

**Polaris Charter Academy  
Board Meeting Agenda**

Dial In: 312-286-6515

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Tuesday, Dec 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>6:30pm (at the school)</b>
<b>Topic(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board Recruitment</b></li> <li>• <b>Fund Restrictions</b></li> <li>• <b>Enhancing Board Committees</b></li> <li>• <b>Dashboard Go-Live</b></li> </ul>

<b>ATTENDANCE CATEGORY</b>	<b>BOARD MEMBERS &amp; FELLOWS</b>	<b>SCHOOL STAFF</b>
Attending in Person	Joel Pomerenk Arun Bhatia Tina Yarovsky Daniel Epstein Ben Burnham (** Board Fellow)	Michelle Navarre (**Board Ex Officio) Roel Vivit CJ Holmes Linda McEvoy
Attending by Phone/Video	Lauren Wein	
Not Attending	Kameron Matthews	

<b>EXPECTED GUESTS &amp; VISITORS</b>

Joel called the meeting to order at 6:30PM.

Welcome/Introductions/Public Forum: Joel introduced and welcomed two new Board members, Lauren Wein and Dan Epstein.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes for the October 27<sup>th</sup> meeting were reviewed. Michelle moved to approve; Dan seconded; all approved.

**State of the School**

Review Fall MAP Scores – Linda, Michelle

- SCRP from 2014 to 2015 grew from Level 3 to Level 1.
- Nationally, the goal is to achieve the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, which is meeting the benchmark. As of fall 2015, Polaris is at 35% meeting/exceeding Math norms and 40% meeting/exceeding Reading goals (up from fall last year). A schoolwide goal has been set for 50% by year-end. If Polaris hits this goal, the school should achieve a high Level 1 rating in 2016. Teachers have been presented these goals. We should have a better feel for status in winter 2016.

Other Topics

- This year, Polaris has two Daniel Murphy scholars – Martin and Marcus Watson. Each will receive a maximum scholarship of \$100,000 per year. Both Martin and Marcus are founding students.
- The PARK assessment was issued last year. Michelle has student-level data, and full data will be released shortly.
- Polaris staff spent two days with Suzanne Plout, lead curriculum designer for expeditionary learning schools. She spent two professional development days working with teachers on complex text. She will return in February for two additional days.
- Two teachers spent two weeks in New York working at a national level on primary curriculum development.
- The school kicked off a student peer mediation program for 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. With this program, students are able to take direct ownership of the Points of Polaris.

- In late October, “Expeditionary Learning” changed its name to “EL Education.”
- Polaris Third Grade teacher Mona lehl was named the Chicago Foundation for Education Teacher for the Year.
- KIPP will be opening a K-8 school at Orr High School.
- Based on 20-days of enrollment, CPS is saying Polaris must cut one special education position (from 5 to 4). Michelle will be meeting with CPS next week to discuss. If Polaris is ultimately required to cut a position, we might consider whether to try to fund the position on our own. Note that this staff reduction would retroactively impact funding.

## **Board Topics**

### Review Dashboard – CJ, Ben

CJ and Ben reviewed the first completed dashboard. The Board discussed adding more goals/benchmarks and indicators to the dashboard to help illustrate whether the scores are at/above/below target. The group also discussed the idea of adding action items based on the dashboard’s results – i.e., what to start / continue / stop doing. The team will continue to iterate for the next meeting.

### Board Recruitment – Joel Pomerenk

Joel reminded all Board members to think about their individual networks – including communities the school has not yet tapped into.

**Action Item:** At the next Board Meeting, each Board member should bring 1-2 names to the table.

### Enhancing Board Committee Structure – Joel Pomerenk

Polaris bylaws require two committees: Governance (currently Kameron) and Finance (currently Joel, Ben, CJ). The Board discussed establishing a third committee focused on Development, and perhaps a Strategic Planning Committee in late 2016/2017.

**Action Item:** Arun will draft a mission/purpose for a Development Committee.

### How to Address Fund Restriction

In a call with Auditors last week, the Finance Committed discussed \$365,000 of funds (cash reserves) that are restricted in use for startup and expansion. Going forward, we need to develop a long-term plan of how to use.

## **Committee Reports**

### Governance – Kameron Matthews

Kameron was unable to attend the meeting, so she provided a report. All Board Members must sign and return *Board Member Agreement* and *Conflict of Interest Policy, Acknowledgement and Agreement*.

### Public Relations

- A press release was issued pertaining to Polaris’ SQRP rating.
- Annual report work will begin soon.

### Finance –Joel, CJ Holmes

CJ provided the following finance notes:

- Credit card management, which was noted by auditors last year as an area for improvement, is being carefully managed.
- The school’s cash balance of \$1,608,358 is approximately \$18,800 greater than it was last November.

- Contributions and foundation/trust grants were originally budgeted at \$405,000, but the goal was adjusted to \$345,000.
- Polaris is expected to be in the black this year, but below budget.
- Refer to Finance Committee reports for more details.

Development – Michelle

- Michelle drafted and posted a Director of Development job description. Thus far, she has received nine resumes, four of which warrant a deeper look. She is focusing on someone detail-oriented who is a strong writer.
- We are closing out a grant cycle and entering into campaign time. We currently have one Letter of Inquiry for a small grant from Seabury. In general, we need to focus on grants with a high likelihood for success that add to operating expenses – not just new programming.
- Additional comments on grants/donations in progress...
  - Perkins Hunter Foundation Grant: Amount can be unpredictable. Last year was \$75,000. Hoping for \$90,000 this year.
  - Madigan Family: Goal is \$75,000
  - Seabury grant: In progress
  - Giving Tuesday: Earned \$5,113
  - Year-end Appeal: Will be sending two letters shortly...
    - 1 letter for current donors
    - 1 letter for potential donors
- The Spring Benefit is targeted for mid-May – which is a bit later than last year, so as to involve more year-end student work. The group discussed placing more emphasis on garnering organizational sponsorships, as well as forming a host committee. (Michelle suggested reaching out to Greg Borkowski.)

Vote to establish a Development Committee: Tina moved to establish a Development Committee. Arun seconded; all approved.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

Tuesday, February 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2016	6:30PM	Board Meeting
May 2016		Spring Event

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