

DRAFT



Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

Minutes

October Board Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday October 10, 2023 at 6:00 PM

Location

PVPA 3rd Floor Conference Room
15 Mulligan Drive
South Hadley, MA

Zoom Account is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: October Board Meeting

Time: Oct 10, 2023 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

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Passcode: E38RDS

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Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kmz7nLz5s>

Trustees Present

David Potter, LATRINA DENSON (remote), Mindi Winter, Shino Pichette (remote), Vanessa Ford (remote)

Trustees Absent

Azizah Yasin, Neil Hede, Sasha Viands

Ex Officio Members Present

Brent Nielsen, Marcy Conner

Non Voting Members Present

Brent Nielsen, 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 Oct 10, 2023 at 6:15 PM.

C. Read the Mission Statement

Mindi read the mission statement.

D. D. Approve Minutes

Vanessa Ford made a motion to approve the minutes from September Board Meeting on 09-12-23.

Shino Pichette seconded the motion.

Vanessa asks if we continued the discussion from the retreat at the board meeting, or if we plan to. This was not continued in the meeting. David notes there will be more follow up from the retreat content that hasn't yet been done. Vanessa wants to be sure we don't leave this without follow up.

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

Roll Call

LATRINA DENSON	Aye
Mindi Winter	Aye
Azizah Yasin	Absent
Vanessa Ford	Aye
Shino Pichette	Aye
Sasha Viands	Absent
Neil Hede	Absent
David Potter	Aye

Vanessa Ford made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Retreat on 09-10-23.

Shino Pichette seconded the motion.

From the board retreat from Sept 10.

- Need to add the retreat presenter slides.

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

Roll Call

LATRINA DENSON	Aye
Shino Pichette	Aye
Neil Hede	Absent
David Potter	Aye
Vanessa Ford	Aye
Sasha Viands	Absent
Azizah Yasin	Absent
Mindi Winter	Aye

E. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

II. Head of School Report

A. Brent's Report

Things are going well.

There was a curriculum day today.

- There was training on seizure responses.
- There was also a Title IX training. Brent added PVPA specific notes to the training.
- There was also some discussion about grading.

The Oct 1 enrollment report came out. Over the weekend there were some drops so the enrollment numbers look different in the report because there were last minute drops without time before the report to add more. But more were added. Tomorrow will be at 403 enrollment total (rather than 399 which is what the report will show). Brent anticipates that we will be at the 400 enrollment mark in March. Of the students that have left since the beginning of the year, the feedback has been positive. Parents said the kids like the school, but they missed their friends, for example. People don't seem to be leaving because of bad experiences or negative opinions of the school.

Oct 18 will be October Fest. There will be costumes and outside activities. There will be a group photo. There are also fundraisers (fun activities) for classes etc.

M1 (mid semester grades) close soon. Grades will be available before the parent teacher conferences in Nov.

One of the senior centers will get a visit from a PVPA wind ensemble for Veteran's Day.

The Friends of PVPA are picking up steam and are asking to join the next board meeting.

Next board meeting we will get MCAS results and will discuss them.

David is curious if there have been any updates on the grants we applied for regarding DEI hiring funding etc. Brent says there hasn't been any update yet, but we should hear within the next month. David wonders if we'll be able to start working on the DEI hiring goals this year. Brent thinks the grant will likely come through, and yes, it will impact this year. David asks Brent to make a backup plan for how we would work toward DEI goals if this funding doesn't come through. Yes, Brent will work on that.

III. Board Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee

We will need to have another board meeting this month to approve something from the Finance Committee.

Marcy reported out:

Finance Committee reviewed the past year audit in their last meeting. Marcy shared many details from this discussion with the audit reviewers. The audit was complimentary of the business office. The results of the audit was an "unmodified opinion" which is the best result that one can get. They recommend continuing to stay on the path of conservative budgeting, as we have done.

The committee also reviewed the first quarter budgeted vs. actual - and our spending is as expected so far. Marcy shared many details about this review. The committee would like to see a couple additional quarterly reports so more reports will be added in the future.

The board needs a chance to review the full audit. And then we will be asked to vote on that.

B. Governance Committee

The Gov Committee hasn't met with Latrina as the chair yet.

Shino met with the PVPA lawyer and Mike from Board on Track to review version and it's ready to send to DESE for preliminary approval. (After preliminary approval it will come to the board for an official vote, and then it will be sent to DESE for formal approval). Shino shared an overview of the changes that will be included in updated bylaws.

- Voting responsibilities
 - Teachers and Students (18+) no longer voting members
 - *But they are still VERY valued members.*
- Board composition: 9-15 voting members instead of 15-20 members
- Officers must have served 6 months (rather than a year)
- Indemnification Clause update
- Updating ByLaws to reflect current board operations:
 - Adding Head of School and CFO as ex officio members (non-voting)
 - Terms all now 2-year rather than 2 OR 3 year
 - Listing HOS Support and Eval as a standing committee
 - *Mindi noted that any committee listed as a standing committee in the bylaws does need to account for their meetings (they can't just be inactive, even though Mike from BoT told Shino standing committees may be inactive easily).*
 - *The board discussed this and agreed it would be best to have this Head of School Support and Evaluation committee listed as a standing committee in the updated bylaws.*

- Committee membership clarification – serve at the discretion of the president of the board.
- Added that we traditionally hold a board retreat in the summer
- Updated pronouns used throughout doc

Shino was asked to send the full version of the proposed bylaw updates out to the full board. Shino will ask for any feedback within one week.

C. Head of School Support & Evaluation Committee

David sharing:

The committee received very little specific feedback from trustees to add to the conversations starting from the retreat. The committee discussed some lack of continuity from last year's goals for Brent and the dual role of support and evaluation. This year maybe the committee could help support more on the continuity of some things that don't necessarily need to be "goals" for this coming year. Keep the goals really substantive and not just continuing from last year's goals. In the next meeting, the committee plans to finalize the list of goals for this year for Brent.

Brent sharing:

There are 3 main areas for goals this year.

One is continued work on diversifying staffing at PVPA.

- Training from NEMNET.
- Recruitment and retention strategies (including ways to promote from within and paying for professional development).

Another goal is to create a structure for student support teams.

- This started with making a schedule where everyone is in the school at the same time.
- Brent's team will work on identifying students that need support, and giving that support well.

Another goal is about communication

- Will work on increasing access to communication.
- We've already done a lot on this, but more to be done.
- Improve how we give important information to everyone and keep everyone on the same page.
- Improve communication around grading. (Arts & Academics Goal #2 from SAP)

Vanessa asks if there are ways to both respond to the parent concern around the grading system being confusing and staying consistent with the current system (so teachers don't need to learn a whole new system).

Brent responds: Yes, grading at PVPA is challenging. It is one of the biggest barriers to students and parents get effective communication about where students are at. The

system asks for a lot of work from teachers (inputting grades into the system) and yet families don't understand. Brent is working with his team to simplify and making an easier lift for teachers (and also families).

IV. Internal Stakeholders

A. Staff Reports

The new teacher members are David Cavallin and Sarah LaPierre. David Cavallin is present at the meeting (Sarah LaPierre is not present today). Nominations happened today! David shared a bit about himself.

Shino asks what the terms for each member is. Both members are elected for two year terms.

Vanessa asks if David has any questions for the board. He says not yet.

B. Student Reports

Students are being elected this week so we should expect them at the next meeting.

V. President's Business

A. Strategic Action Plan Review and Monitoring

UNION UPDATE:

David shares that there is a contract ready with the union. The contract and the MOA with the union will be available to the board at the same time. This will be sent to the board and we'll need to have an additional meeting to approve it this month.

SAP REVIEW and MONITORING:

How are we tracking the SAP? David asks all committees to choose what parts of the SAP that they would be responsible for tracking - and bring this to the next board meeting. If there are areas that committees don't want to take on, maybe David and Brent track those, or we make an ad hoc committee, or make another plan.

Vanessa: Does David want committees to share out SAP updates at every meeting?

David: when there are updates to share, yes, but if there is nothing to share in a particular month, that is okay too.

B. Summer Retreat Continuation Activity

It is on the full board to continue discussion around DEI work. We want to invite anyone to join this conversation at any time by sharing comments and ideas with David directly. David is planning to share anything anyone shares with him, so that we are compliant with open meeting law.

David asks Shino to send out the SAP Matrix to the full board. Shino notes that the matrix is also on Board on Track.

David opens the floor for anyone to share ideas about how to implement these goals:

Goal 1: Strategically expand representation in all parts of the PVPA community.

Goal 2: Increase opportunities for students to learn about social justice issues, and to engage in social justice action.

Goal 3: Openly acknowledge and address challenges in the community related to diversity, equity, anti-racism and inclusion.

Goal 4: Increase opportunities for staff, faculty, administrators and board members to develop anti-racism skills.

Latrina: There have been a lot of ideas for ways to increase DEI work at PVPA. Outside of the affinity groups having open mics during specific months (like black history month), Latrina thinks there aren't many ways for DEI to be included in the arts. How can we include DEI in instructional ways?

Vanessa: Let's continue to showcase ways PVPA works on DEI. There could maybe be a YouTube video students make to talk about how PVPA works to address DEI challenges. It would be great for the community to be able to see what students are doing around DEI. What other platforms could be utilized? Would be great to hear directly from students. Even just cell phones can make high quality videos.

David: notes that this connects to goals 2 and 3. Could board members or staff also maybe create more content to share what is happening at PVPA around DEI work?

Vanessa: This also could pull in goal 4. And Vanessa is happy to help make this happen.

Mindi: PVPA does have a channel on YouTube.

Latrina and others: There is currently a Diversity Committee at school. Maybe that could be utilized to pull community involvement and coordinate more between the board and school. (If it were to have it be a board committee, it would need to be chaired by a board member. And we don't want to take it away from the school, we want them to continue having ownership.) But maybe we could have a board member join the school's Diversity Committee to participate there without it being a board committee.

Vanessa: Maybe we could have a focus group to discuss all this, to help with next steps.

Latrina: Also maybe the consultants could help with this.

The conversation will be continued. Everyone is invited to think more on ways to meet these goals outlined above and share in future meetings and with the board. David notes we will likely continue discussing these in future meetings.

VI. 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 8:08 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Shino Pichette

A roll call vote was taken and everyone present voted yes.

Documents used during the meeting

- 2023_09_10_board_meeting_minutes.pdf
- 2023_09_12_board_meeting_minutes (1).pdf
- PVPA retreat slides (1).pdf