

**Polaris Charter Academy  
Board Meeting Minutes**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>6:30pm (Via Zoom)</b>
<b>Topic(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key State of the School Updates</li> <li>• Board Committee Reports</li> </ul>

<b>ATTENDANCE CATEGORY</b>	<b>BOARD MEMBERS &amp; FELLOWS</b>	<b>SCHOOL STAFF</b>
Attending via Zoom	Tina Yarovsky Lacey Mizell Lauren Levine Ian Roche Chris Haworth Mike Davison Derik Ohanian Roel Vivit	Michelle Navarre (**Board Ex Officio) John Lydon Lissette Sanchez Elizabeth Whiting
Attending by Phone		
Unable to Attend	Sam Bottum Ben Brenton	

<b>EXPECTED GUESTS &amp; VISITORS</b>
Brendan Caldwell Kaitlyn Oh

Tina Yarovsky, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

**Opening Business/Open Session**

***Approval of Minutes***

Minutes from the December meeting were voted on, Chris Haworth motioned to approve the minutes, Ian Roche seconded, minutes approved.

***Open Session for Public Comment***

No one for public comment.

***Voting in new Board Members:***

- Derik Ohanian: Motion to approve by Ian Roche and second by Lacey Mizell, no opposed. Motion approved unanimously.
- Roel Vivit: Motion to approve by Ian Roche and second by Lacey Mizell, no opposed. Motion approved unanimously.

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

### **Polaris Board Retreat highlights:**

- Naming the Challenge conversation: This was meant to name challenges to the Polaris community in the next 3,6,8 months. Specifically, trauma, emotional support, academic achievement, enrollment, and physical health, etc.
- Intellectual Wellness: Current - Learning expeditions/Habits of work/Reflection Practices/Explore Classes/ Professional Development.
- Intellectual Wellness: Aspirations – Open Pre-k program/ expand personalized learning/After school programs/Alumni Center.
- Current physical wellness includes healthy foods by Gourmet Gorilla/ Physical Education classes/Recess breaks/athletic programming and annual vision, hearing and dental services at no cost.
- Facility needs to be updated, moved, or relocated – Facility design is part of the future campus, including an early learning center, wellness center and adult resource center.
- Strategic plan: Work on building a 1-3-6 month plan

### **Testing update:**

- Finishing Axis testing, English learners mandatory State assessment. This measures English language development progress.
- Illinois assessment of readiness is next, along with prep for Illinois Science assessment.
- Internal benchmark data is captured for Math and Literature. Data arrives in summer months.
- Polaris has 6 ESL students currently that are being tested, each test is about four hours per student.
- EL education restorative institute, which included student and teacher panels, restorative practices were discussed. The school visit captured more than 40 people in the field, students presented during the site visit. This was a half day event, but many people requested a full day or even weekend for additional time for learning.
- Mark Doyle, who is a veteran, owns apparel store, focused on veterans, is coming to the school. Mark will be touring the school with John Lydon. Doyle is working in the Biden Super Pac and is oriented to potentially offering support to Polaris in the future.

### ***Board Fellows Presentation:***

Marketing and Recruitment Plan: Initial discovery work regarding the perception and opinions of Polaris were presented.

- Awareness of Polaris: Needs work, less familiarity with the school. Fewer people in the neighborhood are aware of the school.
- Knowledge of Polaris: Less than average, value is not understood.
- Consideration: Conventional schools are being chosen over traditional CPS schools. Familiarity is lacking, visits are strongly encouraged to help overcome this.
- Preference: Strong loyalty
- Loyalty & Advocacy: Strong Loyalty

### ***Finance Committee:***

- Revenue is \$271k below plan.
- Net income unfavorable by \$307K.
- Full staffing is \$62K over budget over salary. Professional fees including math and expedition are the primary problem.
- \$9K increase in spending for recruitment.
- Cash balances are over \$2.7 Million, which is the same as December 2021.
- CARES Act credit is still ongoing, applying for ERC credit.

### ***Governance Committee:***

- **FOIA & OMA:** All board members must complete their annual FOIA and OMA training by March 8. Certificates must be forwarded to Lacey Mizell. All certificates will be uploaded by Michelle to confirm board compliance. Failure to complete these in a timely manner will reflect negatively on Polaris and future charter renewals.
- **2022 Charter Board Training:** Training certificates were missing for a few board members and are in the process of being completed.
- **2023 Charter Board Training:** All current board members must complete 2 hours of ongoing education training in 2023. Details will follow on live webinars being offered in 2023 by INCS, as well as the option to access recordings in the INCS on-demand library. Note: Training deadlines may now be rolling based on each board member's join date. This is currently being confirmed. New board members must complete 4 hours of training within one year of joining the board.
- **2023 Conflict of Interest Forms:** We are waiting for the forms and due dates to be issued by CPS

### ***Development Committee:***

#### **OVERALL FUNDRAISING UPDATE**

Goal: \$355,000

Actual: \$182,200

Goal to Actual Difference: \$172,800

Looking at our fundraising sources...

- **Individual donor gifts:** Smaller for 2022; end of year gifts are less than usual as well.
- **Major Gifts:** Goal \$215,000 – We are currently \$140,000 and on track to reach our goal.
- **Grants:** Goal \$15,000 – We have met our \$15K goal. Ingenuity (CPS Creative Schools Fund) \$10,000 grant award for an arts partnership with Native 312. Due to our Art Instructor on leave, we have been approved to defer our grant award and partnership with Native 312 until fall 2023.

- **Spring Benefit:** Goal \$100,000 (net): Sponsor Goal = \$30,000+ , Donor Goal \$70,000+

Last year, our top challenge was ticket sales and attendance. This year, we are asking each Board member to purchase 4 tickets in advance.

Sponsorship was strong last year from donors, with more than \$50,000 donated before the event started.

Board engagement is key during this year's benefit, networks are decreasing their contributions amidst a potential recession.

Event Details: • Thursday, May 11, 6:30 – 9:30PM at Greenhouse Loft (2545 W. Diversey)  
<https://greenhouseloft.com/>

Early bird ticket price \$125 through April 30, \$150 after April 30

Bundle Raffle Tickets are available online at the ticket sale site and in-person night of event.

- **End of Year Appeal:** Although we fell short of our \$20K goal (increased from original \$15K goal), this year's EOY appeal results did maintain a \$10,000+ threshold established during the pandemic (compared to pre-pandemic EOY giving which averaged approx. \$5,000). While we had a few more donors this year, they yielded lower results than 2021. More concerning is the decrease in individual donor gift amount. This decrease in charitable giving may reflect actual challenges or apprehension about inflation, a down stock market, threat of recession, and a general readjustment after an increase in giving during the pandemic.

***Action Items:***

- OMA/FOIA training by March 8<sup>th</sup> due date

***Key Dates:***

- Next Board meeting April 10<sup>th</sup>
- Spring benefit May 11<sup>th</sup>
- June 26<sup>th</sup> will be the date for our board and budget meeting.

Tina Yarovsky moved to bring the meeting to close at 8:25, Michelle Navarre moved and Chris Haworth seconded, all approved.