

APPROVED



Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

Minutes

January Board Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday January 9, 2024 at 6:00 PM

Location

Zoom Account is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: January Board Meeting

Time: Jan 9, 2024 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

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Trustees Present

Azizah Yasin (remote), David Cavallin, David Potter (remote), LATRINA DENSON, Mindi Winter (remote), Neil Hede (remote), Shino Pichette (remote), Vanessa Ford (remote)

Trustees Absent

Sarah LaPierre, Sasha Viands

Ex Officio Members Present

Brent Nielsen (remote)

Non Voting Members Present

Brent Nielsen (remote)

Guests Present

Danyelle Joujoute, Eva Veras, Fiona Yates, Serena Gross

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 Jan 9, 2024 at 6:13 PM.

C. Read the Mission Statement

David read the mission statement

D. D. Approve Minutes

LATRINA DENSON made a motion to approve the minutes from December Board Meeting on 12-12-23.

Neil Hede seconded the motion.

No discussion.

Fiona Yates votes yes.

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

Roll Call

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

E. Public Comment

No public comment.

II. Head of School Report

A. Brent's Report

Brent reports out.

It has been a banner year for enrollment. Our daily average enrollment has been over 400, which is great!

Attendance we want to be at 95% and it's not quite there yet. We added a new device in the main lobby so when students arrive late they can scan their ID which helps speed things up. We got a 10K grant to address attendance issues. Neil may speak to what attendance means for our budget.

Our application window is open. 165 applications as of today. Feb 11, 2024 is the application deadline for the PVPA lottery. Typically, we fill 85-90 spots each year. 75 for the 7th grade and then we fill in classes that have lost students.

We had the fall visual arts showcase since our last meeting. It went incredibly well. It was the second time we have done it. Things are for sale, and the money goes to the visual arts department. They are trying to save for a new kiln.

There was a fundraiser from the senior class, which Fiona may talk about.

The spring is when shows pick up, so we're all excited about that.

Q: Do we know how many seats are open in the non-7th grade? Are we in need of people in other grades? Answer: We're in good shape. We do think there may be some drops, but we anticipate being able to fill them with the current applicants we have.

Q: Are there any goals in mind for the 10K grant for absenteeism? Answer: We haven't figured out yet what we are going to do with this grant. The application process was very simple, no plan was needed to apply, so we will now be making it now that we have the funds.

III. Board Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee

Neil Hede reports out.

Marcy put some documents up on Board on Track. Neil recommends everyone check the finance section of board on track to review these.

One is the profits and loss for the school thus far this year.

- There isn't anything too surprising in the report.
- There are a couple outliers - for example, some auxiliary revenue. Auxiliary revenue refers to services directly for students (like buses and lunches). Marcy does not believe that we will have a surplus in this line by the end of the year, even though we currently have extra funds available here.
- Interest Income also looks like an outlier at this time. We purchased some investments this year, and that is where the interest from these investments are being tracked.
- Recruitment of employees was purposefully over spent this fall. We wanted to spend money to find a school nurse since we weren't being successful with recruitment on our own. That cost about \$13K.
- The Board of Trustees line covers Board on Track, and legal fees. Right now, this is running a bit high because we hired a consultant to give the board a diversity, equity, and diversity training. We chose to spend this money because that training was important and helped us meet our strategic action plan goals. We anticipate

that we won't have as many legal fees as we have budgeted for so we hope to break even on this line.

The second form is the tuition projects for DESE for the second quarter of the year.

- At the beginning of the year we make guesses about the projected budget (we planned for a 4% increase). Things have changed a bit.
- The above foundation rates are different than we projected, and they could change again. Above Foundation Rates change by district, and they can change throughout the year. These rates are what each district contribute to the education of students in their district.
- DESE gives us estimates each quarter, and each one tends to be different. We expected this.

B. Governance Committee

Latrina Denson sharing out:

The Governance Committee was able to attend the visual arts event to connect with folks who might be interested in participating in the board. It seemed successful.

We are discussing adding information about current board members to our Board on Track public facing page. We could add pictures and bios. We think this would be exciting to add. We want people to know who we are.

Shino Pichette sharing out:

We received feedback from DESE about our ByLaws. They are EXTENSIVE. 3 pages of recommended changes. The Gov Committee will have to sift through all these and get back to the board at a later date about them. But here are a couple highlights.

- DESE shared that no current set of bylaws contains a glossary. It would be appropriate to define any unusual terms within the bylaws where the term is introduced.
- They recommend doing a big overhaul to remove redundancies from our bylaws and evaluate the organization of the document. They said that they recommended this type of review in 2017 and the board chose not to do it at that time.
- Many comments about the term "member" and about our board composition. We are not allowed to have different designations of member - like voting or non-voting, which we had in the draft we submitted. We already addressed changing teacher and students to "representatives" rather than non-voting member, now we just have to go make those changes. And I want to note that they said Bylaws do not typically describe expectations for non-members. The Gov Committee will be mindful of that when considering edits to the bylaws.

- Additionally, regarding membership, DESE emphasized the danger of conflicts of interests with having employees or relatives of employees serve on the board. They asked that we share an article about it from the State Ethics Commission. See [Conflict of Interest Law and Boards of Trustees](#).
- For the Head of School and CFO, they said that while we could indicate intent for participation, the bylaws would not be a mechanism to enforce participation of non-members. They recommended that we use the employment contracts to set expectations for attendance and participation at board or committee meetings.
 - They recommended that the Bylaws could include language like, 'The Executive Director of the School will not be a member of the Board but will participate in the business of the Board as its employee.'

C. Head of School Support & Evaluation Committee

David Potter reported out.

The committee met with Brent. The committee is waiting on a bit of information from Board on Track. The committee is working on collecting evidence of Brent's work on the 3 goals identified.

The committee will be sending out a survey to review Brent. He takes the survey about all areas of his role. His admin team will also take the same survey, as will the board. The goal is for this to be completed in late April or early May, so the committee can bring the report to the board either in May or June. So everyone should be on the lookout for the survey in the spring.

D. Long Range Infrastructure Planning Committee

Brent Nielsen and Mindi Winter reported out.

The committee took a hiatus previously, and just restarted in December. Two new members were added to the committee - A parent (who has a background in construction) and Alyson Miller (PVPA Director of Curriculum and Instruction). It now represents arts and staff across the school.

There was a review of projects.

- Increase security to the front door.
- Securing materials and timeline for sound proofing is underway.
- Theater house lights will be put in in Feb.
- Changing rooms for dancers will be put in.

They discussed the difference between PVPA capital vs. friends of PVPA capital.

There was discussion about whether to do a feasibility study, to get a big picture of what would happen when.

The next meeting will be on January 22.

IV. Internal Stakeholders

A. Staff Reports

David Cavallin reported out.

The music showcase is this weekend, Fri and Sat starting at 6:30. It feels like the arts are back to pre-pandemic levels. We are more prepared than we have ever been, students have worked so hard. This weekend will be a treat.

Paideia is coming up. Then the music. The musical will be basically War and Peace put to movement. It's going to be amazing! David is directing.

B. Student Reports

Fiona Yates reported out.

- We had the senior fundraiser. We made \$600 and Mindi, David, Latrina and Brent all came out and supported - thank you.
- Most seniors got what they wanted for Paideia, which they are excited about.
- The seniors are interested in the revamping of grading that admin has been discussed. Fiona supports the non-traditional grading at PVPA, but she also sees that it is sometimes inconsistent.
- The first mock trial is coming up. (all student reps who are in the room, are in mock trial!)

Danyelle Joujoutte reported out.

- I sit in in the musical rehearsals and she's excited for it. The show season is coming fast, but paideia is the time to prep and people are looking forward to it.
- My grade is gearing up for SATs and college applications.
- Sad news is that the college counselor will be gone next year. Hopefully there is a plan to help students all get the support they need to get into college!
- BSU is working on getting lunch visits to other schools.
- WOFA and Catalyst dance companies are doing a mentorship with the middle school. This allows middle schoolers to apprentice during paideia. This will allow the dance companies to have new members who are ready to hit the ground running rather than reteaching basics.

Eva Veras reported out (remotely).

- My grade is planning a March 1 jazz cafe fundraiser.
- LSU is planning a bake sale fundraiser soon.
- I'm pretty sure our paideia sign ups went well.

Serena Gross reported out.

- The 9th grade did a photo with santa fundraiser. They made real life money (~\$50)! The main goal was getting the grade excited about fundraising. We don't fund raise in middle school, so we are just starting and hope to have real funds in future grades.
- We now have an instagram page for our grade to help people get involved and engaged.
- Paideia sign ups had an issue this year. The 8th grade went before the 9th grade, which didn't feel fair/good to the 9th grade because it is supposed to be by seniority. BRENT COMMENTS: The 8th grade didn't actually go first - there are seats reserved for certain grades. So 9th grade spots filled up that 8th graders were able to be in even though they signed up later.

V. President's Business

A. Diversity Task Force Update

Vanessa Ford and David Potter reported out.

There is a desire to support students with having their voices being heard. We don't want to impose a structure on the video project. There is discussion with Trevin Bond about how to best coordinate with students. The task force also looked at the strategic action plan to see what parts of that they can support in this diversity work.

Q from Fiona Yates: How can one get involved? Answer: Email David Potter and he will include you in communications going forward. And yes, it would be great to have students involved!

B. Visit from the Friends of PVPA

Visit from Jessica Robinson from the Friends of PVPA. Jessica reports out.

What does the Friends do? All this info is on the PVPA website as well, if people want to review. We are an independent organization 501(c)(3) in order to advance PVPA missions and programs. It is separate from PVPA. One of the most important things is that it is the main fundraising body for PVPA. Donations can be tax deductible when made to the Friends rather than directly to PVPA. All Friends funds do go back into the school. The Friends technically own the PVPA building, so it falls to the Friends to upkeep the school building and facilities.

The Friends was inactive during covid, and then it was revitalized after covid. In the summer of 2023, the old guard were able to step down when new members came along. Currently there are 4 active members in the Friends. They started by getting up to date and doing urgent housekeeping. Moving forward they are looking for some more members, and also look for consultants to work with the Friends on specific projects for specific amounts of time. Maggie Solis is an attorney (and member of the Friends) and is going to work on updating the ByLaws for the Friends.

They hope to start a long term fundraising plan. This first will require understanding the big picture needs for the facilities / building. They are mindful to make any big efforts align with other main stakeholders - like the board and PVPA staff. The main staff liaisons are Brent and Marcy who have been really helpful.

Vanessa Ford is the Board of Trustees Liaison to the Friends.

The Friends members are:

Jessica Robinson - Clerk

Richard Ahlstrom - President

Fred Kass - Treasurer

Maggie Solis - At Large Member

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

David Potter made a motion to adjourn.

Shino Pichette seconded the motion.

Fiona Yates also voted yes.

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

Roll Call

Neil Hede Aye

Shino Pichette Aye

LATRINA DENSON Aye

Sarah LaPierre Absent

Sasha Viands Absent

Azizah Yasin Aye

Mindi Winter Aye

David Potter Aye

Vanessa Ford Aye

David Cavallin Aye

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:22 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shino Pichette