

**Polaris Charter Academy
Board Meeting Minutes**

Dial-in: (401) 283-4813
PIN: 63565

Date:	Tuesday, February 27 th , 2018
Time:	6:30pm (at the school)
Topic(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key State of the School Updates • Upcoming Budget Forecasts • Board Vote

ATTENDANCE CATEGORY	BOARD MEMBERS & FELLOWS	SCHOOL STAFF
Attending in Person	Arun Bhatia (Chair) Daniel Epstein Tina Yarovsky (Secretary) Mike Davison	Michelle Navarre (**Board Ex Officio) Elizabeth Whiting Melissa Authement
Attending by Phone	Samuel Bottum Melanie Domer Lauren Wein Ben Brenton Claire Henderson (Board Fellow)	
Unable to Attend	Mary Hicks	Francesca Peck

EXPECTED GUESTS & VISITORS
None

Arun Bhatia called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM.

Opening Business/Open Session

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the December 12 meeting were reviewed. Sam moved to approve; Ben seconded; all approved.

Board Topics (Arun)

The board discussed a compensation adjustment. Sam moved to approve; Tina seconded; all approved.

State of the School

Special Education Challenges (Michelle)

There has been little movement on the special education recruitment front. In the interim, the kindergarten teacher (Mr. Suttles) has a special ed endorsement; he is teaching kindergarten in the morning and working with groups of special needs students in the afternoon.

Polaris has a school psychologist two days per week to work with students, including addressing IEP needs. Due to changing rules in the Chicago Teacher Pension Fund (CTPF), our psychologist is prohibited from further work. Michelle working on addressing this liability and searching for emergency provisions.

Only half of Polaris students with IEPs are getting the services they need, due to the Special Education shortage. We continue working with parents and students. CPS is aware of the teacher shortage and active recruiting is continuing.

PARCC Testing (Melissa)

3rd through 8th grade students begin PARCC testing (state-mandated test; does not impact school quality rating) on March 5th through the end of the trimester. Six crews will test at a time (all morning). Challenge: Because Polaris is down so many learning specialists and the school has many students who require special testing arrangements, everyone will be involved in testing to ensure all students' needs are met.

Staffing Update (Michelle)

The 7/8th grade Science teacher resigned five weeks ago. Ms. Authement has been planning all Science lessons, and Michelle runs crew. Polaris is contracting with a group to assist with these teaching needs. Ms. Peck is modeling lessons for guest teachers through the subnetwork, and it is going fairly well. On March 12th, Ms. Brittane Maddox will join Polaris as the new 7/8th grade Science teacher. She joins us from the Noble network.

Facility Update (Michelle)

On Tuesday, Feb. 12, the Polaris team returned from a long weekend (after big snowstorm) to find the gym flooded. Rain gutters had frozen and were flooding the roof, which led to extensive damage on the gym floors. CPS states this is our responsibility because we opted out of maintenance and hired our own maintenance team. Polaris is arguing that this is a capital renovation (not maintenance). We are getting repair estimates this week. In the meantime, there is no gym and no Community Crew. Note that insurance doesn't cover this expense because it is not our building. Also note that the building lease and the charter renewal go together—and our renewed charter from last year has not been returned.

Threat of Gun Violence (Michelle)

On February 15, a 7th grade student reported a threat of gun violence (seen on social media) by another Polaris student. The threat was reported to CPD and CPS Safety & Security. We are trying to determine if this is a manifestation of the student's disability. The student presently checks in with Ms. Vance three times per day. Next steps will be determined after the discussion with CPS this week.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee: (Arun)

Changing CPS Budget Model

- The new CPS budget model went into effect January 20.
- The new model results in slightly higher net per pupil funding.
- Past SGSA funding has been eliminated.
- Previously, Polaris had been reimbursed for paraprofessionals (working with students with IEPs). These services are no longer reimbursed; instead, this is meant to come out of the per pupil funding.
- We are in the process of moving our operating bank accounts from Chase to Wintrust.

Development Committee: (Elizabeth)

Spring Benefit

- The event will take place on Thursday, May 10 at Blue Plate (same venue as last year); Blue Plate has given us the same cost structure as last year.
- The event revenue goal is \$150,000.
- The attendance goal is 175.
- Ticket price is \$125.
- Refer to the wiki for sample letters/forms to solicit sponsorships, donations, etc.
- An electronic "save the date" will be sent out this week
- Every board member should...
 - Bring 10 guests
 - Reach out to their employer and/or friends' employers for sponsorships
 - Solicit raffle items

Other Development/Marketing Notes

- Polaris will be placing advertisements on CTA buses for four weeks.
- PBS News Hour is looking to do a feature on EL Education, and they are discussing possible Polaris involvement.
- Elizabeth is working on the Annual Report, which should be available a month before the benefit.

Upcoming Events

- May 1: Bus trip to Birmingham, Alabama, where students will meet with participants of the Children's March
- May 4: EL Education's Better World Day, where students in EL schools across the country contribute to a better world. This will be Polaris' Day of Peace, among other events.

Governance

- As a board, we need to revisit building board pipeline.
- Arun will confirm that all board member agreements and training are completed.
- Arun will confirm when FOIA and Open Meetings Act training re-certifications are required.
- Arun will confirm if Board Conflict of Interest forms are completed.

IMPORTANT DATES

April 24, 2018 Board Meeting at 6:30 PM

May 10, 2018 Spring Benefit

At approximately 8:25 PM, Dan moved to adjourn the meeting; Michelle seconded; all approved.