by Total Expenses (expressed as a percentage). Note: In-Kind Contribution is added to the numerator in this ratio to balance out In-Kind Expenditures which will be captured in the Total Expenses in the denominator, and ratios over 100% are set to 100%.	>= 90%	Between 75% (inclusive) and 90%	< 75%
4. Percentage of Program Paid by Tuition & Federal Grants	This measures the percentage of the schools total expenses that are funded by tuition and federal grants. Calculated as (Tuition + In-Kind Contributions + Federal Grants) divided by Total Expenses (expressed as a percentage). Note: In-Kind Contribution are added to the numerator in this ratio to balance out In-Kind Expenditures which will be captured in the Total Expenses in the denominator, and ratios over 100% are set to 100%.	>= 90%	Between 75% (inclusive) and 90%	< 75%
5. Percentage of Total Revenue Expended on Facilities	This measures the percentage of Total Revenue that is spent on Operation & Maintenance and Non-Operating Financing Expenses of Plant. Calculated as Operation & Maintenance plus Non-Operating Financing Expenses of Plant divided by Total Revenues (expressed as a percentage).	<= 15%	Between 15% and 30% (inclusive)	> 30%
6. Change in Net Assets Percentage	This measures a school's cash management efficiency. Calculated as Change in Net Assets divided by Total Revenue (Expressed as a percentage).	Positive %	Between -2% (inclusive) and 0%	< -2%
7. Debt to Asset Ratio	Measures the extent to which the school relies on borrowed funds to finance its operations. Calculated as Total Liabilities divided by Total Assets.	<= .9	Between .9 and 1 (inclusive)	> 1
FY20 MA AVG Column	All financial metrics indicated in this column are averages of each calculated metric across all charter schools.			

APPENDIX B: RESOURCES

Following is a list of resources available through the Department or other organizations grouped according to the Charter School Performance Criteria. Some of the resources include links to federal, state, and Department requirements, but for the most part, these resources are not meant to be prescriptive. Instead, they are intended to provide information that may be helpful to effectively serve students. The resources included below are related to areas of concern identified in this report.

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Criterion 3: Compliance		
Educator Qualifications		
Title	Description	Link
Archived Administrative and Governance Guide	As entities of the state, charter schools must meet a number of legal requirements set forth by the Commonwealth. Charter school teachers are required to meet certain standards and be qualified to teach. Qualifications for Charter School Teachers are located on pp. 34-35.	http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/governance/?section=all
Charter School Technical Advisory 20-1: Educator Qualifications in Massachusetts Charter Schools	Charter school teachers are required to meet certain standards and be qualified to teach. This technical advisory provides guidance regarding educator qualifications in Commonwealth charter schools. It is intended to clarify the requirements of the charter school statute in Massachusetts, G.L. c. 71, § 89; the charter school regulations, 603 CMR 1.00; the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); the state statute governing the education of students who are English learners (ELs, G.L. c. 71A, as amended in 2002; and the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as they apply to Commonwealth charter schools.	https://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/guidance/2020-1.html
Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) requirements by subject area for charter teachers	Charter school teachers are required to meet certain standards and be qualified to teach. Based on the requirements of the charter school statute in Massachusetts, G.L. c. 71, § 89, and the charter school regulations, 603 CMR 1.00, all Commonwealth charter teachers must either have an appropriate license or pass required MTELs within the first year of employment in a teacher role at the Commonwealth charter school.	http://www.doe.mass.edu/mtel/
Office of Educator Licensure	Charter school teachers are required to meet certain standards and be qualified to teach. A Massachusetts educator license is required only for ESL teachers. Other Commonwealth charter teachers may also have an appropriate license to be qualified to teach. This website contains a variety of information on educator licensure requirements.	http://www.doe.mass.edu/licensure/
Board of Trustees Requirements		

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Board Member Management System (BMMS)	Upon beginning service on a board and each year thereafter, each trustee must meet several legal requirements set forth by the Commonwealth. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) has developed the BMMS to distribute, collect, and maintain records of the completion of these requirements by active board members.	http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/governance/?section=bmms
Open Meeting Law	The Attorney General's website provides guidance on following the Open Meeting Law, including the public body checklists used by Department staff when reviewing board meeting minutes for compliance with Open Meeting Law.	http://www.mass.gov/ago/government-resources/open-meeting-law/
Bylaws Checklist	Developing bylaws, the document that governs the activities of the board, is one of the activities of a charter school board of trustees. The Opening Procedures Handbook (OPH) has a resource section about the board's bylaws starting on page 12. In addition, Appendix A of the OPH includes the Criteria for Bylaws Checklist as a resource for boards to consider when revising their bylaws.	https://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/new/?section=handbook
Reporting Requirements		
Annual Report	A charter school's annual report must be submitted to the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign at the Department on or before August 1 annually.	Charter school statute (MGL Chapter 71, Section 89(jj)) and regulations https://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/acct.html?section=annual
Audit	Massachusetts charter schools are required to keep an accurate account of all of their financial activities. This site provides guidance, requirements, and reviews related to charter school accounting and auditing.	https://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/finance/
Data Submission	The Department collects a variety of data from schools in order to meet federal and state reporting requirements.	https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/

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