

**Polaris Charter Academy  
Board Meeting Minutes**

Dial In: 312-286-6515

<b>Date:</b>	Tuesday, August 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2016
<b>Time:</b>	6:30pm (at the school)
<b>Topic(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revisit Budget Discussion</li> <li>• Prep for October 18 Annual Meeting</li> </ul>

ATTENDANCE CATEGORY	BOARD MEMBERS & FELLOWS	SCHOOL STAFF
Attending in Person	Joel Pomerenk Kameron Matthews Arun Bhatia Tina Yarovsky Daniel Epstein Sam Bottum	Michelle Navarre (**Board Ex Officio) Roel Vivit Tammy Vance
Attending by Phone/Video	Nancy Curby Lauren Wein	Linda McEvoy
Not Attending	Mary Hicks Chip Longenecker (*Board Fellow)	

EXPECTED GUESTS & VISITORS
None

Joel Pomerenk called the meeting to order at 6:39 PM.

New board members, Nancy Curby and Sam Bottum, introduced themselves.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the June 26<sup>th</sup> meeting were reviewed. Kameron moved to approve; Daniel seconded; all approved.

Minutes from the August 3<sup>rd</sup> board conference call were reviewed. Kameron moved to approve; Arun seconded; all approved.

**State of the School (Roel)**

Enrollment:

Enrollment for the 2016-2017 school year is currently 433 students.

The team is working to onboard new students, many of whom are joining Polaris from Galapagos, a charter school that recently closed. A structure called “New Crew” has been established for students new to the school to learn about Polaris, its traditions, and its culture.

Extra support/attention is being given to the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> graders, as three of the four teachers are new this year.

New Staff:

New teachers, all of whom will be attending the national ELA conference in Detroit, include:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Grade: Ogemdi Adeboje (returning)
- 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Math: Colleen Hall
- 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Science: Caris Cardona
- 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Humanities: Katie Burnett
- 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> ELA: Bill Suttles
- 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Math: Erica Faulkner (returning)

In addition, there are six new TAs and one new social worker joining the Polaris staff.

#### Staff Changes and Enhancements:

Linda McEvoy is working as a consultant for data collection and math.

Francesca Peck has a full role of Cultural Guide.

Two Americorps volunteers join next week to provide academic support.

#### School Goals:

Polaris has adopted the same school goals as last year for continued development:

- Master of Knowledge & Skills
- High Quality Student Work
- Character

#### Charter Renewal:

Polaris leadership met with CPS and received the application for charter renewal, which is due September 14. The application consists of four key areas:

- Academic performance (prepopulated test score data from the last 5 years)
- Financial performance (audits)
- Operational performance
- Forward planning (strategic plan and alignment to budget)

#### Current Updates:

- The school year started on August 15<sup>th</sup>.
- “Back to School Night” took place on August 25<sup>th</sup>. Parent attendance wasn’t as strong as we would have liked. This is something to work on for the future.
- Next event is Polaris Homecoming on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. In honor of Polaris’ tenth year, alumni are encouraged to attend.
- Final SQRP results will be available in late October/early November. We anticipate receiving a 1, with worst case a 2+.
- Seventh graders have their upcoming crewbuilding event in Lake Geneva, where they will participate in teambuilding activities and a ropes course at Covenant Harbor.
- The school is looking to limit the use of the sub network this year for budgetary reasons.
- Teachers and administrators will follow up with parents on student fees.
- Parents are pitching in to help cover snacks, given budget cuts.

#### Development Manager Update:

The Development Committee had a phone call with Elizabeth Whiting on August 29<sup>th</sup> to discuss the role. Michelle will discuss further.

#### Director of Finance & Operations Update:

The Director of Finance & Operations role is still vacant. Michelle is sifting through resumes, and Arun is further reviewing.

### **Board Topics**

#### Board Roles and Annual Meeting:

The Annual Meeting will take place on October 18; voting for officer positions and committee chairs (finance, development, governance, academic) will take place at this meeting. Kameron will be stepping down from the board, and Joel will be staying on the board but stepping down as Chairman. In the meeting, all board members should formally join at least one committee.

#### Dashboard:

The Board reviewed the latest dashboard and made special note of the following:

- Enrollment: Current enrollment is 433. This number is lower than anticipated, as some students didn't show up. In addition, nine students need to be released from prior schools in the IMPACT system; five additional students were enrolled today; and some additional students are expected to enroll. The goal is to achieve a first half enrollment of 450. The deadline is the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the CPS school year.
- Grants: Polaris received a \$50,000 one-time budget relief grant from the Crown Foundation.

#### Revised Budget:

The Board engaged in a budget review call on August 3, 2016. Following the call, CPS issued a revised budget, reflecting an additional \$94,000 in funding for FY2017. This means Polaris needs to raise an incremental \$21,000, as opposed to \$120,000, as initially anticipated.

Sam moved to approve the revised budget. Kameron seconded. All approved.

Michelle was notified that CPS may owe Polaris \$20,000-30,000 for special education pension true-up. Paperwork must be reviewed. More details will follow.

#### Initial Planning for Spring 2017 Benefit:

The Board discussed a targeted venue for the Spring 2017 benefit – debating the merits of staying at the Garfield Park Conservatory versus looking for a venue downtown. Board members are asked to share any suggestions with Michelle.

In terms of a date, Thursday, May 4, 11, and 18 are targeted, with May 4 as preferred. Michelle will send a survey to Board members to determine preliminary availability.

The goal is to finalize a date and venue in September, as corporate sponsors budget early.

### **Committee Reports**

#### Governance - Kameron

Board Pipeline:

- We will vote on Ben Brenton as a future board member in the October meeting.
- Melanie Domer may be ready to reengage in conversation in late September.

The current Polaris Board consists of 11 members (including Chip, the board fellow), with a maximum number of 15 members allowed.

Kameron will follow up on any Board training and documentation needed in anticipation of the September 14 charter renewal.

#### Development Committee - Arun

Arun and Tina have reached out to the Associate Board to renew and strengthen relationships between the Associate Board, the Executive Board, and the school. The Associate Board may schedule a fall event to recruit new members, and the Development Committee will establish more consistent communications with the Associate Board.

All other Development Committee items were discussed earlier in the meeting.

#### Finance – Arun

Pre-audit FY2016 financials were finalized, which included writing off a \$29,000 special education receivable from FY2014 for an additional para-professional, which was denied by CPS in 2016. This put PCA into the red for the fiscal year.

The "Why Explore" spring benefit netted \$68,399 (revenues: \$87,761; expenses: \$19,362). This includes matches from MacArthur and Baxter and incorporates processing fees.

The budget was approved earlier in the meeting, which includes a \$400,000 fundraising goal for FY2017.

Additional Discussion

The Board needs to approve a five-year strategic plan prior to the September 14 charter renewal deadline. As such, a Board phone call will be scheduled for September 8 at 7:30pm.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

September 8, 2016	Board Phone Call to Review Strategic Plan at 7:30pm
October 18, 2016	Board Meeting at 6:30pm

At approximately 8:45PM, Michelle moved to adjourn the meeting. Sam seconded and all approved.