

COLLABORATION CARING INTEGRITY

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

10/28/2013:

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

Current Board: Brian Gardner (BG)      Directors: Jacob Ellsworth (JE)  
Della Bayly (DB)                              Jeneille Branen (JB)  
Sarah Deming (SD)  
Amy Ball (AB)  
Todd Broadman (TB)  
Greg Larson (GL)

**Meeting called to order at 7:10 pm.**

Attending: BG, DB, SD, AB, TB, GL

Absent:

Public: Cade Konen, JE, Rhonda Brooks

Note Taker: GL

1. Welcome to public audience and guests (5 min)

2. *Approval of agenda*

DB moves, AB seconds

unanimous "in favor"

3. *Presentations & Reports (30 minutes total)*

3.1 General report on status of the school (Branen/Ellsworth)

- JE reports that the school's rapid improvement plan has been accepted by the SBOE.
- JE has discovered an error that will be subject to the federal program audit on 10/29. Last spring the school reported that it has an after-school program that fulfills the requirements for a Title 1 program, but JE finds the school insufficient in meeting this requirement. For students on the Federal program, the school should have in place an after school program in session 2x per week for two hours per session, for 28 weeks of the school year. The full school year is 37 weeks long.
- In consultation with the PPSEL accountant, co-directors are developing a plan which could satisfy the federal requirement and be implemented in time for a 28 week session.

- JE has identified poor organization and documentation in the school's employee files, has organized and audited the files and expects missing documentation to be supplied by personnel within the next two weeks.
- JE reports that he is in contact with Summit Charter School in Spokane, a school which he feels he will be able to learn from.
- JE reviews Americorps status: with sequestration and federal funding difficulties, our Americorps position has been quit. The former Americorps volunteer is now hired by PPSEL and is fulfilling many important functions at the school, many duties in the Kindergarten classroom, as well as helping proctor standardized testing.
- JE notes that the school has inadequate financial policies and recommends that the Board focus on creating financial policies.

### 3.2 Report on ADA to date (Ellsworth)

The school's ADA is higher than anticipated in last year's projections. If the ADA stays this high, it will help the school's financial position

## 4. Announcements (10 minutes)

### 4.1 ICSN regional meeting in CDA on Nov 11 (Gardner)

BG, AB, and SD expect to attend the event

### 4.2 Reminder: next staff business meeting on Nov 5 (Gardner)

### 4.3 Report minor changes to Rebekka Boysen contract (Gardner/Ellsworth).

There is a discrepancy in the wage amount typed in RB's contract: it is spelled out differently than indicated by numerals. This error is being corrected and RB is expected to sign the corrected copy.

## 5. Approval of minutes (10 minutes)

### 5.1 Approve minutes from 10/14/2013

[https://docs.google.com/a/palouseprairieschool.org/document/d/1ri8ITebf56DT3TTp3RmJGU9aFkw0orUXQXpfXH80LYA/edit?usp=drive\\_web](https://docs.google.com/a/palouseprairieschool.org/document/d/1ri8ITebf56DT3TTp3RmJGU9aFkw0orUXQXpfXH80LYA/edit?usp=drive_web)

SD moves to approve

TB seconds

unanimous "in favor"

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

Rhonda Brooks reports that this school year has gotten off to a very nice start, she has a high opinion of the two Directors' leadership, she feels that the teachers are receiving excellent support from the directors.

## 7. Action Items (15 minutes)

### 7.1 Consent Agenda

7.1.A. Approve September financial statements

BG and SD reviewed these statements with Debbie Berkana.

DB moves to approve

AB seconds

Unanimous "in favor"

7.2 Auditor's report for FY2013 (Kade Konenn)

*Mr. Cade Konen, independent auditor with Hayden Ross, will attend and give his report on the financial audit of PPSEL for the past fiscal year (Jul2012-Jun2013).*

Mr. Konen reports that the school increased its fund balance last fiscal year. He states that this is an important indicator of the schools financial health, and it is one of the SBOE's means of measuring the financial health of a school.

Mr. Konen states that we are the only district out of 23 that his firm audits which had a fund balance increase last year. PPSEL's minimum fund balance Mr. Konen estimates would be around \$80K. PPSEL now has a \$260K fund balance.

Mr. Konen urges PPSEL to develop a system of "Internal Controls" to provide our accountant Debbie Berkana with backup, a system to double-check her results which would relieve her of the singular responsibility for all accounting results, and help prevent errors.

Mr. Konen identifies two priority areas for the implementation of Internal Controls: Payroll and Accounts Payable.

Mr. Konen exhorts the Board and the Director of Operations to become versed in the financial mechanics of running a charter school. In Idaho, the relevant financial reporting model is known as "IFARMS."

Mr. Konen states that many charter schools have two Board members who have a professional background in finance/accounting, and that these members provide for many of the Internal Controls.

Mr. Konen states that the Internal Controls should best be developed by the Board and the Director of Operations, without relying on the accountant, who should not be given the responsibility of designing a system to double-check herself.

Mr. Konen reports positively on the schools "Instruction to Support Services ratio." PPSEL spends roughly twice as much on Instruction as it does on support services, for a ratio of 2:1. When this ratio becomes nearer to 1:1, it signals that a school is failing.

DB moves to approve the Auditor's report for FY2013

TB seconds the motion

unanimous vote "in favor"

### 7.3 Completion of Strategic Plan

*Discuss and arrive at a consensus for adding detail to Strategic plan elements.*

BG would like the board to decide on whether to workshop the final Strategic Plan as a whole, or whether to assign the drafting of a plan to a subset of the board.

TB offers to communicate with JE in order to get JE's perspective/goals as an administrator and an experienced teacher included in the Strategic Plan.

TB and BG review the Board's goal of using measurement tools/metrics which the school is already using/required to use in order to evaluate school progress on the strategic plan.

AB would like a copy of the final document produced by the strategic planning committee to be made available to Board members, GL will make it available.

GL requests more input from experts as the Board moves forward

BG states that he will invite as expert Jessica Bearman to attend Board meeting of November 11 to work on the Strategic Plan.

## 8. Workshops

8.1 Fundraising: confirm meeting with Dick Boysen on Nov 1

collect questions: Board members will email questions to BG.

discuss need/content of letter to families re fundraising effort. There will be a communication to families announcing the "Buy Local Moscow" holiday fundraiser.

SD expresses doubts that this communication would be an appropriate place to insert a more general fundraising letter: a focused and simple ask for families to participate in this fundraiser will keep the amount of our 'asking' at a palatable level for families.

review example fundraisers from Todd B.

AB would like to gather input from local non-profits about their experiences: what is an appropriate 'ticket price' to a fundraiser in Moscow? It will be different from the 'ticket price' of a large wealthy urban area.

DB states that she is familiar with two Pullman based nonprofits who have over the years created successful fundraisers. She will contact them and ask for input.

**Meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm.**

#### 2013-2014 Board of Directors

Brian Gardner, Chair, term expires 2014

Della Bayly, term expires 2014

Sarah Deming, Treasurer, term expires 2015

Amy Ball, term expires 2015

Todd Broadman, Vice-Chair, term expires 2016

Greg Larson, Secretary, term expires 2016