

**Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the
Illinois State Charter School Commission
And the Prairie Crossing Charter School Board**

Monday, February 13, 2012

2:10 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Prairie Crossing Charter School, Byron Barn, 1571 Jones Point Road, Grayslake, Illinois 60030

- A. Commission Chair Greg Richmond called the Meeting to order at 2:10 p.m., and thanked the Prairie Crossing Charter School Board and staff for hosting the Commission's meeting. The Commissioners introduced themselves to the PCCS leaders and to the audience.
1. Present in Person: Glen Barton, Sean Denney, Jaime Guzman, Mike Jacoby, Angela Rudolph, Paul Swanstrom, Rudy Valdez, Chair Richmond. Absent: Patricia Van Pelt Watkins.
 2. The Board members of PCCS introduced themselves: Steve Achtemeier, Tom Keenan, Sean Daw, Dr. Eric Hebert, Brian Shamash, Dean Thorson, and Nigel Whittington, Executive Director.
 3. All present rose and said the pledge of allegiance.
- B. Discussion Section of the Agenda
1. Chair Richmond thanked the PCCS community for leading the Commissioners on tours of the school earlier in the afternoon, and praised the PCCS school as very impressive, especially in its environmental aspects. The Chair provided background regarding the Commission and its role in serving as an authorizer of PCCS and Southland as of July 1, 2012, indicating that the Commission intended to work with the PCCS community in facilitating a transfer plan. The Chair solicited the thoughts of the PCCS leaders as to what was working well, and what might be improved in the future, in terms of authorizer/school relationships.
 2. PCCS Board President Achtemeier thanked the Commission for visiting PCCS, and noted that the prep visit by staff was also helpful in understanding the Commission and its goals. Achtemeier noted that the school wanted to continue to be as innovative as possible, and that the PCCS community had a great deal of expertise that it would be happy to share with the Commission going forward, as well as with new charter schools just starting up.
 3. PCCS Executive Director Whittington spoke regarding funding concerns, especially regarding the potential imposition of a fee of up to 3%. Further, Whittington suggested that longer terms of renewal, such as for 10 years, might be considered for schools like PCCS already in existence for 12 years, as this would help in obtaining bank financing for school projects. Whittington also noted that PCCS had maintained a good working relationship with ISBE in terms of the services that were or were not provided.
 4. Commissioner Barton encouraged the PCCS leaders to identify the ways in which the school felt constrained by local requirements, though authorized by ISBE. Achtemeier noted constraints around identifying donors. Members of both PCCS and the Commission discussed the range in Illinois law of 75% to 125% of per capita tuition, and how the particular percentage afforded to each charter school was determined over time.

5. Commissioner Guzman noted that some states allowed for longer periods of renewal. He encouraged the PCCS leaders to work with the Commission over the next months to consider what changes to the Illinois law might be helpful.
6. Commissioner Valdez praised the engagement of the teachers and students at the school.
7. Commissioner Jacoby asked about attrition and relocation rates. The school leaders indicated that the wait list at the lower grades was larger, and that some attrition occurred due to fit, transportation issues, and family moves.

C. Public Participation

1. Laura Fay, a parent, noted that it was difficult to hear all the comments during the meeting, and encouraged the Commissioners to rearrange the setting so that the audience could hear more readily. Ms. Fay concluded by noting that charter schools can really make a difference.

D. Motion to Adjourn.

1. A motion to adjourn was made, and all present assented.

The Joint Meeting of the PCCS Board and the Commission was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Minutes of Joint Meeting dated March 5, 2012.