

先锋中英双语学校

Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

February 4, 2021 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 State mandated regulations and closures from the Coronavirus pandemic. The host for this meeting was Executive Director Richard Alcorn.

In attendance: Board Chair Cynthia Farmer, Peter Wood, Elizabeth “Betty” Larivee, Vice-Chair Edison Santana, Dan O’Shea, A. Juliet Larke, Mina Liang, Ying “Elaine” Wang (joined the meeting at 6:15pm), Faculty Representative Hannah Treworgy, and Student Representative Sebastian English (joined the meeting at 6:25pm after his athletic event). Absent: Lian Duan

Others in attendance: Executive Director Richard Alcorn, Principal Kathy Wang, Director of Student Services Marilyn Kusek, and Director of Operations Kevin Lawson. Previous Board Trustee Charles “Nick” Bagley also listened to the meeting. Additionally, there were several dozen staff members and parents that were in the Zoom meeting.

Meeting was officially called to order by the Chair at 6:01 PM.

Public Comment: None

Administrative Items: Minutes of Previous Meeting(s):

Minutes of the January 7, 2021 Meeting were presented for review. No corrections were noted. Hannah made a motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Juliet. Roll call vote was unanimous approval: Betty, Hannah, Peter, Juliet, Mina, Dan, Edison, and Cynthia.

Committee and Task Force Reports:

Finance Committee: Chairperson Elaine was absent so ED Richard reported:

- ✓ At this time, there is a surplus in the current budget. However, the State is saying that tuition payments and Foundation Budget allocations are probably going to change. These changes may not immediately impact the school budget but could have repercussions for the next year or two. Therefore, caution is being advised as current spending occurs and budget planning for next year is undertaken.
- ✓ The December 31, 2020 Financial Report shows a 206.79% variance in the line item for “Equipment and Furniture”. This expenditure is related to the purchase of specialized cameras for hybrid learning at the middle and senior high school levels. Most of these costs will be reimbursed when the school receives the anticipated grant for technology.
- ✓ Betty asked a question regarding the 184.81% variance in the line item for “Bank/Finance Charges”. Richard indicated that he did not have firsthand knowledge of this expense but suspected it may be related to the school credit card. He will check with Anita Maloney for further information and clarification.

317 Russell Street, Hadley, MA 01035

Phone: 413-582-7040 Fax: 413-582-7068 Email: info@pvcics.org Web: www.pvcics.org

This institution is an equal opportunity provider

先锋中英双语学校

Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes of February 4, 2021

Page 2 of 4

Trusteeship Committee: Chairperson Betty reported:

- ✓ Recruitment for new Board Trustees happens in February. All candidates will be interviewed in March and the proposed slate will be presented at the April Board meeting. All Board members should be recruiting possible candidates for the Board.

Personnel and Grievance Committee: Chairperson Peter reported:

- ✓ At this time the committee has nothing to report.

Principal's Report: Principal Kathy reported:

- (1) The State will be doing a Tiered Focused Monitoring (TSM) at PVCICS. This review of the school's Special Education, Civil Rights, and English Language Learner Programs occurs every six years and was previously called a Coordinated Program Review (CPR). This will be a virtual on-site visit by DESE on March 8th. Extensive documentation has been submitted to DESE in preparation for this review.
- (2) The school has received funding from Title 1 to support "at risk students". This funding is used at PVCICS to support students having difficulty with reading.
- (3) Kathy presented an updated one hour PowerPoint report regarding the current state of remote learning, expectations for re-opening the school, and, data from various sources regarding the current infection rates of Covid-19 in the majority of cities/towns sending children to PVCICS.
 - The Western Mass infection rate is still high in "red" but trending to "yellow". The process of vaccination and categories of priority groups is evolving.
 - Families and staff have been surveyed again to determine who wants to return to school for hybrid learning versus staying in remote learning. Parental response indicated about 40% will remain on remote learning. Questions were submitted about their ability to switch between remote and hybrid models during the remainder of the school year.
 - Ongoing issues and operational changes are occurring for schedules, staffing, transportation, technology, and, routines for daily use of the school facility.
 - Health Office redesign was reviewed with full PPE for Nurses, isolation spaces for sick children, and the CDC version of the "Symptom Screening Flowchart" for testing and quarantine of those with, or suspected to have, Covid-19.
 - Middle and High School students will have access to live streaming instruction. Elementary level students have two teachers in each class so they can co-teach the remote and in-person instruction (hybrid model) for students.
 - Instructional needs as well as mental health needs are being considered as return-to- school matters are developed for staff, students, and families.
 - This presentation was previously sent to all school families and is now being presented to the Board.
 - Other question and answer sessions have been held for families on January 26th with 86 participants and twice on February 2nd with 35 participants.

317 Russell Street, Hadley, MA 01035

Phone: 413-582-7040 Fax: 413-582-7068 Email: info@pvcics.org Web: www.pvcics.org

This institution is an equal opportunity provider

先锋中英双语学校

Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes of February 4, 2021

Page 3 of 4

- (4) Kathy then followed up with a 45 minute question and answer discussion period with Board members and various meeting participants. There were also several comments left in the “Chat Room” of this Zoom meeting. Points of discussion as follows:
- Tentative schedule for Hybrid Model may be released in another couple of weeks.
 - The Fall semester has closed and report cards will be out soon. An analysis of instructional growth during remote learning is being undertaken.
 - The individual and collective concerns from staff are being taken into consideration by the Administrative Team in all this planning for upcoming changes.
 - Planning for re-opening MUST occur – but when and how it happens is still a question to be determined as all the factors are considered.
 - Many staff members have indicated that they are insecure about returning to in-school instruction prior to being vaccinated.
 - What effect has remote learning had on academic skills of the students?
 - What preparation has to occur to address the possible mental health stressors on students and staff upon return to school while others stay in remote learning?
 - What will happen with mandated student testing for MCAS and the IB Program?
 - What “quality of education” will PVCICS have if many staff members choose not to return?
 - What is the “risk level” for returning to school? Can we operate effectively given the “Trigger Metrics” and number of “red” communities in our pool of staff and students?
 - Returning to school immediately after a vacation period may not be wise as some families may have taken a vacation and been exposed to Covid.
 - Is it feasible to have all staff return to school for instructional purposes and then have students return at a later date?
 - Some staff may have issues with returning when they are needed at home for care-giving and supervision of their own children who are on remote learning.

Executive Director’s Update: ED Richard reported:

- Verizon Company has approached PVCICS regarding locating an antenna on top of the school. They have developed a proposal for the usage which will be reviewed by an independent source before final presentation to the Board – this initial proposal was e-mailed by Richard to Board members. Dan indicated that he would like to work with Richard on the review of this proposal.
- Technology for Hybrid-Learning has been increased and will be subsidized through a grant. Twenty-five (25) cameras are being installed for use by the Middle and High School Teachers. These cameras allow for real time instruction while some students are in a remote setting. Wireless microphones are being purchased to enhance the vocal quality of the cameras. New computers are also being purchased.

317 Russell Street, Hadley, MA 01035

Phone: 413-582-7040 Fax: 413-582-7068 Email: info@pvcics.org Web: www.pvcics.org

This institution is an equal opportunity provider

先锋中英双语学校

Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes of February 4, 2021

Page 4 of 4

- There are currently 155 applications for next year's enrollment including 70 for Kindergarten, 23 for Grade 6, and 6 for Grade 9.
- Tuition reimbursements are estimates and not reliable as previously discussed in the Finance Committee Report. The State's "Student Opportunity Act" is supposed to be funded under the new State budget. This will target money to students that are designated as "High Needs".

Quarantine Policy: Executive Director Richard reported:

- ✚ At this time, PVCICS does not have a policy regarding the quarantining of staff as a result of acquiring Covid-19. Richard asked the Board's Attorney, Fred Dupere, to draft a statement for consideration. Atty. Dupere developed this statement as a result of his work with numerous school districts in the State that have already developed this policy. This draft policy statement was e-mailed to the Board but has not yet been sent to staff.
- ✚ Richard took questions regarding the intent and wording of this draft statement.
- ✚ It will be sent to the staff for their review and comments.
- ✚ He will have further contact with Atty. Dupere for any questions and edits.
- ✚ This policy will again be on next month's Board agenda for review and a vote.

New Business: None

Having no further business, Chair Cynthia called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Peter and seconded by Betty. Roll call vote was unanimous approval: Edison, Betty, Juliet, Mina, Dan, Hannah, Elaine, Peter, and Cynthia.

Chair Cynthia thanked all the Teachers and participants at tonight's meeting for their questions and comments. She also thanked Kathy and Richard for their ongoing work in current instruction and planning for future needs to reopen the school.

Meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Minutes approved by Board of Trustees on March 4, 2021