

APPROVED



Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Retreat

Date and Time

Sunday September 10, 2023 at 10:00 AM

Location

Betty Shabazz Cultural Center
2 Dunlap Place
Mt Holyoke College
South Hadley, MA

Trustees Present

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

Trustees Absent

None

Ex Officio Members Present

Brent Nielsen, Marcy Conner

Non Voting Members Present

Brent Nielsen, Marcy Conner

Guests Present

angelica@revolutionarylovecoach.com, mollykeehn@gmail.com

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 Sunday Sep 10, 2023 at 10:00 AM.

C. Ice Breaker Activity

II. Committees Review and Updates

A. Committee reports

SUPPORT FOR THE FRIENDS:

- Sasha and Vanessa will both be liaisons.
- 9/22/23 at 8:30am is the next Friends meeting.

Finance Committee [Neil Report]

- The big change is the capital spending budget. We saved money. Something was covered by a grant, some acoustic updates ended up being un-doable so we changed strategies and it was cheaper...
- They had an executive session for the negotiation committee.
- Had to cancel a meeting because they didn't have quorum.
- Would be good to have one more person on this committee from the board.
- Marcy does a great job of keeping this committee on track.

Governance [Shino Report]

- Working on ByLaws Updates
- New Member Recruitment for Board

Infrastructure [Mindi Report]

- New conference rooms (2 of them and a work room for teachers) done and being used
 - These are a bit smaller than other rooms where the board typically meets.
- Same plan that was approved last year still being worked on
- New Counseling Suite being worked on

- Has 5 offices and a waiting area outside
- Ended up with the same number of classrooms after all the changes... some classrooms smaller, but gained individual working spaces.
- Brent: Summer 2022 did the new offices in the annex.
- Moving the music room down to the first floor is the next big thing to tackle, but we're worried about how much it costs. Where the music room currently it is problematic because it is so loud and bothers the classes nearby. And it is problematic to move all the equipment from the theater to the music room. Want to switch the music room with some of the middle school classrooms so all the noise is on one part of the hallway. Will need to keep the noise from going to the classrooms above the new spot though. We would also be able to have a theater classroom added. We would then have 3 music rehearsal spaces. There is some tension between arts and academic teachers about how much time these new rooms are used for what...
- Still need to work on a cafeteria, but that's on the wish list, not the active planning list.
 - It would be great to have a cafeteria that also is part of a gymnasium.

Head of School Support and Eval [David Report]

- Shannon just left the committee.
- Maggie Solis, Avital Nathman, Mindi and David are the committee members.
- Would be great to have another staff member rep on this committee.
- This committee needs to kick off another new year of evaluation for Brent.
- The board needs to recommend areas / goals for Brent to work on in the coming year.
- This committee not meeting until after the next full board meeting.
- Brent: **Teacher Diversification needs to be a priority this year**, we didn't make many strides last year. Did make strides the year before, but not last year.
 - PVPA applied for a 100K grant from DESE, but not sure if will get it yet.
 - This would help us develop our best practices for diverse hiring.
 - 80K could go to signing bonusing and relocation funds and paying for teaching certifications, all of which would help us hire diverse folks from out of the area. PVPA wants our teachers to be licensed even if they're not required to be.
 - Licensed teachers helps with our student recruitment.
 - If the grand doesn't come through, would this still be a goal for Brent?
 - There are still things that Brent would like to do around diverse hiring, yes. There wouldn't be funds the same way, but still things to do, like trainings.

- The outcome goal would not necessarily be a more diverse staff, but many steps taken to help make diverse hiring possible / effective in the future. We hope to not hire many new people this year!
- Two years ago we received grant money to work towards diversification of staff.
 - Prior to that we didn't have data on applicants. We purchased someone to help us track this data and post our jobs.
 - One challenge to tracking this is that identity is self-reported, so we can't double check / understand complexities that may not be self-reported.
- 3 current open positions at PVPA
- Board members should follow Marcy on linkedin to see the postings and help spread the word to help get a diverse applicant pool.
- Brent: We need to increase teacher salaries to be appealing to all applicants (including diverse applicants)
- Brent: Didn't put anything in goals about MCAS. They are tricky right now. Not quite sure the best way to address MCAS success at the moment.
 - River Valley commuting 2 days a week. Looking to add days to help support MCAS success.
- Other potential goals
 - Strategic Action Plan items
 - Curriculum Dev
 - Multi-tiered student support

III. Training on Diversity, Equity, Anti-Racism & Inclusion

A. Led by Consultants Angelica Castro and Molly Keehn

Participants:

John Kulas

Sasha Viands

David Potter

Vanessa Ford

Marcy Conner

Mindi Winter

Neil Hede

Shino Pichette

Brent Nielson

Loris Bjorkman-Joslyn

Azizah Yasin

Emily Niemann

Frank Newton

Latrina Densen

See Slides from presenters.

IV. 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 3:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Shino Pichette

Documents used during the meeting

- PVPA retreat slides.pdf
- PVPA Hopes and Concerns.pdf