

Polaris Charter Academy	Scheduled Date:	Monday, Oct 28th, 2024
Board Meeting Minutes	Scheduled Time:	6:30pm (Via Zoom)
	Topic(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key State of the School Updates • Board Committee Updates
	Start:	Tina Yarovsky, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM CST.

ATTENDANCE CATEGORY	BOARD MEMBERS & FELLOWS	SCHOOL STAFF
Attending via Zoom	Tina Yarovsky Yaa Boakye Lauren Levine Sam Bottum Stahili Muhammad Ayanna Berry	John Lydon Lissette Sanchez Francesca Peck Tammy Vance Elizabeth Whiting
Attending by In-Person	Antonio Gonzalez	Michelle Navarre
Unable to Attend	Roel Vivit Mike Davison	
EXPECTED GUESTS & VISITORS		
James Quaid, ORBA Kara Austin, ORBA Caitlin Gibbs, ORBA		

Approval of August Meeting Minutes

Discussion: Attendance corrections noted. Confirmed attendees: Antonio Gonzalez, Michelle Navarre, Roel Vivit (in-person), Fran (via Zoom).

Motion:

Antonio Gonzalez moved to approve the August meeting minutes with the attendance corrections discussed.

Second: Sam Bottum

Vote:

- **In Favor:** Unanimous "Aye"

- **Opposed:** None
- Motion carried, and minutes approved with amendments.

Audit Review

- **Presenter:** Caitlin Gibbs, ORBA
- **Key Findings:**
 - An unmodified opinion was issued—this is the best outcome.
 - \$318K deficit (reduced from \$563K last year, reflecting a \$245K improvement).
 - **Program Service Percentage:** 87%, consistent with previous years.
 - **Cash Flow:** Improvement of \$330K from last year.
 - **Action:** Recommendation to engage with CPS to explore new ways of using restricted funds for expansion.

No motion required.

Board Elections & Assignments

- **Officers for 2024-2025:**
 - **Chair:** Tina Yarovsky
 - **Vice Chair:** Roel Vivit
 - **Secretary:** Yaa Boakye
 - **Treasurer:** Mike Davison

Tina, motion to move to vote. Antonio motioned to approved and Sam seconded; remaining boarded approved and zero opposed.

- **Committees:**
 - **Governance:** Stahili Muhammad
 - **Finance:** Mike Davison
 - **Development:** Roel Vivit

Vote:

- **In Favor:** Unanimous "Aye"
- **Opposed:** None
- Motion carried, and minutes approved with amendments.

State of the School

- **Enrollment Update:**

- Maintained steady enrollment at 360 students (same as last year's 20th-day count).
 - Kindergarten enrollment remains low, raising concern—
 - Discussed on-going enrollment challenges due to student mobility linked to housing vouchers and external factors.
- **Expansion Grant:**
 - Pre-application submitted for a 3-year, \$1.5M repayment grant.
 - Funds to support recruitment, buses, and program development.
- **Recruitment Strategy:**
 - Partnerships with childcare centers— aim is 20; Tammy leading the charge.
 - Ads through Google Performance Max (YouTube, Facebook, TikTok).
 - Playdates, resource fairs, and Kindergarten tours scheduled.

Academic Updates

- **Learning Walks:** Learning walks are collaborative, non-evaluative classroom observations designed to assess the implementation of school-wide work plan goals and inform teacher professional development.
 - **Progress:** Three learning walks conducted in the first 10 weeks (compared to 1-2 per trimester in previous years). Focused on lesson rigor, student engagement, and alignment with standards-based learning targets.
 - **Key Highlights:** 85% of classrooms—evidence of clear, rigorous learning targets with students actively engaged in higher-order thinking tasks (e.g., analyzing, synthesizing). 100% of classrooms—teachers using participation strategies to ensure accountability and active learning.

Next Steps is Launching Communities of Practice to Address:

1. **Student-Engaged Assessments:** Empowering students to track and understand their progress.
 2. **Challenging and Rigorous Learning:** Supporting teachers in designing lessons with appropriate rigor and productive struggle.
 3. **Higher-Order Questioning and Discourse:** Enhancing student-driven discussions.
 4. **Equitable Access:** Providing scaffolding and differentiation for diverse and multilingual learners.
- **Goal:** Achieve **50% or more** of students meeting/exceeding grade-level standards in literacy and mathematics by fostering teacher collaboration and targeted strategies.
 - **Invitation to Learning Walks:** Board members are encouraged to join learning walks to observe teaching practices, student engagement, and overall academic progress. Scheduling details will be shared soon.

- **Program Work:** EL Credentialing Renewal: Application submitted; presentation and in-person review scheduled for early 2024.
 - Polaris is in the process of renewing its EL Education Credential, which requires demonstrating excellence in the three dimensions of achievement: Mastery of Knowledge and Skills, Character, and High-Quality Work.
 - **Application Submission:** Due November 1, 2024.
 - **Review Period:** January–May 2025.
 - **Evaluation:** Includes an in-person site visit and a virtual presentation showcasing the school's impact.
 - **Significance:** EL Credentialing is highly rigorous and now includes partial credentials for schools excelling in specific areas. Polaris aims to maintain its fully credentialed status, which only 50 schools across the country currently hold. Renewal involves collective participation from teachers, students, and leadership, making it a crew-building activity and a celebration of Polaris' impact.
 - **Recent Submissions for High-Quality Work:** Visa Butler Project (2nd Grade)— a culmination of Black History Month, highlighting student-created artwork inspired by Visa Butler. Polaris Mural—a two-year collaborative project designed by students to represent the school's mission and vision, now displayed prominently in front of the school. Identity Mini-Expedition Book— a compilation of projects from the annual identity-focused mini-expedition, documenting student work starting in 2019.
 - **Support Opportunities for Board Members:** Board members will be invited to participate in the credentialing process, including attending the presentation and providing support where needed.

- **Exciting Update**
 - **Documentary Opportunity:** Polaris to be featured in a film by award-winning filmmakers Sarah Ga and Daisy Donovan.

No motion required.

Finance Committee Update

- **Status:** No major updates; awaiting communication from legal regarding Synergy.
- **CPA Transition:** Carol to step down; ORBA provided referrals for a replacement.

No motion required.

Governance Committee Update

- **Board Recruitment:**
 - Pipeline low; Wendy Silva identified as a promising parent candidate.
 - Need for board members with finance expertise.

- **Training:**
 - Board members must complete INCS training.

No motion required.

Development Committee Update

- **Fundraising & Grants:**
 - \$75K received from Mr. Madigan.
 - \$10K grant application submitted for music programming.
 - Ongoing corporate partnership discussions with Windward Construction.
- **Sponsor-A-Family Program:**
 - Donations needed by November 1st, 2024.
- **Holiday Card Contest:**
 - Board members (Antonio, Yaa, Tina) will serve as judges for the contest.

No motion required.

Upcoming Key Dates

- **Shermann Dilla Neighborhood Tour:** November 18th, 2024
- **Sponsor-A-Family Deadline:** November 1st, 2024
- **Holiday Card Submissions Due:** November 6th, 2024
- **Next Board Meeting:** December 16th, 2024 – In-person dinner hosted by Michelle Navarre

No motion required.

Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn by Sam Bottum, seconded by Stahili Muhammad.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM CST.

Vote:

- In Favor: Unanimous "Aye"
- Opposed: None
- Motion carried, meeting adjourned.