

APPROVED



Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

Minutes

September Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday September 14, 2021 at 6:00 PM

Location

Google Meet remote access:

Zoom Account is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: September Board of Trustees

Time: Sep 14, 2021 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81060529067?pwd=R3hSVGIqdUpYUStFb1RQbDJJeHJxQT09>

Meeting ID: 810 6052 9067

Passcode: T6N2NF

One tap mobile

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Meeting ID: 810 6052 9067

Passcode: 942829

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kes18YvyFS>

Trustees Present

Andrea Nathanson, David Potter, Jacob Rosenblum (remote), LATRINA DENSON (remote), Marty Espinola (remote), Mindi Winter, Neil Hede (remote), Shannon Materka, Shino Pichette (remote), Tonya Ward (remote)

Trustees Absent

None

Trustees who arrived after the meeting opened

Tonya Ward

Ex Officio Members Present

Brent Nielsen

Non Voting Members Present

Brent Nielsen

Guests Present

Fiona Yates, Marcy Conner

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 Sep 14, 2021 at 6:21 PM.

C. Read the Mission Statement

Melinda Winter

D. Approve Minutes

Marty Espinola made a motion to approve the minutes from 8/24/2021 with amendments to include Neil's absence and indicate the break taken midway through the meeting Board of Trustees on 08-24-21.

Mindi Winter seconded the motion.

Neil Hede raises that he was not listed as absent during meeting. The break that was taken during the meeting is also not listed in the minutes.

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

Roll Call

Andrea Nathanson	Aye
LATRINA DENSON	Aye
Shannon Materka	Aye
David Potter	Aye
Jacob Rosenblum	Aye
Marty Espinola	Aye
Shino Pichette	Abstain
Tonya Ward	Absent
Mindi Winter	Aye
Neil Hede	Aye

II. Executive Director Report

A. Brent Nielsen

It has been a couple of weeks since the beginning of school, and overall, things are going well. There were a few issues with the schedule, most of which have been resolved.

There is an agreement with the Union to change the schedule for this year, mostly impacting the middle school schedule. There is a plan in place to modify the scheduling process to increase student satisfaction. The specifics of this plan will depend on negotiations with the Union.

At the beginning and end of the day, there are higher numbers of students in classes due to a deficiency in staffing at those times of the day. This has raised issues with fire code among other challenges.

On our response to COVID-19, we have been doing very well so far. According to the Union, there are very few teachers who are not vaccinated. About 89 students do not currently have vaccination records on file, which could be the result of a number of things. We have communicated COVID protocols with families, asking students and staff to quarantine if possible close contact occurs. We have received a few reports of close contacts but have not experienced an outbreak. We have had one reported positive case from a student at school, but there was no transmission among students or staff.

One of the largest challenges is managing indoor lunches. We have assigned students locations within the school for eating to ensure that tracing data can be kept up to date. The administration plans to work with the Union on a staggered lunch schedule to

accommodate all students in the theater while they are eating. This plan will be communicated to students once an agreement has been reached.

Marcy was able to put together hiring data for both the administration and current employees, linked below.

- [Admin Data](#)
- [Employee Data](#)

Our new hires more closely represent the racial makeup of our student body, but we need to continue making efforts to recruit and retain a more racially diverse staff, including both teachers and administration, and Board of Trustees. We have made 17 new hires this year.

Question: Will vaccinations be required for students and staff?

Answer: Vaccination requirements for teachers need to be negotiated with the Union—we will discuss this later—and we do not have the authority to require vaccinations for students.

Question: How will we gather and track tracing information for students who are in the theater together?

Answer: These are definitely concerns. We have had two "open mic"s—one outdoors and one indoors—and are currently working on a plan to stagger groups. Keeping students in the theater and using assigned seating seems safer and more effective than allowing students to mingle more freely outdoors, where many students feel comfortable removing their masks and needed reminders to adjust or wear them.

Question: Where are we with enrollment?

Answer: For the month of September, we have Chris Fournier managing the waitlist due to the departure of Charlotte Donovan. We are at either 399 or 400 students, but Chris has recruited a couple of students who will hopefully bring us to our goal of 400.

III. Board Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee was planning to meet but was unable to do so as a result of an inability to meet quorum. Marcy created a schedule of Finance Committee dates to share with the Board. David will review this, send it out to Trustees, and put it on the agenda for the next meeting.

Tonya Ward arrived at 6:58 PM.

It is very difficult for federal employees to take time off to attend meetings that are hosted in the mornings or early afternoons. The Finance Committee will take this into account and try to figure out an alternate meeting time.

David requests that the Finance Committee shares the results of this discussion at the next Board Meeting.

B. Governance Committee

The Governance Committee met earlier in the month and got caught up on some cleaning up of minutes approvals. We also discussed priorities listed on the BoardOnTrack website and went over the Board goal-setting activity. In terms of Board membership, we have plans to reach out to community members who have filled out the membership survey. Our next meeting will be on September 29th at 7:00 PM.

Question: We talked last time about options for recruiting a new Head of School. Is that an ongoing conversation?

Answer: That is a discussion and decision for the Board as a whole. Next time the Governance Committee meets, we will try to come up with an agreement on what process we want to recommend to the Board.

Mike from BoardOnTrack recommended that we bring three candidates to the Board in May of next year. This process, whatever it ends up being, should be started by January when qualified candidates will be looking for jobs.

Question: How many of these decisions are Board-wide decisions?

Answer: The Board does need to decide if we want to enlist the help of an outside recruiting group. The Governance Committee will bring an item to the next meeting.

C. Development Committee

This is a theoretical committee made up of PVPA Board Trustees and members of the Friends of PVPA. It is in the agenda as a placeholder until we have determined how to reinvigorate the partnership between the Board and the Friends.

In conversations with the Friends, David discussed Chris Fournier's potential role in fundraising efforts. If Board Trustees are interested in taking part in that kind of work, this is a great opportunity to do so.

D. PVPA School Leader Search Process Ad Hoc Committee

Marty is eager to expand membership of this Committee. This could include Board members, community members, and staff.

Once a formal search Committee is established, it should include staff, Trustees, community members, and students with a variety of interests and skills. Mindi will join Marty on the Committee.

E. School Leader Evaluation Ad Hoc Committee

With David Chairing and Mindi and Shannon participating as members, the School Leader Evaluation Ad Hoc Committee met for the first time. The minutes of this meeting will be available in the meeting archive once they are approved.

F. Long-range Infrastructure Planning Committee

This Committee is also not currently active and exists in the agenda as a placeholder.

John Kulas holds the notes from the past LRIPC. There are a number of different ideas and plans from the past group that a new body can use to continue the planning process. Archives from the Committee are currently held in a shared Google Drive account.

Question: I know that there are issues with mold at area schools. Are we in danger of facing the same issues?

Answers: We have taken the proper precautions in an attempt to ensure that we can prevent the growth of mold.

The Long-range Infrastructure Planning Committee will be reinstated in the near future.

G. Educational Excellence Committee

This last Committee is also a placeholder. Our goal-setting activity and diagnostic data showed that this is an area we should be focusing on more diligently.

The Board could choose to assess student data more often and more in-depth rather than creating a new Committee. David suggests that we select this option.

BoardOnTrack mentioned, during our onboarding session, that it was unusual for us not to have an Educational Excellence Committee. This does not necessarily mean that we have to have one, but it is important to consider.

If we are going to add Educational Excellence to the monthly agenda, we should also add DEI as a regular discussion.

In the past, the Director of Academics and Director of Student Services presented student data to the Board regularly. The Board agrees that this—or something similar—is a wise course of action to address our need for more discussion related to Educational Excellence. David will evaluate this option and engage with BoardOnTrack to gather information on how to evaluate academic data as a Board.

IV. Public Comment

A. Chris Fournier

Chris Fournier provides an update on PVPA's 25th Anniversary celebration, [linked here](#).

V. Internal Stakeholders

A. Staff

The staff would like to see a map of how decisions are made by school leadership displayed around the school.

The staff would also appreciate allotted collaborative time for updates on what is going on at a Board level. Staff members would also like to see Trustees visit during collaborative time.

Board Trustees should try to attend more events and make themselves more visible in the Community.

Looking at college acceptance and attendance rates limits our definition of what success is. Widening this view and defining success more holistically would be beneficial for everybody.

The staff should have a new representative selected by Wednesday or Thursday.

B. Students

Students are excited about Octoberfest, Open Mic, etc..

Students have questions about how COVID protocols will affect regular events (like Community Day) and are looking for clarification regarding in-school safety measures.

Being outside today felt like PVPA again for the first time in a long time.

Student Council is working on appointing new Student Representatives. Current Student Representatives are invited and encouraged to attend meetings.

VI. Other Business

A. Board self-assessment

The Board should continue to be aware the data dashboard on BoardOnTrack. David will share pertinent information from time to time.

B.

Membership Updates

Davarian Baldwin has resigned due to a conflict related to one of his classes.

Those who are not able to attend Board meetings should consider joining Committees.

The Board currently has 11 members, which is below our operating threshold. The Governance Committee has been working on recruiting and will continue to do so.

C. SAP Goals and Objectives

This has been discussed during the meeting.

D. Committee Membership

David will be reaching out to members individually.

E. Board President's Contact Information

Using the extension 515, messages will be forwarded to David via the school's phone system.

VII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:13 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jacob Rosenblum

Marty Espinola made a motion to Adjourn.

Jacob Rosenblum seconded the motion.

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

B. Executive Session

David Potter made a motion to Move into Executive Session pursuant to Chapter 30A, section 21(a)(3), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with respect to Unit A and Unit B if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body, and the chair so declares.

Jacob Rosenblum seconded the motion.

Marcy Conner and Brent Nielsen are invited to join.

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

Roll Call

LATRINA DENSON Aye

Neil Hede Aye

Mindi Winter Aye

Roll Call

Andrea Nathanson	Aye
Marty Espinola	Aye
Jacob Rosenblum	Aye
Tonya Ward	Aye
Shino Pichette	Aye
David Potter	Aye
Shannon Materka	Aye

C. Board Trustees take a quick break from 8:18-8:20

D. Memorandum of Agreement

The Union has requested bargaining regarding the impacts of their working conditions due to COVID restrictions.

This request would prompt the drafting of a Memorandum of Agreement with the Union signed by the Board and a member of the Union.

The Union and Administration are largely on the same page about content in the Memorandum of Agreement. There is an unsigned draft from last year that can be partially recycled.

The Memorandum of Agreement Should Include:

- Impacts of our new schedule on work hours, acknowledging that this is not permanent.
- The Administration would like to open bargaining for a new master schedule by which full-time teachers are in the building for the entire school day.
- Language about implementing DESE protocols for COVID precautions.
- A provision addressing a possible transition to online or hybrid learning if we face limitations due to COVID.
- We should address the use of paid time off in situations of quarantine or COVID exposure. Staff are worried that time off for safety reasons will cut into their regular allocation.
- Staff would like to include a vaccine mandate.
 - Union Representatives are in favor of a "vaccinated or unemployed" policy for staff members.
 - Hearing from a lawyer about possible implications of teacher-initiated infection among students would be helpful.
- Teacher duties related to COVID
 - Including

- Asking teachers to pick up students outside of the school five minutes prior to the start of class at the beginning of the day and five minutes before class following lunch.
- Establishing two staff members on lunch duty every day to assist in monitoring indoor lunch.
- Writing in a requirement for wearing masks.

We do not know if a third shot will become widely recommended, but we may include additional recovery time off for side effects if it is.

There is one part-time teacher who is not vaccinated and two non-teaching staff.

Question: Do we have the staffing levels to cover time off?

Answer: Not yet, but we are interviewing for part-time and full-time substitutes who can take over.

When teachers do have to quarantine due to exposure and are asymptomatic, they should be expected to teach remotely—both the teachers and administration are in support of this policy.

Full-time teachers are given 15 days of paid time off, a figure based on their usual schedule. One option is to provide this increased time off during the shorter school day and leave them responsible for covering time off using those days.

When the school is asking staff to stay home, they should be compensated for that time. It should be different when they are staying home to care for a child or taking time off for another reason.

Main Office Staff are not in the Union and will not be impacted by this policy.

DESE has given the school protocols on managing quarantine, retesting, and return to work.

PVPA is making rapid tests available to staff who are concerned.

If somebody close to a staff member has been diagnosed with COVID, how do we implement a policy that protects our community while keeping in mind our budget?

Labor Management is likely looking for any quarantine period to be covered outside of their paid time off allocation.

It is in our best interest to go above and beyond in supporting our staff members and keeping them safe.

One option is to ask staff to apply for a vaccination requirement exemption and implement thorough additional safety measures for teachers who are not able to get vaccinated.

Some staff members do not want to provide support and learning for students who are out of school. The Administration feels strongly that this access should be provided.

Commissioner Riley has said that remote learning does not count as a learning model, but DESE does want us to provide a remote options for students who are quarantining.

Brent will reach out to the Union and propose a bargaining session.

Marty Espinola made a motion to Adjourn at 9:19.

Shino Pichette seconded the motion.

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