

**Board of Trustees Meeting for  
Pennsylvania Distance Learning Charter School**  
2100 Corporate Drive, Suite 500, Wexford, PA 15090  
Telephone: (888) 997-3352 Facsimile: (866) 977-3527  
Website: www.padistance.org

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**Board Meeting**

**Date:** March 6, 2017  
**Time:** 4:00 PM  
**Location:** Pennsylvania Distance Learning Charter School  
and via Teleconference

**MINUTES**

MEETING TYPE:     Regular     Special     Proposed     Approved

**A. Call to Order**

Mr. Marous called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**B. Roll Call**

**Board Member Attendance:**

John Marous, President	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
William Donahue, Vice President	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present- phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Bill DiBenedetto, Secretary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
John Lally, Treasurer, Advisory Board Member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present-	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent

**Other Attendees:**

Patricia Rossetti, Chief Executive Officer, PDLCS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Darla Posney, Principal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Jamie Desrochers, Director SE, PDLCS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Sheryl Allmon, Director of Student Services PDLCS	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Absent
Michael Whisman, Charter Choices	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Nicholas Kocuba, Director of Technology PDLCS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
David Pierce, Public Relations PDLCS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Mary Alicandro, Recording Secretary, PDLCS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Kevin Corcoran, Charter Choices	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Tammy Donahue, Special Education Teacher	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
BeBe Kantowitz, Enrollment Lead	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent

**C. Pledge of Allegiance**

**D. Public Comment**

**E. Review of Agenda**

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**F. Standard Business**

**i. Meeting Minutes of the December 5, 2016 Board meeting**

**Motion:** Mr. DiBenedetto moved to approve the December 5, 2016 meeting minutes.

**Support:** Mr. Donahue seconded.

Ayes: 3 Opposed: 0

**ii. State of the School Report**

Mrs. Rossetti presented the State of the School report. We currently have an average daily membership of 672 with over 25% of those being special education students. There was an increase in low income students which research indicates impacts standardized test scores. Our special education students have a 90% low income rate which is on the high side for a cyber school. Mrs. Rossetti reported that two employees have left PDLCS since the last board meeting and 5 employees have joined PDLCS since the last board meeting.

Mr. Kocuba presented the technology update. He stated that a needs assessment was done with the staff to determine current and future professional development. Mr. Kocuba, Mrs. DeRoner and Mrs. Heiles presented two sessions at 2017 PA Educational Technology Expo and Conference. Mrs. DeRoner and Mrs. Heiles presented at Manchester Academy Charter School. He said that dedicated time was implemented for students and families to receive assistance with the technologies throughout the week. He is in the process of establishing the use of Nearpod, an interactive lesson tool for asynchronous lessons. There have been seventeen staff members who have signed up to pilot Nearpod this semester.

Mr Pierce and Mrs. Kantrowitz presented the student services update. Mr. Pierce that \$12,200 was spent on Google Ad words and social media. A switch was made from Act-On to HubSpot. Mrs. Kantrowitz stated that from November 28 to date that 193 leads were generated which led to 81 newly enrolled student. Future plans for community outreach include family favorites festivals, Jubilee Day, Breast Cancer Walk sponsored in part with Carnegie Museum, working with local moms of preschoolers (MOPS) and offering virtual and in-person information sessions. Mrs. Kantrowitz also stated that all collateral and marketing materials are in the process of being updated.

Dr. Posney provided an update on where we are with regard to Benchmark testing. During the first window 71% of the students took the benchmark tests up from 62%. We utilized the CPAA (Children's Progress Academic Assessment) the CDT (Classroom Diagnostic Tests and the Scantron Performance Series for these tests that are a predictor of classroom success and also PSSA/Keystone proficiency. At the January benchmark at least 50% of our K-2 students were at the benchmark, however that still means that 50% were not. At present we are teaching to the middle and not expanding what the students can or should be able to do. Remediation goals are also not being met. This information will be used to determine what more we should do. Dr. Posney stated that the CDT testing provides a snapshot on why and how students may still be struggling or exceeding grade and/or course eligible content. It highlights the student's strength and areas of need thus improving discussions with parents, students, guardians, etc., to help set individual learning goals

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Mrs. Donahue provided a review of the Wilson Reading program. She stated that Wilson is a systematic multi-sensory reading system for students who have word-level deficits and who have not internalized the sound/symbol system for reading and spelling. Students who benefit from Wilson Reading usually have a language-based disability, are slow, labored, non-fluent readers who often guess at words or memorize words, rather than use rule to decode. Currently 18% of our special education population is participating in the Wilson Reading program. Wilson works because it teaches word structure. Words follow a reliable system; once you know what this system you will be able to figure out new words easily which will then increase the students reading pace and understanding of what they read.

**Motion:** Mr. Donahue moved to approve the State of the School Report.

**Support:** Mr. DiBenedetto seconded.

Ayes: 3    Opposed: 0

**iii.      Financial Report**

Mr. Whisman presented the financial report. He stated that total current assets increase from \$3,031,698 at June 30, 2016 to \$3,709,167 at January 31, 2017. This net increase is due primarily to an increase in cash and local subsidies receivables. Total cash increase by \$225,206. Local subsidies receivables show a net positive increase of \$658,510 at January 31, 2017. Included in this net balance is an allowance for prior years receivables of \$87,003. Total liabilities at January 31, 2017 at \$7,513,073 were \$378,474 less than at June 30, 2016. Local subsidies show a balance of \$337,842 for refunds due to districts for previous school years. Of this balance \$316,399 is from the 2015-2016 school year. The cash balance of \$2,939,274 at January 31, 2017 was the equivalent of 130.9 days of cash on hand. This is a decrease from 168.1 days cash on hand at June 30, 2016 due primarily to the days of cash need increasing from \$16,145 to \$22,454. The school's current ration a measure of its ability to meet current payment obligations stood at 5.9 at the end of January, meaning current assets are sufficient to meet current liabilities. Mr. Whisman made note of a couple of key events that could affect the budget in the coming month: we have not received PDE confirmed funding levels for the school districts yet and early indicators are again pointing to a state budget impasse for 2017-2018.

Mr. Whisman stated that due to the cost involved in processing checks, are we required to send reimbursements to school districts where processing the check would be far more than sending what is owed to the district. Discussion was held. Mr. Marous made a petition to pass a policy regarding reimbursements of \$100 or less that are due back to the districts would not be sent unless the school district specifically requests that we do so.

**Motion:** Mr. DiBenedetto moved to pass the policy regarding reimbursements to school districts of \$100 or less and to adopt the Financial Report.

**Support:** Mr. Donahue seconded.

Ayes: 3    Opposed: 0

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**G. NEW BUSINESS**

**i. Employee Handbook**

Mrs. Rossetti presented the following changes that were made to the employee handbook:

- Removal of word non-exempt - page 17
- Removal of lunch time clock requirement - page 17
- RTO system and process changes - page 19
- Addition of sentence regarding the requirement to call (not email) administration - page 21
- Replace hallway with private location - page 23
- Expense report sentence change - pages 27-28 and 30-32
- FMLA Appendix - allow employee to secure personal days - page 6
- FMLA Appendix - addition of short-term disability sentence - page 7

**Motion:** Mr. Donahue moved to approve the changes to the employee handbook

**Support:** Mr. DiBenedetto seconded.

Ayes: 3 Opposed: 0

**ii Student Handbook**

Mrs. Rossetti presented the following changes that were made to the student handbook:

- Dates
- Addition of Homeless Liaison, Foster Care Liaison, and Title IX Officer phone extensions
- 2017-18 School Calendar
- Attendance Policy
- Updated Right to Know Officer extension

**Motion:** Mr. DiBenedetto moved to approve the changes to the student handbook

**Support:** Mr. Donahue seconded.

Ayes: 3 Opposed: 0

**iii MOU Allegheny County CYF**

Mrs. Rossetti presented the Memorandum of Understanding between PDLCS and the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families to establish procedures and agreed upon policies between PDLCS and CYF to ensure the provision of services to optimize academic success for children and youth in foster care.

**Motion:** Mr. Donahue moved to approve the MOU Allegheny County CYF

**Support:** Mr. DiBenedetto seconded.

Ayes: 3 Opposed: 0

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**iv. Foster Care Transportation**

Mrs. Rossetti presented the transportation plan between PDLCS and Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families stating that PDLCS will work with CYS to identify and establish the most cost-effective method of transport for students in foster care placement.

**Motion:** Mr. Donahue moved to approve the Foster Care Transportation Plan

**Support:** Mr. DiBenedetto seconded.

Ayes: 3    Opposed: 0

**v. Homeless Policy Revision**

Mrs. Rossetti stated that the homeless policy was updated to reflect the removal of the phrase “awaiting foster care” from the policy.

**Motion:** Mr. Donahue moved to approve the changes to the Homeless Students policy

**Support:** Mr. DiBenedetto seconded.

Ayes: 3    Opposed: 0

**vi. Draft 2017-2018 School Calendar**

Mrs. Rossetti presented the draft of the school calendar noting that school would start on August 29, 2017 and graduation would be on June 9, 2018.

**Motion:** Mr. DiBenedetto moved to approve the changes to the student handbook

**Support:** Mr. Donahue seconded.

Ayes: 3    Opposed: 0

**v. Proposed New Programs**

Dr. Posney stated that she would like to make a change to the elementary curriculum from Houghton, Mifflin and Harcourt to Acellus. She stated that Acellus is more personalized, and helps the teachers teach scientifically. There are low, medium, high and benchmark sections for every lesson. This will give the teachers a chance to personalize the learning and to help close the gaps. Mr. Rossetti stated that the cost is \$35,000 for 300 licenses in content area and that we have been given a \$10,000 grant for training.

Mr. DiBenedetto asked if the staff has been able to provide direct feedback. Dr. Posney stated that they have and they all are very happy with the program. Mr. Marous stated that he would like the staff to attend the training that is being presented in June and stated he would like more information regarding the viability of the company before making a decision on changing the program. The board will review the program in the June board meeting.

The second program that Dr. Posney would like to introduce for next school year is a 7-12 transition program that is a full program with job shadowing. This item has been tabled until the May board meeting.

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**B.           Reminder of Next Board Meeting**

May 17, 2017 at 4:00 pm to be held at the Pennsylvania Distance Learning Charter School and by teleconference.

**C.           Executive Session (if necessary)**

The Board entered into Executive Session at 6:00 pm  
The Executive Session concluded at 6:20 pm

**The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 pm.**

**Motion:** Mr. Donahue moved to adjourn the meeting.

**Support:** Mr. DiBenedetto seconded the motion.

Ayes: 3   Opposed: 0

**MINUTES CERTIFICATION**

Proposed minutes respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary, Mary Alicandro

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Secretary, Bill DiBenedetto

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date