

## COLLABORATION CARING INTEGRITY

We hear and value multiple perspectives · We are comfortable being uncomfortable · We act responsibly. We are accountable for our actions · We give our most · We reflect on our vision mission values

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### Palouse Prairie Educational Organization Doing business as Palouse Prairie School of Expeditionary Learning Workshop Meeting

Feb 9, 2012 7-9:00 PM

Location: Palouse Prairie School Building, 1500 Levick St, Moscow ID

Board Members Attending: Jennifer Whitney (JW), Brian Gardner (BG), Nils Peterson (NP), Joseph Erhard-Hudson (JEH), Lydia Stewart (LS), Ivan Wright (IW)

Teacher Representative: Jacob Ellsworth

Director: Summer Clayton

Absent: None

Public: Kristen LaPaglia, Amy Ball, Joseph Pallen, Amy Desrosier, Judy Sobeloff, Fred Gittes, Rhonda Brooks, Paula Karr, Lizzie Bromley-Vogel, Jeneille Branen, Ariana Murphy, Kathryn Bonzo, Bethany Gallo, Greg Larson

Note Taker: Jennifer Whitney

### Call to Order

#### **Reading** from The Five Dysfunctions of Charter School Boards by Brian L. Carpenter

*"The difference between managing and governing a school is like the difference between coaching an NFL football team and owning one.*

*Although it's not a perfect analogy, in football, a coach is hired by the owners to run the team—and he's held accountable on the basis of the team's performance. There is no such thing as a successful coach without a winning team. With perhaps a notable exception or two, the owners of the team do not tell the coach which plays to call or otherwise how to do his job. ...*

*The head administrator should be evaluated by the board as to how well he or she is achieving the objectives of the board, just as a football coach is evaluated according to the objectives of the owner. In essence, the board says what it wants; the management determines how to achieve it (within board defined limits).*

*Whenever a board performs the roles, tasks or responsibilities of management, it becomes dysfunctional."*

#### 1. Approval of Published Agenda for this meeting

*Approval of agenda as written, or approval of modified agenda including reasons for modification.*

**JW moved to approve with addition of an executive session to consider personnel issues added as item 10, BG seconded, unanimous approval.**

#### 2. Welcome to public audience and guests (5 min)

*We welcome our guests to this evening's Palouse Prairie School board meeting. The goal for this meeting is to meet our vision of an inclusive environment, our legal requirements, and our practical need to accomplish business in an efficient manner. There is a place later in the meeting for public comments. If you wish to have an item added to our agenda, please see the Board Chair.*

#### 3. Announcements

### 3.1 Status of Recruiting New Board Members

Ivan reported having gotten a couple new names, so we'll be looking at those plus our donor list.

## 4. Presentation

*Presentations should be scheduled in advance with the Board Chair. Participation by students is encouraged.*

4.1 Reflection by Parents on Math Curriculum (**Amy Ball, Kirsten LaPaglia, Judy Sobeloff**) **Math Acceleration as it pertains to dual enrollment. See attached document. Think that if this could be addressed satisfactorily, then this could reduce parent interest in considering dual enrollment. Also, an official school policy would help with inconsistencies in the ways teachers address this issue, and allow kids to have continuing and consistent expectations throughout their years at PPSEL. Parents are also willing to assist in making an additional focus on math happen.**

4.2 Report on Nils' visit to Pocatello Community Charter (an EL School)  
**Nils says he is gaining great insights by seeing other charter schools and is bringing several ideas from Pocatello to be considered at PPSEL**

## 5. Approval of minutes (10 min)

5.1 Approve minutes from Jan 26, 2012 [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1F\\_26\\_U8q2afv3Lte\\_nJ1gdMbW3rRHsktnlf3ZII29dA/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1F_26_U8q2afv3Lte_nJ1gdMbW3rRHsktnlf3ZII29dA/edit)

**JEH moved to approve, LS seconded, unanimous**

## 6. Public Comment Period (limit 15 minutes)

*At this point in the agenda, members of the public are welcome to come forward, identify themselves (name and address) and speak on any topic relevant to tonight's agenda. The time allotted for a speaker is three minutes. The Board will refrain from responding beyond asking for a clarification. The comments presented at this time will be reviewed by the Board.*

## 7. Workshop

### 7.1 Public Comment on Dual Enrollment, Absences and Tardiness

*Dual enrollment is the practice of a student enrolling in more than one school. The Board is gathering input prior to drafting policy regarding this practice.*

**Brief discussion on the definition of dual enrollment, and a clarification that dual enrollment is defined for PPSEL as "attending part-time or enrolled part-time at PPSEL".**

**Amy Ball--dual enrollment is an option she is considering for one of her children. 2 concerns, 1, felt that her child was significantly under-challenged in math 2. concerned that the board felt that parents didn't understand the collaborative nature and culture of the school and classrooms, and wanted to reassure that they did.**

**Ariana agreed that her child is not being challenged and would like to find a solution, but would prefer her child to stay here. Wondered if math was the main reason for dual enrollment.**

**Fred--our goal should be that students from other schools should wish to dual enroll here for math.**

**Kirsten--Luna's new rules allow middle schools to legally offer classes that provide high school credit. We could be the "go to" school to offer this unique option in our community. Also, would like to see that one**

expedition per year include math.

Judy--Moscow school district changing junior high to a middle school that includes sixth grade and bumps ninth grade to the high school. For students/families not prepared for this change, PPSEL offers a great environment that could provide another option for families and students. Ivan--House approved today a program called 8 in 6 to allow kids to move through school faster.

Ivan reading on behalf of Jessica Williams (his wife) (see attached) Summer has not heard input from the board in order to create a draft policy yet. Nils suggests we engage in a discussion session at the next meeting, prior to making a decision on whether to ask Summer to draft a policy.

7.2 Public Comment on Budget Cutting Options

*For a variety of reasons, the school will spend about \$100,000 more than its revenues in 2011-12. This is not sustainable. The Board will listen to suggestions of ways reduce expenses. This is advisory to the Director beginning the budget creation process for 2012-13.*

**We have currently adopted a budget that spends down \$100,000 of carry forward. We have clear direction from our auditor and the Charter Commission that we need cut the budget and bring expenses in line with revenues.**

**Kirsten--potentially cutting down on janitorial costs**

**Amy--consider a larger 5/6 class instead of 2 smaller 5/6 classes.**

**Kirsten--1. benefit financially to move kids grades 2. great books and curriculum, so perhaps not spend more on that.**

**Nils--we could cut our \$45,000 in direct costs to EL and \$10,000 on travel costs and related expenses for professional development**

**Summer--for the amount we pay our teachers, she's not sure they will all come back next year. If we keep all our staff, we could get away without the EL contract, but if any leave, then we will need the contract to do more training.**

**Jacob--teachers feel like they are already on a bare-bones budget, and teachers feel the weight of no increase in salary and not structured assurance for pay increases.**

**Judy--feels like the contract with EL was the beating heart of our school, and that Renaissance's failure was potentially due to the lack of it.**

**Summer--our school's implementation of EL is very mature for our schools' young age**

**Lydia--busing may be an item to cut**

**Joseph--if we lost 2.5 kids due to loss of busing, it would equal the amount we would have saved.**

**Jennifer--concerned loss of busing would make the school only available for those that can afford to drive their kids.**

**Kirsten--even though she was in full commitment to the EL contract, she doesn't see there were be any detriment to not doing the contract for a year.**

**Summer--we have a projected \$55,000 loss next year.**

**Ivan--possibility of splitting grades even further include a 4/5 and a 6/7.**

8. Action Items

8.1 Ratify Survey for Director's Annual Review see

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1X5vxsYBQzDiGHRNC5OeTLNrp58euu6rIUevY6DPTjKQ/edit>

**LS moved to approve, JEH seconded, unanimous with 2 abstentions (BG& JW).**

8.2 Discuss Creation of an Advisory Board, see this drafted in 2009

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SwnWfdvDeR4vsLmGsUY9-Q0Fs\\_aZqquVnkzbraLJFI8/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SwnWfdvDeR4vsLmGsUY9-Q0Fs_aZqquVnkzbraLJFI8/edit)

**We think there are benefits to doing this, but there is some concern about over extending ourselves.**

9. Other items

*Committee reports, announcements and other non-business items that the Board needs to discuss.*

Fundraising tasks from last meeting

- Letter to donors (core of document to later be customized) - Brian, Ivan, Gregory **1st draft is ready for review, waiting for feedback, thought it would also be good to include successes this year. BG, IW & Greg Larson will review and send thoughts, and edited draft to Nils and Summer by next Fri.**
- Grandparent Kit - Jen, Lydia  
**Jen asked for a list of past and suggested grandparent donors so they could get an idea of the audience. We will then adapt the finalized letter with a grandparent angle.**
- High Donor Plan - Nils, Joseph **Decided to start with 2 donors right off, and then move to others, but this would allow us to focus our attentions.**

10. Executive Session to address a personnel issue

Item 1

- Discussed the importance and the procedure for privacy around staffs' personal lives.

Item 2

- Board will draft a letter to our landlord to include: defining the relationship between the school's executive and the landlord, presenting mechanisms for payments and coordination of maintenance activities for the building, and requesting that these be revised into lease. PPSEL will pay Dec-Jun of insurance premium (through the end of this fiscal year), then commence monthly installments as per the lease.

**2011-2012 Board of Directors**

Nils Peterson, Chair (term ends 2013)

Joseph Erhard-Hudson, Vice Char (term ends 2013)

Brian Gardner, Treasurer (term ends 2014)

Ivan Wright, co-Secretary (term ends 2012)

Jennifer Whitney, co-Secretary (term ends 2014)

Lydia Stewart, Member (term ends 2012)

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Presentation Attachment:

## Proposal for Increased Mobility and Advancement in Math for Students at Palouse Prairie School

**ISSUE:** A number of parents are concerned that their children are not being appropriately challenged in math. We appreciate that the current math curriculum emphasizes problem solving, critical thinking, deep understanding of mathematical concepts, and opportunities for students to work collaboratively. However, we are concerned that many students are not receiving appropriately advanced material. There is currently no systematic means by which students at PPSEL are assessed for concept mastery and are allowed to advance either within or between grade levels. Some families have become so frustrated by this problem that they are seeking options such as dual enrollment for math while other families have simply withdrawn their children from the school. We also find it concerning that PPSEL seems to be gaining a reputation in the community as not being academically challenging.

**PROPOSAL:** We would like the board to adopt a policy addressing and correcting these concerns. Further we ask that the board ask the school director to implement procedures and school structures that ensure that every PPSEL student is allowed to progress to his/her full potential in mathematics. We respect that the board will need to consider the input of all stakeholders and the opinion and expertise of the school director before crafting any policy (or choosing not to do so). We request that the following elements should be included in any policy:

Students will be advanced within or between grade levels so that they are appropriately challenged in math. In other words, a 1st grader who is assessed in September at 2nd grade level in Math would work with the 2nd grade students. A 4th grader who is assessed in September at the mid-4th grade level would be allowed to work on math from mid-4th grade material onward and not be forced to review concepts that have already been mastered.

PPSEL will standardize procedures governing student advancement or retention in math. Currently this issue is left to the discretion of each teacher which leads to inconsistencies and creates expectations among parents and students which may be met from year to year.

PPSEL will adopt and routinely use assessments to place students into math material that is both appropriate and challenging. These assessments need to reflect the school's math curriculum. Current math assessments, their results, and their use in student placement need to be transparent to student and parent.

The school will adopt synchronous blocking of math across all grade levels. This will facilitate students' ability to move between classrooms for math instruction.

Teachers will incorporate a math component into at least one Expedition per school year.

**BENEFITS:** There will be many benefits to this comprehensive policy governing math advancement at PPSEL.

PPSEL students will be provided with an education that more closely reflects the vision, values, mission, and charter of the school.

PPSEL teachers are hard-working, dedicated, and deeply invested in meeting the needs of their students. Expeditionary Learning requires a large investment of time and training on the part of teachers. We understand that it would be easier for them to pull out a day's worth of worksheets each morning, and we deeply appreciate that this is not how they teach. PPSEL teachers need and deserve the support of the board, administrator, parents, and community in the form of policy, structures, and resources to be able to help the broad range of students in their classrooms. We believe that the proposed policy will enable students to receive the appropriate level of math instruction without overburdening the teachers.

As students progress in their education they will be expected to learn increasingly challenging material in significantly larger amounts. We are concerned that chronically under-challenged students will fail to develop the work ethic and/or strategies needed to succeed when eventually faced with work that stretches them intellectually. By providing challenging math to every student PPSEL will ensure that every child develops the skills needed for future success.

This policy would begin to address the state-mandated requirement for "an appropriate education that provides educational interventions which sustain challenge and ensure continued growth within the public school system" without being a complete gifted and talented program.

Parents currently concerned for their children's math education and choosing to consider options such as dual enrollment will likely be encouraged to instead work within the PPSEL system thereby alleviation logistical and monetary concerns.

**RESOURCES:** We acknowledge that the measures outlined in our proposal may be challenging to implement. We offer our sincere commitment to the board and the director to work collaboratively to overcome these challenges. Specifically we offer the following suggestions:

Where appropriate, parent or community volunteers may be used to work with small groups of students on more advanced or otherwise more challenging math.

Parents will contribute financially through donations and fundraising efforts to help offset any staffing or curricular costs.

Resources such as online course enrollment could be used to meet the needs of math students who have advanced beyond the 8th grade. For example, Idaho Digital Learning Academy ([www.idahodigitallearning.org](http://www.idahodigitallearning.org)) offers low cost (\$75 for Idaho public school students per course, scholarships available) math courses for upper grade students.

Students may work with free or low cost resources such as Exemplars (<http://www.exemplars.com>), academic competitions, or online math enrichment programs such as Khan Academy (<http://www.khanacademy.org/>) and Apangea

Math (<http://apangea.com/>).

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Attached Written Public Comment Read During Meeting

I would like to make a brief statement regarding the topic of dual-enrollment. I am very concerned it will cause detriment not only to the student, parent, and teacher crew, but also to the individual student.

I urge parents to consider the negative impact dual-enrollment may have on THEIR child. PPSEL is designed to promote a child's academic and social growth both through individual work AND the amazing work that can be accomplished by working as a CREW. I don't think we as parents can compartmentalize children's days entirely by subject matter, the day is collaborative. I am truly concerned your child may not truly feel like part of the PPSEL crew if they miss any portion of the day.

Dual-enrollment is sending the wrong message to both students and parents. It will be disruptive and disrespectful to all involved.

I understand some parents may feel that their child's needs are not being met. My child has VERY individual needs. The PPSEL teacher crew has worked incredibly hard to tailor his education to meet these needs.

We truly have an AMAZING group of parents, teachers, and students. We all have the same goal; to provide our children with and exemplary education. Let's work together, communicate, and make a plan. If we divide we will not conquer!

Feel free to email me at [jess.a.schaefer@gmail.com](mailto:jess.a.schaefer@gmail.com)