

**Polaris Charter Academy
Board Meeting Minutes**

Date:	Monday, December 12th, 2022
Time:	5:45pm (Carlucci Restaurant)
Topic(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key State of the School Updates • Board Committee Reports

ATTENDANCE CATEGORY	BOARD MEMBERS & FELLOWS	SCHOOL STAFF
Attending in Person	Tina Yarovsky Lacey Mizell Lauren Levine	Michelle Navarre (**Board Ex Officio) John Lydon Elizabeth Whiting Fran Peck Lissette Sanchez Tammy Vance
Attending by Phone	Michelle Navarre Chris Haworth Ian Roche Mike Davison	
Unable to Attend	Ben Brenton Sam Bottom	

EXPECTED GUESTS & VISITORS

Tina Yarovsky, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:59 PM.

Opening Business/Open Session

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the October meeting were voted on, Lauren Levine motioned to approve the minutes, Ian Roche Seconds, minutes approved.

Open Session for Public Comment

No one for public comment.

State of the School *(John Lydon/ Michelle Navarre)*

Celebrations and Updates

Site visits: December 5th and 6th over 120 different visitors, including educators, and researchers from around the world. Focus was on fostering character.

Visit included teacher, student and alumni panels, several visitors from other countries were present.

Polaris staff presented 5 master classes at the EL conference, ending with Annie Smith who was awarded the EL award at the EL event.

Birmingham trip was taken by 5th and 6th graders, learning about civil rights leaders.

Daniel Murphy scholarship, awarded to Makai, who will be attending Fenwick High School.

Athletics are off and running, basketball season is open, 5th and 6th grade are currently playing, 7th and 8th will begin after the winter break.

Light leaders were awarded for the point of critical thinker, these are the first light leaders since the pandemic.

Student lead conferences returned this year after the pandemic, students can present their work to their parents and explore where they are excelling and reflect on their improvement.

Document timeliness is still on time reaching a 99% record.

U Chicago's 5 Essential Survey include:

Ambitious Instruction

Supportive Environment

Collaborative Teachers

Involved Families

Effective Leaders

Polaris overall has increased in every category; research shows that rating highly on 3/5 essentials are ten times more likely to improve student learning.

2021 rating was "well organized" for improvement, overall Polaris is outperforming CPS as a whole, each individual category has increased as much as 20 points.

One major decrease was in the ambitious instruction (grit) category, where Polaris teachers and students responded to say they felt less engaged during the pandemic, this feeling has dramatically changed since the last survey. Scores in this poll continue to increase and dramatically outperform CPS continually.

Finance Committee

Highlights:

Net income unfavorable by \$127k

Revenue is \$93k below plan- based on the decrease of enrollment where 381 students are enrolled in Aspen and 415 students are planned.

Expenses are unfavorable – Teachers are \$45k over budget because of full staffing.

Professional fees are \$8k over budget with the total budget for the year being \$55k, with current contracts in place there is a potential for a negative variance of \$15k higher than budget.

Pension expenses are \$15k lower than budget.

Cash balances CARES Act may provide employee retention credits, but we will need to work with a firm in order to apply and receive funding. Feasibility study will need to take place first to determine possible outcome of application, perhaps a 2–3-month process. Potentially in 6-9 months the government would refund money based on tax returns and what credits are available, the firm takes 15% of the overall earnings.

Governance Committee

The committee plans to continue to maintain the board calendar of events, deadlines and required submissions, continue to maintain those records in the Google classroom.

Board pipeline is going to be the most important topic for this coming year, we have a few potential members, and we will be working to engage them over the next few months and weeks.

The committee is continuing to work with University of Chicago, work with them will result in creating ideas to help Polaris grow and to potentially grow the board.

Bylaw amendment is ongoing, we have researched what it will take to amend and review what needs to be changed in order to maintain compliance.

Development Committee

Spring benefit date is tentatively scheduled for May 11th, 2023.

Giving Crew Day was very successful and exceeded expectations, End of year appeal has not yet reached its goal, with a goal of \$20,000 we currently have \$900. The board can help provide support by appealing to their networks, business partners, and forwarding emails to networks.

Spring benefit goal is \$100,000 – Work to secure more sponsors, grow our audience and offer interesting raffle items and opportunities as an “in kind” gift.

Wintrust Partnership could potentially become a partner, with \$5,000 in support coming from that foundation. Wintrust is currently involved in 1,400 partnerships in the city, which could potentially provide a pipeline for new partners throughout the city.

Board should consider a “friend-raiser” to help raise additional money.

Grants were awarded in the amount of \$5,000 from Chicago Fund for Education along with a grant for playground equipment.

Notes:

Board strategic planning in February, this time will be used to review the vision and continue to grow as a board. Dates need to be cemented.

Meeting adjourned at 6:56 by Tina Yarovsky, motion approved by Michelle Navarre and second by Mike Davison.