

**Polaris Charter Academy
Board Meeting Minutes**

Date:	Monday, June 24, 2024
Time:	6:30pm (Virtual) Polaris Charter Academy
Topic(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key State of the School Updates • Board Committee Reports

ATTENDANCE CATEGORY	BOARD MEMBERS & FELLOWS	SCHOOL STAFF
Attending In Person		
Attending by Zoom	Ayanna Berry Sam Bottum Mike Davison Antonio Gonzalez Chris Haworth Lacey Mizell Stahili Muhammad Derik Ohanian Roel Vivit Tina Yarovsky	Michelle Navarre (**Board Ex Officio) John Lydon Fran Peck Lissette Sanchez Elizabeth Whiting
Unable to Attend	Ben Brenton Lauren Levine Ian Roche	

EXPECTED GUESTS & VISITORS

Tina Yarovsky, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM.

Opening Business/Open Session

Approval of Minutes

Tina asked for a motion to approve the April Minutes. Chris brought a motion to approve and Derik seconded. All approved.

Open Session for Public Comment

No one was present for public comment.

State of the School (Michelle Navarre, Francesca Peck, John Lydon):

- School Updates:
 - PCA has 1 [EL Education Student Advisory Council](#) member, Christopher Tate (7th grader) providing student voice and leadership for EL Education.
 - Student-Created Mosaic Installation through art grant secured through Elizabeth Whiting. Installation is movable.
 - Black Ensemble Theater worked with 4th graders that was performed on stage.
 - PCA hosted Field Day and Family picnic at Kells Park coordinated by PCA Director of Family Engagement, Tammy Vance. Celebration as well as opportunity to raise awareness about school for enrollment.

- PCA 5th & 6th gr Science teacher, Mr. Oliver, was honored as adult light leader at the end of the year.
- 8th grade overnight retreat took place at Covenant Harbor in Lake Geneva. Experiences included physical ropes course challenges, team building, and individual/group reflections on bringing Points of Polaris out into the world.
- 8th graders presented their Final Word, a Ted Talk reflection by students on who they are, their challenges, and how they will bring Points of Polaris to life shared before the school community.
- 8th grade graduation: honored 3 student Light Leaders. Also celebrated teacher LaShandra Roberts who graduated from National Louis with her teacher certification.
- First year of Kindergarten First Word celebration where they shared their name and why they are ready for first grade.
- End of Year Data
 - STAR (Gr. 3-8): 2nd consecutive year of outperforming CPS.
 - RDG: PCA - 35% Proficiency vs CPS - 31%
 - Math: PCA - 36% Proficiency vs CPS - 34%
 - IAR scores to come out in Fall
 - EL Education Implementation Review (IR) – measures implementation of the model. Total score is 112. Score of 98 is considered highly implementing. Writing instruction increased from 3 to 5 due to professional development this year.
- Budget Projections
 - Move from Student-Based Budgeting
 - Because of being in a CPS facility, long-term debt, short term debt and pension obligation results in \$13,730.96/student. Total = \$4,888.221,76. Includes special education, which is a concern depending on student needs. Hard to see if school is getting 97% of funding and special education dollars. Increasing enrollment is important.
- Enrollment – working with [Bloomwell](#) Group to consult on student recruitment. Specializes in single-site schools. Founder knows community. 3-pronged approach including ads, a July event to get leads, campaign to enroll late in summer and again to get transfers. Plan to get to 360 this year, 400 in second year, and 450 in year 3. Currently have 300 students. New applications for 24/25 brings number to 337. Important to keep numbers of students we have (check on any summer moves, etc

Finance Committee (Mike Davison, Michelle Navarre):

- FY24 actual projected through April, May benefit not included. Does not include 120K in special education funds.
- Staffing shift – Michelle moving into an Executive Director role focused on development and student recruitment, Francesca Peck as Principal leading Academics K-8 supported by instructional guides (Nora Ryan and Zoe Walker) to continue to push teacher practice. Strong work done by the Personalized Learning Team can enact a strategy to move student achievement through improving classroom instruction by differentiation. Looking forward to advancing literacy progress in the same ways as the school has moved the school in math. The plan empowers teachers and supports their growth and development.

- FY25 Budget
 - Includes number for Employee Retention Credits when they are collected. Govt slowly opening ERC payments due to fraudulent claims from other groups. ~\$350K. Concern for cash. Can address through enrollment and fundraising.
 - Budget based on 360. Need to focus on getting enrollment up.
 - Have seen increase in staff taking time off. Plan to increase support staff to help manage this.
 - Wage salary increases, 4% increase for teachers.
 - Michelle expressed desire to increase to 5% (30K) to communicate value and recognition of teacher. (5% across the board). Would like to explore how to compensate high performers – need to devise a transparent process that includes teachers.
 - Ayanna asked about teacher compensation survey on what is impacting satisfaction. Francesca reported surveys conducted this year and stated compensation is a key recurring factor for teachers. Teachers are surveyed at the end of each trimester.
 - Lissette shared that we would have to resubmit and amend the budget.
 - VOTE: Motion from Sam to amend budget for 5% increase for all staff and adjust the budget accordingly. Mike seconded.
 - More for recruiting and social media.
 - Being in a non-CPS building would be more advantageous.
 - Submitted June 21st.
 - VOTE on proposed FY25 budget: Motion from Mike to approve budget with amendments. Seconded by Derrick. All approved.

Development Committee (Roel Vivit): Spring Event Discussion

Our *Celebration of Learning* benefit was held at Greenhouse Loft on Thursday, May 9. Appreciation to all who attended and supported. This was a true crew effort. Special gratitude to Elizabeth Whiting and all the school staff involved in the organization and coordination of the event.

We met our event fundraising goal of \$100K+. This was the highest grossing/netting benefit we've ever had. We grossed \$138,490 and netted \$110,281. Our expenses were a little higher this year as we purchased GiveSmart mobile bidding and fundraising platform, and we also custom framed 8 large artworks for decoration and auction (raised \$9,000). This event was not enough to fully meet our fundraising goal for the year. We are \$57K short.

We did not meet the attendance goal of 150 guests with 60 purchased tickets. We had approximately 123 guests in attendance, with 36 purchased tickets. We had a higher overall attendance than last year with more attendance by sponsors this year, but less purchased tickets.

Overall, the event was a true celebration of Polaris students and staff through the impressive choir performance, student artwork, interactive stations, and student impact speaker Meisha McClarin. We did bring in some new friends/supporters and continued to use the evening as a way to raise funds and provide a crew building event for the members of the Polaris community including students, staff, board members, and both regular and new supporters.

Feedback from Board Members:

- Great, positive energy. Great turnout from board.
- New sponsor, CDK - that much more engaged and committed to supporting Polaris.
- No paddle raise was hard to gauge. Hard to connect with folks. Some like to competition to engage, especially for high ticket items.
- At tables, hard to hear student due to it being too loud.
- Lower ticket price – Could also be seen as having sold less as people are not spending money
- Bigger ticket items – can we spread out to others? Raffle vs auction?

Governance Committee (*Lacey Mizell, Tina Yarovsky*):

- Board member pipeline review: Ana Pescatello, Yaa Boakye
- Tina will do 1:1 reach outs this summer on board membership.
- Board elections are in October.
- Board Member Continuing Education Training – INCS (July 15, Sept 9th, Nov 4th). On demand training also available,

Key Dates Action Items:

Tina expressed appreciation to John Lydon for his contributions to Polaris on behalf of the board.

Tina Yarovsky asked for a motion to bring the meeting to close at 8:30 PM. Derick brought a motion to adjourn. Sam seconded. All approved.