

APPROVED



Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

Minutes

March Board of Trustees Meeting

Re-scheduled from March 8, 2022

Date and Time

Thursday March 17, 2022 at 6:00 PM

Location

<https://zoom.us/j/98158607236?pwd=cG1OQkd2TTEvT2RWYTl4RXN4TzdBZz09>

Meeting ID: 981 5860 7236

Passcode: PVPA2022

Trustees Present

Andrea Nathanson, Jacob Rosenblum (remote), Jesse Pompei (remote), Maggie Solis (remote), Marty Espinola, Mindi Winter, Neil Hede (remote), Richard Pouliot (remote), Shannon Materka, Shino Pichette (remote), Sofia Getoff-Scanlon

Trustees Absent

David Potter, Jenna Sardella, Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola, LATRINA DENSON, Tonya Ward

Trustees who arrived after the meeting opened

Andrea Nathanson

Ex Officio Members Present

Brent Nielsen

Non Voting Members Present

Brent Nielsen

Guests Present

Marcy Conner

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Marty Espinola called a meeting of the board of trustees of Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School to order on Thursday Mar 17, 2022 at 6:08 PM.

C. Read the Mission Statement

Marty Espinola

D. Approve Minutes

The minutes seem to be missing the remainder of the meeting following the executive director report.

We will delay approval until we are able to figure out what happened to the remainder of the minutes.

E. Public Comment

Parent of 2 Students

Speaking in support of an immediate removal of the mask mandate and all related restrictions to support students' right to breathe freely—cites mental and physical health issues.

9th-grade Student

Experiencing physical and mental health effects from wearing masks—calls for an end to the mask mandate.

Parent of 3 Students

School culture and discipline policies: this parent hopes that, going forward, students will have more say in the culture of the school and its culture. They also hope that the administration will shift from a punitive system to a supportive and restorative one. This parent also offers support for the student(s) who created the poster that has been in the news recently.

Community Member

We have been through a lot with COVID, and there seem to be mixed messages from different sources. Maintaining this stark division on policy, though, will only hurt students. Mask choice should be implemented immediately.

12th-grade Student

This student is immunocompromised and is hurt by the suggestion that we get rid of the mask mandate. Even though COVID rates are declining, the pandemic is more than likely to return. The mask mandate should remain to protect students like me.

Community Member

This individual supports ending the mask mandate. They attended a masking conference and claim that wearing masks is a false sense of security.

II. Executive Director Report

A. Monthly Updates, Progress with Strategic Action Plan

One of the things we have to talk about tonight is masking at PVPA. The good news is that PVPA has done an outstanding job mitigating the pandemic. One of the things that we know from the experts is that vaccination is the most important component in limiting the spread of COVID-19, followed by masks.

In regard to vaccines, 96.6% of our staff are fully vaccinated. 95.5% of our staff are up to date on their boosters.

86.15% of our student population are fully vaccinated. 55.6% of students are up to date on their boosters.

PVPA is hosting its second vaccine clinic at school tomorrow (Friday, 3/17). 30 students have signed up so far.

We are averaging two positive cases per week right now. This past week, we experienced only one positive case. Our rates are very low compared to the institutions around us.

South Hadley has lifted its mask mandate, so we are able to make our own decisions about how we want to proceed.

Question: How is enforcement of the mask mandate feeling for staff?

Answer: There are a small number of students who require constant reminders, but most students do what they need to do in order to keep those around them safe. 95% of students are following the rules for the purpose of keeping their classmates safe.

Survey:

Question of when people believe it will be safe to lift the mask mandate

Parents were split

Staff are generally in favor of maintaining the mask mandate until *at least* April 1st

Students are generally in favor of maintaining the mask mandate until *at least* April 1st

Brent has spent a lot of time managing the impacts of COVID on students and staff. He has worked in the building virtually and in person since the beginning of the pandemic. He believes that PVPA is in a place where we will be safe if masks are made optional right now, but the situation will likely evolve, and changes may have to be made as we move into the future.

Student Representatives have discussed with those from other grades and have determined that the social benefit of removing the mask mandate is outweighed by the social (physical and educational) harm of removing the mandate. Immunocompromised students need to be protected since they cannot participate virtually. There is a new variant that we do not know enough about. We need to assess what impacts removing mask mandates will have on other schools that have done so recently.

Staff have spent the past couple of weeks discussing Paideia. Teachers seem to be split on whether the mask mandate should be removed.

Question: How many students are participating in pool testing?

Answer: About 50% of students are currently participating

We are behind in presenting a draft of our accountability plan to DESE. We should have given them a draft already, but we were unable to provide one on time.

Brent will share this during the next meeting.

Recently, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed by the administration and a representative for the Union. The pay increases agreed upon have been signed and approved by both parties.

Restorative Justice and School Culture:

We have hired a PVPA 2006 alum who has been working for the past 8 years as either a Dean of Students or Restorative Practices Coordinator. He has just started as our Restorative Practices Coordinator.

Andrea Nathanson arrived at 7:12 PM.

Richard Pouliot made a motion to keep the mask mandate in place as is, and the issue will be revisited at the April Board Meeting.

Maggie Solis seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Marty Espinola	Aye
Maggie Solis	Aye
Mindi Winter	Aye
Tonya Ward	Absent

Roll Call

Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola	Absent
Andrea Nathanson	Aye
Neil Hede	Aye
Jesse Pompei	No
Richard Pouliot	Aye
Shino Pichette	Aye
Jacob Rosenblum	Aye
Shannon Materka	Aye
Sofia Getoff-Scanlon	Aye
LATRINA DENSON	Absent
Jenna Sardella	Absent
David Potter	Absent

III. PVPA 25th Anniversary Celebration Planning Committee

A. Chris Fournier will present updates

Technically, this is PVPA's 26th year, but we will be celebrating our 25th anniversary this year due to limitations in the past resulting from COVID.

PVPA will be bringing in alumni for a mixer in Northampton, MA. The community-wide aspect will be a festival-like event.

The fundraising aspect of the campaign will begin within the next few weeks. The Friends are mindful of the cost of the event and plan to continue fundraising for an initial lump sum that will allow the committee to set up the event.

Members of the community can check the Community Bulletin for more information about the event.

IV. Board Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee Report

The Committee has taken a look at the FY23 capital budget. The cash reserves remain at a comfortable level of around \$700,000.

The Committee voted to approve an approximately \$111,000 capital budget for FY23. The Board will be presented with this and other budget information during the May meeting.

Question: can we discuss the budget during the April meeting and vote in May? We have faced issues in the past in regards to time constraints that prevent Trustees from seeking amendments prior to a vote.

Answer: we do not receive tuition numbers until the end of April, so we have very little wiggle room.

The Finance Committee will bring some budget discussion to the next Board Meeting to ensure that Trustees are able to provide insight prior to the vote.

B. Governance Committee Report

C. Long Range Infrastructure Planning Committee Report

During the last meeting, current building needs were discussed—including renovating the third floor storage space and turning the area into classrooms and meeting rooms.

Other changes have also been discussed, including the switching around of offices and changing of office spaces.

D. Executive Search Committee Report

The Committee has been meeting weekly and has reviewed the results of the community survey. The Committee has assessed 12 candidates and narrowed the list down to 5 who would best fill the position.

Representatives from a number of different groups within the community will have input on the hiring process.

E. Executive Evaluation Committee

Mindi, David, and Shannon have been meeting once per month to develop an evaluation survey that can be used for the next head of school. The draft of the survey should be ready to present during the May meeting.

V. Internal Stakeholders

A. Staff Reports

Infrastructure plans are great, but staff are going to wonder how there is money for capital improvements and not pay increases. The response should be that they money is from separate sources—capital vs operating.

Question: where should concerns about the head of school go?
Shannon will talk to Andrea about the concerns and discuss next steps.

B. Student Reports

The BSU wanted to speak but could not do so due to technical issues.

The PVPA Mock Trial team is in the state finals!

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

Jesse is hoping that we can make timing clear to participants who are participating in public comment. Mindi suggests that Jesse speak to David about the issue.

A comment was made before the vote on the mask mandate that an individual "already [knew] how the vote would go," which felt unfair.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jacob Rosenblum