

**Minutes of the Meeting of
The Davidson Academy of Nevada
Governing Board
September 15, 2015**

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Governing Board was called to order at 10:00 a.m. in the Tahoe Room of The Davidson Academy of Nevada located at 1164 N. Virginia St., Reno, Nevada, 89503.

A. Roll Call

Roll call was completed by Bob Davidson. Roger Davidson, Mark Herron, Bruce James, Annette Whittemore and Colleen Harsin were present. Ms. Patricia Richard, Marc Johnson's Chief of Staff, attended in his absence. Brian Krolicki, Traci Davis and Steve Canavero were not present.

B. Welcome and Introductions

Bob Davidson announced and welcomed new Board Member, Dr. Steve Canavero, Interim State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Mr. Davidson thanked Dale Erquiaga for his time served on the Board.

C. Public Comments

There were no public comments at this time.

D. Approval of Minutes for Meeting of May 25, 2015

Bob Davidson requested approval of the minutes for the meeting of May 25, 2015, under Tab 1 of the Board books (incorporated herein by reference). Motion was made and seconded for approval of the minutes as submitted. There was no discussion and the motion carried unanimously.

E. Approval of Agenda

Bob Davidson requested approval of the Agenda. Motion was made and seconded for approval of the meeting Agenda as submitted. There was no discussion and the motion carried unanimously.

F. Reports

1. Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

a. Presentation of independent auditor's report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2015

Mark Herron, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, introduced John Van Trigt and Kimberly Hastings of the accounting firm Holthouse, Carlin & Van Trigt LLP who joined the meeting by conference call.

Mr. Van Trigt began his presentation by referring the Board to the AU260 Letter and Audit Report prepared by his office and provided to the Board (incorporated herein by reference). He indicated that the AU260 Letter summarizes the audit report. He confirmed that the audit was completed with an unmodified clean opinion, with no audit exceptions, adjustments or disagreements. He confirmed that the Academy's record keeping was in good order and accurate with appropriate internal controls in place. The financial statements show strong finances without debt.

Mr. Van Trigt confirmed a clean and uneventful audit and asked for questions. Bruce James asked if there were any issues coming up that the board should be made aware. Mr. Van Trigt advised that there may be some changes in the future pertaining to non-profit organizations which are in a preliminary stage and that any proposed changes will be discussed within 18 months. He indicated that that he does not expect The Davidson Academy to be significantly affected.

Bob Davidson asked if there were any areas in the reports or in practices that need improvement. Mr. Van Trigt answered that there were no suggestions at that time and that controls are good

with processes in place. Ms. Hastings added that given the size of The Academy they would need to stay diligent in the review process and that so far all has worked well. Mr. Van Trigt indicated that The Academy was able to close books three to four weeks following the end of the fiscal year which is very reasonable.

Motion for acceptance of the audit report was made and seconded. There was no further discussion and the motion carried unanimously. Mark Herron thanked Karin Dixson for her work in preparation of materials for the completion of the audit, as well as Colleen Harsin, Mr. Van Trigt and Ms. Hastings.

2. Academy Director

a. General Program Updates

Colleen Harsin began her report with an update concerning The Academy's Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Carmen Garcia. She shared that unfortunately there wasn't good news to report as is often the case with an aggressive cancer diagnosis. She complimented The Davidson Academy Community as a whole for the amazing outpouring of support of Carmen through a GoFundMe account for Carmen's care that had reached a large fundraising goal in a matter of days, as well as a supply of meals provided for friends, family and staff members.

Ms. Harsin referred Board members to Tab 2 of their materials for a copy of the non-traditional school calendar (incorporated herein by reference) which was approved by Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dale Erquiaga. The calendar was slightly altered from previous years with the addition of two days at the end of the school year to accommodate state testing following completion of the finals schedule. Ms. Harsin confirmed that she would be following up with Steve Canavero for guidance as to non-regulatory guideline options concerning The Academy's calendar.

Ms. Harsin advised that Blackboard has now replaced The Academy's private website. Blackboard is essentially a learning module which provides lots of options and is customizable to meet the needs of The Academy Community.

Under Tab 3 of their Board books Ms. Harsin referred Board members to a letter from AdvancED (incorporated herein by reference) indicating that The Davidson Academy of Nevada had received its Certificate of Accreditation through the year 2020.

Under Tab 4 of their Board materials Ms. Harsin provided a copy of The Academy's Fall Academic Schedule of course offerings. (incorporated herein by reference).

Under Tab 5, Ms. Harsin referred to information about The Academy's SET for Success Program and PALs Team information for the current school year (incorporated herein by reference). She confirmed that these programs continue to provide valuable support to students with a focus on how and when to ask for help.

Under Tab 6, Ms. Harsin referenced her letter to the Nevada Department of Education concerning The Davidson Academy's development of and application for an online distance learning option intended to reach students across the United States who would not otherwise be in a position to attend The Academy's established day school. She advised that staff and instructors have been working on developing this opportunity for the last 18 months with Evergreen Education and now Hawthorne Education, with Stacy Hawthorne. At present, a pilot or Beta group of 8-11 year old students are accessing not for credit, online course work including an offering in History, Composition and Pre-Algebra. These courses are offered through Davidson Institute for Talent Development and only made available to students already enrolled in the Davidson Young Scholars Program. Ms. Harsin and Mark Herron met with Dr. Canavero and Mr. Erquiaga regarding the implementation of a distance learning option. She indicated that following that

meeting it was her impression that Dr. Canavero and Mr. Erquiaga want The Davidson Academy to remain in Nevada and value what the school has brought to the state.

Ms. Harsin advised that the application, with approval from the Board, will be submitted as Davidson National Academy. This is a name supported by Bob Davidson and would encompass both the “brick and mortar” school as well as the distance learning option. This name draws attention to a Davidson Academy education being an option to students nationally. She confirmed that she was looking into the possibility of creating national hubs at universities and that all stakeholders were dedicated to offering the closest possible experience to the brick and mortar school with the distance learning option.

Bob Davidson indicated that The Academy had achieved legislative approval for a distance learning option as a private school, however two separate schools is not the most desirable model. The intent is to create as much of the current Davidson Academy experience as possible to distance learning students. He confirmed that the planning and development of an online school is moving at a thoughtful and moderate pace.

Bruce James questioned the accreditation process and commented that this was a huge change for The Academy. Colleen Harsin and Mark Herron confirmed that essentially a reorganization of the delivery of the current school is being sought and that a separate school and therefore accreditation, is not being pursued. Additionally, the distance learning option will be offered as a free public high school to instate students with a tuition option for student residing outside the state of Nevada. Bob Davidson commented that this is a positive step toward serving many profoundly gifted students on a national level.

Mark Herron confirmed that approval from the Governing Board was needed in order to submit the letter and application to the Nevada Department of Education. Motion was made and seconded, there was no further discussion and the motion carried unanimously. The Action Plan currently being followed in the development of the distance learning school will be forwarded to all Board members.

Under Tab 7 of their Board books Ms. Harsin provided a copy of the Results of the ACT test with writing for Nevada Grade 11 State Testing–Spring Cohort 2015 (incorporated herein by reference). Twenty-three Davidson Academy students participated in this exam. All students who tested met the benchmarks for English, Mathematics, and Reading. All students but one met the benchmark for Science.

b. College Planning Updates

Under Tab 8 Ms. Harsin provided the Board with the 2016 list of National Merit Scholarship Program Semifinalists and Commended Students (incorporated herein by reference). Thirteen of The Academy’s 26 graduates are National Merit Semi-Finalists.

3. Media and Outreach

Julie Dudley, Director for Davidson Institute for Talent Development reported that an air date was finally set for the CNN piece, which was filmed last September at the Academy. The segment will air on CNN International tomorrow, Sept. 16 and on CNN Domestic (in the U.S.) Saturday, Nov. 28, 2015, on the show *Vital Signs* with Dr. Sanjay Gupta. Academy graduate and CNN interviewee, Grace Hong was recently named a 2015 Davidson Fellow scholarship award recipient in literature. Taylor Wilson continues to receive various media placements. The Academy recently held its first evening admissions information session which was attended by an estimated 40 people. The Academy is beginning its 10th school year and Senator Heller’s office sent a printed Congressional Record statement to highlight the school’s anniversary and positive impact.

Board members were provided with information and a "Save the Date" for the Academy's fundraising event, the Extravaganza, which will be held on February 27, 2016.

G. Correspondence

There was no correspondence received by the Board for this meeting.

H. Public Comments

There were no public comments at this time.

I. General Business

1. Davidson National Academy

This item was discussed and action was taken under – F. Reports, 2. Academy Director, a. General Program Updates.

J. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board in public meeting, motion was made and seconded for adjournment; motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.



Respectfully submitted by Colleen Harsin, Clerk of the Board