

**Providence Englewood Charter School
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Providence Englewood Charter School (PECS)**

**At
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
333 N. Wacker Dr.
Chicago, IL 60606**

**Thursday, October 17, 2013
4:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE IN PERSON

Trustees

**John Stoops
Paul Adams
Dick Burridge
Debora de Hoyos
Marcia Doane
Tim Dugan
Leslie Holling
Howard Isenberg
Rev. Bernard Lilly
Denise Nash
John Stevenson
Gail Ward**

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON

Staff

**Angela Johnson-Williams, Principal, PECS
Shinwe Shelton, Director of Operations, PECS
Tahanni Ragland, Staff Accountant, PECS
Abraxas Thomas, Development Coordinator
Jami Griffin, PECS Teacher**

TRUSTEES ABSENT

**Kelley Kalinich
Rev. Walter Matthews**

GUEST

Bruce Vassall, Citibank

I. ROLL CALL/DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

The meeting was called to order at 4:06 by Mr. Stoops.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion duly made, seconded and unanimously passed, the minutes of August 24, 2013 were approved.

II. SCHOOL REPORT

As of 10/9/13 we have 469 students enrolled at PECS. There were 344 enrolled on the first day of school, 472 by the second week, and 471 at the 20th day. Of the 105 Kindergarten apps on file, only 73-75 showed up to enroll. 1st grade attendance is smaller than last year. There were only about 25 1st grade apps on file, coupled with the fact that a good number of kindergarteners didn't return from last year. To try to prevent the drop in enrollment next year, we plan to spread the word starting with local daycares and preschools. The next open house will be targeted toward new families. We will also participate in the New Schools Expo in January. Returning students' siblings will be accepted.

The Englewood community in general has a declining student population. For recruiting purposes, we may have to cast our net to a broader population. A good number of the school closings were in Englewood. We were able to receive a few students from closing schools. Charter schools did not receive extra funding as a result of the closings, and although the SPED student percentage is high this year, we have not received extra funding because of it. The SPED increase was a natural increase.

Task: Mrs. Johnson-Williams will research the trend for SPED students in Englewood overall.

ISAT scores have dropped across the district because of cut score changes. Currently our composite score is 58.5. Terra Nova and Explore charts remain the same. Comparison charts have been updated for schools in the same zip code (PECS remains the highest performing school in the 60636 ZIP code by a wide margin). Math scores for ISAT have decreased slightly over the last two years. Last year, low middle school scores brought the school-wide average down. Low scores were attributed to the questions being Common Core generated, which our students were not prepared for. With the addition of the Common Core curriculum, there should be an improvement in this year's scores. NWEA testing for fall session has just ended. Scores will be reported after each session. Third grade scores in math were low, but reading was up. The reading curriculum was changed to cater more toward the questions and to take a research approach at answers. Math was probably down because of the emphasis that was put on the reading curriculum.

There are a significant amount of new students in middle grades. This causes a constant battle with scores because it is harder to adjust new middle grade students to the rigorous curriculum at PECS. Second quarter is when we put those children in after school tutoring, and sometimes that still isn't enough. Some suggestions to combat this problem are to a) offer tutoring on a voluntary basis from the first day of school and/or b) work with these students over the summer. Teachers are the tutors this year as opposed to volunteers. It was a challenge to get the teachers to do it because of the long hours. Initially, tutoring fulfills teachers' service hour requirement. After the service hours are completed, they will be compensated. Volunteers were not as familiar with the curriculum and educational model as our teachers.

Dr. Kallinich and Mrs. Johnson-Williams are working to formulate a school improvement plan.

Performance policy report – CPS evaluates PECS (and all district schools) annually with metrics as set forth in the performance policy report. PECS has now earned a Level 1 designation for three years in a row, a record of performance matched by only five other charter schools in Chicago. The metrics include ISAT meets/exceeds, ISAT trend scores, and “Value-Added Scores” which are intended to isolate a school's contribution to student growth year-over-year through regression analysis, controlling for variables like family income, race/ethnicity, and prior year scores. Unlike ISAT scores, the Value-Added Score is a percentile score that ranks individual schools against all schools district-wide. Despite relatively strong performance on the ISAT, especially as compared to geographically similar schools, PECS scored in the 30th percentile in Math and 36th percentile in Reading. A preliminary analysis comparing PECS to other Level 1 charter schools on the Value-Added Score showed that other high-performing schools also had low Value-Added Scores. Mr. Stoops and Mrs. Johnson-Williams have been trying to gain info from CPS as to how exactly the Value-Added Score is calculated.

Task: Mrs. Nash will research how these numbers are formulated.

Parent Involvement last year was 89%, as of 9-20-13 parent involvement is 91%.

The new PECS website is up and running. Key features include video from the fundraiser, an LRC interactive link, leadership page, art blog, lots of pictures, a link to Power school and a PE blog to come. In the near future, our goal is to provide a link to the new curriculum as well.

With the help of a connection through Mr. Isenberg, we were able to create a technology plan for our school. This was a necessity if we were to pursue funding for technology projects or services. The technology plan provides PD goals, both within PECS and through outside opportunities. Some goals have already been achieved. The focus was on how to use what we already have. The new Wonders program is technology infused, but only for K-5. Ms. Griffin is also teaching a new class for grades 6-8. We are in the

process of trying to acquire Me Pads for K-2. Before we can transition into learning labs and have a middle school annex that is rich in technology, we need to improve on what we already have. There are many development opportunities for technology. The Technology Team and Ms. Thomas will look for grant opportunities that will increase and improve upon PECS' technology infrastructure.

Student Handbook Review

Regarding the Charter Renewal status, a few weeks ago, an email was sent from the office of New Schools regarding changes to our student handbook. There are several issues being raised that require the Board's attention. Some modifications are "suggested" and others are "required". Attention is drawn to the required items. In looking at what the handbook states vs. actual practice, we found that we don't actually enforce some consequences that are stated in the handbook. For example: Regarding the Parent Enrichment Program – fines are assessed, but students are not excluded from school as the handbook states. The Board agreed that we should agree to "required" changes if we don't actually enforce the problematic language as written in the handbook. The one "required" change that we do not agree with is removing God from the mission statement. Our position has been the same since our charter was originally granted in 2006. God is recited in the Pledge of Allegiance and is no different when used in our mission statement. This has been reviewed by CPS' legal department, so it should not continue to be an issue. PECS makes an accommodation for students who choose not to recite the mission statement or the pledge. It has not been an issue with parents thus far.

Initially, it was important for us to have the severe consequences in the handbook in place. It set the groundwork for what our expectations were and helped to create a culture of accountability. But the Board agreed that several of the "suggested" changes had merit and should be considered, now that the school is well-established, especially in light of the fact that in actual practice, we don't enforce many of the consequences as written in the handbook. The question that needs to be asked is "What are the goals of our hand book, and are we accomplishing them?" Comprehensive review of student handbook is delegated to the Academic Excellence committee. We believe a response on the "required" changes is holding up our charter renewal. Mr. Dugan made a motion that the Board respond to CPS agreeing to all of the "required" changes with the exception of removing God from the Mission Statement. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Task: Ms. Doane in conjunction with Mrs. Johnson-Williams will circulate the necessary changes so that we can give a speedy response to CPS.

III. FINANCE/OPERATIONS REPORT

The June 30, 2013 Balance Sheet showed Cash of \$348k, Short Term Investments of \$1,244k, and Total Assets of \$2,554k against Total Liabilities of \$239k. The increase is attributed primarily to the cash received related to charter school funding for the first quarter. Accounts receivable decreased due to removal from the balance sheet of previously accrued anticipated refund for the Social Security overpayment for certified employees. Our auditor requested that we remove the receivable from the assets of the school because the timing of its receipt is unknown and uncertain. Currently, there is no information on the status of the Private Letter Ruling (required in order to apply for the refund from the Social Security Administration)

Task: Mrs. Shelton will follow up on a timetable as it relates to the PLR.

Property and equipment has increased due to FY 14 acquisitions. Accrued payroll is currently up from the prior year because of employee pension payments in process at quarter end.

Total revenue exceeded budget for the first quarter by \$91k. This is related to additional CPS funding caused by higher than anticipated enrollment, the foundation contribution revenue used to fund the new Schwab account and student fee collections.

Total Expenses are under budget for the first quarter by \$26k related to lower salary expenses and staff vacancies.

There was also unrealized gain of \$17k due to the appreciation of Foundation securities. The increase is shown in equity, not net income, and has nothing to do with the school's operations.

Following Board review and approval, the revised budget (based on actual enrollment) will be submitted to CPS by the November 1 deadline. It will include private fundraising of \$100k, which will result in a budgeted change in net assets of \$32k (surplus) and a budget change in cash of \$103k. For purposes of this meeting, we removed private fundraising revenue to show the school's operations in isolation. On motion duly made, seconded and unanimously passed, the revised budget was approved.

Approximately 87 students are out of compliance due to not having physicals and/or shot records on file. The medical exclusion date is October 15, 2013. Letters have been sent to parents regarding their child's status.

We received a preliminary draft of the audit. Some of the exceptions noted in the draft report were incorrect and we are working with the auditors to correct them. On motion duly made, seconded and unanimously passed, the approval of the audit was delegated to the Finance committee.

57% of staff is participating in the new 403(b) plan. Several people are saying no at this time, and some are just set on not giving up additional money. We are still working on achieving 100% participation.

IV. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE – We are going to continue to consolidate the foundation and school financial statements. Foundation assets will be fully invested in three separate time periods. We will keep minimum cash balance of \$30k. As money comes in it will be swept into investment.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE – No report.

DEVELOPMENT – February 28th is the date of the fundraiser for this year. All who were involved are willing to be involved again this year. Please forward people that you wish to invite to Ms. Thomas. The price will be raised to \$125. Fundraising goals have not been established to date. The mentor program that Mrs. Johnson-Williams has been involved with regarding getting 8th grade students into choice high schools will meet on November 9th for volunteers and parents of 8th graders. The goal of this meeting is to form relationships with eighth grade parents and assist them in navigating the enrollment process for highly selective schools. This is an excellent opportunity for volunteers to get involved with the school on a one-on-one basis. The intent is for these relationships to continue through high school and beyond.

In general, development mailings should go out quarterly and a newsletter should be sent on a regular basis (every other month).

GOVERNANCE – The third part of the new compensation system deals with performance metrics and evaluation. Governance should be able to present more information to the Board at the December meeting. We intend to devote a portion of one board meeting each year to organizational performance reviews of key staff, including the Principal and Director of Operations. Long-term strategic planning has been tabled to December meeting.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION – The Board did not enter Executive Session.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Saturday, December 14, 2013, PECS 6515 S. Ashland – 9 a.m.