

Providence Englewood Charter School
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

At
6515 S. Ashland Ave
Chicago, IL 60636

Saturday, February 29, 2020
9:00 a.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE IN PERSON

Directors

Ellen Kollar
Matt Bergmann
Peg Cain
Caroline Degenaaars
Kelley Kalinich
James Reilly
John Stevenson
John Stoops
Latasha Thomas
Arlen Wiley
Jason Zenner

DIRECTORS ABSENT

Tim Dugan
Rona Fourte
Leslie Holling
Bernard Lilly
Walter Matthews

TELECONFERENCE

Howard Isenberg
Cynthia Helle, PECS Foundation Chair

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON

Staff

Angela Johnson-Williams, Principal, PECS
Shinwe Shelton, Deputy Director of Operations, PECS
Tahanni Ragland, Business Manager, PECS
Jessica Lewis, PECS Promise, PECS
Dr. Antoine Jones, Recruiter, PECS

I. ROLL CALL/DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m. by Mrs. Kollar.

II. Opening Comments and Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

On motion duly made (Ms. Cain), seconded (Mr. Zenner), and unanimously passed, the Board approved the minutes of December 12, 2019.

III. ACADEMICS

Mrs. Johnson-Williams gave the highlights of the Academic Report.

With regard to personnel, Mrs. Johnson-Williams noted that PECS has two vacant positions: Middle School Social Studies and a Paraprofessional. A candidate has been hired for the MS Social Studies position and Mrs. Johnson-Williams is reviewing resumes for the Paraprofessional position. In addition, only 3 current employees have indicated their intent to not return for next year.

Regarding Middle of the Year NWEA results, Mrs. Johnson-Williams reported that last year scores showed growth in reading/language arts at 44% and math at 39%. This year, reading growth is 37% and math growth is 27%. PECS goal is to have 60% of our students growing 1.25 years in both reading and math. The PECS team is continuing to drive extra supports and small groups to increase growth.

Regarding 8th grade, Mrs. Johnson-Williams shared with the Board the good news that PECS has one student who has received a Daniel Murphy scholarship and one Link Scholar. We are still awaiting results of the HFS Scholarship. The PECS Link Scholar will be attending De La Salle institute.

Mrs. Johnson-Williams also noted that PECS parent involvement is at 78%. Total strikeouts are at 136, with behavior issues starting to creep up. Current enrollment is 422 students and recruitment and re-enrollment efforts for next school year are in effect. As of the meeting date, 271 re-enrollment applications had been filed, together with 113 new applications, of which 40 were kindergarten applications.

Mrs. Johnson-Williams then discussed with the Board the terms of PECS's Charter Renewal. PECS has been approved for a renewal for five years, subject to two pre-conditions: first, updates must be made to the PECS student handbook specifying that PECS will not impose out-of-school suspensions on K-2 students, and second, that PECS must attend two discipline data review sessions with CPS. These conditions are both part of a system-wide discipline effort from CPS.

Since the student handbook changes must be submitted to CPS by April 3, the Board discussed the substance of the changes to be made – namely, that it be made clear in the handbook that K-2 students will not be subject to out-of-school suspensions – and the fact that the Academic Excellence Committee will work with Mrs. Johnson-Williams to review and update the handbook.

Following this discussion, on motion duly made (Ms. Thomas), seconded (Ms. Cain), and unanimously approved, the Board APPROVED the proposed changes and delegated to Mrs. Kollar the authority to review and approve the specific changes and to have the amended Student Handbook filed with CPS on or prior to April 3.

In addition to the two pre-conditions, Mrs. Johnson-Williams also discussed with the Board specific ongoing obligations that CPS will specify in the PECS Charter Renewal Agreement. These obligations involve demonstrating compliance with various special education documentation requirements; providing summaries of PECS's discipline practices and results (with a demonstrated reduction in in-school and out-of-school suspensions); and providing documented proof of staff training regarding the needs and rights of students in temporary living situations.

IV. Academic Excellence Committee Report

Dr. Kalinich provided to the Board a report on the Academic Excellence Committee. She noted that the Committee has focused on improving attendance since it is critical to student learning and is weighted heavily on the SQRP report. PECS aims for attendance of at least 96%. PECS is in session during the MLK Holiday and Presidents' Day, but since these are CPS holidays, PECS's attendance has tended to be low. As a result, the Committee is exploring creative ways to improve attendance or to otherwise not hold classes on those days.

Dr. Kalinich then reviewed with the Board the status of the PECS Pre-K initiative. She began by noting that PECS has been assigned two University of Chicago Booth Fellows, Faina Dookhand Danielle Xu, who will be working with her on this initiative. Dr. Kalinich then discussed with the Board the significant challenges she has discovered to obtaining state funding for Pre-K. While the Pre-K team will continue to pursue these funds, Dr. Kalinich believes that PECS will need to pursue private funding. She noted that the team has begun to develop a budget based on two Pre-K classes with a total of 40 students and a dedicated administrative position for the program. First year cost projections are roughly \$450K; scaling back to one classroom would probably be about \$100K less. The Pre-K team will continue its work and will update the Board at its next meeting.

V. FINANCIAL/OPERATIONS

Ms. Shelton reviewed in detail the Financial Report, including the year-to-date financials, with the Board, noting comparisons to prior year and to budget.

Ms. Shelton reported that PECS is 100% on-time and compliant with CPS submissions.

Ms. Shelton also provided an update regarding the work that the Finance Committee was tasked with to potentially find another auditor. ORBA, who came highly recommended, has been favorably reviewed and Ms. Shelton has confirmed that if PECS decides to make the change, there won't be any negative repercussions or inferences with CPS. The Finance Committee will formally recommend changing PECS's auditors to ORBA once they receive a formal engagement letter.

Finally, Ms. Shelton noted PECS is still having problems with the building's HVAC unit. As a result, PECS will move forward with replacing the unit in the gymnasium, at replacement cost of approximately \$8,000. Ms. Shelton noted that we have yet to hear from CPS regarding the review that we would like for them to conduct of the roof and tuck-pointing repairs that PECS believes are necessary.

VI. Board Committee Reports

- a. Recruitment Committee. Dr. Jones and Mr. Wiley provided a report from the Recruitment Committee. They noted that recruitment efforts are off to a great start and that there is urgency to hit the 500 student enrollment goal for next school year. They highlighted actions taken by the recruitment team, including the intention to engage Parent Ambassador Groups of about 4 or 5 families who will help spread the word about PECS, which should help with recruitment and retention. In addition, developing incentives for effective referrals should will help get all PECS parents engaged as well.
- b. PECS Promise Committee. Ms. Lewis and Mr. Reilly provided a report from the PECS Promise Committee. They noted, in particular, that there has been much enthusiasm about connecting with PECS Alumni -- there were about 30 alum that visited PECS for the Martin Luther King holiday. The PECS Promise team intends to continue sending alumni the message that their presence is important and that the current students are very receptive to seeing them in the building. They also discussed the status of 8th graders and their high school choices. Most 8th graders are still awaiting news regarding CPS acceptances; a few have received acceptances from private schools already. The PECS Daniel Murphy scholar is looking at Lake Forest Academy (he was inspired by former alum that attended LFA). 100% of our 8th graders have applied to PECS preferred schools.
- c. Development Committee. Mr. Zenner provided a report from the Development Committee. He started by discussing the wonderful annual event which had taken place the night before the Board meeting. He noted that the event had an excellent turnout and that so far, PECS had raised \$37,000 beyond the costs of the event. He noted that he will provide more specific details at the next Board meeting. Many of

the directors had attended the event and discussed what a successful and fun evening it had been.

- d. Governance Committee. Mr. Bergmann provided a report from the Governance Committee. He reminded the Board that the Board will need to have a Parent Director in place on the Board by the end of this year; he noted that it would be best to target a parent of a younger student, since they are likely to be involved with the school for a longer period. Mr. Bergmann also reminded the Board that under a new law that was passed last year, all directors are required to complete four hours of formal Board Training before the end of the year. Mr. Bergmann shared with the Board a hand-out noting various events that can fulfill the four-hour commitment, both in-person and on-line. Finally, Mr. Bergmann noted that Mrs. Fourte has joined the Governance Committee and that Joan Malliband, who has been a member of the Development Committee and was instrumental in planning last night's event, is a likely candidate for Board Membership.

- e. Mr. Stoops provided to the Board an update of the work of the Englewood Stabilization Project that he has discussed with the Board in the past. He noted that the Stabilization Project comprises two parts: revitalization and investment. He noted that revitalization efforts for the neighborhood are under way, and that the team will partner with a local company called EcoHouse to develop a garden/farm. The investment fund, which is titled the Englewood Opportunity Fund, acquired two properties: one at 6501 S. Justine and one at 66th and Bishop. The plan is to get both properties approved for Section 8 rental, with the dream to have one or more of PECS STLS families able to live there.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

On motion duly made (Mrs. Cain), seconded (Dr. Kalinich) and unanimously passed, the meeting of the Board was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, April 23, 2020 @ 4:00pm (Water Street – 444 W. Lake St., Ste 1800)