

APPROVED



Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

Minutes

November Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday November 8, 2022 at 6:00 PM

Location

In Person:

PVPA

15 Mulligan Dr

South Hadley, MA

Remotely:

Zoom Account is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: November Board Meeting

Time: Nov 8, 2022 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

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Meeting ID: 899 4576 7473

Passcode: PVPA

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Trustees Present

David Potter, Jenna Sardella, LATRINA DENSON (remote), Mindi Winter, Neil Hede, Shannon Materka, Shino Pichette (remote)

Trustees Absent

None

Ex Officio Members Present

Brent Nielsen, Marcy Conner

Non Voting Members Present

Brent Nielsen, Marcy Conner

Guests Present

Fiona Yates

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 Nov 8, 2022 at 6:12 PM.

C. Read the Mission Statement

Read by David Potter

D. D. Approve Minutes

David Potter made a motion to Approve minutes from October.

Shino Pichette seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

E. Public Comment

No public comment.

II. Head of School Report

A. Brent's Report

Report sent to members.

Enrollment update:

- 391 students
- Accepted offeres will bring us to 396.
- Wait list is exhausted in 7, 10 & 11. Seats are available in 8th and 9th. Another special lottery may be needed in January to fill open spots for end of year figures. 7th grade will be at 68 max is 72 students. 10th may get to 68 students.

The application window for next year opened on November 1st. Compared to other years at this time, the numbers look good. There are currently 82 applicants. At this time in 2021 there were 75 applicants and a total of 268 for the year. Compared to 2019 where we had 75 at this time and ended with 353 total applications. Our goal is to reach 360 applications.

All schools in the Commonwealth, especially charter schools, are currently dealing with declining enrollment. Several ways that we can improve enrollment is by making positive news and sharing our achievements. The We Came to Play music tour was out visiting

elementary schools. Word of mouth is the best marketing approach to help increase our enrollment numbers.

Staffing - PVPA started the 2022-2023 school year fully staffed. As of this morning there is one staff position open but an offer has been made and we hope to fill shortly.

Please see the chart in the Head of School report for the numbers of staff by race for 2021 vs 2022 and the student population comparison. Overall not very different from last year's improvements. PVPA definitely has work to do to increase our diversity and have a staff that represents our student population but we are moving in right direction. It is important to note the significant changes in the diversity of the Administration from 2 years ago.

Performances & events:

- 10/12 PSAT school day testing - maybe 60% participation - need to get back to 100%.
- 10/28 Octoberfest - groups & clubs participated in community building and fundraising. They succeeded in raising just under \$1,900 - this is a new record!
- LSU - Latin Heritage - congo line out to buses
- 11/8 Springfield Prep Charter Arts teachers visiting. This is a collaboration to help prepare students to move to PVPA as well as strengthening the arts programming at Springfield Prep.
- 11/9 & 11/10 Audition music ensembles - We came to Play - 4 different schools - elementary & middle - opportunity to play along with some marketing - 1st time since pandemic.
- 11/10 Dr.Marge Burchack - presentation about Native American History in New England
- 11/16 & 11/19 Senior Dance Thesis
- 12/1 SEPAC & PTO meeting - need more participation both committees are strong and beneficial to parents.

Another upcoming event is the South Hadley Arts Festival - Brent & Frank met with the Principal of the South Hadley Public Schools and PVPA will be a participating this year!

Alyson Miller presented MCAS scores at the last meeting. Since then we were contacted by a reporter from the Springfield Republican that noted out high scores and asked questions about how we did it. We leveraged the COVID ESSER grants funding well in ways that supported students. We receive 7th & 8th grade students with varied backgrounds and different approaches to math instruction - this is one of the biggest challenges we have in the middle school. Though our collaboration with Summit View Learning, we were able to take a long game approach by preparing students for success and college preparedness. This approach seemed to be an important step to sustaining growth in the longer term.

Kendrick Roundtree, Dean of Students school culture report. The report compares the beginning of the school year through November 4th for 2021 and 2022. Suspensions down by half in 2022 however since the return from pandemic closure cyber issues and vaping have increased significantly. A significant change was changing all of bathrooms to single occupancy, except theater, with privacy lock. This change has made things more equitable, a little inconvenient but cuts down on hanging out in bathrooms and behaviors that come with it like vaping.

Absenteeism. Chronically absent is defined as missing 10% or more of the school year-to-date. Currently 32 students are showing as chronically absent - not where we want to be but not terrible and it is down from 41 students the year before. Glows & grows - fewer students roaming during class time, lunch is more manageable and safer from a staff point of view.

Work is being accomplished in regards to the Strategic Action Plan. Recruiting staff of color, dissemination of materials, partnerships with local entities, (see David's email). Disseminating to other public schools as Alyson & Frank went to Northampton Public Schools to present on standards based grading.

III. Leadership Team Presentation

A. Trevin Bond

Trevin introduced himself as an alum and stated that he is honored to be back at PVPA. Trevin serves as the student council advisor, grad show director, Restorative Practice Coordinator and Diversity Committee Chair. Last few months full of new programming to help students see each other in different ways. Community time rotation allows for student clubs with staff advisor; 1st Friday open mic, 2nd Friday student clubs, 3rd Friday open mic, 4th Friday is student clubs (still working on clubs and will have new activities besides open mics).

Octoberfest. Activities included an open mic and taping Brent to a wall among others. Thank you to the students who helped plan Octoberfest. Fundraising numbers will be released in next few day.

Diversity Committee - action planning for the next couple of month under way.

Restorative Practice - circle with parents regarding event with 7th graders. There was a good response and parents wanted to be a part of the problem solving.

DEI work - started this year with a presentation at curriculum day for staff - more to come.

Senior prefect - new program for students to do something to contribute to community ie. hall monitoring, TA classes that will serve as incentives to get them to the end of school year.

Kickboard - new programming intended to support our PBIS efforts. Once this is up and running we will be able to track behaviors and give students positive feedback.

Daily working with students & staff to develop social skills. This is important work that is totally supported by Brent. I would like to say thanks for allowing us to do what we need to do for students. We are creating an environment where relationships are built and you can see this work taking place - working towards the ideals of RP.

IV. Board Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee

Nov 8 just prior to this meeting.

The Committee reviewed the annual timeline of work - what happens when - no major changes.

1st quarter P&L Budget vs Actual Overview was reviewed. For the first quarter typically 25% of budget would be spent. the Committee identified a couple of account that seems to have a variance and discussed the causes - mainly on target.

DESE tuition projection from the start of the school year was discussed and looked very optimistic. The Committee discussed continuing our conservative approach as it has served us well. If DESE numbers are realized it will be very favorable but not necessarily reality given all of the changes that take place to tuition throughout the year.

No votes were taken and minutes were approved pending some numbers from the auditors.

B. Governance Committee

The Governance Committee proposes two new trustees: Vanessa Ford and Sasha Viands.

Vanessa Ford is a community member who works in the arts as a vocalist and is passionate about the PVPA mission. Vanessa has served many organization across Western Massachusetts including the Springfield Unity Festival, the Brianna Fund for Children with Physical Disabilities and is a founding director of the Springfield Community Chorus. She just recently released her new inspirational song "Fight For You".

Shino Pichette made a motion to approve Vanessa Ford as a Trustee as a Community member.

LATRINA DENSON seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

Thank you, Vanessa, for serving the PVPA Community. You can now participate in the meeting but cannot vote until your membership is approved by DESE.

Sasha Viennse is 2009 graduate of PVPA and the parent of a PVPA 7th grader. Sasha currently works for Planned Parenthood in Springfield, MA. Sasha has conducted anti racism training to ensure equitable hiring practices and promotes social emotional integration for MCAS scores.

Shino Pichette made a motion to accept Sasah a PVPA trustee.

David Potter seconded the motion.

Appreciate the expertise that you are bring to PVPA - welcome!

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

Roll Call

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

Student membership - PVPA Board invites student reps from high school grades to help board stay informed about student needs - valued presence and voice. Bylaws have been confusing - students may be members under 18, can include up to 5, seems to indicate that students are officially considered members of the Board and should be approved by Commissioner. Non-voting members - only official if voted by DESE. Do we continue to have students participate without vote or should they be approved? Current 3 per bylaws is 15 - do they get count for membership?

15 members that include 4 student - do we submit to DESE? Not voting members until they turn 18 and get DESE approval. Would need resume and letter of intent to be approved-no changes in current practice. Trevin would need to organize. Logistics for no gain.

Updating bylaws takes time - up to a year - logistical process would get us in line with what bylaws state now.

Does doing this speed up the process for when someone becomes 18? Once your in your in but can't vote until reaches 18. Board would still need to vote them in and be approved by DESE. Yes it would be more seamless. Student term is 1 year - can be voted in for another year by peers.

Onboard procedures in new folder in BOT.

Bylaws - clarifying student membership - be in touch with Shino. Decreasing the size of Board - may be pertinent to do - BOT recommend standard size of 10-14 members. We need more committee involvement - if we decreased size are there enough members for Committee involvement? 4 Committees are sufficient; Governance, Finance, Head of School Support & Evaluation Committee and the Long Range Infrastructure Planning Committee.

Role of teachers as voting members can be confusing - is it a conflict of interest?. Could consider the role of teacher to that of students - could weigh in but not vote. There is value in having them vote but it is time to consider what their role is - not looking to remove any powers. Being voting member is important for other teachers to see the teacher voice. If they do not voting rights it might impact staff negatively- what is the perception of the role? The collaborative nature of PVPA has been to allow teachers and students to be a part of the process of managing the school and decision making. Need clarity with where to draw the line and will continue to work on this. Union is now a factor that changes dynamic - council has not advised change but do not like. Union contract is with the Board of Trustees and not the Administration. This could potentially be a problem if legal action is taken by the Union against the Board. Staff members serving on the Board are not actually here to represent the teachers - they are Board members. It is important to hear the teacher voice but the bylaws states trustee cannot have financial interest in PVPA and as a teacher you do. If teachers stay voting members - it is with the understanding that votes do not represent the teachers but the fiduciary commitments of the Board and the sustainability of the school. Important to the Board to hear the teacher perspective but teachers must understand their true role on the Board.

How do we keep from being reactive? We do not want any issues around the nuance of faculty voting if a conflict of interest exists. Can we put in language that clearly defines what this is? Legal issues create more issues for the long term sustainability. There safety in saying no - too tricky of a terrain that will put teachers in a conflict themselves.

Conversation to continue at the Governance Committee. Voice is more important than vote - influence is important.

C. Head of School Support & Evaluation Committee

Informal acceptance of goals last meeting - committee has approved those goals.

The Committee draft of timeline and work to be done throughout the year. Would like to have Board approve the timeline. Check ins with the Board to allow for an organic process, stress communication aspects and May 15th documentation from Brent to Committee. Survey in May by Board and Admin team - still developing one for students and staff. All stakeholders will give input and be reviewed.

David Potter made a motion to approve the Head of School Support Committee timeline. Mindi Winter seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

D. Long Range Infrastructure Planning Committee

Committee reported:

- Oct 25th - previous minutes approved
- updates on 3rd floor
- 2nd floor counseling suite
- other possible projects
- donation
- need to develop plan for FY24 capital budget
- Music dept move to 1st floor

3rd floor project is moving along but taking time. We will be unable to use the space until the HVAC unit is installed. Walls and electrical are in, next is the duct work along with suspended ceiling and finally the painting and flooring. Most recent update on delivery of the HVAC unit was the beginning of April.

As soon as school is over renovations on the 2nd floor will start.

V. Internal Stakeholders

A. Staff Reports

Middle School is reporting mid semester progress reports have been done and parent/teacher conferences are next week. New structure allows us to talk with parent of

students of concern. Bond held an important conversation with 7th grade and we are seeing positive results. Still facing support challenges in the classroom.

High school is running pretty smooth. Staff are able to collaborate and most important, new staff are getting the support that is needed. Mid semester reports are done with any incomplete to be resolved. Access to students is good. Grading system under review - Alyson is gathering data. The year feels good. LSU presentation was fantastic! Conversations before events seem to be working. Hats off to Daphne!!

Teachers are planning for Paideia. December curriculum day there will be planning time along with grading discussion. Only 2 weeks for Paidiea this year.

Commissioners weekly update included a picture from Octoberfest - 1st time ever being in the report! Positive press!

B. Student Reports

Seniors - penny war. There is some frustration around students going to vehicles during lunch - teachers take brunt of attitude. If the policy had been communicated and explained it would have been more accepted.

Mid terms wrapped up - concern about grade level meetings - students want to be a part of the conversation as the activities effect our day to day lives. Administrators can listen to grade level meetings - students enjoy being heard. Octoberfest was very enjoyable.

Things seem more organized - shows starting - props to Bond for Octoberfest - looking forward to new trips and voices being heard.

VI. President's Business

A. Union Negotiating Team update

1st meeting is scheduled for Nov 10th to set ground rules for the negotiating process. Information will be brought back to the Board and could include an executive session.

VII. Executive Session

A. Purpose of Executive Session

Will not return to open session. Non-voting members and teachers will be asked to depart. Inviting Brent.

Pause for a moment will resume after quick break.

David Potter made a motion to 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.

Neil Hede seconded the motion.

Teacher not invited. Marcy is invited

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

Roll Call

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

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 8:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marcy Conner