

PVPA Board of Trustees Meeting
15 Mulligan Drive, South Hadley, Ma 01075
Ladenheim Library
Tuesday, April 12, 2016

Present: Jim Barnhill, Will Decherd, Rachel Dionne, Kim Hicks, Gary Huggett, Berri Jacque, Deborah Jacobson, Sean Moore, Gary Smith, Geoff Sumi

Staff Present: Scott Goldman, Robert Brainin, Amanda Melemed

Meeting called to order at 6:01pm with quorum.

Kim recites mission statement.

Public Comment

Faculty present spoke in support of Will Decherd, faculty representative on the Board of Trustees, and expressed a desire to have further discussion with administration about faculty concerns and issues.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the March meeting were initially approved (with one vote opposing and one abstention). This prompted a brief discussion about the accuracy of the minutes of the March meeting.

In a second vote the Minutes of the March meeting were approved (with one vote opposing and three abstentions).

President's Business

The President invited Llama Maynard to discuss the most recent MCAS preparation for PVPA teachers. The DESE conditions based on math scores (AY2012–13) prompted the hiring of a director to modify the math curriculum and support teachers, including how to read and understand MCAS data. In the first year under Mike Hayes' leadership, math scores improved but in the second year they did not. DESE also raised concerns about ELA MCAS scores in the middle school. In fall 2015 Scott sent email communication to ELA teachers. The discussion whether to continue with MCAS or adopt PARCC delayed some communication from the DESE.

The charter renewal report (received February 2016) placed conditions on our renewal due to concerns about middle school math MCAS scores. Scott met with middle school teachers before February break to share this information. After February break, teachers received advice about decreasing student test anxiety and MCAS preparation.

A significant concern is that MCAS tests content knowledge for grades 6–8, but since we have only grades 7-8 and our students come from a variety of sending districts, it is a

challenge to create a two-year curriculum that provides students with content knowledge of three years.

Llama said that she passed the science curriculum on to the middle school science teachers. MCAS released items have been embedded in the curriculum.

In looking ahead Llama said that a “Student Learning Data Team” was created to help teachers understand how to analyze raw MCAS data and use this analysis to enhance curricula and assessment tools, such as GradeCam, which might not have an immediate impact but long term will help us better assess student learning, and MAPS, which is an assessment tool used nationally and will provide additional data on our students’ growth that we can share with the state. We also expect these tools to be useful for teachers in their instruction and assessment since they allow for real time assessment and responsive and nimble changes in the curriculum. Llama is working with math and ELA department leaders to develop an effective professional development plan for teachers.

Llama’s remarks led to a discussion about how to balance PVPA’s arts mission and curriculum with the MCAS standards. Several board members raised concerns that teaching to the MCAS would be detrimental to our arts mission. In the end, however, Board members acknowledged that improving our math MCAS scores are necessary in order to remove the DESE’s conditions on our charter.

Head of School Report

Scott updated the board on the search for a new Associate Director of Academic Programs. We have received 27 applications, nine of which met the qualifications. Seven were invited for interviews (one of whom withdrew). The interview committee will include representatives of all the disciplines that the candidate will be working with. This committee will interview the six candidates and winnow the list to three finalists who will be invited for a second round of interviews. We expect to offer the position to the successful candidate in early May.

Report of the Finance Committee

The finance committee reviewed the budget for FY2017 and recommended it to be sent to the board for a vote at the May meeting. The balanced budget includes a significant salary increase for faculty. There was discussion about the portion of the budget devoted to administrative costs compared to education costs, which led to a request that the CFO solicit data from other schools about the ratio of administrative to education costs.

Report on Development

We are almost at the \$160,000 mark in the Arts for All capital campaign. Last Saturday we held a breakfast meeting, which yielded a \$2500 donation.

The Wine and Watercolors event will be on May 12 at the Wyckoff Country Club. Some of the artwork in the student silent auction will also be part of the Hope and Feathers gallery in Amherst. One-third of their sales will go to the capital campaign. We are soliciting local businesses to donate art supplies and materials.

We had a positive meeting with representatives from People's Bank. They were unwilling to commit to contributing to the capital campaign, but they did express interest in funding school activities so that more students could afford them. We will also be meeting with Greenfield Savings Bank. Scott will be meeting with a former board member, Asha Strazzero-Wild, to discuss other fundraising opportunities.

Report of the Governance Committee

Three board members whose terms are expiring have agreed to stay on (Rachel Dionne, Donovan Arthen, and Gary Smith). Alison Noyes was introduced as a prospective parent representative. We will present the slate of candidates at the May meeting.

We have also been in discussions with Thom Vreeland about enhancing the Board's web presence to include public information (agenda, minutes, bylaws) as well as a password protected site for sensitive board materials.

Report of the ad hoc committee on the Strategic Action Plan

Will Decherd reported that the committee will present draft of the SAP at the May board meeting.

Report of Students

The musical is going up this Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Many students are involved. Student council is leading grade meetings this Friday. Spring is here!

Report of Faculty

Staff had a productive meeting with Head of School on April 8. The news about the 9% raises has been well received. Teachers fully endorse the move of the middle school classrooms to the east annex.

Public Comment

The teachers present expressed concern that Llama's report on MCAS preparation and communication about MCAS standards did not include what happened during her maternity leave (since she could not speak to that) and are hopeful that communication will improve in the coming year. They reiterated their support for Will Decherd in his attempt to convey that message to the full Board at its March meeting.

Kim Hicks requested that an executive session be called to order: *To discuss issues that touch upon the reputation or character of two PVPA employees.*

Roll Call Vote for Executive Session

Kim Hicks—aye

Rachel Dionne—aye

Deb Jacobson—aye

Jim Barnhill—aye

Geoff Sumi—aye

Gary Smith—aye

Berri Jacques—aye
Sean Moore—aye
Gary Huggett—aye
Will Decherd (abstain)

Scott Goldman was granted permission to attend a portion of the Executive Session. There was a brief discussion about whether faculty representatives should be present during Executive Session. It was agreed that Gary Huggett would remain for a portion of Executive Session.

Adjourned at 8:12 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Melemed