

先锋中英双语学校

Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School

Board of Trustees Special Meeting Minutes

August 27, 2020 at 6:00 PM

School Location: PVCICS, 317 Russell Street, Hadley, MA 01035

This meeting was held via Zoom and Telephone access due to the current school closure from the Coronavirus pandemic. The host for this meeting was Board Chair Paula Quinn. This meeting was facilitated by Board Vice-Chair Aime DeGrenier.

In attendance: Board Chair Paula Quinn, Vice-Chair Aime DeGrenier, Faculty Representative Hannah Treworgy, Dan O'Shea, A. Juliet Larke, Peter Wood, Charles "Nick" Bagley, Elizabeth "Betty" Larivee, Lian Duan, Cynthia Farmer, Edison Santana, Ying "Elaine" Wang, Executive Director Richard Alcorn, and Principal Kathy Wang. Absent: Scott Livingstone

In addition to Board members, this meeting was also well attended by parents and PVCICS staff members. At times, there were up to 90 participants via Zoom and phone access. Questions and comments were posted by participants in the Zoom chat box or e-mailed to Vice-Chair Aime.

Meeting was officially called to order by the Chair at 6:04 PM. Chair Paula reviewed the posted Agenda and logistics of holding this special meeting for a review and discussion of the PVCICS Re-Opening Plan that was submitted by Principal Kathy Wang on Monday, August 17, 2020 to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Schools (DESE).

At 6:15pm, Paula turned the meeting over to Principal Kathy so she could give an overview of the key points of the Plan. Generally, she reported the following highlights:

- ✓ Guidelines have been issued by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Public Health (DPH), and DESE. Once issued, many guidelines have been changed, updated, or re-vamped to align with each other.
- ✓ Surveys were sent to School Families and Staff to gather their perspective on options for re-opening.
- ✓ Some staff worked thru the summer to offer programs and support services to students.
- ✓ The Plan submitted to DESE on 8/17/2020 will not receive approval from DESE and there will be no feedback from them on the Plan.
- ✓ The Plan is a "living document" that will evolve as data emerges regarding the scope of the pandemic and resolution of it.
- ✓ DESE Commission Riley is constantly reminding school administrators that everyone must "tolerate ambiguity" because this pandemic and school closure is a very fluid situation.
- ✓ The current plan has been developed with a three prong approach:
 - In-Person Learning: returning to school under a traditional education model.
 - Hybrid Model: Returning to school in alternating weeks and using remote learning for the opposite week. This model works in conjunction with the color-coded data reports on the number of Covid-19 cases in any given area of the State.
 - Remote Learning: Off-site delivery of education using Google Classroom.

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- ✓ There are a lot of responses from the parental and school community regarding all forms of reopening. However, everyone is seeking to optimize the delivery of a high quality educational program -- regardless of the format that is followed.
- ✓ As planned, the staff returned to work on 8/12/2020 for In-Service Training and Meetings. Some classrooms had been set-up according to the social distancing requirements so staff could visualize what to anticipate if students were in the building. Upon inspection, staff had negative reactions to the classroom set-up.
- ✓ Unlike the spring session, Remote Learning will now require daily attendance and grading of students. There will be daily schedules with live instruction, independent work, allowance for digital breaks, and Week at a Glance Planning for anticipation of work assignments.

Meeting Facilitator Aime indicated that there were many questions in the Zoom chat box so she would report out the questions and give Principal Kathy a chance to answer some of them. All Zoom chat box questions, topics, and comments would be saved and responded to if not covered during this meeting. Questions addressed:

What was the selection process for choosing the Remote over Hybrid Model?

DESE Health Metrics and DESE Regional School Guidelines

What are the parameters for pivoting from Remote to Hybrid Model?

Community and Regional data on Covid-19 infection rates

When will the daily schedules be released?

To be completed on Friday (tomorrow) and released next week

What is the first day of school for students?

As planned on September 8, 2020; School Calendar has been posted online

When can families expect a return to the school facility?

Dependant on health data and related guidelines

What is the social emotional cost to parents, families, and students?

Impact also felt by staff; developing program to address this area of need

How to build community and connections with on-line learning?

Small group instruction sessions; Support services as needed

What child care program options are being considered?

PVCICS is exploring partnering with the Northampton YMCA

Facilitator Aime said that the Board had received letters from the PVCICS staff regarding reopening the school. She asked if any of the staff wanted to make a comment. The following individuals made statements:

- Hannah Treworgy (Faculty Representative to the Board): she had consulted with about half of the staff and they all expressed similar concerns regarding Health, Safety, Emotions, Planning for Self and family as well as students and their families.

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- Lisa Winters (Art Teacher): agree with Hannah on considerations for staff and families
- Kaleigh McKenna (Kindg. Teacher): not an ideal situation; everyone is struggling to adjust
- Lisa Donnelly (Grade one): younger students need to return but now is not the time
- Abbie Williamson (Reading Specialist): there is no perfect option
- Elizabeth Boliver (Grade 5): Attempts will be made to keep homework within the daily schedule. However, this is dependent on the family situation and student's ability to complete the work.
- Shannon Stilla (Grade Three): everyone is attempting to develop the best possible plan; we are all in this together and are listening to families regarding issues and concerns
- Edison Santana (School Psychologist): A program is being developed in collaboration with UMass Amherst to address the anticipated social emotional needs of our students, families, and staff in accordance with DESE Guidelines released on 8/3/2020.

Board Member Cynthia reported that she has three grandchildren at PVCICS – hopefully a fourth one next year. She stated that given this pandemic and related issues, we need to “think globally” and not about “our own circle” as we address these concerns. We need to be careful about pivots to different educational models because of health and transportation concerns from the various towns/cities covered in the regional aspect of PVCICS.

At this time, Board Chair Paula indicated that a vote on the current Re-Opening Plan would be needed. Hannah made a motion to accept the plan; seconded by Peter. Discussion and questions followed: (1) Is the Plan “required” or “Suggested” by DESE? DESE required submission of the Plan but will not review or comment on them. (2)What is the anticipated timeline for decisions on pivoting? Data and Guidelines will be reviewed quarterly (about every 45 school days). Having no further questions, Chair Paula indicated that there would be a roll call vote on the motion to approve the plan. Voting to support the motion: Aime, Nick, Cynthia, Dan, Juliet, Lian, Peter, Paula, Betty (see notes below). Abstaining from the vote: Hannah and Edison. Motion passed.

Note 1: Elaine Wang had left the meeting prior to this vote.

Note 2: Betty Larivee had technical difficulties with audio connections on Zoom. She sent her supporting vote to Chair Paula in a comment on the Zoom chat box.

Chair Paula and Principal Kathy made the following comments:

- ❖ There are still many details to resolve and work out – changes should be expected
- ❖ Daily schedules will be sent out next week
- ❖ Curb side pick-up will occur next week for student materials, computers, etc.
- ❖ School lunch program will continue during remote learning
- ❖ Administrators appreciate the patience, support, and feedback from families
- ❖ This was a great collaborative discussion about a difficult situation

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There being no further business, Chair Paula indicated that she would entertain a motion to adjourn. Dan made the motion to adjourn; seconded by Peter. Roll call vote to approve: Aime, Nick, Cynthia, Dan, Edison, Hannah, Juliet, Lian, Peter, Paula. Motion passed.

This Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees adjourned at 8:08pm

Minutes approved by Board of Trustees on September 3, 2020

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