



PROVIDENT CHARTER SCHOOL – WEST
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PROVIDENT CHARTER SCHOOL
September 9, 2025
6:00 PM
HELD AT PROVIDENT CHARTER SCHOOL – WEST AND VIA ZOOM

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT	BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT	OTHERS PRESENT
Dr. Jean Ferketish	David Baker	Maria Paluselli
Sallie Richards	Mike Brady	Dr. Rachel Owens*
Dan Sponseller		David Mongillo
Julie Shepard		Vivi Besteman
Dan Lynch*		
Terry Smith*		
Curtis Kossman*		
Sheila Conway*		

*Via Zoom

The meeting was preceded by a tour of the PCS West campus, from 5:00 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.

Curtis Kossman convened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Election of Board Member

Maria Paluselli shared that Julie Shepard, Senior Manager of Development and Events with the Pittsburgh Promise, will be joining the PCS Board. The Board introduced themselves to Ms. Shepard and expressed their excitement for her tenure on the Board.

ACTION: Upon motion by Dan Sponseller, seconded by Dr. Jean Ferketish, the appointment of Julie Shepard to the PCS Board of Directors was unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the August 12, 2025 meeting were reviewed by the Board.

ACTION: Upon motion by Curtis Kossman, seconded by Dan Sponseller, the August 12, 2025 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

School Operations & Facilities Update

Travel Reimbursement Policy

Maria Paluselli reviewed revisions to the Travel Reimbursement Policy, which was initially presented to the Board for review during the August Board Meeting. Ms. Paluselli indicated that pursuant to the recommendations made during that meeting, the policy was updated to clarify the specific situations in which employees will receive their daily rate in addition to travel expense reimbursements for summer professional learning that takes place out of state. The revised policy provides that whether or not an employee receives their daily rate depends on whether the school administration requires them to attend training (daily rate received) versus whether the employee voluntarily requests to attend (no daily rate received).

ACTION: Upon motion by Shiela Conway, seconded by Dan Sponseller, the updated Travel Reimbursement Policy was unanimously approved.

Enrollment & Hiring Reports

Enrollment and Demographics Report

Maria Paluselli shared that as of September 2025, there are 87 students currently enrolled for the 2025-2026 school year, and one student who is in the process of enrolling, for a total of 88 students. Ms. Paluselli shared that the student who is in the process of enrolling is new to Pittsburgh (from New York originally) and first became introduced to PCS during a 2024 Halloween event.

In addition, Ms. Paluselli shared the 2025-2026 demographics for PCS West, highlighting that 69% of students are special education students and 59.7% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch. With respect to race, 84% of students identify as White; 9.9% as mixed-race; 3.7% as Asian; and 2.5% as Black. The Board discussed the possibility of broadening the network of psychologists at PCS to assist with assessing new students for IEPs in order to ensure that they receive speech, occupational therapy, and other necessary services.

Hiring Report

Maria Paluselli reviewed the monthly hiring report. There were four salaried new hires to report, including Alanna Bell, Third Grade Teacher; Christopher Galiszewski, Sixth Grade ELA/SS Teacher; Anna Korezeniewski (Duncan), Sixth Grade Math/Science Teacher; and Alison Russo, Fifth Grade ELA/SS Teacher. There were no temporary new hires to report. There was one hourly new hire to report, Amber D'Addio, Day-to-Day Substitute.

Additionally, there were three promotions/role changes to report, including Jessica Patterson, from PT Music Teacher to FT Music Teacher; Janet Szarejko-Miller, from PCS Central Fourth Grade Math/Science Teacher to PCS West Fourth Grade Math/Science Teacher; and Elaina Tkaczenko, from PCS Central Special Education Teacher to PCS West Interventionist. There was one separation to report, for the position of Technology Specialist.

ACTION: Upon motion by Dan Sponseller, seconded by Dr. Jean Ferketish, the September Hiring Report was unanimously approved.

Finance Report & Vendor Purchases

Finance Report

Maria Paluselli presented the financial report for August 2025. Of note, Ms. Paluselli highlighted that there is a significant accounts receivable figure due to the outstanding payments due from school districts as a result of the state budget impasse. Ms. Paluselli shared that over the summer there were significant draws on the line of credit with First Commonwealth Bank in order to cover necessary operational expenses impacted by the lack of funding during the budget impasse.

ACTION: Upon motion by Curtis Kossman, seconded by Dan Sponseller, the finance report for August 2025 was unanimously approved.

Vendor Purchases

Maria Paluselli presented the vendor purchases for August 2025. The vendor purchases were ordinary and routine. Ms. Paluselli noted that the schools have been sensitive to spending during the period of the state budget impasse.

ACTION: Upon motion by Dan Sponseller, seconded by Dr. Jean Ferketish, the vendor purchases for August 2025 were unanimously approved.

Other

2024-2025 Family Surveys

Maria Paluselli provided an overview of the 2024-2025 end-of-year family surveys, sharing that for PCS West, 26 individuals participated in the survey (up from 23 the previous year). Overall, 100% of survey participants reported that they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their experience at PCS West. The open-ended comments to the survey identified several opportunities for growth, including adjusted meeting times to make family participation easier; the possibility of adding a kindergarten program to the school; and the addition of more outdoor activities for students.

Foundation Grant Update

Maria Paluselli shared with the Board that the PCS Foundation was recently the recipient of a \$250K grant from the Eden Hall Foundation. Ms. Paluselli indicated that the grant was originally requested as a way to fund the curriculum initiatives being explored by the PCS Foundation, and was intended to be restricted to that purpose. However, as the relationship with Eden Hall developed, it was decided that the use of the grant would be expanded to support operations at the schools. Dr. Jean Ferketish suggested that the Board should host a tour of PCS Central for Eden Hall in October (Dyslexia Awareness Month), in order to showcase some of the exciting opportunities that PCS has to offer.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.