APPROVED

Pan American Academy Charter School

Minutes

February Board Meeting

Date and Time
Monday February 24, 2025 at 4:30 PM

Location
Virtual

Directors Present
C. Gorman (remote), D. Espinosa (remote), D. Nuccio (remote), J. DuCette (remote), J. Garcia (remote), M. Gonzalez (remote), N. Flores (remote)

Directors Absent
A. Feuer-Edwards, H. Guzmán

Guests Present
B. Robin Eglin, Omnivest LLC (remote), Darcy Russotto, CEO/Principal (remote), Elzy Munoz, Assistant Principal (remote), Idalee Escribano, Teacher (remote), Joshua Fineberg, Director of Student Services (remote), L. Kelly (remote), Mercedes Mason de Gomez, Director of Talent Management (remote), Renee Burgos, Teacher (remote), Roberto Lugo, Director of Security (remote), Wendy Jackson, Assistant Principal (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

N. Flores called a meeting of the board of directors of Pan American Academy Charter School to order on Monday Feb 24, 2025 at 4:33 PM.

B. Public Testimony

C.

School Connections

Escribano shared updates from the last SAC meeting, including resolving a snow/ice removal issue, discussing lunch and recess fire drills for the next year, and finding a solution for 7th and 8th grade students who arrive late. They also touched on teacher resources for substitute folders and the changing political climate. Flores asked about the current climate and Escribano confirmed that while there was initial stress due to lack of information, they received updates and resources that helped to alleviate some of that stress. Russotto reported on the attendance and support provided to families, with a slight increase in absenteeism but no drastic changes.

Russotto shared several positive updates from Pan American Academy Charter School, including an author visit, a community worker fair, Black History Talent Show and a news clip featuring two students who won a learning challenge. The school also has a game night planned for April.

II. Action Items

A. Contracts

N. Flores made a motion to Approve Para-Plus Agreement for Translation Services.
J. Garcia seconded the motion.
Fineberg explained the need for a new translation and interpretation vendor to support Special Education paperwork and documentation.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
N. Flores made a motion to Approve Pan American Academy High School Mill Development Facilities PreWork Agreement.
M. Gonzalez seconded the motion.
Russotto presented a proposal for pre-work on the school's building development, with a limit of $50,000.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Other Items

N. Flores made a motion to Approve Resolution to Ensure a Safe and Inviting Environment for All Students and Families Including Those Threatened by Immigration Enforcement Activities.
D. Espinosa seconded the motion.
Flores discussed a resolution to ensure student safety and family safety, especially in light of recent immigration enforcement action. Russotto touched on the school's safety policies and procedures and their application to ICE.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

III. Governance

A. Approve Minutes

N. Flores made a motion to approve the minutes from January Board Meeting on 01-13-25.
D. Nuccio seconded the motion.
Maria Gonzalez abstains.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Committee Updates

Flores provided an update from the Governance Committee, mentioning that the board chair job description seemed fine, but the vice chair and treasurer descriptions might need some tweaks. He also mentioned that the secretary's description was inaccurate and would work on updating it. Flores also mentioned that the March meeting would be in-person and encouraged board members to let him know if it would be a challenge for them.

There are upcoming changes due to the new residency requirement for board members, which will lead to the loss of DuCette and Guzman from the board. Flores proposed recruiting new members with expertise in finance, fundraising, health sciences, technology, business, and human services to support expansion and high school experience. Board members were encouraged to send the names of potential board members to Flores for consideration.

There are no updates from the Advancement Committee.

The Audit and Finance Committee will be preparing for the upcoming school year's budget.

IV. Finance

A. Monthly Report - January

Eglin provides a review of the January finances. Financial reports showed a net loss in January but overall strong financial metrics year-to-date.

V. High School Planning

A. Next Steps in Application Process

Russotto discussed the potential outcome of the upcoming vote, stating that she was not confident it would go their way. She explained the process of an adjudication document listing reasons for denial, followed by a revised application submission. Darcy also mentioned the possibility of an ongoing process and the need for a strong legal argument. She suggested that if the vote is no, they may need to push their timeline back into the following year to open. Flores encouraged other board members to attend the

vote or submit written public comments. Russotto offered to share talking points with those planning to testify. Flores confirmed that he would be providing virtual testimony.

VI. Development

A. Grants, Partnerships, Fundraising

There are no significant updates. Board members were provided with a summary report for review.

VII. School Report

A. School Report

Board members were provided a school report for review.

Student Performance Assessment
Jackson discussed the progress of students in various grade levels, focusing on their performance in English Language Arts (ELA), Spanish Language Arts (SLA), and Math. She noted that students tend to score higher on Computerized Adaptive Tests (CAT) when administered one-on-one compared to when working independently. Jackson also mentioned the use of CBM and iStation data to assess student proficiency and identify areas for improvement. She highlighted the need for a comparative analysis of these assessments and the implementation of individual data deep dives with teachers to enhance student achievement. Muñoz discussed the 5th-grade ELA and SLA data, noting a decrease in the iStation data but an increase in the CBM data. She mentioned the intention to continue monitoring and adjusting instruction based on the data. Russotto discussed the discrepancies between the iStation and STAR data, attributing it to the novelty of reporting iStation data and the need for further analysis. They also discussed the utility of both tests in identifying areas for intervention and providing resources for targeted support.

The team discussed the impact of language on learning, particularly for students transitioning from one language to another. They noted that students in grades K-4 are taught in English and Spanish, depending on their proficiency. The team also discussed the potential disconnect between students' performance on standardized tests and their grades in class. They agreed to compare these metrics more closely in the future, with the aim of identifying areas where students may need additional support. The team also discussed the challenges of communicating these findings to parents and the potential benefits of sharing test scores and grades in a consolidated report.

Muñoz discussed the growth and challenges in grades 6 to 8, particularly in English Language Arts (ELA), Spanish, and Math. She highlighted the need for targeted

intervention groups and the importance of aligning coaching goals with instructional priorities. Muñoz also mentioned the positive impact of having Spanish and ELA support teachers collaborate in their coaching. She noted a decrease in Office Disciplinary Referrals (ODRs) in 6th grade after implementing a reset strategy in January. The team also discussed the use of AI-generated questions to match the rigor of upcoming tests. Russotto clarified that the question styles on the STAR and ISIP tests are comparable to the PSSA, although the PSSA is more interactive due to its online format.

Russotto discussed the new benchmarking system, Firefly, which they have been using for math and will be using for English Language Arts (ELA) soon. The system is designed to mimic the actual PSSA tests, with features like calculator access and formula sheets. The first Firefly test was conducted on January 31st for math, and the second one will be on the upcoming Friday. The data from these tests will be analyzed in March. Russotto also mentioned that they have been analyzing attendance on half-day dismissal days and are working on a plan to ensure students are present for important tests. Espinosa expressed concern about the potential impact of missing the Firefly test on students' PSSA performance and suggested sending a reminder to parents. Russotto agreed to send a Class Dojo blast as a reminder.

CEO Evaluation

Russotto and Flores discussed the progress of their CEO evaluation process and the goal of increasing student achievement by 5%. Russotto acknowledged that the first goal should have been to submit a high school application and committed to working on it as her March project. She also noted that the data trends were similar to previous years, indicating a potential for a 5% increase in student achievement. DuCette asked for clarification on the 5% increase, which Russotto explained as an increase in students who are either at or above grade level or proficient or advanced. Nelson suggested revisiting the CEO goals in the summer retreat to discuss any necessary changes or improvements. Russotto work on creating concrete evidence for board members to use when answering questions in the CEO evaluation survey.

VIII. Executive Session

A. Human Resources

The board entered into executive session at 6:15pm to discuss personnel matters, benefits compensation. Returned to the regular meeting session at 6:26pm.

IX. Closing Items

A. Action Items

N. Flores made a motion to new hires.
J. DuCette seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
N. Flores made a motion to salaries.

D. Espinosa seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
N. Flores made a motion to stipends.
D. Nuccio seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:28 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
N. Flores