

**Polaris Charter Academy
Board Meeting Minutes**

Date:	Monday, February 12th, 2024
Time:	6:30pm (In-Person) Polaris Charter Academy
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	Derik Ohanian Ayanna Berry	John Lydon Lissette Sanchez Fran Peck Elizabeth Whiting
Attending by Zoom	Paul Li Stahili Muhammad Mike Davison Ben Brenton Roel Vivit Lacey Mizell Kristine Brailey	Michelle Navarre (**Board Ex Officio)
Unable to Attend	Lauren Levine Ian Roche	

EXPECTED GUESTS & VISITORS
Tatiana Lamkin Ms. Lamkin’s Mother

Tina Yarovsky, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM.

Opening Business/Open Session

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the December Meeting;

Tina Yarovsky asked for a motion to approve, Ben Brenton made a Motion, Ayanna Berry seconded, all approved.

Open Session for Public Comment

No one for public comment

State of the School (John Lydon)

MoY assessment Data – Polaris outperformed both district and state in reading and math. MoY Assessment scores are on track to again have these outcomes for end of year. PL team continues to evidence remarkable impact in foundational literacy skills. Students on grade level are expected to grow one micro phase per trimester; students who worked with the PL team displayed dramatically accelerated outcomes.

Polaris Updates – Illinois Holocaust Museum Fieldwork, Student leadership; double light leader for 2024.

Trimester one student award ceremony – New addition to the light leader ceremony.

Polaris sports – 7/8 grade basketball season is coming to an end, girls' season has ended and the boys are playing with a rank of 2/1.

Black History Month – Crews studied artists and created a project inspired by their work in some way. Celebration of learning is for 5-7 pm and will culminate the learning crews engaged in this month.

Water quality report was officially accepted into the EL models of excellence.

State of education in Chicago;

- School safety is top of mind.

CPS Board of Education – Reimagined vision – A community informed plan that brings together educational and operational goals. Implications are that Charter schools are slated to have shorter renewals.

HB4840 – Charter schools cannot be renewed for more than 3 years, amends the Charter Schools Law of School Code, if this is passed, Charters are going to start closing as early as next year if this is voted on.

Enrollment and Staffing – Enrollment of 354 students, uptick of three students since last meeting. This is the first year that an Educational staff member was not in each classroom, testing and technology coordinator is currently not in place.

Compliance;

State bilingual / Title III consolidation grant is complete. 99% submitted on document timeliness, 97% on time submissions.

Board Fellows Update;

Fellows are exploring marketing opportunities for the school. More specifically refining the messaging to attract both board members and parents. Developing a more concrete, repeatable strategy that will reduce strain and bandwidth but maximize the opportunities and feedback with respect to marketing communications.

Finance Committee:

December 2023 YTD;

Net income is unfavorable to plan at \$338K. Revenue is unfavorable to plan at \$349K, \$54K is unfavorable due to ESSER Funds, Polaris did not receive \$104K in November.

\$175K unfavorable due to individual Donations and Foundation/Trust Grants, some are due to timing, mostly due to the additional “to get” amount needed to balance budget. We received a \$90K donation from Perkins in January.

\$146K unfavorable due to per pupil finding due to enrollment numbers.

\$31K favorable due to interest-savings account.

Expenses \$10K favorable to plan, compensation over budget by \$21K due mostly to an increase in para - professional and TA cost \$57K offset by decrease in administrative salaries and other small items.

Maintenance expenses \$16K over budget due to boiler and fence repairs.

SPED contract Services are also over budget by \$15K.

Student recruitment is \$23K under budget, we've planned \$50K for the year.

Cash balances show the effects of lower student counts. We have \$2.3M on hand at the end of December versus \$2.7M at the end of the December last year, cash remains concerning.

\$327K restricted to start-up and expansion costs.

CARES Act credit returns have been filed for a total refund of \$350K, due to issues with the Cares Act administration, we don't expect to receive funds for 1-2 years and it is possible that the government could change course and not issue refunds.

Governance Committee:

FOIA and OMA training are due March 3rd.

INCS training schedule has been provided to the board, training started and will continue through the year, due 12/31/2024.

Development Committee:

2024

Goal \$365,000

Actual \$169,725

Goal to Actual \$195,275

Communication and marketing to promote end of year giving.

-Giving Tuesday

-Holiday card

-Mass Emails

-Social Media Posts

Analysis;

- \$6,100 short of our \$20K goal
- Surpass a \$10,000+ threshold we achieved during the pandemic.
- Polaris welcomed 10 more donors compared to 2022 and gained 5 new donors, the individual gift amount decreased.

Major Gifts;

Goal \$215,000 we are currently a \$150,000 and are on track to reach our goal with anticipated donations.

Grants;

Goal \$15,000. We did not apply to the ingenuity arts grant this year as we are catching up on past grant-funded projects.

Spring benefit;

Goals are as follows – Raise funds and awareness; Celebrates Impact and Achievements as a Crew; Gather and grow our community and Build Connection.

Goal;

\$100,000 + Net

Thursday, May 9th at Greenhouse Loft, tickets are priced at \$125 attendance goal is at least 80 purchased tickets.

Marketing/Communications; Elizabeth is working with Board Fellow Yaa Boakye to strategize and strengthen the message and marketing.

The board can help by building an audience, securing sponsors, securing raffle items, engaging past board members and past Presidents.

Tina Yarovsky asked for a Motion to bring the meeting to close at 8:35, Derik Ohanian brought a motion and Ayanna Berry seconded, all approved.