



Pacem School

Celebrating Curiosity - Igniting Passions

32 College Street, Suite 100, Montpelier, VT 05602
802-223-1010 www.pacemschool.org

Pacem Board of Directors Information for Potential Board Members

Section 1: Introduction and background on Pacem and our mission

We invite you to consider joining Pacem's board of directors and becoming a part of our inspiring educational community. Serving on our board is a wonderful way to give back to the community, help young people, and support this unique educational alternative. We're looking for dynamic, interested people like you who want to share their skills and expertise with us.

In case you don't already know a lot about us, Pacem School is an intellectually inspiring, joyful learning community in Montpelier, VT. We are a state-approved, full-time independent 6th - 12th grade school, and in addition, we offer coursework and extra-curricular support to homeschoolers age 10-18. Our students are curious and passionate. We give them time and freedom to pursue their interests while supporting them with an intellectually rich curriculum. Our exceptional faculty, all experts in their fields, inspire and guide our students every day. Pacem provides a community where each student is known and cherished. This setting allows our students to develop confidence, feel empowered, and to blossom.

Our Mission is:

- ◆ to provide a vibrant and supportive educational community where all students are known and valued and learn the tools to solve problems peacefully and collaboratively.
- ◆ to guide and support students to be the primary architects of their own educations and to pursue their individual intellectual and creative passions.
- ◆ to offer small academically challenging classes, a flexible stimulating curriculum, and inspired teachers who celebrate curiosity and creativity and challenge all students to reach their fullest potential.
- ◆ to help children and teens grow into caring, responsible, and confident young adults who can make a difference in their communities and have the skills and awareness needed to create a more cooperative, just, and sustainable world.

Section 2: Board of Directors' Responsibilities

As a member of the board of directors, you would help us carry out our four main responsibilities.

1. Vision and Mission: The board is responsible for ensuring that the school is meeting its mission. This includes the following specific tasks:

- ◆ Understanding the vision, mission, and bylaws of the school
- ◆ Ensuring that the overall operations are fulfilling, as best as possible, the vision and mission, and that the school is operating in accordance with its bylaws.
- ◆ Periodically revising the mission and vision statement to ensure that we stay relevant and represent ourselves accurately to the community at large.

2. Financial Health: The board is responsible for the financial health and wellbeing of the school. This includes the following specific tasks:

- ◆ With the help of the director, creating a detailed annual budget, including setting tuition and salary numbers each year.
- ◆ Reviewing financial statements at every meeting.
- ◆ Providing leadership and organizational support for fundraising.

3. Hiring and evaluating the Director of the School.

4. Organizational Support: The board is responsible for other high-level organizational support and decision-making activities. The specific tasks vary depending on the current need of the school, but may include:

- ◆ Providing leadership for marketing efforts
- ◆ Supporting the search for, renovation of, and negotiations around our physical space
- ◆ Supporting the General Circle as otherwise required. Please note that the General Circle has the responsibility of managing the day-to-day operations of the school.

Section 3: Time Commitment

We all have full lives with varying amounts of time and resources to bring. We ask the following commitment of our board members:

- ◆ Participate in at least 75% of our quarterly board meetings
- ◆ Participate in our board retreat once per year
- ◆ Complete preparation, reading, or research time for meetings as necessary (0-1 hours monthly)
- ◆ Read and respond promptly to board-related email
- ◆ Serve on at least one board committee & possibly chair one committee to work between meetings (1/2-1 hour monthly). Committees change according to the needs of the school. Our current committees are: Fundraising and Development, Finance, Marketing, and Facilities.
- ◆ Familiarize yourself with our financial reporting documents
- ◆ Donate to Pacem at whatever level is meaningful to you; we aim for 100% board participation in our annual campaign
- ◆ Act as an ambassador of Pacem within one's personal communities and networks
- ◆ Serve at least one complete term of 2 years

- ◆ Join our community for at least one Pacem event per year. (These include our Presentation Celebration, Show of Art and Talent, and our Literature Night. Other events occur depending on the interests of our current students/community.)

Section 4: School Governance and Decision-Making

As a board member, you would add your voice to Pacem's distinct form of decision-making, the sociocratic process. Our deep sense of community and small size both allow and are supported by this approach, which is based on the equality of each person and on honoring the voice of each individual. We believe that creative and high-quality decisions come from a synthesis of many ideas through consent-based, facilitated, decision-making in our sociocratic process. This process builds community, trust, and group problem-solving and communication skills, and it assures that no voice or idea is lost.

Policies and decisions are made by 5 interconnected governing circles. Every member of the community is on at least one circle, though they may choose not to participate.

General Circle meets monthly during the academic year and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school. The General Circle is made up of representatives from the Faculty, Student, and Parent circles. Each circle makes recommendations to the General Circle

Faculty Circle meets monthly during the academic year and oversees decisions regarding curriculum and student education.

Parent Circle meets as needed during the year and oversees decisions that concern parents.

Student Circle meets every other week during the academic year and oversees decisions that concern students.

Board Circle is responsible for overseeing Pacem's overall vision and financial well-being.

More information about sociocracy in general can be found from the organization "Sociocracy for All" <https://www.sociocracyforall.org/> and <http://www.sociocracyforall.org/sociocracy/#keyconcepts>

Section 5: Board Policies

- ◆ The board is made up of between 5 and 12 members
- ◆ The board shall include at least three principal representatives: a representative of the parents, the Director, and representative(s) of the General Circle.
- ◆ The board should reflect the diversity of our whole community, including gender, race, age, and class
- ◆ Board membership is an unpaid volunteer position
- ◆ Board members are expected to be familiar with the Pacem Bylaws, and to run the business of the board accordingly.

- ◆ Our culture at Pacem values collaboration, creativity, and open constructive communication. Our board models this culture for the school in its discussions, communications, and demeanor.
- ◆ All decisions at Pacem, including those of the board, are made using a sociocratic process (described above.) All board members should understand sociocracy as we practice it.

Section 6: Our Current Goals:

- ◆ To maintain a board of between 6 and 9 members that includes community members as well as parents of Pacem students
- ◆ To create and maintain a stable board with all of the needed skills and the capacity to use them on behalf of the organization.
- ◆ To refine the board's priorities and responsibilities. This includes taking on some areas that have previously been handled mainly by staff.

Section 7: Desired Skills and Qualities of Board Members

We know that you have a lot to offer. We're looking for board members with diverse experience, time to offer, and *any* of the following traits.

- ◆ Time to give to organization (in addition to attending meetings)
- ◆ Experience with and interest in leadership
- ◆ Financial literacy
- ◆ Fundraising experience
- ◆ Connection to Pacem's constituencies including parents, potential students, the Montpelier community, the local or national alternative education community and to broad networks
- ◆ Financial resources to contribute
- ◆ Demographic diversity (age, race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, physical ability, etc.)
- ◆ Education/homeschooling background
- ◆ Community involvement, particularly connection to organizations aligned with Pacem's mission
- ◆ Non-profit experience, especially prior board membership
- ◆ Marketing/media experience
- ◆ Vision, passion, and strong strategic thinking
- ◆ Skilled in clear, direct, and peaceful communication
- ◆ Strong ability to connect and work with staff, parents and students, and community members of diverse backgrounds
- ◆ Strong background in non-violent communication and peaceful conflict resolution
- ◆ Legal expertise in the areas of education, organizational management, and real estate.
- ◆ Familiarity with alternative education practices and principles
- ◆ Sense of humor, curiosity, and creativity!

Section 8: Current Pacem Board members:

Steve Sharp (Secretary)

Lexi Shear (Director)

Laura McCaffrey (Faculty Representative)

Samara Mays (Parent Representative)

Laura Martinez (Alumnx Representative)

Kathleen Kesson

Section 9: If you are Interested in Joining us:

We'd love to hear from you! Please send a letter of interest and current resumé to:

Lexi Shear

Head of School

lexi@pacemschool.org