

**Board of Trustees Meeting
March 8th, 2016
Ladenheim Library**

Present: Kim Hicks, Geoff Sumi, Rachel Dionne, Will Decherd, Jim Barnhill, Noah Hornick, Scott Goldman, Gary Huggett, Robert Brainin, Rachel Huggett, Sean Moore, Melinda Winter

Meeting called to order at 6:02pm

Mission Statement read by Rachel Dionne

Public Comment- N/A

Approval of Minutes- approved at 6:15 pm. One abstention.

President's Business- N/A

Finance- Robert Brainin

Committee met last Tuesday to look at next year's budget, which will be presented to board at April's Board Meeting. Things are looking good and we are able to accomplish our goals of having competitive comp. packages within our salary model.

Development- Scott Goldman

A PVPA family made an anonymous donation for \$5,000 towards the projector for the new theater this past weekend. As of this week, if we include the in-kind donation of LED lights, we are at \$146,000 towards the capital campaign. There are a few meetings scheduled to meet with head of Greenfield Savings Bank and People's Bank.

We have confirmed a fundraising event for adults only for Wine and Watercolors. Carl Bridge, Martin Bridge and Petula Bloomfield have donated their time to teach the class. It will be on Thursday, May 12th from 7:00-9:30pm at the Wyckoff Country Club. The Families of PVPA has worked to put this together (including parents Suzanne Cordes, Tracy Goodman and Melinda Winter). Tickets will be \$35 and all money goes to the Arts for All campaign. Hors d'oeuvres will be available and we hope to have a silent auction of arts related items and PVPA students' art. We are hoping to sell at least 100 tickets. We would love help in promoting this event.

Grand Opening Breakfast on Saturday, April 2nd: This is for Marketing Purposes and for how PVPA and local businesses can work together.

Richard Ahlstrom is building a merchandise cart for all of the gear that is sold at productions.

We did get the green light from Asha's company to do research for us about potential grant sources. They are forming their team and have invited Scott to join them to talk about the school.

Governance- Geoff Sumi

We did not meet last week because we did not have quorum. We have been charged with setting the agenda for our annual retreat; e-mail Geoff Sumi with agenda items. We do not have a date set yet and will wait a month or so to do that by sending out a doodle poll. Regarding officers for next year, we were hoping to have the bylaws approved so that we would have the vice president position. We will come with a slate of candidates very soon, for the vote at the May meeting. The capacity of the board is 20 members.

Strategic Action Plan Update- Will Decherd

We have been in our small groups and writing new goals. We have some goals already framed out and a retreat set over April break. The goal is to complete a rough draft during that retreat. The next step is to finalize the draft and get it out the community. The new plan needs to be approved by the end of this school year. If there is a significant change to the SAP that needs to be worked into the budget, the budget would need to be amended to reflect those changes. There will be a draft of the new SAP for the Board's review May, with the goal of voting on a final draft at the June Board meeting.

Head of School Report- Scott Goldman

Building Project: The storage room heater in the theater has been fixed. The South Hadley building commissioner has signed off on how the stairs are lit on the risers. The work is being done on March 15th and 16th. After that we will get our permanent occupancy certificate. We are waiting for the landscaper to come back to reseed the lawn when the weather gets better.

Charter Renewal Final Determination Letter:

We have a condition that we must demonstrate we are an academic success in mathematics, specifically middle school math MCAS scores. If we do not meet the state's expectation, we may be placed on probation, which is the next, more significant consequence. If this were to occur, the school may get more visits from the state and be subject to more accountability reporting. After that time, we could move back to conditions from probation. We have changed our communication to middle school families and students about MCAS. It is very important for us to be successful. A letter was sent to 7/8 parents two weeks ago about the anecdotal conversations students have had about how they don't put their best effort into MCAS. We also need students to be present in school for the test; otherwise we can drop below the threshold for the percentage of participation needed. PVPA is hurt when students don't try their hardest or protest taking the test. Scott will be sending the letter out again in the near future. Scott met with middle school teachers about how they will communicate this approach to MCAS this year. Faculty have been directed to include MCAS practice in their classes in the next couple of weeks, such as the type of questions that students are going to be asked and approximating test-taking conditions.

We have purchased "gradecam" for our middle school math teachers, math department leader and an apprentice teacher. It is a formative assessment technology that allows teachers to have immediate feedback to see if students understand what was taught.

In addition to teacher-developed assessments and MCAS, the charter school office wants us to have another form of assessment. We are therefore purchasing Northwest Assessment Systems. Students take this online test of literature and comprehension questions and the test will adjust itself to match the level the student is at. A report can be printed for all of the students' teachers; students will take this assessment at the beginning, middle and end of the year. We can compare this data with student growth percentile data from MCAS.

ELA and MATH MCAS tests are skill based, and that is a good thing because you don't have to teach a specific curriculum the way you would for a history test. People can be effective teachers and use formative assessments and try to structure instruction in a way that gives the teacher the most feedback on student learning. If these tools are a success in the middle school, other teachers may want to use them and we can get them for those teachers.

WD: As middle school teachers, we have not received enough training/ support around how to help these kids prepare for the MCAS. It would be helpful to have PD for teachers around how to change our teaching to make MCAS scores go up.

SG: Professional development was identified and was piloted over Paideia and time was set aside for Math dept. to practice gradecam.

Over the last four years, we have been one of the top three school districts in Massachusetts on the science MCAS. PVPA is hosting a meeting this month about the new science standards that will be implemented for 17-18 school year. Jeanne and Llama can talk to the middle school teachers about this. The culture of an MCAS classroom is very different from a typical PVPA classroom. Culture and approach is very important for us in regards to MCAS.

RD: Coming from a parent who went through two other school districts, my child used to come home with anxiety about MCAS. When my child took MCAS here in seventh grade, he did better than at any other school. I would hate to see PVPA become another public school that only teaches to the test.

NH: I've taken a variety of standardized tests and scored high. Taking a test is a skill in itself. There is some information you can't get without "teaching to the test." We had a grade meeting about MCAS and Llama Maynard said that for Biology, we as a school prepare very heavily for this test. I am concerned about the issue of "teaching to the test" and how that influences curriculum and "happiness" in a class.

SG: PVPA's 9th and 10th grade science curricula are more flexible than other schools, and we teach topics in BIO that are not covered on the Biology MCAS. Students can bring this topic to the statewide student council.

It appears that our entering student population is more needy, particularly in math. We ought to be prepared to support all students.

In terms of us being successful in MCAS, it is more about student growth percentage, and less about students achieving advanced or proficient on the test.

Students: Noah Hornick and Rachel Huggett
Student Council has discussed open mic and now there is a monthly all school mandatory open mic.

Student group “Just People” organized a Consent Week about different issues like Safe Sex, Consent and Sexual Assault. We are just starting MCAS season. We are getting into the two months of a lot of shows about to go up. This is our last meeting before the headgear shows on April 1st and 2nd!

Staff: N/A

Motion to adjourn at 7:28

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Melemed