

DRAFT



# Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

## Minutes

### Board of Trustees October Meeting

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#### **Date and Time**

Tuesday October 11, 2022 at 6:00 PM

#### **Location**

In Person:

PVPA  
15 Mulligan Drive  
South Hadley, MA

Remotely:

Zoom Account is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: October Board Meeting

Time: Oct 11, 2022 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86171596511?pwd=RkhGZDNMWU1qZEI2QjJkNkZ6dURWQT09>

Meeting ID: 861 7159 6511

Passcode: PVPA

One tap mobile

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### **Trustees Present**

David Potter, Jenna Sardella, Shannon Materka, Shino Pichette (remote)

### **Trustees Absent**

LATRINA DENSON, Mindi Winter, Neil Hede

### **Ex Officio Members Present**

Brent Nielsen, Marcy Conner

### **Non Voting Members Present**

Brent Nielsen, Marcy Conner

### **Guests Present**

Fiona Yates

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## **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 Oct 11, 2022 at 6:10 PM.

### **C.**

### **Read the Mission Statement**

David Potter read the PVPA mission statement.

### **D. D. Approve Minutes**

Shino Pichette made a motion to approve the minutes from September Board Meeting on 09-13-22.

Jenna Sardella seconded the motion.

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

#### **Roll Call**

Shino Pichette	No
Neil Hede	Absent
Shannon Materka	Aye
Mindi Winter	Absent
David Potter	Aye
Jenna Sardella	Aye
LATRINA DENSON	Absent

### **E. Public Comment**

Sasha Viands - Board membership candidate. Introduction & welcome.

## **II. Head of School Report**

### **A. Brent's Report**

Update - returning from long weekend with curriculum day today. DEI work led by Trevin Bond including all staff. Beginning work to understand the roots of racism. Also started to frame all other work through the lens of DEI. Looking forward to working together with the Board to keep this important work moving forward.

Big shout out to the PTO for raising the funds to provide breakfast and lunch. \$200-\$300 was spent buying lunch platters and bagels from Mason's Creations (PVPA student).

Also shout out to Charlotte Powell who left from PVPA on bicycle to Seneca Falls, NY - 300 mile ride to raise awareness of voter rights.

Enrollment at 392. Application period open now through Oct 17th for wait list - grades 7, 10 & 11. Hope full to get to 400. All charter schools are experiencing a decline. Our recruitment focus is on getting students out into the community - Puerto Rican parade, jazz festival and We Came To Play Tour. Worked with Slowey McManus with the coverage for Charlotte's trip.

Heading into fall with Octoberfest, grades closing and parent teacher conferences.

Alyson Miller here this week to review MCAS scores that were released this week.

Next meeting will bring Trevin Bond and Kendrick Roundtree to talk about student culture.

Three policies to approve: Chronic Absenteeism Policy, Student Vehicle Policy and Freedom of Expression Policy.

Chronic Student Absenteeism Policy - been approved as a model policy by MCPSA and DESE. Chronic absenteeism policy requested by DESE during review last year. Huge indicator in terms of future success for students.

Student Vehicle Policy - student responsibilities around having a vehicle on campus. Collaborative effort by Dean of Students and Facilities Manager - has been reviewed by attorney. Basic responsibilities along with consequences. Off campus privileges for seniors - intentionally vague due to limited time for lunch.

Freedom of Expression Policy - does express that expression is a privilege and not a right and names hate speech. Attorney's advice was that it needed to be more vague.

David Potter made a motion to approve the Chronic Absenteeism Policy as presented. Jenna Sardella seconded the motion.

9 days in half a school year is 10% of the 18 for a year. Language states "may file".

Child requiring assistance can be filed by school or parent - meant to be collaborative - policy outlines the options available to PVPA. 18 days is mandatory per the state. This data is part of our accountability and historically PVPA has struggled with - both keeping track and students attending.

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

#### **Roll Call**

Shannon Materka	Aye
Neil Hede	Absent
Jenna Sardella	Aye
Mindi Winter	Absent
LATRINA DENSON	Absent
Shino Pichette	Aye
David Potter	Aye

David Potter made a motion to to approve the Student vehicle Policy as presented.

Shannon Materka seconded the motion.

Written rules are important, along with clear consequences. Question about the way it is written in terms of vagueness about consequences. Student parking lot? Will need to do survey to see how many student drivers there are so that appropriate space can be made - student area is to left of the sign island. Can there be a definition of "good academic standing"? May also create an equity issue. Part of having a policy is making things transparent so that expectations are known.

This is typical of what schools do in tying things to privileges and being vague so that consequences can match the infraction. Good academic standing is no incompletes within a marking period. Consequences are little harder to define as they are based on infractions.

Loitering and driving on school property seems problematic. We can revise and bring policy back to the Board if people feel its needed or move forward.

The motion unanimously did not carry.

**Roll Call**

Shannon Materka	No
Jenna Sardella	No
David Potter	No
Shino Pichette	No
Mindi Winter	Absent
LATRINA DENSON	Absent
Neil Hede	Absent

David Potter made a motion to approve the Freedom of Expression policy as presented. Shino Pichette seconded the motion.

Where is the line? What do we consider foul language? Does it support legal activity? First paragraph gives a good definition. Context should decide case by case.

Would like to have a copy of something that is more vague. This seems more like PVPA. Encourages people to be create, express themselves and speak out. But understanding that their is a responsibility along with it. Every school needs a policy and this helps to support creativeness without stifling freedom of speech but everyone needs to feel safe.

Review of materials - how long? Should it be reviewed before distribution? Intent is that it gets approval.

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

**Roll Call**

Shino Pichette	Aye
David Potter	Aye
Neil Hede	Absent
Jenna Sardella	Aye
Mindi Winter	Absent
Shannon Materka	Aye
LATRINA DENSON	Absent

**III. Academic Report: MCAS update**

**A. Allyson Miller, Director of Academics**

MCAS - 2022 - ELA  
8th Grade

- PVPA overall is performing better than the state averages with 47% of students taking the test meeting or exceeding expectations, 48% partially meeting expectations and 5% of students not meeting expectations vs state averages of 42% meeting or exceeding expectations, 40% partially meeting expectations and 18% not meeting expectations.

#### 10th Grade

- PVPA overall is performing better than the state averages with 76% of students taking the test meeting or exceeding expectations and 8% of students not meeting expectations vs state averages of 58% meeting or exceeding expectations and 8% not meeting expectations. PVPA is slightly lower than state averages in students partially meeting expectations with 21% vs 34% statewide.

#### MCAS - 2022 - Mathematics

##### 8th Grade

- PVPA has some work to do with increasing scores for 8th grade mathematics with 12% of students taking the test meeting or exceeding expectations, 76% partially meeting expectations and 12% of students not meeting expectations vs state averages of 36% meeting or exceeding expectations, 47% partially meeting expectations and 18% of students not meeting expectations. It is difficult to take in 7th graders that are coming to PVPA with varied skills in mathematics and only having one year to work with them prior to taking the 8th grade MCAS.

##### 10th Grade

- PVPA grade 10 scores improve as students are done transitioning into PVPA. The averages compared to the state show improvement with 49% of students taking the test meeting or exceeding expectations, 45% partially meeting expectations and 5% of students not meeting expectations vs state averages of 50% meeting or exceeding expectations, 40% partially meeting expectations and 10% not meeting expectations.

It is also important to note that PVPA had higher participation rates than the state; 96% of 8th graders taking the MCAS vs the state average of 52% and 97% of 10th graders vs the state average of 53%.

## **IV. Board Committee Reports**

### **A. Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee met on October 4, 2022 with the main topic being the Audited Financial Statements for the year ending June 30, 2022. Ben Adsit and Frank Seretti from Powers & Sullivan were present and conducted the review.

The first item presented was the disclosure of required communications:

- Significant Accounting Policies- there were no new policies or changes
- Use of Estimates- not many estimates and all found to be reasonable
- Difficulties- there were none- PVPA staff was curious and information was received timely
- Audit Adjustments- there were no audit adjustments
- Disagreement with Management- there were no disagreements

The Audit was issued with an unmodified opinion with no identified deficiencies - this is the best possible outcome from an audit.

Further highlights from the audit and presentation included:

- No issues found with cash reconciliation, payroll, accounts receivable, credit card transactions, adjusting entries or accounts payable- all selections were documented, complete, accurate, timely and approved. Funds in the bank are fully insured under FDIC.
- Analysis of the balance sheet and the revenue and expenses proved accurate with no changes to disclose
- Approximately \$3.5 million in available cash
- Due from Friends of PVPA of approx \$192,000- this represents accumulated expenditures paid by PVPA on behalf of the Friends of PVPA since 2014. It was recommended that arrangements for repayment should be made to remove from balance sheet.
- Capital Assets- total \$6.1 million with an addition of approximately \$157,000 for FY22. We generally budget for about \$100,000 annually - FY22 was higher due to wrapping up capital projects that have been outstanding since the COVID closure.
- Accrued Payroll- noted that balance is less than FY21
- Debt Covenant- bond requires a combined minimum debt service ratio of 1.25:1.0. This includes both PVPA and the Friends of PVPA as blended activity. The debt ratio was met.
- Overall combined net position of \$6 million. Change in combined net position of approximately \$530,000; increase for PVPA \$554,000 with a decrease of \$24,000 from the Friends of PVPA. Friend's decrease was attributed to depreciation. Increase to PVPA was attributed to tuition being over budget and expenses under budget by \$204,000.
- Tuition is 80% of revenue
- MTRS Pension- recorded as both income and expense. Information is obtained from the annual audit of the Commonwealth's pension system as required under GASB Statement No. 68.

Under Other Business the Committee discussed the installation of an acoustical curtain in the theater and fundraising. The acoustical curtain is the last remaining outstanding capital project since the COVID shut down. This item was passed back to the Infrastructure Committee to analyze the need and decide how to proceed. Committee discussed how the goals are set for the annual fundraising plan - Finance Committee is only responsible for determining a reasonable and obtainable goal for the budget. There

is an immediate need for approximately \$1.5 million to replace the roof and the HVAC units.

David Potter made a motion to to approve the FY22 Audited Financial Statements.

Shannon Materka seconded the motion.

The Finance Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Board of Trustees approve the FY22 Audited Financial Statements.

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

**Roll Call**

Jenna Sardella	Aye
LATRINA DENSON	Absent
Neil Hede	Absent
David Potter	Aye
Mindi Winter	Absent
Shino Pichette	Aye
Shannon Materka	Aye

**B. Governance Committee**

Recruitment timeline and guidelines for new members.

November 1 meeting reminder for people to participate in process for approving new by-laws.

Need to add memberships, especially community members. No new nominations - three in process but we need to get to 15 members as written in by-laws. Public notice will go out - change deadline from Oct15th. Looking to have a cohort of new members.

Looking to standardize the process of bringing on new members. Board on Track has helped - looking through an equity lens about people's qualifications. What are potential members bring to our community. These tools are meant to guide our decision making.

By-laws - updating - not since 2017. Invite the full Board to come to Nov 1st meeting 8-9pm. Governance will draft and get preliminary review from DESE then to the full Board for approval.

**C. Head of School Support & Evaluation Committee**

Goals that the Committee would like the Board to review. There are three goals that have an over arching description with action steps. Committee would like support.

Goal 1 - recruitment of hiring and retaining diverse staff that represents the student body. Are we making progress? does it have integrity?

Goal 2 - improvement of transparency of leadership. Collaborative decision making.

Goal 3 - evaluations - ensure that all employees have an evaluation process. Specific objective of the senior leadership team.

Survey process will capture a lot of perception and people's sense of how the Head of School is doing. This survey will extend out to staff and parents - Committee is working on this process. Will be brought in its entirety to the next Board meeting.

Timeline - self assessment piece and evaluation pieces come from Brent and the committee. Brent will work to bring pieces of evidence through the year. Surveys will be another point of information to gauge his impact on the community. Committee will analyze the evidence and screen survey data then bring it to the Board. Ultimately a process for honest feedback with some place on a rubric looking for improvements each year.

## **V. Internal Stakeholders**

### **A. Staff Reports**

Middle School perspective - collaborative day - Bond's presentation was helpful.

Significant challenges with students. 7th grade team met with Brent and Bond to discuss concerns - lack of paras in classrooms has to do with hiring, 70 minutes in class is long and meeting 3 times a week is hard.

High School - is going strong - new hires are reporting good levels of support. New sign ups for the Union - stewards, reps and reps are a wide array of people who are involved and represent the school. Hear the middle school - changes about what can work for 12yr olds and 16yr olds.

Sounds productive with open channels of communication.

### **B. Student Reports**

Off campus lunch proved a good return is good!! Students have adjusted to new schedule but some concerns about things like the amount of passing time. Students are excited about clubs and upcoming Octoberfest - community building. Productions are starting soon. A lot of new stuff on the horizon.

## **VI. President's Business**

### **A. Union Negotiating Team**

Negotiations with the UAW Local 2322 on a new contract for a fall 2023 start date will begin in November. The Board needs a team that is effective and efficient.

Subcommittee of the Board it would need to follow Open Meeting Law.

David Potter made a motion to have a three member negotiating team that includes the Board President, Head of School and Chief Financial Officer.

Shannon Materka seconded the motion.

Last time was Head of School, Dir of Student Services, CFO, Board President and VP.

Will set a schedule of topics and invite other members of Admin team based on their expertise. Looking to balance work for senior admin. First potential meeting is Nov 10th  
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

Shannon Materka	Abstain
Shino Pichette	Aye
David Potter	Aye
LATRINA DENSON	Absent
Jenna Sardella	Abstain
Mindi Winter	Absent
Neil Hede	Absent

**VII. Executive Session**

**A. Purpose of Executive Session**

David Potter made a motion to move to Executive Session to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual.

Jenna Sardella seconded the motion.

Not returning to open session. Dismissing staff and students. Inviting Brent and Marcy.

Shino states that she is alone with no others present with her remotely.

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

**Roll Call**

Mindi Winter	Absent
David Potter	Aye
Shino Pichette	Aye
Jenna Sardella	Abstain
Neil Hede	Absent
Shannon Materka	Abstain
LATRINA DENSON	Absent

**VIII. 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 8:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Marcy Conner

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### **Documents used during the meeting**

- 2022\_09\_13\_board\_meeting\_minutes.pdf
- STUDENT VEHICLE POLICY, VEHICLE ACCESS & OFF CAMPUS PRIVILEGE - Google Docs.pdf
- Freedom of Expression Policy.pdf
- Chronic Absenteeism Absenteeism Policy.pdf
- DRAFT - PVPACPS FY2022 Financial Statements 9-27-22.pdf
- New Member Evaluation Guide.pdf
- Interview Qs for PVPA Trustee Nominees.pdf
- Head of School Goals 22-23.pdf