



PROVIDENT CHARTER SCHOOL – CENTRAL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PROVIDENT CHARTER SCHOOL
August 12, 2025
6:00 PM
HELD AT PROVIDENT CHARTER SCHOOL – CENTRAL AND VIA ZOOM

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT	BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT	OTHERS PRESENT
Dr. Jean Ferketish	Dan Sponseller	Maria Paluselli
David Baker	Mike Brady	Dr. Rachel Owens
Sallie Richards		Alan Shuckrow
Dan Lynch*		David Mongillo
Terry Smith*		Vivi Besteman
Curtis Kossman*		Darlene Brown*
Sheila Conway		Kala Williamson (Food Services Manager)
		Brittany Herbert (Director of Pupil Services)

*Via Zoom

The meeting was preceded by a recognition ceremony and reception for Connie Joseph, former Principal of PCS Central and West, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Maria Paluselli convened the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

Executive Session

At 6:02 p.m. the Board went into executive session to discuss an attorney-client privileged legal issue. The Board exited executive session at 6:18 p.m.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the June 10, 2025 meeting were reviewed by the Board.

ACTION: Upon motion by Shiela Conway, seconded by Dr. Jean Ferketish, the June 10, 2025 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

School Operations & Facilities Update

Updated Policies for 2025-2026 School Year

Uniform Policy

Maria Paluselli reviewed updates to the PCS Uniform Policy, most notably that black and gray were added to the approved uniform colors for the school.

ACTION: Upon motion by David Baker, seconded by Dr. Jean Ferketish, the updated Uniform Policy was unanimously approved.

Personal Device Policy

Maria Paluselli reviewed updates to the PCS Personal Device Policy, most notably that prohibitions regarding student use of personal devices during the school day was expanded to include a variety of electronic devices (e.g., ear buds, smartwatches, tablets and laptops) in addition to cellphones.

ACTION: Upon motion by Curtis Kossman, seconded by Shiela Conway, the updated Personal Device Policy was unanimously approved.

Travel Reimbursement Policy

Maria Paluselli reviewed updates to the PCS Travel Reimbursement Policy, including a new provision which applies to employees who consistently elect to lodge with friends or family rather than at commercial lodging facilities while traveling for work-related matters. The new provision allows the friends and family to be reimbursed at a rate of \$80 per night, up to \$2K per year, for hosting the employee.

In addition, Ms. Paluselli noted that language was added with respect to additional compensation (daily rate) to be provided along with other reasonable travel expense reimbursements for summer professional learning that takes place out of state. There was some ambiguity regarding the specific situations in which employees will receive their daily rate in addition to travel expense reimbursements while traveling for such trainings, and Ms. Paluselli indicated that the policy will be further revised to clarify 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). The further revised policy will be presented to the Board for vote at the next meeting.

Charter Renewal for 2025-2030

Maria Paluselli updated the Board that PCS Central received its Renewal Charter for 2025-2030 following the Pittsburgh Public Schools vote to approve reauthorization in June. The Board noted that this is PCS Central's second renewal, which is a significant accomplishment. Alan Shuckrow provided an overview of the changes in the Renewal Charter as compared to the prior agreement (for example, language specifying certain standardized testing performance targets for students was removed), noting that overall there were no matters of concern.

ACTION: Upon motion by Shiela Conway, seconded by David Baker, the Renewal Charter for 2025-2030 was unanimously approved.

Elevator Proposals

Maria Paluselli shared materials regarding the PCS Central elevator project which will improve accessibility either (i) within the main building of the school (single elevator only plan) or (ii) both in the main building and the annex (elevator with connector plan). Ms. Paluselli noted that these materials had been previously circulated to the Board for review, and highlighted the cost difference between the two proposals, with the single elevator only plan estimated at \$533K as of April 2025 and the elevator with connector plan estimated at \$1.153M as of March 2025. Ms. Paluselli asked the Board to consider the benefits of each proposal. The Board discussed that while the single elevator only plan is less expensive in the short term, the elevator with connector will service both school buildings, representing a more forward thinking approach which will not only provide maximum accessibility for students and staff but will also allow for broader programming opportunities.

ACTION: Upon motion by David Baker, seconded by Dr. Jean Ferketish, the elevator with connector plan was unanimously approved.

Enrollment & Hiring Reports

Enrollment Report

Maria Paluselli shared that projected enrollment for the 2025-2026 school year is 336 students. There are currently 253 existing students advancing to the next grade level; 61 enrolled; 5 in the enrollment process; and 50 waitlisted for the upcoming school year. There are 17 available seats for the upcoming school year, with most of those seats (15) available in second grade.

Hiring Report

Maria Paluselli reviewed the monthly hiring report. There were three salaried new hires to report, including Jennifer Karpa, Special Education Coordinator; Jennie Smith, Classroom Environment Coordinator; and Sara Walker, Business Services and Administrative Assistant. There was one temporary new hire to report, Mason Stewart, Summer Maintenance Worker. There were no hourly new hires to report.

Additionally, there were three promotions/role changes to report, including Lisa Auther, from 200 day EE to 260 day EE; Damian Farrall, from Computer Science Teacher (200 day) to Data Specialist (260 day); and La'Shawna McHenry, from PT Business Services to FT Executive Assistant. There were five total separations to report, including a 5th Grade ELA/SS Teacher; Resource Room SPED Teacher; Behavior Specialist; Speech and Language Pathologist; and Interventionist.

ACTION: Upon motion by Curtis Kossman, seconded by David Baker, the August Hiring Report was unanimously approved.

Finance Report & Vendor Purchases

Finance Report

Maria Paluselli presented the financial report for June-July 2025. Of note, Ms. Paluselli indicated that the Balance Sheet as of June 30, 2025 reflects an amount due from PCS West which is slightly less than the budgeted figure. With respect to Bank Balances, Ms. Paluselli noted a General Fund Balance of \$1.167M as of July 31, 2025, and an Investment Account Balance of \$3.949M as of July 31, 2025. The Board discussed setting up a follow up conversation with First Commonwealth Bank with respect to the Investment Account, recalling a prior recommendation to add between 20-30% stock exposure to the investment portfolio (*see* April 8, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes).

ACTION: Upon motion by Curtis Kossman, seconded by Shiela Conway, the finance report for June-July 2025 was unanimously approved.

Vendor Purchases

Darlene Brown presented the vendor purchases for June-July 2025. Of note, Ms. Brown highlighted a significant payment, in the amount of \$17K, which represents the final payment for the security vestibule at PCS Central. The vendor purchases were otherwise ordinary and routine.

ACTION: Upon motion by Curtis Kossman, seconded by David Baker, the vendor purchases for June-July 2025 were unanimously approved.

Special Education Due Process Claim

Maria Paluselli and David Mongillo reviewed the details of a recently settled special education due process claim with the Board.

ACTION: Upon motion by Curtis Kossman, seconded by Dan Lynch, the special education due process claim settlement was unanimously approved.

Other

International Trip 2026

Dr. Rachel Owens provided an update on the upcoming international trip for students, which will take place in London during the summer of 2026. Dr. Owens shared that a PCS employee has a family foundation which has previously donated to the school's music program and is now interested in making donations to support the international trip. The foundation made an initial donation in the amount of \$10K to support the trip, and has expressed a commitment to donate another \$10K provided that PCS can match that donation through fundraising efforts (with students actively participating in those efforts). PCS will be hosting fundraisers periodically up until January 1, 2026 to raise money for the donation match opportunity. Dr. Owens shared that a car wash fundraiser recently took place which raised \$700 towards this goal.

Ten Year Anniversary

Dr. Rachel Owens shared that PCS will celebrate its 10 year anniversary during the upcoming 2025-2026 school year. As part of the celebration, t-shirts will be created and distributed to staff.

Distinguished Alumni Recognition

Alan Shuckrow shared that Maria Paluselli was recently named the recipient of the North Allegheny Distinguished Alumni Award in Education. A gala will take place on January 22, 2026 to honor award recipients. The Board congratulated Ms. Paluselli on this honorable and prestigious accomplishment.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Curtis Kossman at 7:10 p.m.