

# Valley Inquiry Charter School

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## March Meeting Minutes

May 8, 2024/ Virtual Meeting 5:30

### Board Members

### Instructors/Staff/Other

Board President & Chair	Cammi Carriere
Vice Chair	Terry Rohse
Treasure	BJ Foster
Secretary	Vacant
At-Large	Stephen Staten
At-Large	Ed Austin
At-Large	Vacant
At-Large	Vacant
At-Large	Vacant
Non-Voting Member	Mr. Gary Etchemendy, Principal

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### Meeting Agenda Minutes

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#### 5:35 Call to Order

Request to record meeting. Board members were polled. Terry-no, BJ-could stifle some presenters, Steve and Ed could go either way.

Cammi-no

Meeting would not be recorded.

#### Review/Approve Board Meeting Minutes

Terry moved to approve minutes for April 8. Steve seconded. Approved

Terry moved to approve minutes for April 24. Steve seconded. Approved.

Cammi announced that the Board would meet in executive session: The board of directors of Valley Inquiry School will meet in executive session for the purpose of and held pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2) (f) to consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection.

Representatives of the news media and designated staff and other persons shall be allowed to attend the executive session. All other members are asked to remain in the main zoom meeting room.

Representatives of the news media are specifically directed not to report on any of the deliberations during the executive session, except to state the general subject of the session as previously announced. No decisions will be made in executive session.

At the end of executive session, we will return to open session and welcome the audience to the room.

Reuben would anyone else meet with the board

Cammi Someone from Jordan Ramos

5:40 Executive session

6:20 Board members returned to general session. Short break announced

6:24 Session restarted

Cammi Complaint had been received by email alleging violation  
Board would listen to comments and possibly revote.

I want to start tonight by addressing the student posters incident. I want to apologize personally for my part in the miscommunication that occurred between Gary and I. I feel very strongly that everyone has the right to their first amendment rights, as does the rest of the board.

Gary would monitor list of those who wanted to comment. There would be a 3-minute time limit for speakers.

Steve would handle written testimonies

Ed would take notes

Steve introduced self as parent of 2 children at VICS, on board about 6 months

Set stage for evening. IB heard often, stands for International B.

VICS is an IB school, student led education,

We are here to discuss change to all-charter model

We understand concern, is not considered lightly, want world-class education.

Why charter only? Three principals in last three years, need stable leadership. Gary is appreciated, vital but only here two days a week.

Need permanent long-term solution

IB- aligned to goal, full time, all charter provides condition to succeed.

Two principals? A problem.

Unified charter staff, unified, in line with goals, levels playing field to attract talent.

How to correct inequality? Teachers have opportunity to be part of learning community, growth in staff, committed to philosophy.

Funding: allocation per student from district from state. VICS gets 85% and district keeps 15%. Operate with less funding than regular schools, pursue grants, next year SIA grant will not be available.

Gary SIA grant will continue next year but ESSR) grant is not continuing next year.

Steve Offers autonomy, some freedom from District, invite involvement for our community, set times, day structure.

Address concerns and misinformation:

Standards will not be lowered

Committed to more involvement, building not at risk,

Long-term development, success, more control, not just next year but future.

Expand to K-8

Change never easy, can be disruptive, time is now empathy, respect for all

Committed to bright future

Board has stumbled, taking steps to increase effectiveness, ask for patience, continual help

Improve channels of communication, working on that, would appreciate communication, How best? What works best?

Excited about future, exceeds aspirations of students.

Profound gratitude to all staff, They are more than staff. Family in the community. 50+ turnout, here for staff, Will try to make a fair offer to stay. Stay close to VICS.

Steve Will start with pre-submitted questions. Thanks for all questions, comments. You are engaged, dedicated to community.

Grouped questions. We are concerned all concerns are addressed. 10 categories, 30 questions

Long-term vision?

Be a model IB school, develop global citizens, safety, develop staff, financial stability.

Middle School, preference for alumni, long-term vision, funds?

Not ready, no room, need leadership, not this year. Preference for alumni? Not discussed yet. Need classrooms, funding.

Rationale for April meeting?

Concern for losing good teachers.

Quick! Stability of leadership, inequality of staff.

Aligned with new leader, set up for success.

No comments on this in minutes-has been topic with board.

Why not wait?

District forced to make cuts to 2024-2025 budget. Have announced cuts to teaching staff across District. Could become worse, 24J layoffs, 24J could sell property. VICS charter says we must have a building.

With no building we might have to close school, could create a frantic search for property. We must meet problems now!

Why full charter?

Not primarily financial, best decision not always popular, committed to more involvement.

Alignment with school values, hold to IB values. Without IB values just another school. Litmus test for Board acts in future. Hold Board accountable.

Curriculum change?

Remain IB school, set and develop teacher curriculum. Could see some change. Under new leader.

Class sizes?

Will be controlled, charter can control size. Staff

Will child's teacher change next year?

Always possible. Hope for continuity. Driven by hiring process.

Special needs, IEPs?

Committed for all students, will be supplied by district. Strong partnership, staff will support.

Cammi Time for comments? Terry?

Terry Lays out guidelines: 3 minutes, we will not comment, will listen.

7:06 Reuben G. Has slide presentation. A parent. Focus on future All votes voided. Unlawful, Cites 2019 Attorney General

7:10 Kasey S Saddened but understands. Benefits of IB, few parents have shown up, need strong leadership, support IB leadership-excited, ok to be worried, doesn't mean wrong. Strong leadership can lead staff, not two leaders, scary but has benefits, think about grander picture, attend more meetings, few people at meetings, keep going.

7:13 Ashley M For all-charter but done really fast. No mention in minutes, did not see IB values, teachers will need training, expensive, lots of work for new teachers too fast, how will schools work? We love teachers, allow opportunity for son.

7:16 Garick W We thought it was full-charter, didn't matter a lot of the time. Single leadership so good for unity, will be difficult but not always bad, look at positive side, ideas, diversity of thought, teachers are, it is quick, needs to be managed well.

7:19 Trista C Thanks to teachers, IB training up to 3 years, brand new staff, has verbal agreement to have apply at another school already.

7:21 Patty A not concerned charter or not, short time, how many teachers? Won't be ready by August, the way staff was told, you should have given them more time, if you value staff, let them know a different way.

7:24 Chuck H. was board member, turned to teachers then, disrespectful that teachers were told no jobs, late change, less salary, too soon, teachers will have zero experience, wait. Please reconsider, must be reasonable, less than two months.

7:27 Andrew M echo what Chuck said, don't disagree with full-charter, some children don't do well with change well. Consider, listen, slow down.

7:31 Ana L. Wait, IB value, have done the wrong thing, insulted teachers, taking signs down, children upset, why has board not followed rules, teachers deserve better pay, treatment. Her daughter: how will kids feel who are not involved when teachers disappear?

7:35 Miss Colby been part of the strong team for two decades. Staff was eager for next year, takes time, present students will not enjoy full IB experience,

7:36 Rebecca T. 24-J has shown more transparency in a tough situation, challenge board to regain trust, challenge parents to be more involved, better minutes.

7:38 Mark M. Don't know a lot, teachers offered \$10,000 less to stay, highly skeptical to fill positions, skeptical about middle school expansion, change wasn't done in efficient manner, fearful for future.

Terry No more in public (sign up to speak)

7:41 Kendra parent damaging to lose teachers , hope board will reverse, some parents can't come but can read minutes, there is still time to change, involve me in future.

7:43 Mileya has talked to many parents, the way it was done with exec. Meeting, teachers, don't come if we are losing how many more teachers . More things taught than might be.

Terry Anyone else? Thanks to everyone, passion. Will not comment though.

7:45 Board discussion

Cammi Thanks, Terry. Here to do meeting again. I've never seen so many parents. Thank you. Steve, any other pre-submission questions?

Steve Should we start conversation?

Terry Steve has very good comments.

BJ Begin discussion. Where to go after hearing comments can we rescind there? Not all got message out.

Cammi Still taking all in to process. I do understand. Board didn't leave anything out.

Terry Lots to take in. Speed of decision, time, time given by district, not an excuse. More discussion needed. Didn't know teachers were given offer. Wasn't aware offer made to teachers. We're going to look at other charter schools. How are we going to function? Teacher offer /would love to know when. Who knows if we might attract IB teacher? Not throwing people under the bus. I have to make decision. Not on what hasn't happened . Been through some rough times. Continue to go full charter now.

Cammi We found out about the time pressure from the district that in-district transfers needed to be made by 4/26. We found out this information on

4/18. Having to pull together a meeting with board members needed to happen by 4/24 at the latest. We do not have pay scale ready for them. Unfortunate we did not have this ready.

I asked Gary if it was too late to change calendar for next year for district staff which would allow staff to come in for IB training before school starts. Gary confirmed that the date to change the calendar had passes but that staff could come but it would be optional.

Discussion – deal with leadership, IB evaluation was shocked about district principal, I don't know how I feel. Possibly roll out slowly or rip bandage.

BJ Board is volunteer, no compensation, no advantage, lots of time, we are going to make mistakes. Talked about leadership, lots of principals, leadership-desire for own administration. Took talk with district, must be public. Teachers find out for paper or sent letter same evening, could not legally tell them because of public meeting laws. Assumed all staff would have a position as district said.

Finances biggest concern? S-K will have a job, if with us first to have job.

Wage scale-not fair, problem with 2 wage scales, pay all reasonable amount.

Health care, retirement, equity not present, we don't have the money.

2 groups or equalize, experienced teachers might be attracted.

Can feel rushed. How do we do this? Going to be hard either way. Unique year for pool, leadership.

Steve Will see financial models on Monday. Can change benefit package.

Some saving by charter staff. Salary close but not close benefits. Join us Monday.

Gifford Pinchot: greatest good for greatest number for longest time. Consider greatest good for longest time.

Need you, stay engaged,

Terry Signs, not consciously aware, proud of students, we've gone through a lot. Have dedicated a lot, not given a lot of time. Now is the time 400 will be let lose, some teachers with IB backgrounds may be coming to us. We make the correct decision.



Cammi Full charter or slower, do some this year, full charter, have some good applications in, get process going. Slower?

Terry "strike" compensation, can't afford, divide now is huge, charter staff feeling abused, compensation budget not put together, not in favor of roll out.

BJ But chance for quality teachers, new package might attract, hopeful that some might find it attractive. Split staffs create problems.

R. How is administration now?

Terry District principal has no control over charter staff.

Steve Would like slow roll over, but it won't work. When do we take action?  
Gary has agreed to stay on. Part time. Need to move forward with charter leadership, 2 principals? District staff, roll out not viable.

R Any idea if district would change from Gary?

Terry Need charter alone

Gary District has agreed for next year.

Rff Anything in budget to prevent what we've always done?

BJ Costs about \$70,000 more, we don't have a budget yet.

Ed Disturbed by what has happened. Need parents, staff, kids with you for success. What about partial roll out and study to find solution. Present on stated date in spring.?

Cammi I don't think I'm ready for a vote. IB evaluators were shocked by not having principal. Better to transition.

Gary Gary and admin. hired by charter.

Cammi Gary (?) change to FTE, stay on as 0.2, hire new teaching principal

Gary Too late to change calendar. Full charter could come back early for new employee training.

Cammi Can be optional training.

Steve Could swing two principal model, would impact teacher salary.

Cammi Board members have idea, could hire principal by mid-June, no one has told us they aren't returning.

Terry Best solution is hiring teaching admin., make offer to staff.

BJ Need to solidify budget so teachers can decide.

Terry Vote now.

Ed Don't vote tonight.

Cammi We can make vote tonight.

Terry Not sure how to make motion.

1. Charter seeks teaching principal. This would direct the Board to hire one person with strong IB experience to be the school administrator and also a teacher.

c

Cammi Anyone second? BJ seconds the motion. This is a roll call vote. Board members are polled. All are in favor. No opposed.

Terry 2. Release all district staff, go full charter, retain Special Ed, put together offer to all

Cammi Gary, elaborate on FTE.

Gary Clarify on who does what, work in tandem. At Lamb (Elementary) assistant principal, Gary is over all.

Cammi Can (?)

Terry Don't add.

BJ (Adds details on money)

Ed (?) for full change, 1 year

Terry Go for it

Cammi Worry that we push red on (?) gap (referring to budget)

Steve Charter pay scale has suffered, other charters, need to address pay.

R Gary for next year?

C He has had verbal contract. We were told that getting Gary next year wasn't a guarantee.

Terry Need to go full charter 24-25.

R. Call vote by name.

Terry No provision

BJ Need provision

Terry I move go full charter with the provision that the Board give preference to our staff.

BJ Second

Vote Yes-Steve, Cammi, Terry, BJ  
No-Ed  
Motion passes 4-1

Terry District wants concessions to district.

Steve Concern that District could sell our property, we should lead conversation.

BJ Can we renegotiate 85%? Look at long term, ownership of building.

Terry (?)

R Is there a geographic area? How are you getting feedback?

Cammi You're right. We did look at property. Property in Brooks was discussed but has since sold. We are not pursuing any buildings at this moment.

Terry You will be given notice.

Steve I want to stay in our building.

BJ. I agree. We have made infrastructure improvements here.

Terry Motion. We will explore our building options.

BJ Second

Vote 5 ayes

Cammi Have I covered everything? Give ok to follow up on complaint?

Vote All ayes

Cammi I appreciate tonight. Thank you. Any public comments?

R Thanks, Ed, for listening.

Terry Feels good!

Cammi 9:09 meeting adjourned.

\*Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 13, 2024, 6:30. In person  
Please email us at [vicsboard@valleyinquiry.org](mailto:vicsboard@valleyinquiry.org) to request a copy of the chat discussion.

