

Patterson Park Public Charter School, Inc.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEETING MINUTES

January 19, 2022

7 pm Meeting held by Zoom

Members Attending: Sarah Sandoval-Mohapatra (presiding), Jenna Adams (SAL-PPPCS), Ankit Aggarwal, Astrid Bharath-Pierce (PAL-PPPCS), Candace Caraco (recording), Raven Cooper (SAL-CHPCS), Kim Francois, Pat Irish, Natasha Perry (SAL-PPPCS), Paul Rishar, Anais Roman (SAL-CHPCS), Lauren Stutzman, Julie Neale Taylor (PAL-PPPCS), Lazette Wells; *ex officio*: Jane Lindenfelser

Absent: Charles Conner, Tasha Johnson, Chris Scott

Staff and Guests: Emily Augustine, principal of Clay Hill Public Charter School (CHPCS); Yolanda Manning and Alexis Suskin-Sperry, asst. principals, Patterson Park Public Charter School (PPPCS); Deborah Mattera, PPPCS Inc. Business Manager; Andrea McCants, PPPCS controller; Risa Duré and Bess Aquila Hanley, CHPCS; Joshua Brown and Tess Cornell from Weyrich, Cronin & Sorra (auditors); Semetra Carter, Staci Grant, Jacob Holtz, Dominique Johnson, Maria Lewis, Cinthia Lopez, Ms. Martinez, Calais Prince, Shawn Stewart

**Unless otherwise noted, an asterisk indicates there is a presentation or document archived online in the Google Drive linked to the meeting agenda. These are effectively part of the minutes.*

I. Opening Items

- A. The board was placed in small groups for conversation at 7 pm. Board president Sarah Sandoval-Mohapatra called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm. She read the draft mission.
- B. Record Attendance and Guests (see above) – the roll was taken and noted
- C. Public Comment* - Ms. Carter spoke about the social worker hired recently at PPPCS and said she felt the social worker has been supportive of her child.
- D. The consent agenda* was approved; it includes the Development report and the November board meeting minutes.

II. Finance Committee - PPPCS Inc. Audit

Joshua Brown, manager of the audit, and Tess Cornell, supervisor on the audit, from Weyrich, Cronin & Sorra, LLC, presented the fiscal year (FY) 21 audit. They noted the financial condition of the organization have improved materially since last year. They offered an unmodified (“clean”) opinion. Discussion followed. The organization is to have 30 days cash on hand for operating expenses, but 110 days’ worth is available. Paul Rishar, board treasurer and Finance Committee chair, thank the staff for their input and efforts. The board voted to approve and accept the audit.

III. Staff-at-Large Report*

- A. PPPCS – Miss Perry provided the elementary school report and Miss Adams the middle school report. They noted there were two staff-at-large of the month awardees this month: Ms. Suskin-Sperry and Ms. Manning. They reviewed “Glows and Grows” for the month, most of which were focused on health and safety issues.
- B. CHPCS –Ms. Cooper and Ms. Roman provided the staff report. They noted several areas of celebration, including implementing Pollyanna lesson 1 and the staff having an all-hands-on-deck mentality. Growth areas include addressing Covid anxieties and facilities staffing capacity. Jane Lindenfelser, executive director, addressed the facilities staffing updates about to launch. There was some discussion of the board’s equity agenda and the organization’s vision.

IV. Parents-at-Large Report

Astrid Bharath Pierce, who noted she is the parent of both a pre-K and a 1st-grade student, called out the parents’ thanks to the teachers who have been working hard to educate children in these challenging times. were present to deliver the report. Clay Hill parents who are interested in becoming a board representative may reach out to Jane, Emily, or the Staff at Large at CHPCS.

V. School and Growth Update*

- A. Jane Lindenfelser gave the Executive Director’s report. She noted an upcoming MD State Department of Education site visit at Clay Hill for the 3-year replication grant we received.

BCPSS has called for smaller pools (5-8 students) for Covid pool testing.; they had been the size of a class. Smaller pools can limit the students’ out-of-time school if there is an exposure.

There was discussion of recruitment and enrollment at the two schools and how the board can help.

Charter renewal for PPPCS begins in April with the School Effectiveness Review. This will be a retreat topic.

- B. Ms. Augustine provided the CHPCS report. Hiring is about to launch; this year there will be 2-4 hired as the school adds 4th grade. Students are currently engaged in mid-year skills testing. The school has qualified to be a Title I targeted site, which will mean funds for specific students to address their needs. She noted the challenges of balancing health and safety amid the omicron variant with equity, access, and overall well-being. Before students returned from break, rapid tests were used to catch a number of students’ infections before entry, which helped keep the school in classroom-based learning. Devices were handed out for those in quarantine (in short order as City regulations were announced), but families have reported that they do not have an Internet connection at home. This context informed the attendance data shared (89%); there have been no suspensions this year.

BCPSS has yet to assign a school nurse to CHPCS. Similarly, no social worker has been assigned. If the school were to recruit now, the person might not be placed with us as there are system shortages, and this role is to be a system hire, and another school might be deemed higher need.

- C. Jane provided the report for PPPCS. She began by reviewing the Qualities section of the mission/vision handbook and noting the values we strive to convey. She thanked the PPPCS staff

for being “dedicated and determined” as the leadership team has had to make transitions. Dr. Kramer is currently on a leave which is being managed by the Baltimore City Public Schools. Ms. Suskin-Sperry and Ms. Manning, the assistant principals, are sharing the principal’s duties. Ms. Manning noted the 93% attendance rate and that today was only the 3rd day back in school after break because PPPCS had a high Covid infection rate and was required to move to virtual learning for the first two weeks of the year. There have been 3 suspensions so far this year; there have been 53 behavioral referrals this year, which is a large number but not given the circumstances of the year. The MCAP will officially be released by MSDE in January. Mid-year assessments are now being done; electronic devices had to come back from home learning to administer the tests. Ms. Suskin-Sperry noted that over 100 devices were distributed overnight when the staff was alerted that virtual learning had to be the way to start the calendar year. Many classes had 100% attendance the first day. She noted that the 8th graders are engaged in the high school choice process; only 3 have to complete their applications as the deadline approaches. City Schools has appointed a half-time person to assist PPPCS with special education support.

The chair thanked the two assistant principals for their work and responsiveness this month.

VI. Executive Committee

Jane reviewed the process of mission review and change that the board and school community have engaged in over the past two years. She then highlighted the changes proposed, which the board has previously seen. The material has been shared with the two schools’ families. The board voted unanimously to approve the new mission statement:

To be a place where children thrive as members of a vibrant and inclusive learning community with families, caregivers, staff, and neighbors engaged in a practice of whole-child education. By teaching and learning from one another, we embrace unique identities and cultivate an atmosphere of love.

VII. Governance Committee

The committee orally presented its goals in September, but they had not been formally approved. The board voted and approved the committee’s goals:

1. The Governance Committee will complete all Board transition items so that the Board of Directors reflects a two-school community:

- o Update necessary bylaws
- o Update the Board handbook
- o Vote in 3 new board members with a commitment to our mission and the SE Community

2. The Governance Committee will explore and make a recommendation regarding a Board-level DEI Committee by:

- Reviewing and discussing the original demand
- Determining the best structure for the DEI Committee or DEI work at board level
- If applicable, develop the charge, identify the membership, identify the leadership.
- Ensuring that the DEI work is reflected in the goals of each Board committee

3. The Governance Committee will be prepared for leadership transitions by

- Expanding the Governance Committee
- Make explicit the Officer nomination process
- Make explicit the nomination process for Board Members

4. PPPCS, Inc. will get a rating of Effective or Highly Effective on the Governance aspects of the charter renewal for PPPCS.

VIII. Facilities Committee

Lazette Wells, chair and board vice president, presented the committee report. She noted there had been some facilities issues at Clay Hill, which have been addressed. The committee is doing a site visit to CHPCS in February to look at the specifics of Phase II construction. The committee also presented Shawn Stewart to be a committee member. The board voted to approve him as a non-director committee member.

XI. Closing Items

- A. The next regular board meeting will be in March; the board will have a retreat on the third Wednesday (16th) of February (6:30 pm – 9 pm).
- B. Welcome to Kim Francois' new daughter Chloe! who was also a meeting guest.
- C. The meeting adjourned at 8:57 pm.