

先锋中英双语学校

Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

March 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, A. Juliet Larke, Mina Liang, Faculty Representative Hannah Treworgy, and, Student Representative Sebastian English.

Absent: Lian Duan, Vice-Chair Edison Santana, Dan O’Shea, and Ying “Elaine” Wang.

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 about a dozen staff members and parents that listened to the Zoom meeting.

Meeting was officially called to order by the Chair at 6:03 PM. Roll call was done for attendance of Board members.

Public Comment: Parent Rosie Cowell spoke about the need to re-open the school. She stated that she is gravely concerned about the student’s physical and mental health as well as the future of the school as she and some families are looking into alternative options for possible enrollment of their children. She asked that the Board give her specific responses to two questions: (1) Does PVCICS intend to stick to the date for re-opening in hybrid mode on March 29th? (2) Does PVCICS intend to re-open for full time in-person learning in Fall 2021?

Administrative Items: Minutes of Previous Meeting(s):

Minutes of the February 4, 2021 Meeting were presented for review. No corrections were noted. Juliet made a motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Peter. Roll call vote was unanimous approval: Betty, Hannah, Peter, Juliet, Mina, and Cynthia.

Principal’s Report: Principal Kathy reported:

- ❖ Kathy thanked the Board for allowing her to give her report out of the usual agenda sequence. She stated that has another meeting to attend and must leave the PVCICS Board Meeting by 6:45pm.
- ❖ DESE is in the process of doing the school’s Tiered Focus Monitoring Review for Special Education, English Learners, and Civil Rights. A report will be generated with outcomes for each area once the Review is completed.
- ❖ Documentation for the Title I Program has been submitted. This is a federally funded grant that supports early intervention for the Reading Program at PVCICS as well as program supplies. It does not fund any staff salaries.

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- ❖ Yesterday, Grade 11 students were in the building and able to take the SAT exam.
- ❖ A PowerPoint presentation (12 slides) was reviewed for current information on the following: local infection rates (red and yellow communities); vaccine dissemination which includes teachers as of 3/11/21; updated Guidelines from DESE regarding Transportation, Structured Learning Time, and Indoor Special Classes (Music, PE, Art).
- ❖ Tomorrow, March 5th, there is a Board of Education meeting. It is anticipated that current DESE and CDC Guidelines will be discussed and may be amended for returning to school.
- ❖ At this time, a decision has been made to return all K to 12 students to a hybrid-model as of 3/29/21. The students will have a full week in school and a full week of remote instruction. Grade level cohorts will continue as already assigned. However, some families have already indicated that their child(ren) will remain on a remote schedule of instruction.
- ❖ Revisions for protocols within the school are being updated and revised to insure safety and security for students and staff: Arrival/Dismissal, Bus, Bathroom, Hallways and Stairs, Masks and Hand Washing, Daily Self Screening, Nursing Stations, Exposure and Quarantine, Kitchen, Lunch and Staff Break Areas, Behavior Intervention, Peace Room, Substitute Staff, Use of school spaces (Library, Copy Room, Front Office) and equipment (Laptops and Walkie-Talkies).
- ❖ March 19th will be a staff Professional Development Day with no instruction for students. The week of March 22nd will be used for half-day staff training and IB Mock Exams for high school students.
- ❖ The proposed Quarantine Policy was developed by Attorney Fred Dupere. He has gathered this information from a variety of school districts that he assists. This Policy is intended to replace Federal Legislation on this matter that expired on Dec. 31, 2020. A discussion and vote on this Policy will occur later in the agenda.
- ❖ Kathy asked Student Rep. Sebastian to speak about the article on the Ski Team that was in the Gazette newspaper. He described the article and spoke about the enthusiastic support for, and involvement of all the students and families, towards all the sport teams at PVCICS in spite of the pandemic.

Committee and Task Force Reports:

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

- ✓ At this time, the current budget is stable. In anticipation of unknown future financial revenues, \$300,000 has been moved into a reserve fund.
- ✓ Last month, a question was asked regarding the 184.81% variance in the line item for “Bank/Finance Charges”. This item is related to a credit card. A process for auto-payment is being developed to avoid these charges in the future.
- ✓ The school has received a State Grant for Covid-19 Relief in the amount of \$44,200. This money came to the State from the Federal Government.
- ✓ Two other grant awards are also anticipated: \$20,000 and \$300,000.

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Trusteeship Committee: Chairperson Betty reported:

- ✓ Recruitment for new Board Trustees traditionally happens in February, candidates are interviewed in March, and the proposed slate is presented 14 days prior to the April Board meeting. This year, there was a delay in posting the ads for recruitment so the committee will not be able to follow this timetable as set forth in the By-laws.
- ✓ The Board has the option to (1) waive the 14 day notice before the April Meeting, or (2) change the vote on candidates from the April to the May meeting.
- ✓ Discussion followed on both options as well as the possibility of extending the cut-off date from March 12th to March 19th.
- ✓ Following discussion, Betty made a motion to move the cut-off date to March 19th and present the slate of Trustee candidates 14 days prior to the May 2021 Board meeting; motion seconded by Peter. Roll call vote was unanimous approval of these changes: Hannah, Peter, Juliet, Mina, Betty, and Cynthia

Personnel and Grievance Committee: Chairperson Peter reported:

- ✓ In accordance with the Evaluation Process, the committee has scheduled two planned observations of Principal Kathy. These will occur on March 8th and March 11th.
- ✓ One unannounced observation has already occurred; another one is yet to be done.
- ✓ These four observations are requirements for Kathy's Annual Evaluation.

Executive Director's Update: ED Richard reported:

- Information on Grants has been covered in the Finance Committee Report.
- Lottery Enrollment numbers were sent to the Board via email. There are currently 240 applications. Admissions to date are 44 for Kindergarten; 8 for 6th Grade; and, 1 for 9th Grade, which fills all available seats (authorized headcount). It is anticipated that attrition will occur in the upcoming months so some more applicants may be admitted to the school for the 2021-2022 school year.
- Technology for Hybrid-Learning includes classroom cameras, wireless microphones, and additional computers. The school network has also been upgraded.
- Verizon Company has approached PVCICS regarding locating an antenna on top of the school. The original proposal was reviewed by a consultant and changes were made to the Proposal. This still needs to be reviewed for possible additional changes and then reviewed by our Attorney so no action is needed by the Board at this time.
- Hannah asked a question about safety issues with RF waves. Richard said he would send info to Hannah and she can share it with the staff.
- Sebastian asked a question about security within the school if repair workers are allowed full access at any time. He was told that changes in the second Draft addressed many of these issues (see Section #5).

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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 the original statement as a result of his work with numerous school districts in the State that have already developed this policy. The original was amended based on discussion at last month's Board meeting. This revised draft policy has been e-mailed to the Board and school staff.
- ✚ Richard took questions regarding the intent and wording of this Draft #2 statement. Questions were asked about the use of accrued and unused sick leave as well as the need for notes from medical personnel to (1) quarantine and (2) return to school.
- ✚ The issue of notes from medical personnel could not be answered at this time but could be addressed by the next Board meeting. However, the anticipated return of staff in a few weeks means that there would not be a policy in place by the time of their return.
- ✚ Given the timelines, Betty made a motion to accept the submitted Quarantine Policy as a Provisional Policy until such time as other questions can be addressed; motion seconded by Hannah. Unanimous vote to approve the Provisional Quarantine Policy: Hannah, Peter, Juliet, Mina, Betty, and Cynthia.

Chair Cynthia mentioned items that were written in the "Chat Room" of the Zoom meeting. She addressed the ongoing work being done by Dr. Edison Santana (School Psychologist) on the mental health concerns of students and the development of the Peace Room. Student Rep. Sebastian echoed this information by referring to his own use of the Peace Room. He also mentioned the range of needs and desires that students have expressed regarding their return to school – often repeating similar concerns expressed by the staff and parents.

New Business: None

Chair Cynthia thanked all the participants at tonight's meeting and Rosie Cowell for her public comments and questions. She also thanked Richard, Kathy and the Teachers for their ongoing work in current instruction and planning for reopening the school.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:23 pm.

Minutes approved by Board of Trustees on April 1, 2021