APPROVED

Pan American Academy Charter School

Minutes

April Board Meeting

Date and Time
Monday April 21, 2025 at 4:30 PM

Directors Present
A. Feuer-Edwards (remote), C. Gorman (remote), D. Espinosa (remote), D. Nuccio (remote), J. DuCette (remote), J. Garcia (remote), N. Flores (remote)

Directors Absent
H. Guzmán, M. Gonzalez

Guests Present
Angel Williams, Dean of Students (remote), B. Eglin (remote), D. Russotto (remote), E. Munoz (remote), Ernie Richardson-Santana, Teacher & DEIB Cochair (remote), J. Fineberg (remote), L. Kelly (remote), M. Mason (remote), Meghan Turner, Teacher & DEIB Cochair (remote), Miguel Feliciano, Dean of Students (remote), R. Burgos (remote), R. Lugo (remote), W. Jackson (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 Apr 21, 2025 at 4:33 PM.

B. Public Testimony

C. School Connections

SAC Meeting Update

Burgos shared discussion points from the most recent **S**AC meeting held on March 25, which addressed several topics, including staff concerns about unannounced evaluations and communication with administration. The board also discussed ways to better track SAC concerns and administrative responses. Ideas included having concise response summaries included in SAC minutes and providing the board with access to SAC meeting minutes as a standing resource. Russotto and board members agreed to further explore this process and update the board.

School Events & Celebrations

- The school celebrated a successful Secret Spirit Week, which engaged students and staff in themed activities prior to spring break, as well as a highly successful Scholastic Book Fair, which generated over $9,000 in sales to support student book distributions for events like Three Kings Day and the Summer Reading Club. A special acknowledgment was given to the school's Office Manager, Jeannie Rivera, for her exemplary work managing school operations and communications, particularly in light of reduced staffing.
- Ernie Richardson-Santana and Megan Turner, co-chairs of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, presented plans for the second annual Fiesta Fusion event scheduled for Friday, May 16, from 5–7 p.m. The event aims to connect students and families with community organizations, celebrate Latin American and world cultures, and promote inclusivity. They requested board assistance in fundraising to expand activities and secure additional cultural performers, including new partnerships with groups such as Al-Bustan. The board expressed strong support and agreed to collaborate on identifying specific needs and potential sponsorships, with further follow-up planned between the Task Force and the Advancement Committee.

II. Action Items

A. Contracts

No contracts presented at this time.

B. Other Items

N. Flores made a motion to Amendment to 2024-2025 Calendar.
J. Garcia seconded the motion.
Russotto proposed an amendment to the 2024–25 school year calendar, explaining that as a charter school, Pan American must meet instructional hour requirements (900 hours for K–5 and 990 hours for 6–8), rather than the traditional 180-day model. Due to a surplus of instructional hours this year, the proposal recommended moving the final student day from Friday, June 13 (noon dismissal) to Thursday, June 12 (also a noon dismissal), providing teachers a full day for classroom breakdown and preparation.

Calculations showed an average surplus equivalent to four days, ensuring compliance with requirements.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

III. Governance

A. Approve Minutes

N. Flores made a motion to approve the minutes from March Board Meeting (In-Person) on 03-17-25.
C. Gorman seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Board Compliance

A reminder was issued to all members who have not yet submitted their *Statement of Financial Interest* forms. These forms are required by both the School District of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and must be on file no later than May 1. Members were asked to submit their forms prior to this deadline to allow sufficient time for review and verification before final submission.

Additionally, any new board members are required to complete and submit an Act 55 Training Certificate as part of the mandatory reporting to the School District of Philadelphia. It was noted that Maria Gonzalez is the only new board member for 2024 and will be notified directly. Flores was also asked to assist in communicating this requirement.

C. Committee Updates

Governance Committee:

- The CEO evaluation process has begun. Russotto is working on her self-assessment using the same evaluation tool as last year to ensure consistency. Once completed, the board and senior leadership team will conduct their assessments, with the Governance Committee reviewing the results. The goal is to finalize the evaluation and set new goals at the July 14 summer retreat.
- The board is seeking a member with health services expertise to support high school planning. Jake Becker, recommended by Espinosa, has expressed tentative interest and will meet with Russotto next week. Nuccio reported that another candidate is interested in a future term and is exploring additional leads. Feuer-Edwards plans to follow up with potential candidate, Beverly Woods.

Advancement Committee does not have any updates at this time.

Audit and Finance Committee: The committee met prior to the board meeting to review the budget timeline and initial assumptions. The budget is due by June 30, 2025, with additional meetings scheduled. Key budget assumptions include:

- Enrollment: Russotto and Fineberg will meet to finalize projections based on current K–7 enrollment and incoming kindergarten students. Kindergarten enrollment documentation was successfully collected early, allowing an open house before spring break. Currently, 92 kindergarten students are registered for next year.
- Tuition Rates: An estimated 4% increase for regular education and 3% for special education, based on School District of Philadelphia trends. Official rates will be confirmed before final budget submission.
- Title Funding: Assumed to remain flat.
- Health Insurance: The school will proceed with a 4.5% premium increase, opting not to change surplus share participation to reduce employee financial impact.
- Salaries & Staffing: Salary adjustments will be comparable to the School District to stay competitive. Additional staffing is planned for special education, including new teachers for kindergarten, fourth grade, and developmental learning classes. Notably, 27 incoming kindergarten students already receive specialized services, the highest number on record.
- Grants & Revenue: The school continues to review current grants and projected carryover revenue for next year.

IV. Finance

A. Monthly Report - March/Forecast

Eglin presented the financial statements for March 2025. Key metrics included a corrected current ratio of approximately 2.0 (standard ≥1.1), days cash on hand at 97.04 days (requirement: 45 days), a debt ratio of 0.66 (requirement: <0.85), a total margin of 5.28%, and a debt service coverage ratio of 2.68x (requirement: 1.15x). The board discussed cash reserves, with the consensus that current levels are healthy and not excessive; funds have been earmarked for high school expansion through an assigned bank account to protect funds. The Finance and Audit Committee will explore opportunities to earn higher interest on idle funds. Eglin explained that the higher March net income included early federal revenue recognition, and significant June expenses are expected to normalize the year-end forecast to approximately $90,000, in line with budget expectations. The final forecast will be presented in May.

V. High School Planning

A. Application Process Updates

The team, in collaboration with legal counsel, has been thoroughly reviewing all documentation in preparation for the charter application resubmission, with particular

focus on ensuring the application is ready for the anticipated appeal process should the School District deny it again. One area of feedback addressed was the predominance of community support letters from outside communities; efforts will be made to diversify and strengthen local community endorsements for the appeal. The team remains committed to maintaining professionalism throughout the process, acknowledging the emotional investment involved.

VI. Development

A. Grants, Partnerships, Fundraising

The school continues to actively pursue grant opportunities in collaboration with FundEd to support school initiatives. Fineberg and the team partnered with FundEd on a grant application aimed at enhancing therapeutic staff capacity, with a site visit from the granting organization scheduled. Efforts are ongoing to maximize available grants within the current contract, including applications for two repeat grants to support the October Book Festival, sponsored by Read by 4th and the Philadelphia Activity Fund. The festival, now entering its third year, has shown strong growth and community engagement, with last year’s event providing students with books and drawing significant attendance. The goal is to continue building momentum for this grant-supported program.

VII. School Report

A. School Report

The School Report was presented for review.

- Leadership goals were shared.
- **School Culture Presentation**: In response to prior board concerns about disproportionate discipline of African American students, Russotto introduced Deans of School Culture Angel Williams and Miguel Feliciano, who presented data and initiatives aimed at improving school climate. The presentation included year-over-year reductions in suspensions and detentions, along with implementation of positive behavior incentives such as the Super Cheetah program, Class Dojo points, the Pan Amazon store, and trimester celebrations. The team also outlined the use of Second Step SEL curriculum and monthly community meetings to promote student well-being and engagement. Board member Espinosa requested clearer parent communication on trimester award criteria to encourage student participation. A broader discussion followed regarding the discipline data and its interpretation. While the district report indicated disproportionate suspension rates, Russotto clarified that differences stem partly from enrollment demographics and reporting methods. However, she acknowledged that overall suspension rates remain higher than similar schools and emphasized the administration's ongoing efforts to identify alternative, non-exclusionary disciplinary strategies, particularly for special education students and chronically absent students. The board stressed

the importance of balancing accountability with keeping students in school to promote educational outcomes. The school will explore the decision-making process for student suspensions and available alternatives and plans to discuss this with the Board at a future time.

VIII. Executive Session

A. Human Resources

Entered Executive Session at 6:00pm to discuss personnel matters and compensation. Returned to regular session at 6:47pm.

IX. Closing Items

A. Action Items Related to Executive Session

N. Flores made a motion to Approvel Personnel Salaries.
J. DuCette seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
N. Flores made a motion to Approve Stipends & Bonues.
D. Espinosa seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
C. Gorman made a motion to Approve Employee Termination Effective 4/21/2025.
J. DuCette seconded the motion.
Jessica Garcia and Dana Espinosa abstain.
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 6:52 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
N. Flores