

Providence Englewood Charter School
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

At
6515 S. Ashland Ave.
Chicago, IL 60636

Saturday, October 19, 2019
9:00 a.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE IN PERSON

Directors

Ellen Kollar
Rona Fourte
Leslie Holling
Howard Isenberg
Kelley Kalinich
Bernard Lilly
John Stevenson
Arlen Wiley
Jason Zenner

DIRECTORS ABSENT

Matt Bergmann
Peg Cain
Caroline Degenaaars
Tim Dugan
John Stoops
Walter Matthews

DIRECTORS via TELECONFERENCE

James Reilly
Latasha Thomas

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON

Staff

Angela Johnson-Williams, Principal, PECS
Shinwe Shelton, Director of Operations, PECS
Tahanni Ragland, Staff Accountant, PECS
Jessica Lewis, PECS Promise, PECS
Dr. Antoine Jones, Counselor/Recruiter, PECS

I. ROLL CALL/DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

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

II. Opening Comments and Consent Agenda

a. Strategic Plan

Mrs. Kollar reviewed with the Board her plans for tracking progress against the PECS Strategic Plan. She noted that for the following strategic goals, the relevant Board Committee Chair would provide the Board with an update regarding progress at each Board meeting: Academic Excellence; Recruitment; PECS Promise; and Operational Excellence (via Finance Committee). With regard to the Pre-K and School Culture Goals, Mrs. Kollar indicated that the approach to these is still in progress and asked any Board members who were interested in being the “champion” for these to let her know. With regard to Pre-K, Mrs. Kollar noted the work that Mr. Reilly is doing to identify an external resource to help us understand all that is involved in establishing a Pre-K program. Dr. Kalinich suggested that it would be ideal if a current PECS staff member was in charge of planning for Pre-K; among other reasons, she noted that there is a block grant application due in the summer and having someone from PECS involved would be of great benefit.

b. Approval of Minutes of September 19, 2019 Board Meeting

On motion duly made (Stevenson), seconded (Fourte), and unanimously passed, the minutes of the September 19th Board Meeting were approved.

III. ACADEMICS

Mrs. Johnson-Williams gave the Board a detailed update regarding academics.

Regarding personnel, she noted that PECS hired a middle-school science teacher who started on September 30th and a new middle-school Math teacher who starts on Monday, October 21st. Mrs. Johnson-Williams was optimistic that both new teachers will fit well into our middle school culture. She also noted that she received a resignation from one of the Kindergarten teachers stating personal reasons for leaving.

The Academic Excellence committee has considered ways to improve the middle-school approach for this year. Under consideration is a plan to take the current 7th and 8th grade (comprising two classes) and blend them into 3 classes. This would require modifying the daily schedule, but could be a good solution to address discipline issues that we have been experiencing.

Mrs. Johnson-Williams noted that the School Improvement Plan goal is the same as last year: 60% of students will grow 1.25 years in both reading and math. She reviewed with the Board the data has been collected to date to determine year to date whether or not

we are on track, noting that the results so far are encouraging. A discussion ensued about whether the assessments are reliable and give a good read as to actual performance, with Mrs. Johnson-Williams noting that the assessments have recently been reviewed and updated and affirming that she believes they are appropriate. As students meet these metrics, Mrs. Johnson-Williams will continually increase goal.

Mrs. Johnson-Williams also reviewed the Culture Metric which tracks staff attendance, student attendance and on task (green) behaviors. For quarter one, on average, faculty attendance is greater than 96% (last year was 95%). Student attendance was at 94% (last year was 93%). A brief discussion ensued regarding incentives for student attendance; Mrs. Johnson-Williams stated that she has not continued last year's incentives since it isn't clear that they had an impact (and they also took away from 8th grade fundraising). The student on green percentage was 83% and behavior removals were 30 (last year was 22). The concentration of removals is in Kindergarten and 1st grade and steps are being taken to drive better student discipline in these classrooms.

Mrs. Johnson-Williams then reviewed PECS beginning of the year (BOY) NWEA testing results. Students are at or above 50% in reading and math for each grade level. This year the average scores were 62% for reading and 49% math (last year it was 52% for reading and 42% for math). Among many actions that are driving these improvements, Mrs. Johnson-Williams noted that internal professional development seems to be having a positive impact. In particular, the SLANT (Literacy) program has been positive and she will be continuing with this program this year.

Finally, Mrs. Johnson-Williams noted that while the PECS teachers are doing really well, many of them are feeling the pressure of the staffing reductions that were made at the beginning of the school year. In addition, many teachers seem to be struggling to fully understand the new compensation program that was introduced. Where there are questions, Mrs. Johnson-Williams will take the teachers through their compensation individually. She is also exploring ways to help give teachers some breaks, including possibly having parents and volunteers helping monitor the cafeteria during student lunch breaks.

IV. FINANCIAL/OPERATIONS

Ms. Shelton took the Board through the financial report. She reported that the auditors had recently completed their annual audit and that PECS has been issued a clean audit again this year with no deficiencies. There are a few immaterial matters that are being finalized, but Ms. Shelton indicated that the audited financials distributed to the Board were essentially final. She further indicated that the Finance Committee will meet before the end of October to approve the final audited statements. The Board

commended Ms. Shelton and Ms. Ragland for the strong audit results. In addition, following discussion, on motion duly made (Mr. Isenberg), properly seconded (Mr. Zenner), and unanimously approved, the Board approved the audited financial statements and their submission to CPS, with both contingent on approval by Finance Committee.

Ms. Shelton reviewed the year-to-date financials with the Board, noting comparisons to prior year and to budget. She also noted that in the past PECS had a significant cash cushion, but that this is no longer the case. As a result, to help closely monitor and predict PECS' cash position throughout the year, Ms. Shelton and Mr. Stoops have developed a detailed Cash Flow statement, which Ms. Shelton reviewed with the Board. The Board agreed that Mr. Stoops and Mrs. Kollar would review PECS' financials, including the Cash Flow Statement, with the PECS Foundation and would keep the Foundation updated, particularly if any cash flow needs seemed likely in the future.

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

V. Board Committee Reports

- a. Recruitment Committee. Ms. Fourte, Chair of the Committee, provided an update to the Board with regard to its activities. She noted that the Committee was officially formed on October 3rd and has gotten off to a robust start. With the help of Cynthia Helle (Foundation Chair and Committee member), a focus group of current PECS parents was conducted to help drive a deeper understanding of why parents send their children to PECS – so that we can drive the most impactful messaging into our recruitment efforts. More work will be done in this regard, including surveying PECS' parents more broadly. She also noted the work that Dr. Jones has been doing, including visiting more than 15 pre-school and daycare sites to date (which enroll more than 150 students). He has also scheduled 2 open houses for the next month or so. And, the PECS banners are up on Ashland Ave. Ms. Fourte, noted the challenging demographics in the Englewood community, where population has been declining, and solicited help from all Board members as we drive for increased enrollment.
- b. Development Committee. Mr. Zenner, Chair of the Committee provided an update to the Board with regard to its activities. He made a strong push for all Board members to be actively involved in Development, noting that the more involvement, the more money we will be able to raise. The idea for this year as a giving focus is Semester 3. He noted that PECS will be sending out annual letters and cards soon to try to get early year-end money and that we also plan to focus on a social media push for "Giving Tuesday." He also discussed the need to shake up the annual event this year – to refocus it to sustain PECS's consistent supporters, but also to continue to grow the development reach outside of the Kenilworth area. In particular, Mr.

Zenner asked Board members to commit to filling a table at this year's event with potential supporters.

- c. PECS Promise. Mr. Reilly, Chair of the Committee provided an update to the Board with regard to its activities. He noted that the Committee is keeping the strategic pillars of PECS Promise the same as last year, with the first priority to be high school placement and transition for our 8th graders. In this regard, he noted that out of 28 students, 24 have signed up for mentors and that we have 17 mentors. Four PECS scholars will be applying for the Daniel Murphy scholarship. The second priority is alumni outreach. Discussion ensued about ways to secure 100% participation in the eighth grade mentor program, including recruiting (post-college) alumni as mentors.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

On motion duly made (Fourte), seconded (Kalinich) and unanimously passed, the meeting of the Board was adjourned at 11:10a.m.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, December 12, 2019.4p.m. (Water Street – 444 W. Lake, Ste 1800)