



PCCS Board of Director's Meeting
Academic Excellence Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 17th, 2026, at 6:00 PM
Vicky Ranney Library
1571 Jones Point Road Grayslake, IL 60030

Committee Members Present

Matthew Earl
Gabi White

Peyton Schrag

Jenny Jin Diehl Sims

Staff Present

Ms. Ellie Jensen
Mr. Tony Zamiar
Emi (Therapy Dog)

Call to Order –Meeting called to order by Matthew Earl at 6:00PM

Public Comment - None

Discussion Agenda

1. Update on PCCS Therapy Dog Utilization – Ms. Jensen presented a Therapy Dog Utilization review for the committee and was joined Emi (the PCCS Therapy Dog) and Mr. Zamiar. Emi has been with PCCS for coming on 12 months and Ms. Jensen reported successful systematic approach for reserving and/or pairing Emi with students and classes in need. Students can opt out of Therapy Dog utilization, with around 1% opt out rate to date. Emi has been to each classroom over service time, as well as supporting conferences, meetings, etc. There are currently no student plans that require therapy dog support as a condition. No known significant issues with current policy or procedures related to Therapy Dog utilization. Ms. Jensen and Mr. Zamiar will discuss opportunities to expand Therapy Dog resources with curriculum and public facing appearances. Gabi White verified with Mr. Zamiar that the Therapy Dog program is accounted for in the PCCS safety plans. There is an opportunity or PCCS to donate to Canines for Comfort; either in monetary or other means.
2. ISBE 5 Essentials – Mr. Zamiar shared an overview with the committee, including that the 5 Essentials survey has been shared with parents and teachers, and will go out again this week with a reminder to parents. Currently 28 staff members and 92 parents have responded. The committee reviewed some of the questions within the survey with Mr. Zamiar. The 5 Essentials survey was developed and is maintained by the University of Chicago. The plan is for the students to have time designated for completing the survey on 2/23 and 2/24, with make-up opportunities for those who are unable to complete on those dates. The committee appreciated all of the planning and action to date.
3. Electives Feasibility at PCCS – Mr. Zamiar gave the committee an update that Elective options are currently within a feasibility review within PCCS, with several staff members supporting the assessment. If available, it is likely that only grades 6-8 would be within scope, due to complexities related to scheduling and resource availability. Staff would need to be available to take on this additional instruction, K-5 schedules would still be impacted due to multiple shared resources, and administration has engaged with other local schools to discuss how their electives may be operationalized.

4. IAR Assessment Update – Mr. Zamiar shared with the committee that IAR assessments for grades 3-8 is currently planned for week of March 3-10, with planned communication ahead of time. ISA assessments are planned for grades 5 & 8 the week of April 6. Make-up assessments will be made available for those who were not available to complete them at the regularly scheduled windows. In discussion it was noted that some of the assessment software is incompatible with some of the older generation Chromebooks, however the are plans to update / replace those units ahead of time, and a backup plan if needed. Peyton Schrag asked about other assessments, and it was noted that NWA MAP testing is completed in the fall, spring and as needed in the winter seasons.

Action Agenda:

None Slated

New Business

1. CARES / Restorative Practices / Natural Leaders Overview – Committee Member Peyton Schrag recently attended a session centered on the use of Restorative Practices. Restorative Practices themselves are core to PCCS' CARES approach. Jenny Jin Diehl Sims suggested that she would like to have an overview of the Natural Leaders recognition program, which is aligned with the PCCS CARES approach. The AEC will work with Mr. Zamir to have staff present to discuss each of these items and how they coordinate with each other.
2. Spanish Curriculum Overview – Peyton Schrag suggested that the committee invite discussion related to the approach and goals of the current PCCS Spanish program. The committee in turn will collaborate with administration to arrange for a Spanish overview at a following meeting.
3. Canine for Comfort Discussion – The committee wanted to round back to a possible donation initiative for Canines for Comfort, in recognition of Emi (Therapy Dog) coming from Canines for Comfort, and the services rendered to PCCS.

Adjourn – Motion to adjourn by Gabi White, 2nd by Peyton Schrag; All votes aye.

Meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Matthew Earl