



# Palisades Charter High School

More Than 50 Years of Innovation and Excellence



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### BOARD MEETING MINUTES

August 18, 2015

5:00 PM, Gilbert Hall

#### I. PRELIMINARY:

A. CALL TO ORDER: 5:08 PM

B. ROLL CALL: 5:08 PM

	Present	Absent		Present	Absent
Emilie Larew	X		Torino Johnson	X	
Allison Holdorff Polhill	X		Ellen Pfahler	X	
Monica Iannessa	X		Alexander Shuhgalter	X	
Emilie Larew	X		Dara Williams	X	
Marcia Haskin	X		Leslie Woolley		X
Amanda Campbell	X				

#### NON-VOTING MEMBERS

	Present	Absent
Evan Holland	X	

#### PCHS MANAGEMENT/STAFF

	Present	Absent
Pamela Magee	X	
Greg Wood	X	

## **II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:**

### **A. REGULAR MEETING – JULY 21, 2015**

*Minutes were tabled to add more detail to graduation data.*

## **III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

*Non-agenda items: No individual presentation shall be for more than two (2) minutes and the total time for this purpose shall not exceed sixteen (16) minutes. Board members will not respond to presentations and no action can be taken. However, the Board may give direction to staff following a presentation. Speakers may choose to speak during the public comment segment and/or at the time an agenda item is presented.*

PCHS teacher John Rauschuber told the Board that he had been contacted by the private investigator (Ms. Nicole Miller, who was investigating the circumstances behind the student petition) two weeks earlier. Mr. Rauschuber described how he allowed the petition's student leader to address his class last semester. He denied that he had been involved in the creation of the petition. He referenced freedom of speech. He stated his belief that the investigation will negatively impact campus climate.

PCHS parent Craig Au criticized the 2-minute public comment as being too short, unless there were an unusually large number of public commenters. In his opinion, the fact that most summer classes were math illuminates the problem with math. He added that parking for visitors must improve and said movie people had reserved parking during shoots while PCHS parents with appointments must fend for themselves.

## **IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **A. Conflict of Interest and Agenda Setting Protocol – Emilie Larew, Allison Holdorff Polhill, Attorney Mark Bresee**

Board Chair Emilie Larew received an agenda request from a Board member that appeared to be a conflict of interest. She informed the Board that counsel for PCHS, Mark Bresee, was appearing telephonically. She reviewed Board Governing Policy #3.1 regarding agenda setting protocol and Governing Policy #6 regarding Board Member Code of Conduct. Board Vice Chair Allison Holdorff Polhill referenced the PCHS charter, governing policies and recent Board training, which described what constitutes Board conflict of interest as follows: "A conflict of interest arises when an individual who has a private financial interest in the outcome of a contract or a public decision, participates in the decision-making process or influences or attempts to influence other making the contract or decision." PCHS attorney Mark Bresee described the unique structure of the PCHS Board and how interested and non-interested members must navigate carefully to adhere to legal guidelines.

Board member Alexander Shuhgalter noted that the conversation so far was in vague terms without specifics. He explicitly denied any conflict of interest saying that he never talked about himself but had talked about a school wide problem. He suggested that if PCHS were to improve campus climate, the school must turn a new page and stop "strange" actions against teachers and students.

Mark Bresee replied that in his opinion, Mr. Shuhgalter's request to the Board to stop the student petition investigation violated Board conflict of interest code. Board member Dara Williams commented that Mark Bresee revealed in open session the name of the person who was being investigated. She suggested that all understood what constituted conflict of

interest and suggested the Board move on. Board member Monica Iannessa commented that the Board had decided that the administration alone would handle any investigation into the petition as a personnel matter. After some discussion, Ms. Holdorff Polhill and Mr. Shuhgalter agreed that his language in his letter to the Board had created the issue of conflict of interest. He suggested that his request be renamed "Improvement of School Climate." After considerable discussion, Dara Williams urged to Board to go into closed session to discuss "Public Employee Discipline, Dismissal and Release."

## **V. CLOSED SESSION**

The Board went into closed session for over an hour. The Board reported that no action was taken.

## **VI. PRESENTATION ITEMS**

### **A. Goal One: Math – Dr. Minh Ha Ngo**

Dr. Minh Ha Ngo reviewed Goal One, which focuses on Math. The two primary objectives were to increase math support for students and teachers, and to expand intervention support options to include tutoring for all students (there were multiple sub-goals as well). During a lengthy presentation and discussion, Dr. Ngo reviewed math data and results from 2014-15. Dr. Ngo acknowledged that there should be further review of the data to improve math at PCHS.

### **B. School-wide Survey Results – Emilie Larew, Allison Holdorff Polhill, Evan Holland**

Board member Allison Holdorff Polhill reviewed results of the 2015 Columbia Schoolwide Survey. 282 students, 361 parents, and 75 staff members participated in the survey. Overall satisfaction with PCHS increased slightly from the year before. Most parents at PCHS gave the school an overall grade of A or B (123 and 150, respectively). Parents appeared to be slightly more pleased with the academic program at Pali High, compared to last year's survey results. Subject by subject, parents urged improvement with teacher communication regarding students' academic progress. Parents noted math as an area that needed much improvement.

Ms. Holdorff Polhill emphasized that PCHS should strive to increase the number of respondents and stated that the process could start significantly earlier for the 2016 Survey. In response to the issue that some parents had with communication (teachers to parents), Board member Dara Williams suggested creating a tutorial or offering a seminar in Schoology for parents. Board member Greg Nepomuceno suggested that parents be given the opportunity to take the survey during events such as Open House or VAPA Night. Board member and student representative Evan Holland noted that students were pleased with academic opportunities, classroom and campus resources (such as the Math Lab) and safety on campus; they were not pleased that their grades were dependent solely on test scores in math and foreign language; had issues with going to teacher office hours; rewards & consequences; fairness with race/gender; and the math department. A huge majority of students were in favor of college courses on campus.

Board Chair Emilie Larew reviewed results from the Staff section, which included results from both certificated and classified staff members. Ms. Larew noted that newer staff members (less than 2 years at Pali) were only 8% of the survey respondents, while over half of respondents had worked at Pali for over 10 years. Staff

members expressed a desire for modifications in how/what professional development is provided and expressed concerns with school climate. There was wide variance among staff opinions regarding school culture and the consistency of student discipline. Overall, staff members expressed confidence in working with a variety of students. Staff members wanted more information about school activities and Ms. Larew noted the recently created enhanced calendars now available on the website. Staff also expressed a desire for more time to collaborate and for specific types of professional development. Teachers said they want more training in technology, LGBTQ, 504s, and Schoology. PCHS strengths listed by staff included supportive administrators, diverse student body, sports programs, and academics. Board member Amanda Campbell suggested that future surveys be broken down by department in order to better identify specific needs and desires that may be department specific. She also suggested that the importance of the survey should be communicated to new teachers more thoroughly and that time be set aside during a professional development to complete the survey.

**C. Dolphin Academy & Summer Bridge Program – Monica Iannessa, Jeanne Saiza**

Director of Student Achievement and Board member Monica Iannessa and PCHS teacher Jeanne Saiza reviewed the summer 2015 Dolphin Academy/Summer Bridge program. Ms. Iannessa noted that she had added a leadership component to the program and consequently there were noticeable improvements. She also added a technology component with the assistance of Technology Supervisor Donna Mandosa and science teacher John Vieira.

The students were given leadership roles during freshman orientation. They brushed up on math skills and completed their summer reading lists. Ms. Saiza described the intensity of the three week program and how the students transformed into leaders and gained academic, technology, and social confidence. She said it was one of the most rewarding instruction opportunities she had participated in. She recommended a follow up with 10th graders who had done the leadership academy in 2014 as some of them were now in honors classes. Ms. Saiza is piloting a Social Justice pod. Evan Holland suggested that the students be encouraged to try out for Student Leadership. Ms. Iannessa stated that a few Leadership students had accepted her invitations to meet the Dolphin students but that she wanted greater participation and mentoring from Student Leadership. She stated that she wanted to expand the number of students participating in the program.

Board members thanked Ms. Iannessa and Ms. Saiza for their great efforts.

**D. Extracurricular Substance Abuse Policy – Russ Howard**

Assistant Principal Russ Howard explained the policy that he and Athletic Director John Achen created after reviewing policies from other schools and districts. The policy has a third tiered level of consequences assigned to athletes found using drugs or alcohol and there is a “zero tolerance in regards to drugs, alcohol, or tobacco at any time during the sports season as defined by CIF rules.” The policy applies to all PCHS sports teams and Pali coaches are not able to modify the policy. The new policy is in the current Student/Parent Handbook as well as the Athletic Handbook. Mr. Howard noted that PCHS sports teams do not have many drug/alcohol issues.

**E. Technology Update – Donna Mandosa, Jeff Roepel**

Technology Director Donna Mandosa and Technology Supervisor Jeff Roepel reviewed significant recent technology updates on campus, including tripling wireless capacity over the summer. There is now wireless in the staff cafeteria and in the stadium. Four computer labs were upgraded. The 1:1 iPad program continues which is free for 9th

graders, as does the 10th grade Chromebook program (free for financially challenged 10th graders). Office 365 will shortly be made available for PCHS. Clubs in J100 (Robotics, Auto Club, Game Development) continue to grow and expand, including through donations from the Pali community.

The Board thanked Ms. Mandosa and Mr. Roepel for their extensive work over the summer to complete these projects.

**F. Culture and Climate Facilitators, Alan Rasmussen & Richard Tauer – Dr. Magee**

PCHS is beginning the important work of examining school culture and climate with a focus on improving campus relationships. Dr. Magee described the decision making process. Facilitators Dr. Alan Rasmussen and Richard Tauer were selected jointly by Steve Klima and Dr. Magee and they began meeting with faculty, UTLA leadership, and administration on Tuesday, August 11. The facilitators also attended the Back to School professional development on August 16 and met with teachers individually throughout the day. The facilitation team will participate in the annual PCHS Board Retreat, which will focus on developing school-wide goals for the 2015-16 school year. PCHS will continue working with the facilitators throughout the school year. Facilitators are working with PCHS to improve the climate and communication. Part of the EDP's evaluation rubric includes a section regarding student interaction with the EDP. Allison Holdorff Polhill stated that the Board acted appropriately and took the confidential evaluation of the EDP very seriously. Dara Williams stated that she, prior to serving on the Board, had sent complaints, and a follow up letter, to the District Attorney's office because she was concerned that the Board had violated the Brown Act. Board member Ellen Pfahler opined that there may have been significant costs to PCHS in legal fees to respond to such inquiries.

**G. Development & Facilities Consultant, David Tokofsky – Dr. Magee**

Dr. Magee communicated to the Board that PCHS management is conferring with development and facilities consultant David Tokofsky regarding potential grants and funding for campus improvements that PCHS may be eligible for through initiatives such as Measure Q and other modernization funds. The purpose is to address the ongoing priorities of reducing class size and eliminating the need for teachers to share classrooms through revisiting facilities plans developed in 2012 in conjunction with LAUSD.

**V. ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS**

*Organizational reports shall be submitted in writing, it is recommended that oral reports be limited to less than 3 minutes.*

**A. Executive Director & Principal – Dr. Magee**

Report stands as submitted.

**B. Chief Business Officer – Greg Wood**

Report stands as submitted. Mr. Wood added that the Budget & Finance Committee was in the process of producing detailed information regarding the final 2014-15 budget and the updated 2015-16. He will update the Board at the September Board meeting. Board member and Budget & Finance committee member Amanda Campbell raised two points from the B&F committee meeting: Produce specifics reasons for 800K deficit and 400K surplus for this year; avoid relying on ADA to close budget gaps; find a "perfect" student body number for PCHS which considers space, traveling teachers, class sizes, etc.

**C. Director of Operations - Dave Riccardi**

There was no report.

- D. Human Resources Director – Amy Nguyen  
Report stands as submitted.
- E. Classified Report – Torino Johnson  
There was no report.
- F. Student’s Report – Evan Holland  
There was no report.
- G. Parent’s Report – Allison Holdorff Polhill, Mark Epstein, Greg Nepocumeno  
There was no report.
- H. Faculty Report – Emilie Larew  
There was no report.
- I. Budget & Finance – Dr. Minh Ha Ngo, Olivia Castro  
See CBO report.
- J. Audit – Greg Nepomuceno  
There was no report.
- K. Post-Retirement Health Care Benefits Subcommittee – Michael Stryer  
No report.
- L. Academic Accountability Committee – Monica Iannessa, Evan Holland  
Chris Lee retracted his resignation.
- M. Election Committee – Emilie Larew  
Ms. Larew communicated that parents have been registering to vote early via the PCHS home page.

**VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS - CONTINUED**

- A. **Update on District Attorney’s Inquiry Regarding Brown Act. Confirmation from District Attorney: there was no Brown Act Violation** – Allison Holdorff Polhill  
Board member Leslie Woolley announced the formation of an ad hoc committee to create a code of civility for PCHS. Dara Williams volunteered to serve on the committee with Ms. Woolley.
- B. **Agenda for Aug. 29 Board Retreat** – Emilie Larew  
Emilie Larew reviewed the investigation of complaint regarding electioneering. The Board had postponed continuing the investigation until the new Board took office. The Board discussed various considerations, including the fact that the election in question was a particularly close election (the winner tallied 51.4% of the student vote) and what impact continuing the election investigation would have on campus morale. The Board voted to not to continue the election investigation at this time. The Board also stated that it was up to the EDP to pursue employee matters separate and aside from allegations of electioneering.

**C. PCHS Unrepresented Salary Scale Updated to Include Admissions Coordinator and Masters and Ph.D. Stipends – Amy Nguyen**

Ms. Nguyen presented an amended salary table for unrepresented employees. The modified table included a stipend for unrepresented employees that hold a masters or doctorate. This was an equity adjustment as other PCHS staff salary tables already include this stipend component. The Board unanimously approved the revised salary table.

**ACTION:** *Dara Williams moved to approve the updated Unrepresented Salary Scale as presented.*

*Seconded the motion: Marcia Haskins.*

*Unanimously passed (Interested parties abstained).*

	Yes	No	Ab		Yes	No	Ab
Emilie Larew			X	Torino Johnson			X
Allison Holdorff Polhill	X			Ellen Pfahler	X		
Monica Iannessa			X	Alexander Shuhgalter			X
Greg Nepomuceno	X			Dara Williams	X		
Marcia Haskin	X			Leslie Woolley (not present)			
Amanda Campbell			X				

**D. Uniform Complaint Policy – Amy Nguyen**

Human Resources Director Amy Nguyen presented the Board with an amended Uniform Complaint Policy. Regarding the prohibition on charging fees to students, Board member Dara Williams suggested that there needs to be more education for the staff in general to ensure teachers are not asking students for fees rather than donations. Dr. Magee agreed that more teacher education was needed to clarify this issue. The Board unanimously approved the amended complaint policy.

**ACTION:** *Dara Williams moved to approve the amended Complaint Policy as presented.*

*Seconded the motion: Greg Nepomuceno.*

*Unanimously passed.*

	Yes	No	Ab		Yes	No	Ab
Emilie Larew	X			Torino Johnson	X		
Allison Holdorff Polhill	X			Ellen Pfahler	X		
Monica Iannessa	X			Alexander Shuhgalter	X		
Greg Nepomuceno	X			Dara Williams	X		

Marcia Haskin	X			Leslie Woolley(not present)			
Amanda Campbell	X						

**Board Member Response to Communications – Emilie Larew**

Tabled until Board Retreat.

**VII. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. APPROVAL OF REIMBURSEMENTS FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL**

There was not a reimbursement request submitted.

**B. APPROVAL OF FIELD TRIPS**

There were no field trips up for approval.

**VIII. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS**

No outstanding business.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**X. CLOSED SESSION**

*Board Chair will report publicly on any closed session action items for which a vote occurred.*

The Board did not go into closed session.

**XI. OPEN SESSION**

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

*(Meeting Materials can be found on the Pali website under Governance, Board of Trustees, Agendas and Minutes, Material for Board Meetings)*

The meeting adjourned at 9:13 pm.