

APPROVED



Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

Minutes

Board of Trustees

August Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday August 24, 2021 at 6:00 PM

Location

In Person: PVPA 3rd Floor Conference Room

Remote Participation:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87213553752?pwd=TGhRSy9VeWxxT2l0ZlBkRzdkVVhXZz09>

Trustees Present

Andrea Nathanson (remote), David Potter, Jacob Rosenblum, Marty Espinola, Mindi Winter, Shannon Materka

Trustees Absent

Davarian Baldwin, LATRINA DENSON, Neil Hede, Shino Pichette, Tonya Ward

Trustees who left before the meeting adjourned

Andrea Nathanson

Ex Officio Members Present

Brent Nielsen

Non Voting Members Present

Brent Nielsen

Guests Present

Fiona Yates, Kendrick Roundtree, Marcy Conner (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

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 Aug 24, 2021 at 6:07 PM.

We have recieved two resignations recently, which we can discuss later in the meeting.

C. Reading of the Mission Statement - Brent Nielsen

D. Approve Minutes

Marty Espinola made a motion to Approve 7/13 Board of Trustees Minutes.

Mindi Winter seconded the motion.

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

Jacob Rosenblum made a motion to Approve 7/14 Board of Trustees Minutes with the amendment to correct the date from Tuesday to Wednesday.

Marty Espinola seconded the motion.

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

Jacob Rosenblum made a motion to Approve 11/02/2020 Board of Trustees Minutes with an amendment to add an adjourn time to the meeting and an amendment to include the date (11/02/2020) at the top of the document.

David Potter seconded the motion.

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

Jacob Rosenblum made a motion to Approve 10/08/2019 Board of Trustees Minutes with an amendment to reflect language in the finance portion of the minutes and an amendment to include the date at the top.

Marty Espinola seconded the motion.

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

If the public wishes to review these minutes, they will be located, for the time being, on the PVPA website under:

Board of Trustees > Meeting Announcement Archive

In the future, minutes will be located on a BoardOnTrack dashboard accessible through the "Board of Trustees" link on the PVPA website. In order to maintain the accessibility of

the archives, we have not yet finalized this change. Once our archives change location, a presentation will be prepared for the Board and the public.

II. Executive Director Report

A. School Year Preparation

This summer has been a stressful but productive time for the PVPA administration. Over the past few months, we have completed a number of hires; however, what sets this year apart is the number of staff members who have left PVPA due to dissatisfaction.

Our hires include important COVID-19 related staff members as well as positions that may become permanent like the school social worker.

We just filled two arts positions—an interim (long-term substitute) position to take on some of Frank Newton's classes and a Director of Arts. Frank has just been selected as interim Director of Arts and has been extremely successful in this position so far. This position includes managing productions, hosting arts-focused meetings, supervising arts faculty, etc.

The only position that has not been filled is a special education position formerly held by Loris Bjorkman, who is acting Director of Student Services.

Brent shares new [Organizational Viability Chart](#)

The academic calendar that was previously approved by the Board has been updated. In observance of Juneteenth, there will no longer be school on June 20th. As a result, the final teacher work day will be moved to June 21st.

In or around May, the Board approved an administrative request to open bargaining for a new master schedule. The administration has come to an agreement with the union that the master schedule for this school year will look similar to the hybrid schedule that was used during COVID-19 with the addition of about 15-minutes to the school day.

The administration has discussed bargaining with the union to ensure that full-time teachers are in the school building for the same number of hours as students. The goal for this bargaining will be to reach an agreement by February of 2022, with hopes that the schedule will go into effect for the 2022-23 school year.

In addition, the piano lab that was previously approved by the Board has been completed and will be ready for use when students arrive. New classes in the music department will make great use of this equipment.

Painters hired by the school have finished work painting the first and second floor hallways and doors.

Enrollment, as of 8/23/2021, is at 404 students right now. Charlotte, anticipating a few unexpected non-returning students, is prepared to offer four more spots to ensure that we meet our enrollment goal of 400 students at the start of the school year.

Question for Kendrick Roundtree: How will you introduce yourself to students?

Answer: I like to be very hands-on in my position. In addition to being everywhere I can be and making every personal relationship I can, I will be reading the morning announcements live over the PA. In this position, I have instituted both a student support team and an attendance team to ensure that we are identifying processes and procedures that are positive as well as gaps that need to be filled.

Question: One piece of our SOA proposal was the allocation of funds for new hires. How are we doing with that?

Answer: Although we do not have numbers yet, we will definitely provide those during the next Board meeting. I will state that we seem to be doing better than we have previously, and we have a significant number of BIPOC staff members joining us as of this summer.

Starting on 8/25/2021, all staff will be in the building to prepare for the start of the year.

B. 2021/22 School Year COVID-19 Response

The union and Administration are in agreement that vaccines should be mandated for PVPA staff members. To be worked out are religious and medical exemptions, potential responses to staff who refuse to get vaccinated, and what types of resources PVPA can offer to support staff members who are not yet vaccinated.

Question: Are we going to be conducting pool testing this year?

Answer: So far, we plan to do something similar to what we did in the Spring. Due to an order by the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, we will be requiring masks for everybody indoors, vaccinated or not; our lunch and breakfast routines will be very similar; and we will continue to pool test using a new provider determined by DESE. More information about this and responses to positive tests will come out later.

DESE has also announced that, in October, schools that can ensure an 80%+ vaccination rate may allow vaccinated students to go without masks. The decision to follow this guidance is up to the school, and Brent would like to see closer to 95% of students vaccinated if we are going to consider this option.

Question: Will we communicate with families about potentially shifting mask mandates and our goals as an institution in order to access this choice?

Answer: We will send out a communication, but the language is still in the works.

Question: Are microwaves and vending machines gone permanently?

Answer: This will likely be permanent. Both the microwaves and vending machines tended to act as places of congregation, raising COVID-19 safety concerns. We have had multiple issues with microwaves in the past—including fire department visits—and have received complaints about the options available in vending machines. In addition, many of the foods in the vending machines contained peanuts or traces of peanuts, which poses an issue for one student, in particular, who has a life-threatening allergy.

Question: Are lunch and breakfast still free?

Answer: For this school year, both lunch and breakfast will be free for all students, regardless of qualification for free meals. Despite the universal system, families who believe that they may qualify for free meals—whether or not they wish to receive them—should fill out the form so that we can share accurate data with the state.

III. Board Committee Reports

A. Governance Committee

Marty shares August 2021 [Governance Committee Report](#)

David makes a call to the Board and PVPA community to join the Governance Committee.

B. Finance Committee

David requests that the Finance Committee prepare a presentation for our next Board meeting on general goals and issues in the budgeting cycle.

Marcy commits to preparing an item for the September Board meeting.

C. Development Committee

The Development Committee is not a Board Committee—Instead, it is a subcommittee of the Friends of PVPA—but the Board should have a representative to the Development Committee. We have not traditionally had a Development Committee since we let go of an official fundraising position.

Since our previous Treasurer, a person has not held positions on both the PVPA Board and the Friends Board.

There has been discussion in the past about PVPA taking over ownership of the building, but doing so would mean that we would lose our 501(c)(3) organization.

- Managing a productive and positive relationship with the Friends is a priority. Grants and fundraising are two big reasons why having a 501(c)(3) is important for us as an institution.

Sakina Ibrahim, who resigned from the Board due to the time difference, has expressed interest in taking an active role in the Friends.

IV. Internal Stakeholders

A. Staff

Teachers are anxious to know their schedules and room assignments, which, according to Brent, have been produced and are ready for dissemination.

B. Students

Student Representative elections will need to be managed by another individual following Jenyka's departure.

Students have received their schedules and seem to be generally enthused. Some counselor meetings are necessary, but things seem to be going well. One thing that would benefit students going into the school year would be community events—in particular, those involving school leadership, the Board, Committees, and families all gathering.

It seems that a great majority of students have received a vaccine.

C. Goals of Stakeholder Reports

David hopes that we can develop a more organized system for garnering staff and student feedback, potentially instituting a "theme of the month" or similar system to guide staff and student data gathering and reporting.

V. Other Business

A. President's Business

1. Membership Updates
 1. Sakina Ibrahim and Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola both announced their resignations from the Board.
2. Board on Track
 1. Please respond to meeting invitations and fill out membership survey!
3. Interim Head of School contract
 1. Brent and David have both approved the new Interim Head of School contract. One of the school's attorneys, Mark Terry, recommended that we forego the evaluation process to avoid unnecessary complications.

1. We should continue to plan for a more focused and consistent evaluation process in the future.
 1. David creates the Executive Committee ad hoc committee to draw from the Strategic Action Plan in developing a leadership assessment system.
 1. Mindi, David, and Shannon will make up the initial membership of the Executive Evaluation ad hoc Committee.
4. Board President's contact information
 1. There is a PVPA voicemail extension for David, as the Board President, that will send him any voice message left in in the form of an email.
5. Friday Notes
 1. The Board has a weekly space in the Friday notes as needed.

B. Board Retreat Part 2

1. Areas of Strengths / Areas for Growth Analysis
 1. Board reviews [areas of strength document](#)
 1. Obviously, the arts are incredibly strong at PVPA. We seem to have a strong visual arts program, but people often raise concerns about the accessibility of the performing arts.
 1. Many of the aspects of the performing arts have to do with the visual arts. For visual and technical theater, drawing is the foundation.
 2. There is a strong sentiment of dedication and intention.
 3. Continuing to focus on DEI is a huge strength of ours and something that we need to continue to turn into action.
 2. Board reviews [areas of growth document](#)
 1. The notion of an Educational Excellence Committee is one of the large action items that the Board identified. This could be a significant agenda item at a future meeting.
 1. It seems that one fundamental piece of this committee is assessing data. One important task of this committee would be to work with Brent and the Administrative team and identifying the data that would show that we are accomplishing our goals. BoardOnTrack does not manage that kind of information.
 1. Brent will inform the Board of the school's DESE level.
 2. We need to focus on determining the consequences of larger actions and changes made at a Board level.
 3. The relationship between the Board of Trustees and the Friends of PVPA has come up a lot in the recent past. It could be effective to assign a group of people to begin those discussions now.

1. Brent and David have begun talking about managing and improving the functionality of this relationship. This should be brought up at another meeting in the near future.
4. Re-establishing the Long-range Infrastructure Planning Committee and assessing their past goals will be an important precursor to taking on future fundraising efforts and facilities projects.
 1. This summer, the Administration did a walk-through of the building and grounds and gathered a few recommendations for potential projects.
 2. The Friends of PVPA need to approve and complete any capital improvements.
5. David requests that Marcy inform the Board of the state of the PVPA Friends' finances at our next Board meeting.

Andrea Nathanson left at 8:35 PM.

C. Other business not reasonably anticipated within 48 hours of meeting

Public Comment
- None

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

Marty Espinola made a motion to Adjourn at 8:47.

David Potter seconded the motion.

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

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:47 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jacob Rosenblum

Documents used during the meeting

- Nielsen, Brent FY 21 Interim Executive Director Revised 7-22-21.pdf
- Screen Shot 2021-07-15 at 3.27.05 PM.png
- Board Minutes (7_13_2021).pdf
- Board Retreat Minutes (7_14_2021).pdf
- Board Minutes (10_08_2019).pdf
- Board minutes 10 8 19.pdf
- Board Minutes (11_02_2020).pdf

- Minutes 11 2 20.pdf