

**Polaris Charter Academy
Board Meeting Minutes**

Dial In: 212-798-088

PIN: 58366422#

Date:	Tuesday, February 21 st , 2017
Time:	6:30pm (at the school)
Topic(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key State of the School Updates • Committee Updates • Polaris 101

ATTENDANCE CATEGORY	BOARD MEMBERS & FELLOWS	SCHOOL STAFF
Attending in Person	Arun Bhatia (Chair) Joel Pomerenk (Treasurer) Tina Yarovsky (Secretary) Chip Longenecker (Board Fellow)	Michelle Navarre (**Board Ex Officio) Roel Vivit Tammy Vance Elizabeth Whiting Fran Peck Melissa Authement
Attending by Phone	Daniel Epstein Lauren Wein	
Unable to Attend	Sam Bottum Ben Brenton Nancy Curby Melanie Domer Mary Hicks	

EXPECTED GUESTS & VISITORS
None

Arun Bhatia called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the December 6th meeting were reviewed. Joel moved to approve; Michelle seconded; all approved.

State of the School

Charter Renewal Update: (Roel, Michelle)

- Received full 5-year charter renewal
- Observations/Recommendations/Conditions included the following:
 - CPS diverse learner expectations (timely completion of IEPs/evaluations) – some IEPs lapsed during a window in 2015-16 (which is what they looked at)
 - Suspension rates
 - Accounting in 2015-16 was optimistic (operated in the black, finished in the red, had to pay penalty); funding declined dramatically that year
 - Reporting timeliness: now using EpiCenter which should help (all in one spot)
 - Governance: need to address areas where not meeting expectations
 - Student admission and enrollment: issues with enrollment application instead
 - Student Discipline: records were completed by not uploaded

Student Updates: (Roel, Michelle)

- A few weeks ago, eighth graders had their celebration of learning at a nearby art gallery. It was a great experience for students to showcase their artwork, which was a study of the Manhattan Project.
- Three Polaris students have received Daniel Murphy scholarships: Nina Escobar, Chyna Cannon, and Ezekiel Boose. Daniel Murphy Scholarships provide financial assistance (up to \$25,000 per year) and educational support to attend and thrive at a parochial or independent high school of the recipient's choice.
- High school returns are coming in. So far, three students have been accepted into Mt. Carmel. Kris Brailey is doing great work with the students on the high school application process. We are looking for anyone with contacts at Mt. Carmel and Fenwick High School.
- The community is on high alert due to gang wars. We cannot send children out for recess. There have been ten shootings in the middle of the day over the past couple of weeks. The school is feeling the effects on the student population. A longer term consideration would be to move the playground to where the parking lot is.
- The school celebrated the 10th annual Real Men Care Day, where dads greet students and attend crew. They engaged in a good discussion on the role they can play in the students' lives, as well as within the Polaris community. Overall parent engagement is down. The school may consider instituting monthly Mother Mondays and Father Fridays.
- Recent choir and band performances were well-attended
- The school continues to work on collecting outstanding student activity fees.
- Latest enrollment numbers are at 447 students, which is very strong.
- There is currently a situation with a 5th grade student whose behavior is becoming very violent very quickly. The student is in the midst of a referral (possible IEP for disability) and trying to get him a paraprofessional (one-to-one aide).

Committee Reports

Finance Committee: (Joel)

- The Finance Committee has met three times since the last board meeting. Key news items are as follows:
 - CPS will be cutting \$300/student: (\$134,000)
 - Some TIF funding has come through: +\$56,000
 - Net impact on budget: \$80K cut to school's funding for the year
 - \$300K short on fundraising to get to break even
 - Other risks: Special Ed funding is questionable, and student activity fee collections are challenging
 - \$1.3M cushion in the bank
- We continue to have \$3,800 in uncollected funds from the Spring Event.
- Recruiting efforts continue for a Director of Finance & Operations. Joel has pre-screened two candidates, with whom Michelle will meet in the near term.

Development Committee: (Elizabeth, Lauren, Tina)

- Grant Applications:
 - We were not invited to continue on with the Impact 100 Chicago grant
 - Currently working on the Crown grant (asking for \$75,000 per year for two years)
 - Looking into LOI for McGowan grant

- Corporate Sponsorships:
 - Look at getting sponsorships for Spring Benefit (or as general sponsors of the school)
- Spring Benefit:
 - Looking at two venues: City View Lofts and Blue Plate Catering
 - Date is confirmed for Thursday, May 18 from 6:30pm-9:30pm
 - Ticket price last year was \$125
 - Michelle reached out to John and Holly Madigan to honor them for their ten years of partnership; shying away from this but Michelle will follow up
 - Attendance: Create a collaboration document for outreach to attendees
 - Corporate sponsorships: Board members should reach out to their own organizations/networks
 - Auction/raffle items: Consider experiences to connect with the theme of experiential learning
 - To Do:
 - Aurn: Reach out to all board members about corporate giving/sponsorships
 - Lauren: Draft email for outreach to past board members
 - Chip: Develop a list of guests to target for attendance (including past board members)
 - Elizabeth: Draft a save-the-date
- We are looking to plan a Board social event on Thur., March 2. Lauren will confirm time/place.
- Development Dashboard: Chip circulated a draft development dashboard. As a next step, Chip will work with Elizabeth to confirm which data is easy/difficult to extract.
- Associate Board Event: Recruiting event / social to take place on 3/29 or 3/30; details to follow

Governance Committee:

- Arun will reach out to the Board to see if there's any interest in chairing the Governance committee
- Board Pipeline: Need to reactivate this

Board Topics

- We will defer our *Polaris 101* informational session to our next Board meeting. In the interim, refer to the two-page sheet that Elizabeth drafted (posted on the Wiki) for some key topics and talking points.
- We will develop a basic FY2016 Annual Report that can be used as a template for FY2017. The goal is to create this by March 17.
- We reviewed the Finance Dashboard and will revisit the numbers/time period for the MAP scores (will populate with Fall/Winter data).

IMPORTANT DATES

April 25, 2017	Board Meeting at 6:30 PM
May 18, 2017	Spring Fundraiser at 6:00 or 6:30PM (TBD)

At approximately 8:56 PM, Tina moved to adjourn the meeting; Joel seconded; all approved.