

**Polaris Charter Academy  
Board Meeting Minutes**

Dial-in: 712-775-7031  
PIN: 519622

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Monday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>6:30pm (at Trattoria No. 10; 10 N. Dearborn; Chicago)</b>
<b>Topic(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Key State of the School Updates</b></li> <li>• <b>Board Committee Reports</b></li> <li>• <b>Role of Polaris Board</b></li> <li>• <b>Board Retreat &amp; Board Meetings Schedule</b></li> </ul>

<b>ATTENDANCE CATEGORY</b>	<b>BOARD MEMBERS &amp; FELLOWS</b>	<b>SCHOOL STAFF</b>
Attending in Person	Samuel Bottum Ben Brenton Mike Davison Melanie Domer Ian Roche Tina Yarovsky	Melissa Authement Michelle Navarre (**Board Ex Officio) Elizabeth Whiting
Attending by Phone	Lauren Wein	
Unable to Attend	Mary Hicks Rebecca Shapiro	

<b>EXPECTED GUESTS &amp; VISITORS</b>
None

Melanie Domer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM.

**Opening Business/Open Session**

***Introductions***

We introduced ourselves and welcomed two new Board members, Ian Roche and Rebecca Shapiro (who will attend the February meeting).

***Approval of Minutes***

Minutes from the October 15 meeting were reviewed. Sam Bottum moved to approve the minutes; Ben Brenton seconded; all approved.

**State of the School** *(Michelle Navarre, Melissa Authement)*

***SQRP 2018-19***

Our overall rating is Level 1 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row. Our score dropped 0.10 point. Our biggest area of concern is low performance within the diverse learner population. We will discuss further at the January Retreat.

### ***Expedition Overview***

This year's crew expeditions are as follows:

- K Community Expedition
- 1<sup>st</sup> Sun, Moon, & Stars Expedition
- 2<sup>nd</sup> American Indians (just finished); starting on Pollinators
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Fire Expedition
- 4<sup>th</sup> Water Expedition
- 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Slavery, Civil War, Reconstruction; Water Expedition
- 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Holocaust; Adolescent Brain

**Action Item:** The Marketing Committee will follow up with some language to highlight these expeditions and help raise the profile of Polaris in Chicago.

### ***EL Education Research Advisory Council***

Polaris is hosting the EL Education Research Advisory Council on March 19. The focus is character development in education.

**Action Item:** Marketing Committee will work with Michelle and Elizabeth to determine how best to leverage this event to promote the school.

### ***Signing the Lease***

In October, we held off on signing the lease for the school due to some outstanding building items (north parking lot/storm sewer, roof, air conditioners). Michelle is in conversation with CPS to address these issues. We have signed the charter but have not yet signed the lease.

### **Board Committee Discussions**

#### ***Development Committee (Elizabeth Whiting)***

Our development target for FY2019 is \$402,000. Revenue sources include...

- Major Donors/Foundations
- Campaigns
  - Giving Tuesday
  - Year-End Appeal
  - Spring Fundraiser
- Grants

We need to push hard in particular for the Year-End Appeal and the Spring Fundraiser. Each board member should think about their individual plans to bring 10 people to the event, identify corporate sponsors, etc.

Note that individual donors to the school are not parents/families, but rather board members and friends of the school. We need to increase our donor base. We currently have about 90-100 people who give regularly, and we need to double this.

We brainstormed some ideas on how to make the benefit more successful:

- Provide three months advance notice (to solicit attendees early)
- Develop a clear and compelling program
- Visually represent the fundraising target during the event
- Procure sponsorships before the event
- Use storytelling; share stories to get people hooked into the event (identify and create)
- Choose an appealing venue
- Create a “package” for board members to sponsor the event and bring “x” people

Currently, our target date is Thursday, May 16, with a backup date of May 9. We will look at Gallery 1028 and a few other venues.

#### ***Finance Committee (Mike Davison)***

- The Finance Committee has set monthly phone check-ins for the year.
- Year-to-date, we are tracking close to our plan. There was an increase in CPS funding; however, we held off on 3% salary increase for staff due to some charter school funding uncertainties. The Board is in agreement to stand by the past budget plan and the decision to hold off on salary adjustments for the time being.
- We have a reasonable reserve from last year to cover any shortage in our fundraising goals
- Cash balances are strong; we will ladder some CDs.
- The Committee will work on pulling together some metrics to help identify trends, benchmarking, etc.

**Action Item:** Board members should review proposed metrics and provide feedback to Finance Committee.

#### ***Marketing Committee (Melanie Domer)***

The Marketing Committee has been working to define who is a priority donor. It seems that members of the Board their respective networks are the key target. By the February meeting, we will have language surrounding our target donor and a compelling story of Polaris.

#### ***Governance Committee (Sam Bottum)***

We are pleased to welcome two new Board members: Ian Roche and Rebecca Shapiro. We have one additional candidate in the pipeline.

**Action Item:** We need to further define our needs for prospective board members, what skills and backgrounds to target, etc.

#### **Additional Board Discussion**

##### ***Role of a Charter School Board (Melanie Domer)***

We discussed the role of a charter school board, specifically looking at the role of governance versus management. Ultimately, the Board should be focused on setting the tone, thinking about future goals/vision, and defining/tracking critical KPIs to help monitor the health of the school

##### **Action Items:**

- We need to define school KPIs.

- We also need to develop joint goals between the Board and Administration
- We need to assess Board performance each year (work with Governance to do so).

***Board Retreat***

The Board retreat will take place on Saturday, January 19 at Polaris. Our tentative agenda is as follows:

- Mission/vision of Polaris
- Where are we in fulfilling mission/vision
- Where do we want to grow as an organization (next 5 years)
- What holes do we want to fill as an organization

***Board Meeting Schedule***

We will be changing the March 25 meeting date. Melanie will follow up with an email.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

January 19, 2019	Board Retreat (time TBD)
February 11, 2019	Board Meeting at 6:30 PM at Polaris
March 25, 2019	<b><i>Board Meeting date to be rescheduled</i></b>

At approximately 9:11 PM, Melanie Domer moved to adjourn the meeting; Samuel Bottum seconded; all approved.