

先锋中英双语学校

Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

October 28, 2021 at 7:00 PM

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

This meeting was held via Zoom and Telephone access in accordance with current State guidelines regarding the Coronavirus pandemic. The host for this meeting was Executive Director Richard Alcorn.

In attendance: Board Chair Cynthia Farmer, Elizabeth “Betty” Larivee, Mike Rooney, Frank Soleimani, Ann Kochis, Sujane Wu, Vice-Chair Edison Santana, Gina Ocasion, and Ying “Elaine” Wang.

Absent: A. Juliet Larke, Peter Wood, and Dan O’Shea

Others in attendance: Executive Director Richard Alcorn, Principal Kathy Wang, and Previous Board Member Charles “Nick” Bagley. Also in attendance but pending DESE approvals as Board Members: Faculty Representative Greg Rota (joined meeting at 7:40pm) and Student Representative Augusto Schwanz.

Meeting was officially called to order by the Chair at 7:05 PM. Chair Cynthia completed a roll call for attendance of Board members. Mention was made that the newly elected Faculty and Student Reps would be attending this meeting – however, they were pending final approval from DESE so they were only observers for tonight. Additionally, Faculty Rep Greg Rota was currently driving the school bus for a sporting event so he would join the meeting in about half an hour.

Public Comment: None

Administrative Items:

Minutes of the September 2, 2021 Board Meeting were presented for review. No corrections were noted. Mike made a motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Betty. Roll call vote: Approval from: Cynthia, Betty, Ann, Elaine, Mike, and Frank. Abstaining from the vote (due to not attending this meeting): Edison, Gina, and Sujane.

Election of Board Vice-Chair: This election had been postponed in previous meetings because Vice-Chair Edison had not been in attendance. Chair Cynthia asked him if he wanted to self-nominate and continue in the position. Edison stated that he declined to continue in this position. Betty gave a brief description of the position with duties and responsibilities. Mike was the only Board member to self-nominate for the position. No other nominees were put forth. Edison made a motion to elect Mike as the Board Vice-Chair; seconded by Betty. The roll call vote was unanimous approval (9 votes).

Committee and Task Force Reports:

Trusteeship Committee: Chairperson Betty reported:

- ✓ Introduction of the new Student Rep was made. Augusto briefly spoke about himself and his interest in being a Board member.

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- ✓ Editing of the Board Handbook is finally being completed and should be distributed in the next few days.
- ✓ The committee held a meeting on October 7th to develop a schedule for work to be completed this school year. A new committee chair will be elected at the next committee meeting.

Finance Committee: Chairperson Elaine reported:

- ✓ The Committee met on 10/18 with the Auditor and School Financial Team to review the Auditor's Report and Recommendations. Final results indicate a financial surplus and no exceptions to the Audit. The Committee is recommending that the Board approve the FY'21 Audit as presented.
- ✓ The Committee has reviewed credit card purchases and statements. No issues were found.
- ✓ ED Richard commented that careful budgeting and a surprising amount of grant money had put the school in an advantageous position at the end of the year which helped to create the budget surplus. For the future, there will be a more detailed budget analysis because of the oversight required by the grant money.
- ✓ Elaine questioned the Budget Reports e-mailed to the Board this evening. ED Richard stated these were reports for the first three months of FY'22 and not associated with the Audit; there are some variances due to the start of the school year but these should even out in the next month or so. As in the past, the Board will get these financial statements on a regular basis.
- ✓ Betty made a motion to approve receipt of the FY'21 Audit and allow Chair Cynthia to sign the required documents; motion seconded by Edison. Roll call vote was unanimous approval of the motion (9 votes).

Personnel and Grievance Committee: Chairperson was absent so Betty reported:

- ✓ The committee held a meeting on September 30th and elected Juliet as the new committee chair. She agreed to hold the position for this school year but will be leaving the Board in June when her term expires.
- ✓ The 2021-22 Annual Goals for ED Richard were reviewed, edited, and approved by the committee. They have been sent to Board members and will be discussed for approval at the next Board meeting.
- ✓ Principal Kathy has been busy with school opening and the DESE Charter Renewal Team. To date, she has not submitted her 2020-21 Summative Evaluation Report nor her 2021-22 Annual Goals. These documents will be reviewed once received.

Principal's Report: Principal Kathy reported via a PowerPoint presentation:

- The Charter Renewal Site Visit occurred on Tuesday, October 28th. The five member Team started their day at 7am with her and then met the Board at 8am – thanks to the Board members that were able to participate. During the day, the Team completed 28 classroom observations as well as Focus Groups with the School Leadership Team,

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Teachers, Special Education Staff, and ESL Staff. They will develop a Draft Report within a few weeks; the school will be able to respond to factual inaccuracies. The Final Draft will be sent to DESE for their review; a final decision on Renewal must be made by the Commissioner and Board of Education by the end of February 2022.

- The current school year is only in-person learning for all K-12 students. Busing continues to be available for local shuttles; remote distances are being covered and bus services were increased to the Springfield area.
- A third School Nurse has been hired to assist the current staff
- Practicum Students for various disciplines are in place for the current and Spring Semesters. They will be coming from Mt. Holyoke College, Smith College, UMass-Amherst, Westfield State, the Elms, and the Collaborative.
- Virtual Parent-Teacher Conferences and Meetings were held October 20th to 22nd.
- Results of the Spring 2021 MCAS Testing have been released and are being reviewed by school staff. The State has indicated that these tests will not be used in the Accountability Plan due to concerns from the pandemic-related school closures. Overall, results for PVCICS are “solid” with some dips in Math; overall, the statewide scores showed decreases across the board. Disaggregated test scores are still being reviewed; all test results will be presented to the Board at the next meeting. Questions were asked regarding the impact on learning and test scores from remote learning; expectations for graduation; residual impact of the pandemic on students and families.
- Some elementary level students did a field trip and all of them had an opportunity to decorate pumpkins. THANKS !! to Red Fire Farm for the donation of all the pumpkins.
- Looking ahead – Covid testing (Pooled and Test/Stay) has been approved at the school but staffing has not occurred; vaccinations for young children will probably be approved within the next week or so.
- In addition to academic assessments, the school staff has focused on the Social-Emotional Health of students; re-building community within the school now that everyone has returned to school; returning to “normal” is a slow process for everyone.

Faculty Rep Greg Rota had joined the meeting and was asked to introduce himself to the Board.

Executive Director’s Report: ED Richard reported:

- ❖ The Enrollment Policy was previously approved by the Board in June 2017 during the last Charter Renewal Cycle. It is time to review and update it again. Requirements of the State limit our ability to individualize the Policy – most content is boiler-plate. The current 2017 Policy was sent to DESE for updating; initial response indicated 53 updates to language and formatting; a second review had changed to 56 revisions. As of 10/28/21, it appeared that all revisions were completed and complied with current requirements so the document could be submitted for final approval although there may still be some “technical changes” as requested by DESE. After discussion, Edison made a motion to

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approve the updated Enrollment Policy; seconded by Elaine. The roll call vote was unanimous approval (9 votes).

- ❖ A previous Charter Amendment for an Expansion Request had been emailed to Board members for their information and review. The State has updated the process for these Amendments which means a simple revision of the previous Amendment is unlikely. At this time, ED Richard will work on this item and have further discussions with the Board about action to be considered.
- ❖ The 2020-21 PVCICS Annual Report was submitted to DESE 7/28/21. They requested some minor edits to the Report which have been completed; it appears that DESE is now willing to accept the revised Report.

Evaluation of Executive Director: Chair Cynthia stated that she has not yet received the 2020-21 Evaluation from some Board members. She has reached out to them and expects to have their report soon. Once received, she will compile all responses into one report which will be presented at the next Board meeting for final review and approval.

New Business:

- Discussion regarding the date of the November Board meeting took place because the meeting is just a week away. Questions were asked about changing the date as well as cancelling the meeting. Board consensus seemed to be to cancel the November meeting. Edison then made a formal motion to cancel the November meeting; seconded by Mike. The roll call vote was unanimous approval (9 votes).
- Chair Cynthia also discussed the 7pm rather than 6pm meeting time. Several people indicated that they liked the later time due to work commitments. After discussion, Elaine made a motion to change the meeting time to 7:00pm; seconded by Edison. Roll call vote was unanimous approval (9 votes).
- Betty indicated that it has been the practice of the Board to write a Letter of Reference for the Student Representative when they complete their term of participation. The previous Student Rep., Sebastian English, has been on the Board for two years and fully participated in spite of his athletic/sports schedules, school closure, remote meetings, and general pandemic issues. Board consensus was to develop a letter and send it to Sebastian.

Having no further business, Chair Cynthia thanked everyone for their participation in tonight's meeting and called for a motion to adjourn. Betty made a motion to adjourn the Board Meeting; motion seconded by Edison. Roll call vote was unanimous approval (9 votes). Meeting adjourned at 7:28pm. Everyone wished each other a Happy Thanksgiving!

Minutes approved by Board of Trustees on December 2, 2021

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