

**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

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**Board Meeting**

**Date:** December 4, 2023  
**Time:** 4:00 pm  
**Location:** Pennsylvania Distance Learning Charter School  
and via Teleconference

**AGENDA**

MEETING TYPE:    ☒ Regular    ☐ Special    ☐ Proposed    ☐ Approved

**A. Call to Order:** The meeting convened at 4:02 p.m.

**B. Roll Call**

**Board Member Attendance:**

John Marous, President	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
William Donahue, Vice President	x Present phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Stephen Catanzarite, Trustee	x Present phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent

**Other Attendees:**

Michael Leitera, Chief Executive Officer, PDLCS	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Kelly Crooks, Chief Academic Officer, PDLCS	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Nick Kocuba, Chief Operating Officer, PDLCS	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Dean Pappaterra, Chief Compliance Officer, PDLCS	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Robert DiGiandomenico, Dir of Communications, PDLCS	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Aubrey Ploesch, Elementary Principal, PDLCS	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Kim Crandall, Middle School Principal, PDLCS	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	x Absent
Charles Mort, High School Principal, PDLCS	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Stephanie Faith, Special Education Coordinator, PDLCS	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Sheryl Allmon, Procurement Coordinator, PDLCS	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Michael Whisman, Charter Choices	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Leigh Anne Lord, Recording Secretary, PDLCS	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Matt Miller, Senior Associate, HBK	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Tim Gagen, Principal, HBK	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Mary Ann Calderone, PIMS Coordinator, PDLCS	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Gianna Mason, Student, PDLCS	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Nicolette Mason, Student, PDLCS	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Maggie Kelly Brown, Teacher, PDLCS	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Dan Leroy, Guest	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Alex Schuh, Director, School Frontiers	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Mario Gutierrez, Chief Growth Officer, School Frontiers	x Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent

**C. Pledge of Allegiance**

**D. Public Comment – none**

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**E. Review of Agenda**

**F. Standard Business**

**i. Meeting Minutes of September 11, 2023 Board Meeting and October 17, 2023 Special Board Meeting**

Mr. Marous asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the September and October Board of Trustees Meetings. Mr. Donahue made the motion. Mr. Catanzarite seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**Ayes:** 3

**Opposed:** 0

**G. NEW BUSINESS**

**i. Student Report – Nicolette and Gianna Mason**

The students highlighted events that had occurred since the beginning of the school within the Elementary, Middle School and High School buildings. Their impressions included how personalized the start of school had been for them and they were very impressed with writing across the curriculums. Mr. Marous asked them if there was anything that should be changed within the school. After much thought, Nicolette indicated that an extension of the after school tutoring program would be a great addition. Mr. Marous expressed the Board's appreciation for such a thorough report and Dr. Leitera concurred.

**ii. December 4, 2023 Board Meeting Agenda Change**

Mr. Marous explained that there was a last minute change to the agenda as the school received the June 30, 2023 draft Audit report earlier that day. He asked for a motion to approve the Agenda change. Mr. Catanzarite made the motion. Mr. Donahue seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**Ayes:** 3

**Opposed:** 0

**iii. Audit Report**

Matt Miller and Tim Gagen, auditors with HBK, presented the audit findings through June 30, 2023. Mr. Gagen expressed the continued appreciation of the relationship between their firm, the school and Charter Choices. The audit was under standard review and there were no anticipated findings. Mr. Gagen commented that the school remained in a strong financial position.

Mr. Marous asked for a motion to conditionally approve the June 30, 2023 financial statements. Mr. Catanzarite made the motion. Mr. Donahue seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**Ayes:** 3

**Opposed:** 0

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**iv. Financial Report**

Mr. Whisman presented the October 31, 2023 financial report and indicated the metrics remain healthy and strong. Total revenues were slightly less than budgeted. This was due to a decrease in the ADM. The ADM has now been revised to 1,206. Dr. Leitera explained that the weekly enrollment change is having a positive effect on enrollment numbers and the retention rate remained steady. Mr. Whisman agreed that enrollment was trending in the right direction. He also reminded the Board that in the September Board Meeting, it was approved to move part of the fund balance from PNC to PSDLAF, Pennsylvania School District Liquid Asset Fund, which is fully liquid and earning an interest of 5.22% vs 3.57% with PNC. Mr. Marous suggested that we continue, in the future, to investigate the possibility of moving more funds into PSDLAF.

Mr. Marous asked for a motion to approve the October 2023 financials. Mr. Donahue made the motion. Mr. Catanzarite seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**Ayes:** 3

**Opposed:** 0

**v. State of School Report**

Dr. Leitera presented the State of the School Report reiterating that the school's enrollment was trending back to last year's figures. He highlighted that the special education enrollment rate was now at 24.6%. Ms. Crooks presented the CSI Update after Quarter 1. She highlighted that the CDT benchmark assessment participation rate had increased over last year. This can be attributed to, in part, the utilization of Go Guardian, which provides live monitoring of student engagement activities within the classroom. Mr. Marous inquired about the new 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy. Ms. Crooks offered to present a more detailed review of the new program at the next Board Meeting. Mr. Mort explained that the academy presented more mentoring opportunities to the students and as a result, contacts with students and families had increased and many students were on the edge of passing classes. He highlighted that the Academy was very much a team effort with monthly parent sessions and teachers meeting regularly. Ms. Crooks provided more insight into student engagement by presenting several charges that compared live class attendance and its impact on student grades. They have also been able to identify a new target – PNE students (Present Not Engaged). Mr. Marous asked how these students were identified and Ms. Crooks indicated that it was a manual teacher process. Teachers were identifying those students present in live learning but not participating in the class. More metrics were in the works concerning this group of students.

Dr. Leitera introduced Dr. Alex Schuh and Mr. Gutierrez from School Frontiers. Dr. Schuh explained that their work with the school was centered on building capacity around data with the goal of enabling the teaching staff to participate in the full cycle of student growth and measurement. They had been engaged to produce a number of data driven reports for the school. Mr. Marous inquired as to the timeline of the delivery and Dr. Schuh explained that the first round should be ready by year-end.

Mr. Kocuba gave a brief update on the School's repurchase of SchoolMint, which should provide a smoother enrollment process. Ms. Faith provided the initial results of the recent Special Education Audit. The results of this audit, conducted every six years, were extremely



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positive. Mr. Marous congratulated the special education staff for this performance. Mr. Donahue also praised the report.

Mr. Marous asked for a motion to approve the State of School Report. Mr. Donahue made the motion. Mr. Catanzarite seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**Ayes: 3**

**Opposed: 0**

**vi. Board Policy Update – Child Find Policy**

Ms. Faith indicated that, as a result of the special education audit, very specific language was required in the Child Find Policy. Dr. Leitera also indicated that the policy had been reviewed by legal counsel.

Mr. Marous made the motion to approve the Child Find Policy. Mr. Donahue seconded. The motion carried unanimously. (Please note that Mr. Catanzarite had to exit the meeting due to another professional commitment.

**Ayes: 2**

**Opposed: 0**

**vii. New Board Policy – Student Educational Records Policy**

Ms. Faith, again indicated that this policy was required based on the special education audit. Mr. Marous made the motion to approve the policy. Mr. Donahue seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**Ayes: 2**

**Opposed: 0**

**viii. 2024-2025 Proposed Academic Calendar**

Ms. Crooks presented the proposed 2024-2025 Academic Calendar indicating that it was very similar to the 2023-2024 academic calendar. While there were four professional development days built into this year's calendar, this has been reduced to three days for the upcoming school year. There were neither questions nor further discussion.

Mr. Marous made the motion to approve the proposed 2024-2025 academic calendar. Mr. Donahue seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**Ayes: 2**

**Opposed: 0**

**ix. Director of Communications – Proposed Title Change**

Dr. Leitera proposed a title change for the current Director of Communications; changing the title to Chief Communications Officer. This title change positions the school more strategically as Mr. DiGiandomenico further positions and develops the school's marketing efforts. Mr. Marous indicated the Board's support of the change stressing the upgrades in the school's messaging efforts. He also stated that in the upcoming months, the School and the Board would be participating in a number of working sessions designed to revamp the School's Mission and Vision statement. He indicated that these statements would together direct and drive various programs of the school such as the CSI and Strategic Plans.

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Mr. Marous asked for a motion to approve Mr. DiGiandomenico's title change to Chief Communications Officer. Mr. Donahue seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Ayes:**    2

**Opposed:** 0

**H. Reminder of Next Board Meeting**

To be held at the Pennsylvania Distance Learning Charter School and by teleconference on March 4, 2024.

**I. Executive Session - none**

The meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

**MINUTES CERTIFICATION**

Proposed minutes respectfully submitted.

*Leigh Anne Lord*

Recording Secretary, Leigh Anne Lord

January 19, 2024

Date

*William Donahue*

William Donahue (Jan 19, 2024 12:04 EST)

Board Secretary, William Donahue

Jan 19, 2024

Date