

**Board of Trustees Meeting for
Pennsylvania Distance Learning Charter School**
2605 Nicholson Road, Suite 4100, Sewickley, PA 15143
Telephone: (888) 997-3352 Facsimile: (866) 977-3527
Website: www.padistance.org

Board Meeting

Date: May 9, 2023
Time: 4:00 pm
Location: PA Distance Learning Charter School and via
Teleconference at 888.988.2893, access 73527

MINUTES

MEETING TYPE: Regular Special Proposed Approved

A. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Board Member Attendance:

John Marous, President	xPresent	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
William Donahue, Vice President	xPresent	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent

Other Attendees:

Michael Leiterra, CEO, PDLCS	xPresent	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Aubrey Ploesch, Elementary Principal, PDLCS	xPresent	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Kelly Crooks, Chief Academic Officer, PDLCS	xPresent -phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Kimberly Crandall, MS Principal, PDLCS	xPresent	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Michael Whisman, Charter Choices	xPresent	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Nicholas Kocuba, Chief Operating Officer, PDLCS	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Charles Mort, HS Principal, PDLCS	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Dean Pappaterra, Chief Compliance Officer, PDLCS	xPresent	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Stephanie Faith, Special Education Co., PDLCS	xPresent	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Leigh Anne Lord, Recording Secretary, PDLCS	xPresent	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Sheryl Allmon, Procurement Coordinator, PDLCS	xPresent	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Carol Smialek, Teacher, PDLCS	xPresent	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Tracey Colbert, Teacher, PDLCS	xPresent -phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Everett Peterson, Student, PDLCS	xPresent -phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Andrea Brauer, Charter Choices	xPresent -phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent

C. Pledge of Allegiance

D. Public Comment: none

E. Review of Agenda

F. Standard Business

i. Student Update: Everett Peterson

Everett Peterson, a sophomore who has attended our school for the past 10 years, gave an overview of the recent Game Night sponsored by several of the school's After School Clubs. He emphasized the interaction that the students, families and staff had throughout the event. Dr. Leiterra pointed out that there were several families who drove across the state to attend the event.

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ii. Meeting Minutes of December 5, 2022 Board Meeting

Mr. Marous asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2023 Board Meeting. Mr. Donahue made the motion; Mr. Marous seconded – so moved.

Ayes: 2

Opposed: 0

iii. State of the School Report

Dr. Leitera presented the State of the School report indicating that as of May 9, 2023, the school's enrollment totaled 1,341 students with a 24.4% Special Education enrollment rate. He also reiterated the success of the on-site and virtual Game Night recently presented by the school's After School Clubs. He highlighted another one of the school's clubs, Aspiring Authors, who recently published a book which contains short stories and poems written by the club's members. Mr. Kocuba presented the initial findings from the pre-audit report prepared by SEOBrand. He highlighted the keywords that were successful in search engines and our ranking compared to other cyber charter schools. The audit revealed approximately 1,200 issues related to search engine optimization and stressed that SEOBrand had already started to make changes. The school's website has been migrated to GoDaddy. It is anticipated that these changes will begin to show results in four to six months. Approved changes are being implemented within a number of days and the school will have monthly meetings with the vendor. Mr. Marous suggested that we look at the SEO traffic from July-August, 2022 and compare it to the traffic in July-August, 2023. Mr. Donahue inquired as to whether this vendor worked with other cyber schools. Mr. Kocuba answered in the negative. Mr. Marous asked if there had been any discussion about the school's messaging as we enter the enrollment season. He recommended a brainstorming session to occur prior to July to discuss the school's external and internal messaging. Mr. Pappaterra pointed out that at this point in time last year, the school had 22 new enrollment applications and currently, the school has 62 pending enrollments for the 2023-2024 school year.

Mr. Marous asked for a motion to approve the State of the School Report. Mr. Donahue made the motion; Mr. Marous seconded – so moved.

Ayes: 2

Opposed: 0

iv. Financial Report

Mr. Whisman presented the March 31, 2023 financial report indicating that enrollment challenges continue to exist and this is expected to continue as we enter the 2023-2024 school year. However, the key indicators are strong and reflects healthy financial picture. Mr. Marous praised the conservative approach to the budget development and stressed that this strategy should continue going forward.

Mr. Marous asked for a motion to approve the March 31, 2023 financial report. Mr. Donahue made the motion – so moved.

Ayes: 2

Opposed: 0

G. New Business

i. SY 2023-2024 Board Appointments

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Mr. Marous indicated that both he and Mr. Donahue have agreed to continue in their current roles on the Board of Trustees. He also announced that Stephen Cantanzarite has agreed to join the Board as a Trustee and one other individual has agreed to join the Board in September 2023.

Mr. Marous asked for motion to approve the 2023-2024 Board Appointments. Mr. Donahue made the motion; Mr. Marous seconded - so moved.

Ayes: 2

Opposed: 0

Mr. Marous asked for motion to add Stephen Cantanzarite as a Trustee. Mr. Donahue made the motion; Mr. Marous seconded - so moved.

Ayes: 2

Opposed: 0

ii. SY 2023-2024 Board Meeting Dates

Mr. Marous indicated that the June 13, 2023 Board Meeting date would need to change to June 26, 2023 due to scheduling conflicts.

Mr. Marous asked for a motion to tentatively approve the SY 2023-2024 Board Meeting Dates. Mr. Donahue made the motion; Mr. Marous seconded – so moved.

Ayes: 2

Opposed: 0

iii. 2023-2024 Draft Budget

Mr. Whisman presented the 2023-2024 Draft Budget indicating that the conservative strategy will continue. He stressed that ESSER funding would be discontinued after the 2023-2024 school year and an assumption that there would be rate decreases over the next five years. He also pointed out that fund balances would start to decrease after 2024-2025. Mr. Marous pointed out that it had been discussed for the 2022-2023 school year to provide a \$1,000 incentive payment for progress in each CSI parameter; however, the focus went towards the commitment bonus. As the school has shown tremendous progress in the Attendance parameter, it was recommended that this incentive be made within the confines of the 2022-2023 budget for those staff members employed by the school as of June 30, 2022. In further years, the incentive focus would be for achievement out of CSI and further discussions would take place during the June Board Meeting. He stressed that this draft budget reflects a continued conservative approach.

Mr. Marous asked for a motion to approve and post the Draft 2023-2024 Budget for comment. Mr. Donahue made the motion; Mr. Marous seconded – so moved.

Ayes: 2

Opposed: 0

Mr. Marous made a motion to approve a \$1,000 incentive payment to staff members employed by the school on June 30, 2022 and still employed on June 30, 2023 for positive progress on the Attendance criteria of the CSI plan. Mr. Donahue seconded the motion – so moved.

Ayes: 2

Opposed: 0

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iv. Comprehensive School Improvement Plan 2023-2024

Ms. Crooks presented the draft Comprehensive School Improvement Plan for 2023-2024. She stressed that these goals were set when the school entered CSI and the school was entering the final year of this initial categorization. She stressed that the school was in CSI for six reasons: Graduation Rates, Attendance, Career Readiness, and Academic Progress in Math, ELA and Science. We are currently over the state average for Attendance and have shown strong progress with Career Readiness and Graduation Rates. Mr. Marous pointed out that the action steps for each goal should be rigorous but attainable. Ms. Crooks indicated that goal percentages could be modified to reflect this strategy. She also indicated that by attaining the established goals in Attendance, Graduation Rates and Career Readiness, the school would exit out of CSI and enter A-TSI (Additional Targeted Support and Improvement). A-TSI focuses only on low academic achievement. Mr. Marous stressed that the goals should be aligned to move the school to an A-TSI designation. She also explained that the action plans for every area of CSI are tied to an evidence based strategy. She highlighted the changes to be made within the School Counseling department in order to support attendance and engagement. The school's counselors would also be considered Success Coaches and would play a major role in new student orientation. The school would also continue utilizing the PASS climate survey in order to understand the "why" behind student behaviors first before developing interventions. Mr. Mort, High School Principal, explained the creation of a 9th Grade Academy which would deploy a dedicated group of teachers and counselors in order to build a support team tasked with increased academic proficiency and graduation rates. Ms. Crooks announced a \$10,000 grant that the school has received to cover the costs associated with dual credits (high school and college) and should give the school the ability to increase partnerships with post-secondary institutions. Certified staff would continue their Teacher Clarity work and there will be an effort to provide feedback to teachers in order to increase the rigor of asynchronous lessons. With regards to graduation rates, Mr. Pappaterra explained that the Student Services staff was conducting reviews of withdrawn students (WD-01) in order to determine if these students are enrolling elsewhere.

Mr. Marous asked for a motion to post to the school's website for public comment the Draft Comprehensive School Improvement Plan 2023-2024 with the modifications to the action plans to include rigorous but attainable goals and the Student Services quarterly review of WD01 coded withdrawals. Mr. Donahue made the motion; Mr. Marous seconded – so moved.

Ayes: 2

Opposed: 0

v. Student Resolution

Dr. Leiterra indicated that no further information was available at this time. Mr. Marous tabled the discussion.

vi. Organizational Chart Update

Dr. Leiterra presented the organizational chart for SY 2023-2024 which reflects direct supervision of the Principals under the Chief Academic Officer. This would build upon vertical alignment and would enable a clear, concise academic voice.

H. Reminder of Next Board Meeting

To be held at the Pennsylvania Distance Learning Charter School and by teleconference on June 26, 2023.

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I. Executive Session (if necessary)

The meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m. and moved into Executive Session.

MINUTES CERTIFICATION

Proposed minutes respectfully submitted.

Leigh Anne Lord

Recording Secretary, Leigh Anne Lord

06/26/2023

Date

William Donahue

Board Secretary, William Donahue

6-26-23

Date