



## **Governing Board Meeting**

Tuesday, February 16, 2021



## NOTICE OF MEETING

### State of Emergency Special Public Notice

The regular meeting of the Governing Board of the Davidson Academy will be held starting at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, February 16, 2021.

Due to the current State of Emergency declared by the Governor because of the Covid-19 virus, and more specifically the Governor's Directive 006, Section 1, this public meeting will be held via videoconference and there will be no physical location for the meeting. Members of the public wishing to observe the meeting may do so using the following link: <https://davidsongifted.zoom.us/j/84830913949>

Public comment for this meeting will be received via email only. Those wishing to make public comment should email their public comments to [boardcomments@davidsonacademy.unr.edu](mailto:boardcomments@davidsonacademy.unr.edu). All public comments received before and during the meeting will be forwarded to the Governing Board of the Davidson Academy for their consideration. All public comments will be included in the public record as minutes but will not be read aloud during the meeting

## AGENDA

2 p.m.

A. ROLL CALL\*

B. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS\*

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS\*

*The public may comment on any subject that is not on the agenda that is pertinent to the Davidson Academy. Each speaker will be limited to three minutes. Public comment relating to an agenda item will be taken during discussion of that item. Comment will be limited to three minutes, but speaking time may be reduced at the discretion of the chair of the meeting, if there are a large number of speakers on a given subject. No comments will be restricted based upon viewpoint.*

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (for possible action)

*The public is notified that the Governing Board may take items on the agenda out of order; combine two or more agenda items for consideration; remove an item from the agenda; or delay discussion relating to an item on the agenda*

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of November 9, 2020 (for possible action)

**Tab 1**

F. REPORTS\*

1. ACADEMY DIRECTOR\*
  - a. General Program Updates **Tab 2**
2. DIRECTOR OF ONLINE LEARNING\*
  - a. General Program Updates **Tab 3**
3. MEDIA AND OUTREACH\* **Tab 4**

G. GENERAL BUSINESS (*for possible action*)

1. VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
The Governing Board will review, discuss and possibly adopt revised policy regarding multiple signatures on Academy checks for amounts in excess of \$10,000. **Tab 5**
2. The Governing Board will review, discuss, and possibly approve a list of candidates for graduation in May 2021, subject to each candidate's completion of requirements for graduation. **Tab 6**

H. PUBLIC COMMENTS\*

*The public may comment on any subject that is not on the agenda that is pertinent to the Davidson Academy. Each speaker will be limited to three minutes. Public comment relating to an agenda item will be taken during discussion of that item. Comment will be limited to three minutes, but speaking time may be reduced at the discretion of the chair of the meeting, if there are a large number of speakers on a given subject. No comments will be restricted based upon viewpoint.*

I. ADJOURNMENT (*for possible action*)

Upcoming Meeting Dates for 2021

- Monday, May 10, 2021 (Public Budget Hearing)
- Monday, May 24, 2021
- Monday, September 20, 2021
- Monday, November 8, 2021

---

**CERTIFICATE OF POSTING OF THIS AGENDA**

I hereby certify that In accordance with NRS 241.020, on or before Wednesday, May 20, 2020, at 9:00 a.m., a copy of this agenda was delivered to the post office used by the Davidson Academy addressed to each person who has requested to receive copies of Davidson Academy Governing Board meeting agendas; a copy of this agenda was emailed to each person who agreed to receive copies of Davidson Academy Governing Board meeting agendas by electronic mail; and a copy has been posted online at Notice.NV.gov and at the Academy's website (<http://www.DavidsonAcademy.UNR.edu/>). Physical posting has been suspended in accordance with Nevada Executive Department, Declaration of Emergency, Directive 006 (section 3).

/s/ Holly Lorge  
Governing Board Clerk  
Email: [hlorge@davidsonacademy.unr.edu](mailto:hlorge@davidsonacademy.unr.edu)  
Phone: 775-682-5800

---

**Davidson Academy**

1164 N. Virginia Street, Second Floor, Reno, Nevada 89503 · (775) 682-5800 · FAX (775) 682-5801  
[www.davidsonacademy.unr.edu](http://www.davidsonacademy.unr.edu)

**Governing Board:** Bob Davidson, Roger Davidson, Hon. Brian Krolicki, Mark Herron, Lauralyn Lovell McCarthy Sandoval, Richard Trachok, and Annette Whittemore; Ex-Officio: Dr. Kristen McNeill, Jhone Ebert, and Hon. Brian Sandoval.

Note: The Governing Board may take items on the agenda out of order; combine two or more agenda items for consideration; remove an item from the agenda; or delay discussion relating to an item on the agenda.

Those items followed by an asterisk (\*) are items on the agenda upon which the Governing Board will take no action.

Members of the public who are disabled and require special accommodations or assistance at the meeting are requested to call Colleen Harsin at 775-682-5800 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Copies of the packets containing support material for this agenda are available at no charge on the Davidson Academy website at <http://DavidsonAcademy.UNR.edu>. Copies may also be obtained by sending a request via email to [charsin@davidsonacademy.unr.edu](mailto:charsin@davidsonacademy.unr.edu) or by contacting Aimee Fredericks by mail at Davidson Academy, 9665 Gateway Drive, Ste. B, Reno, NV 89521, or by telephone at 775-682-5800.

Meeting agendas and minutes are available on the Academy's website (<http://www.DavidsonAcademy.UNR.edu/>).

**Minutes of the Meeting**  
**The Davidson Academy Governing Board**  
**November 9, 2020**

---

These minutes are not yet approved and are subject to revision at the next meeting of the Governing Board.

**Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Governing Board was called to order at 2:00 p.m. Due to the current State of Emergency declared by the Governor because of the COVID-19 virus, and more specifically the Governor's Directive 006, Section 1, this public meeting was held via videoconference with no physical meeting location.

Because he was calling in from a remote location, Board Chair Bob Davidson asked that Mark Herron chair this meeting.

**A. Roll Call**

Roll call was completed by the Chair of the Meeting, Mark Herron. Bob Davidson, Roger Davidson, Mark Herron, Richard Trachok, Brian Krolicki, Lauralyn McCarthy Sandoval, Brian Sandoval, Annette Whittemore and Kristen McNeill were present. Academy Director Colleen Harsin, Director of Online Learning Stacy Hawthorne, Legal Counsel Ann Alexander, Controller Karin Dixson and Clerk of the Board, Holly Lorge' were also present. Jhone Ebert was not present. Following completion of roll call, a quorum was confirmed.

**B. Welcome and Introduction**

Mark Herron welcomed Board members and members of the public in attendance. He introduced and welcomed new ex-officio Governing Board member, and University of Nevada, Reno, President, Brian Sandoval.

**C. Public Comment**

Mark Herron provided instructions concerning public comment as stated under item C of the meeting agenda.

Mr. Herron also read the State of Emergency information and provided the link from agenda and confirmed that public comments, if made, would be received by email. There were no comments from the public.

## **D. Approval of Agenda**

Mark Herron requested a motion for approval of the Agenda. Motion was made and seconded for approval of the meeting Agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

## **E. Approval of Minutes**

Mark Herron requested approval of the minutes for the meeting of September 21, 2020, under TAB 1 of the Board Book. Motion was made and seconded for approval of the minutes as submitted. There was no discussion and the motion carried unanimously.

## **F. Reports**

### 1. Academy Director

#### a. General Program Updates

Davidson Academy Director, Colleen Harsin, began her report by confirming for the Board that the Academy currently has 169 in-state students across both campuses, for the current school year. The Reno campus has moved to virtual tours for prospective applicants and their families. The tours are scheduled to coincide with online campus tours but do not overlap with those tours, so that prospective families have the option to investigate both options.

Ms. Harsin reported that application numbers are down for the Reno campus, but also noted an increase in submitted applications for the Online campus. Ms. Harsin reported a total of 106 applications in progress; 34 of are those for Reno campus. She confirmed this was not unexpected due to the national COVID-19 pandemic and related logistics in moving to the Reno area in order to access in-person learning at the Reno campus.

Ms. Harsin shared with the Board activities going on at the Reno campus. As of mid-November the Academy has had a total of 19 college visits. Representatives from these schools met virtually with our high school students and counselors. A successful in-person administration of the PSAT was completed in October. Virtual parent meetings were completed at the Reno campus, attended by 20 families for the morning meeting and 27 families for the evening meeting. Monthly parent meetings will continue, covering details and information concerning the current school year, and a question and answer session.

Ms. Harsin continued with an update on Student Council events. Ms. Harsin complimented the Student Council on successfully figuring out ways to keep important activities that were previously conducted in person, just as meaningful in a virtual environment. Virtual events to date have included a Microsoft paint competition, a Halloween costume contest, and a scavenger hunt. Student Council is currently putting together a gratitude and recipe book in celebration of Thanksgiving.

Ms. Harsin reported that students continued to participate in competitions and Club meetings online, as well as participate in Club activities such as Film Making Club's

Scary Movie Night. Ms. Harsin gave an update on Academy Yearbook students, noting that they are well under way collecting photos and quotes with a different format for the current school year.

The Academy's Back to School night was held virtually. Parents followed their student's schedules and interacted with teachers through Zoom. The Back to School Zoom night worked very well, and was much better attended than our traditional in-person Back to School nights. Ms. Harsin stated the Academy will seek to continue options for virtual participation in events even as in-person participation is reinstated at some point, as having virtual options creates more opportunities for participation.

Ms. Harsin discussed that some students are attending school at the Reno campus for in-person instruction. The Academy's hybrid learning option allows students to sign-up to attend on any available day during the scheduled school week. The average student count in the building is usually between two and ten and averages about seven each day. To date, the Academy has not had any attendance issues with the remote learning option. Students are making contact with instructors and other students on a daily basis. Parents also indicate when their student is ill and will not be participating that day. Optional in-person attendance will continue unless there is a physical shutdown.

Ms. Harsin confirmed that the Academy will continue with its previously approved academic calendar, although the University academic calendar has shifted for the spring semester. Spring semester Academy classes will start on 1/19/2020, and the week-long spring break in March will stay in place. This is the case for both Academy campuses. Academy students with University classes will proceed with their University classes according to the University academic calendar.

Ms. Harsin referred Board members to TAB 2 of their Board Books concerning her report in response to the Nevada Path Forward Directives provided last summer, for an accounting of student online connectivity. This information was provided by the Academy in early October per Guidance Memo 20-05. The total number of students at both campuses is 234. Of those students, none are without a device or access to the Internet. The Reno Campus has issued 24 Thinkpad laptops for student use at home or in the Academy building. The Academy also issued one webcam for student home use. Ms. Harsin further explained this is at no additional cost, as these are items that were already available at the Academy.

Ms. Harsin referred Board members to TAB 3 of their Board Books for a summary of Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), which represents the Davidson Academy 2017-2018 school year. This information was published since the last Board meeting and is typical of nationwide data analysis. In 2017-2018 the Academy had 172 students enrolled. That academic school year also marked the first year that the Davidson Academy Online full program was available to students. The Davidson Academy is recorded as a magnet program, and gifted and talented. In this data, regarding enrollment and chronic absenteeism, the Academy reported 2.3%, meaning there were approximately four students with attendance issues. The Academy was in contact with the students at that time regarding chronic health or other relevant issues concerning their attendance. The Academy did not have any students who needed to be retained, failed or had disciplinary issues.

Also included under TAB 3 was a summary of the 2017-2018 CRDC Staffing and Finance data. Legislation indicates that the Academy at least have a 70% teacher licensure. The reported data indicates the Academy as exceeding that requirement at 81.2%. The Academy's average teacher-to-student ratio was reported as 7 to 1.

Ms. Harsin reported and further clarified the CRDC data for 2017-2018 regarding the Academy's 8<sup>th</sup> grade math/Algebra 1 as presented in the data collection. The demographic data for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in Algebra I indicates 100% of those students reporting as White. Since the Academy does follow a grade

level progression based on age, the requirement to report data based on age/grade designation does not accurately reflect the advanced, rigorous nature of the Academy curriculum. Academy students take appropriate math courses based on their academic ability in that subject. Ms. Harsin also stated many Academy students are past Algebra 1 by 8<sup>th</sup> grade and are accessing a higher level course in Mathematics. Thus, the CDRC data is not generally indicative of most Academy students' math progression. Davidson Academy students do not move forward with grade level progression.

Brian Krolicki commented that the optics of the data as presented are difficult and was concerned about public perception absent Ms. Harsin's explanation. He asked if there was any way to asterisk an explanation within the available data collection currently available to the public. Ms. Harsin said she will look into the possibility of adding information to clarify the presented data.

Lauralyn McCarthy Sandoval asked if the Academy's information is presented with other schools. She reiterated Mr. Krolicki's concern about public perception and is there a way to solve that problem. Ms. Harsin stated she is not aware of a current solution, but will follow-up to request an option to provide more information on the Academy's behalf.

Ms. Harsin referred Board members to TAB 4, for discussion of the Academy's updated School Profile Letter, which is representative of both campuses. The document includes results of consultations with the National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC), geared towards what universities are looking for from applicants. The letter also includes direct communication about the Academy's COVID-19 response. The School Profile reports 238 students currently enrolled between the Online and Reno campuses, how many students of color, financial aid, states represented, student-to-teacher ratio and number of enrolled seniors. Ms. Harsin noted that this year is our largest graduating class, with 40 seniors set to graduate in the spring of 2021 and also the Academy's largest number of National Merit semi-finalists.

## 2. Director of Online Learning

### a. General Program Updates

Director of Online Learning, Dr. Stacy Hawthorne, began her report and referred Board Members to TAB 5 of their Board Books to discuss the 2021-22 application review process, which is now open. When this data was printed two weeks ago the Academy had received 65 applications, but as of today's Board meeting 99 applications have been submitted for Davidson Academy Online. Of these, 72 applications are in progress and 27 applications are fully completed. Last year, in November 2019, the Online campus had reported 15 applications, thus the Online campus is showing significant growth again this year.

Dr. Hawthorne shared that 11 prospective students will be assessing Thursday and Friday, and a total of 44 students have already assessed for 2021 admission. Of those applicants, five have been accepted. Decisions are pending and further acceptance decisions will be going out next week. Dr. Hawthorne recognized that some of this growth is a response to COVID-19, but also complimented that this is a testament to the quality and good work of our Reno campus and online programs.

Dr. Hawthorne confirmed that Online campus open houses are continuing as they have in the past online with parent/student panels where current Academy students talk about their experiences as members of the Davidson Academy Online community, as well as presentations by Dr. Hawthorne and other Online



staff. Shared perspectives by current students is helpful so families and applicants know what to expect when applying, which keeps the process honest and authentic.

Dr. Hawthorne discussed new spring electives: Women's Studies, Psychology, Organic and Bio-Chemistry, Chinese Martial Arts Film and Peer Mediation. The Davidson Academy Online electives are semester long, and are developed by current Online staff.

Dr. Hawthorne also shared student and family stories included in TAB 5 of the Board Books. These student stories come to her via email, which Dr. Hawthorne shares with Online staff. These are uplifting emails from students and parents about how the Davidson Online staff has impacted them in a positive and meaningful way.

Dr. Hawthorne discussed how the Online staff are continuing to build community with their currently enrolled 79 online students. The staff have brought in guest speakers, and Reno campus students are also invited to attend and enjoy the speakers. Speakers so far this year have included: NASA engineer Manuel Retana who was invited to speak with the Spanish classes, and Dr. Robert Leonard, a Forensic Linguistics Investigator who shared forensic files and clues with our students. Both speakers were highly impressed with Academy students.

Another guest speaker was Zoe Griffiths of Think Maths who presented to Academy students from both campuses live from England, sharing "Math Adventures in the Fourth Dimension."

Dr. Hawthorne mentioned that the first virtual dance of the school year (and the second ever) will be held next Friday. The students chose 'Winter Formal' as their theme. The Online campus Student Council is posting events weekly and has held game and movie nights already this year. Dr. Hawthorne added that the parents appreciate that their students have these opportunities to enjoy themselves and feel connected.

Dr. Hawthorne concluded her report by referring Board Members to TAB 5, announcing that for the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year all Davidson Academy Online courses are approved by the University of California system for A-G credit

### 3. Media and Outreach

Dr. Hawthorne provided the Board with a report of the Academy's recent media and outreach efforts summarized under TAB 7 of the Board Books. The summary highlighted places the Academy has been listed in the media or mentioned on notable websites. Due to outreach, Dr. Hawthorne was asked to present this week to a panel of parents and students at a gifted school in Austin, TX. Dr. Hawthorne commented that the Academy has had success reaching out to K-8 schools for gifted students, who have no affiliation with a high school. The Davidson Academy has already received several applications for next school year due to this successful outreach.

Dr. Hawthorne added that there has been a lot of work on the Academy's main website search engine optimization (SEO), and a new website will be launching next year. The Website Metrics show traffic has increased by 107% over last year with an increase in demand for both campuses. A large portion of that increase was due to organic searches for "online gifted school and/or gifted school" in which 50% of people looking online are finding the Academy on their own. Over half of the website traffic is coming

from the state of Nevada (Reno and Las Vegas), and there is increased traffic coming from New York and Los Angeles.

Dr. Hawthorne pointed out that the Davidson Academy has moved up in search rankings, from 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, to now 3<sup>rd</sup> in ranking for “online classes for gifted children” and “academy for gifted students.” The Davidson Academy is still rated #1 search return for “online gifted high schools.” Dr. Hawthorne noted we are moving in the right direction, and will continue our ongoing outreach, newsletters, and open houses.

### **G. General Business**

Mr. Herron referred Board Members to TAB 7 of their Board Books which included, a draft Resolution regarding Employee Timekeeping and Allocations. This action item was in response to a suggestion stemming from the Audit Report and the related AU260letter presented at the September 21, 2020, Governing Board meeting. The auditors found a potential deficiency relating to how the Academy collects employee time for payroll and budget purposes, specifically employees whose time allocations may change between pay periods. Due to the Academy’s timekeeping change this year from paper-based to electronic time collection, it did not have a formalized mechanism to report time allocation variations. The Academy has new forms for the employees to allow for reporting of this information. The auditors asked that the Academy adopt aboard policy regarding this issue and the proposed resolution does that.

Mr. Herron asked for a motion to adopt the resolution as presented. The motion was made, seconded, and after some discussion carried unanimously.

Mr. Herron then presented for discussion proposed Board meeting dates for the 2021: February 16, public hearing for Budget May 10, May 24, Sept 20, and November 8, 2021.

### **H. Public Comment**

Mr. Herron reminded everyone that the rules for public comment have not changed. There were no comments from the public

### **I. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board in public meeting, Mr. Herron asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

*Holly Lorge*

*Respectfully submitted by Holly Lorge’, Clerk of the Board*

## Academy Director The Davidson Academy Governing Board Updates February 2021

---

### Application & Assessment

As of 2/9/2021, we have 115 applications “In Progress” for the Reno Campus, with a final deadline of March 31<sup>st</sup>. Sixteen applicants have been assessed. Of those, seven have been accepted, including five local students, one from southern Nevada, and one from Washington.

Our February assessment was completed 2/11-2/12, and included twelve applicants. The February assessment results are pending. Seventeen applications are complete and under consideration for March assessment dates.

### In-Person Attendance

In the ten weeks since the previous Governing Board meeting, an average of seven students have indicated interest in attending the Academy in-person. The range of students in that timeframe has been 2–13 completing the weekly sign-up form, with the fewest number of students signing up for the last days of the fall semester. There has been an increase in in-person attendance since the beginning of the spring semester.

### Reports in Progress

- Mid-Year Parent Survey (surveys due 2/15/21)
- Nevada Department of Education Dual Credit Data Request (due 2/19/21)
- NRS 388C.120(5) Report (due 3/1/21)
- Application to Operate and Alternative Schedule (due 5/1/21)

### Accreditation

The Academy is scheduled to host our Accreditation Engagement Review during the 2023-2024 school year. Our review will be in accordance with the new Cognia Standards and Protocol to be released in 2021-2022. Susie Eisa, Senior Director for Accreditation Services, has advised us that the Cognia Global Commission was to review and take action on the Standards and Protocol on January 27, 2021. We have requested an update on these proceedings and a timeline for their release so that we may plan and budget accordingly for upcoming professional development opportunities. As of 2/10/21, we have been informed that Cognia is working on completing some of the elements and will be in touch as soon as the final materials are available.

## Scholastic Art Awards

Students in grades 7-12 (age 13 and up) submitted their art to be judged by a panel of local artists and art professionals. Artworks are eligible for the highest award of Gold Key, a Silver Key, or an Honorable Mention based on originality, technical skill, and an emergence of a personal vision. Along with going on to compete in the national competition, select works are shown in a joint exhibition presented by the Nevada Museum of Art and The Lilley Museum of Art, the School of the Arts, and the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Nevada, Reno.

**Exhibition:** February 5, 2021 - March 5, 2021; Wayne L. Prim Theater Lobby Floor 1

Gold Key Works on view at Sheppard Contemporary/Church Fine Arts building, University of Nevada, Reno. Parking is available at the Brian J. Whalen Parking Complex, bottom floor.

American Visions Nominated Works on view at Nevada Museum of Art/Donald W. Reynolds Grand Hall.

<i>Award Recipient</i>	<i>Award</i>	<i>Work Title</i>	<i>Work Category</i>
<b>Annabelle Choi</b>	Gold Key	Narcissus	Film & Animation
<b>Annabelle Choi</b>	Gold Key	Upcycle Fish	Sculpture
<b>Annabelle Choi</b>	Gold Key American Visions Nominee	Biophilic Rooftop Workspace	Architecture & Industrial
<b>Annabelle Choi</b>	Honorable Mention	We've Got Time	Drawing & Illustration
<b>Annabelle Choi</b>	Honorable Mention	Courage	Painting
<b>Annabelle Choi</b>	Silver Key	Godzilla	Film & Animation
<b>Ryan Moore</b>	Gold Key	Saint Sebastian	Drawing & Illustration
<b>Ryan Moore</b>	Honorable Mention	The Allegory of the Cave	Mixed Media
<b>Maya Park-Weber</b>	Gold Key	Waiting	Digital Art
<b>Darsh Patel</b>	Honorable Mention	Devil's Bridge, Sedona	Photography
<b>Darsh Patel</b>	Honorable Mention	Forward March	Photography
<b>Darsh Patel</b>	Honorable Mention	Machine Shop, Berlin Mill	Photography
<b>Darsh Patel</b>	Silver Key	We Shall Rise	Painting
<b>Darsh Patel</b>	Silver Key	Old Berlin Mill	Photography
<b>Priyanka Senthil</b>	Honorable Mention	Depersonalization	Painting
<b>Ruby Song</b>	Silver Key	A Morning Stroll	Painting
<b>Gracie Verano</b>	Silver Key	Skelebird	Digital Art
<b>Gracie Verano</b>	Silver Key	Studying in the Library	Digital Art
<b>Wendy Thompson</b>	Honorable Mention	Forest Spirits	Drawing & Illustration
<b>Wendy Thompson</b>	Honorable Mention	Star Girl	Drawing & Illustration
<b>Wendy Thompson</b>	Honorable Mention	Erin	Drawing & Illustration
<b>Wendy Thompson</b>	Honorable Mention	Japanese Palace	Painting
<b>Wendy Thompson</b>	Silver Key	Self Potrait	Drawing & Illustration

Annabelle Choi's Gold Key and American Visions Nominee piece is also featured on the Nevada Museum of Art website, [Image 2](#).

## College Board National Recognition Program (CBRP) Scholars

Students scoring in the top 2.5% of PSAT/NMSQT test takers who identify as one of more of the following: African American, Hispanic American or Latinx, Indigenous, or attend in a rural area or are from a small town were invited to apply for the CBRP. Two Davidson Academy students have been identified as CBRP Scholars for 2021:

- Ikenna Okpukpara - National African American Recognition Program
- Asher Hansen - National Hispanic Recognition Program

Participation in the CBRP enables students to highlight their outstanding educational achievements to top colleges and universities. Please see <http://www.psat.org/recognition> for more information.

## 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program Finalists

Congratulations to the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program Finalists! The following twenty-four Davidson Academy seniors are recognized as Finalists, and therefore eligible for a variety of related scholarship and recognition opportunities.

Rex Burnham	Megan Li	Luke Noonan	Paul Thornton
Derek Chien	Michelle Liu	Ikenna Okpukpara	Zoya Vincent
Meghana Dodda	Luke Mauer	Aayan Patel	Cecilia Wade
Caitlin Hamilton	Cliona McEnergy	Alex Peng	Jessica Wei
Asher Hansen	Reagan Moore	Jason Scharoun	Zane Williams
Ellie Huh	Ryan Moore	Wendy Thompson	Amanda Zhu

## 2021 U.S. Presidential Scholars

The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964, by executive order of the President, to recognize and honor some of our nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. In 1979, the program was extended to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative and performing arts. In 2015, the program was again extended to recognize students who demonstrate ability and accomplishment in career and technical education fields. Each year, up to 161 students are named as Presidential Scholars, one of the nation's highest honors for high school students (quoted from [website](#)).

Candidates for the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program from Davidson Academy

Alyssa Brown	Asher Hansen	Aayan Patel	Zoya Vincent
Rex Burnham	Ellie Huh	Jason Scharoun	Cecilia Wade
Derek Chien	Michelle Liu	Priyanka Senthil	Jessica Wei
Meghana Dodda	Luke Noonan	Wendy Thompson	Zane Williams
Erika Filter	Reaghan Moore	Paul Thornton	Amanda Zhu
Caitlin Hamilton			

Two of the 21 are from the Online campus. Davidson Academy candidates are listed in the Nevada section of the U.S. Presidential Scholars (pp. 71-73) [Awards PDF](#), as well as the Pennsylvania section (p. 97).

**Class of 2021 College Application Process (as of 2/8/21)**

**Students:** 39

**Number of Applications:** 494 (Early and Regular)

**Number of Colleges:** 143

**Acceptances:** 85 (to 56 different Colleges, see below)

**Deferrals:** 26

**Denials:** 13

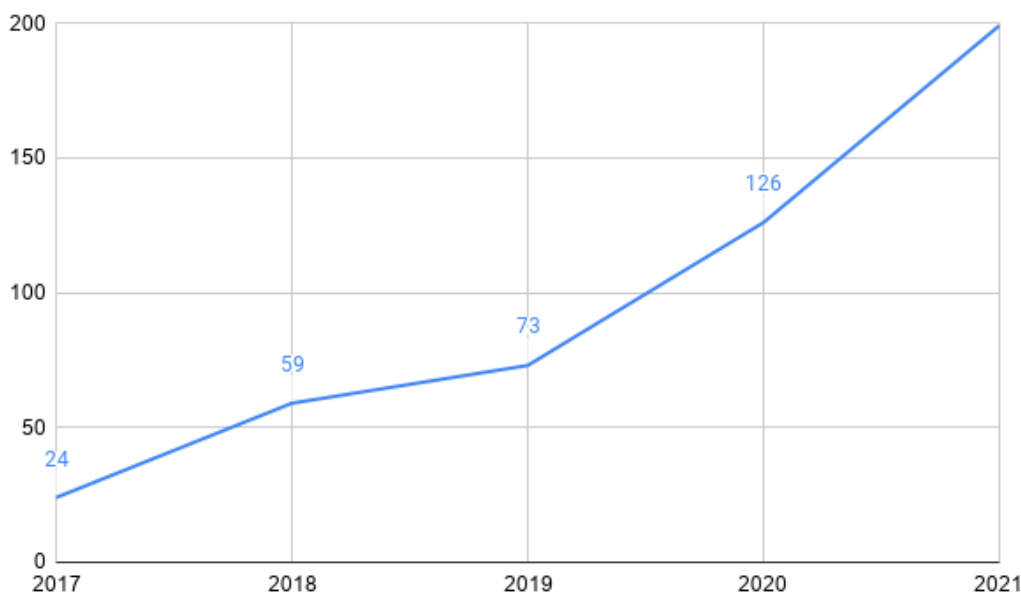
Aberystwyth University	The Ohio State University (Main Campus)
Arizona State University (Main Campus)	The University of Alabama
Baylor University	The University of Manchester
California Institute of Technology	The University of Texas at Austin
Case Western Reserve University	The University of Texas at Dallas
Colorado School of Mines	Trinity College Dublin
DePaul University	Union College
Fordham University	University College Dublin
Georgetown University	University of Alabama at Birmingham
Georgia Institute of Technology (Main Campus)	University of Chicago
Harvard University	University of Colorado Boulder
Hillsdale College	University of Idaho
Indiana University (Bloomington)	University of Maryland (College Park)
Loyola Marymount University	University of Michigan
Macalester College	University of Nevada (Reno)
McGill University	University of New Mexico (Main Campus)
Michigan State University	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Montana State University	University of Oklahoma
Northern Arizona University	University of Oregon
Oregon Institute of Technology	University of Pittsburgh (Main Campus)
Pennsylvania State University (Main Campus)	University of Portland
Purdue University (Main Campus)	University of Rochester
Reed College	University of St Andrews
Saint Louis University	University of Utah
Sarah Lawrence College	University of Virginia (Main Campus)
Soka University of America	Virginia Commonwealth University
Stony Brook University	Willamette University
Temple University	Yale University
Texas A&M University	

## Director of Online Learning The Davidson Academy Governing Board Meeting February 2021

---

### Applications Update

Our applications up again for the fourth consecutive year. The graph below shows the application total count through the end of February for each year since 2017. While the chart below shows 199, we have a total of 289 applications when the Extended Application from summer 2020 numbers are included.



### Assessment Update

The Online campus has completed eight assessment cycles. A total of 88 students assessed already this year. Nineteen students have been fully accepted and 25 are awaiting decisions. We are running assessments at least every two weeks to keep up with the flow of applications.

### Professional Growth and Continuous Improvement

Professional development at Davidson Academy Online starts the moment teachers are employed and continues throughout their tenure. New teachers are enrolled in our DAO Teacher Training course on Blackboard, which is a seven-week, hands-on introduction to our policies, our school culture, and our practices on Blackboard. Throughout the year we offer mini-trainings and workshops throughout the year, live session observations with targeted feedback for all instructors, technology trainings, formal course reviews, and collaborative weekly staff meetings.

It’s challenging for a program that is growing as fast as DAO to maintain the quality of their program. Maintaining the quality of our courses is a key focus for us and a primary reason we take a whole school and multidimensional approach to professional development.

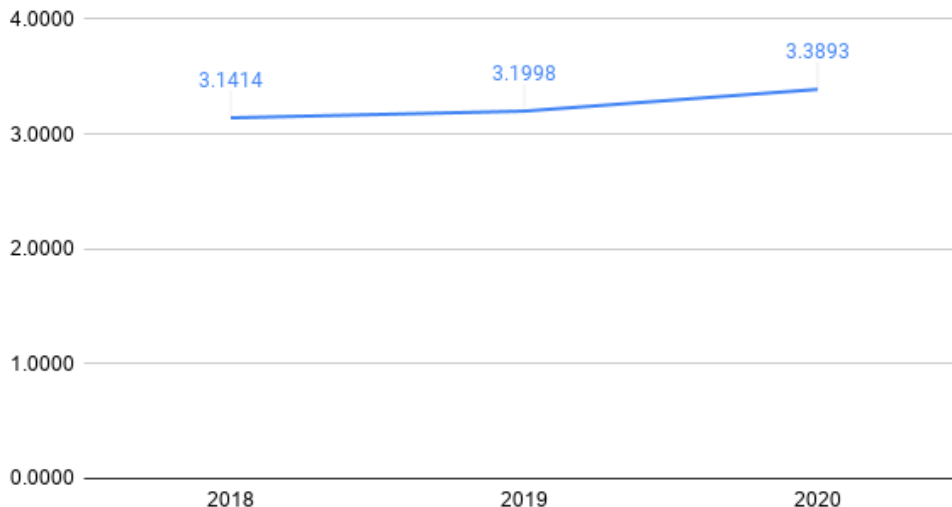
Each semester we ask students to complete feedback surveys on each course. The surveys measure student perception on three different domains – course materials in Blackboard, live sessions, and the teacher. Students rate each item on a scale of 0-4 where 0 means strongly disagree and 4 indicates strongly agree to each question. We have been conducting these same surveys since 2018 and each year our average score is higher.

As evidenced from the data below, our composite score in all three categories has steadily risen from fall 2018 to fall 2019 to fall 2020. This is especially impressive data since the entire fall 2020 semester took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, where many schools around the world are struggling to implement online learning in a way that engages students. This data supports the proposition that our professional development program is improving student perceptions, which are linked to student achievement (Crawford et al., 1998; Horak & Galluzzo, 2017; Ramsden & Entwistle, 1981).

Questions included in the course materials category are:

The course materials are appropriately challenging.	Course materials are well designed.	Course materials allow for sufficient peer interaction.	Course materials in Blackboard are easy to navigate.
---	-------------------------------------	---	--

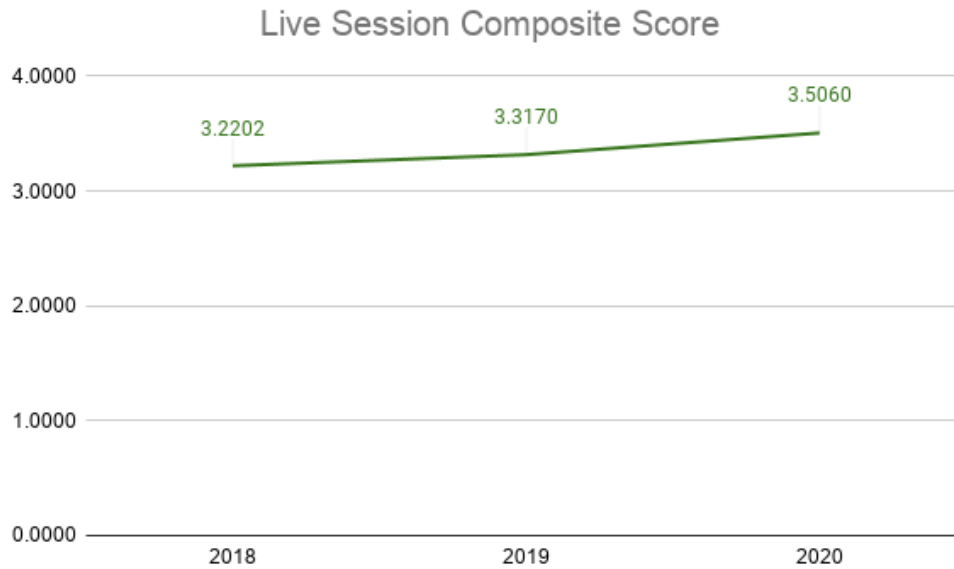
Course Materials Composite Score





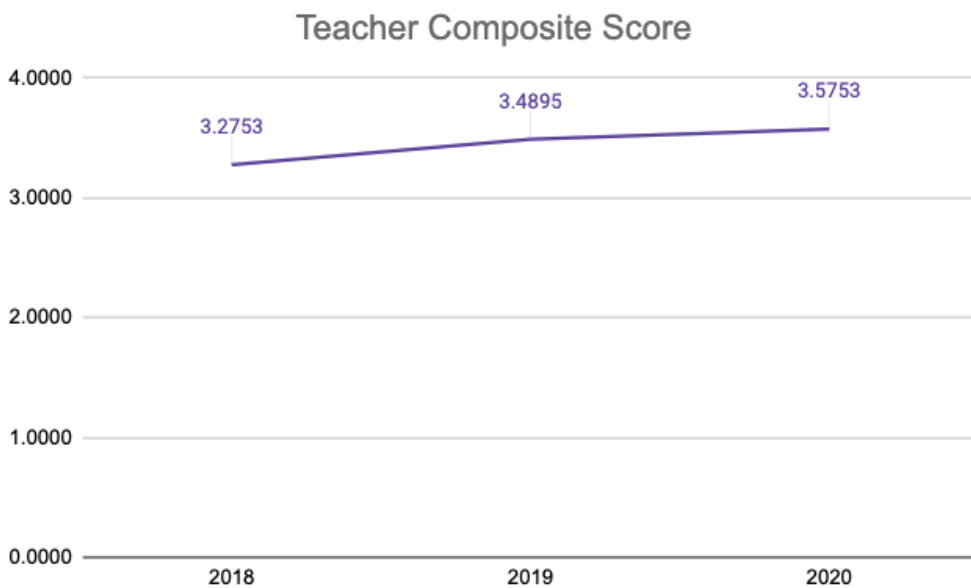
Questions included in the live session (LS) category are:

LS help me to think more deeply about the course content.	LS give me an opportunity to contribute to the class.	LS are important to me.	LSs are well organized.	LS encourage meaningful interaction with my peers.
---	---	-------------------------	-------------------------	--



Questions included in the teacher category are:

Teacher is responsive when I have questions.	Teacher provides appropriate feedback in order for me to improve.	Teacher knows and understands the content.	Teacher knows and understand my learning needs.
--	---	--	---



## **Accepted Families Night**

During the new student Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) meetings this summer we noticed that many families were learning important details about the Academy's courses, credits, and processes for the first time. This was creating confusion and in some cases frustration for new families. The following concerns came up the most:

- The PLP – Many families believed that this meant students could take whatever courses they wanted, when they wanted, and from any educational provider and still receive a Davidson diploma.
- Graduation Requirements – For some families coming from a home or other alternative schooling background, that the Academy is a public school with state-mandated graduation requirements was not something they had realized.

Rather than focusing on details and policies during a PLP meeting, counselors and advisors wanted to get to know students and families and to help get them prepared and excited for the new school year. To improve the tone of PLP meetings as well as help answer some of these common questions before a family enrolls, the Leadership Team began offering a regular forum for accepted students and families to connect and have questions answered before their intent to enroll is due.

In these hour-long Zoom meeting, members of the Leadership Team present and answer questions about general topics that are important to consider when enrolling at the Davidson Academy Online. Topics have included graduation requirements, transfer credits, personalized learning plans, the Davidson core curriculum, course placements, workload expectations, student resources, and curricular and extracurricular activities. The first Accepted Families Night was held on Thursday, December 17, 2020. We are planning the second Accepted Families Night for Tuesday, February 23, 2021.

## **Davidson Academy Online Student Success**

Lucia M. has progressed to the national level of Cyberstart America Competition. A free national program for high school students to master cybersecurity as a gateway to the industry, up their digital skills, and compete for college scholarships!

## Scholastic Art &amp; Writing Awards

Students in grades 7-12 (age 13 and up) submitted their art to be judged by a panel of local artists and art professionals across the nation. Artworks are eligible for the highest award of Gold Key, a Silver Key, or an Honorable Mention based on originality, technical skill, and an emergence of a personal vision.

<i>Award Recipient</i>	<i>Award</i>	<i>Work Title</i>	<i>Work Category</i>
<b>Beatrice Alba</b>	Gold Key	Reassessing Marxism for Marginalized Groups	Critical Essay
<b>Beatrice Alba</b>	Gold Key	Tower of Babel	Poetry
<b>Sequoia Ding</b>	Honorable Mention	"Cinderella" Stories as Justification for Patriarchal Societies	Critical Essay
<b>Sequoia Ding</b>	Silver Key	Paradoxes and Activism in "The Sound of Silence"	Critical Essay
<b>Sequoia Ding</b>	Gold Key	Who's There? ( <i>Shown below</i> )	Photography
<b>Elizabeth Keller</b>	Silver Key	From the Stars to the Earth: Why Space Exploration Remains Important	Critical Essay
<b>Elizabeth Keller</b>	Honorable Mention	Directions	Poetry
<b>Elizabeth Keller</b>	Honorable Mention	Worms Philosophy	Poetry
<b>Elizabeth Keller</b>	Honorable Mention	Hollows	Short Story
<b>Lucia Moscola</b>	Gold Key	Where Have All the Flowers Gone? They've Gone to Symbols Every One	Critical Essay
<b>Rowan Muir</b>	Honorable Mention	Stick and Stream	Photography
<b>Rowan Muir</b>	Honorable Mention	Swirling Symbol	Photography
<b>Chili Pramoda</b>	Gold Key	I Wonder: The Girl Next Door and You, Yourself, and You Only	Poetry
<b>Chili Pramoda</b>	Gold Key	Poker, Mask of the World, Lex Talionis	Poetry
<b>Peter Tarson</b>	Silver Key	Two Poems from The Deity Cycle	Poetry
<b>Peter Tarson</b>	Honorable Mention	The Stellar Plague	Science Fiction & Fantasy
<b>Caroline Stanton</b>	Silver Key	Common Core's Rousseau Reform	Critical Essay



**References:**

Crawford, K., Gordon, S., Nichols, J., & Prosser, M. (1998). Qualitatively different experiences of learning mathematics at university. *Learning and Instruction*, 8(5), 393-346.

Horak, A. K., & Galluzzo, G. R. (2017). Gifted middle school students' achievement and perceptions of science classroom quality during problem-based learning. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 28(1), 28-50. <https://doi-org.libproxy.boisestate.edu/10.1177/1932202X16683424>

Ramsden, P., & Entwistle, N. J. (1981). Effects of academic departments on students' approaches to studying. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 51, 368-383.

## Media and Outreach Updates

### The Davidson Academy Governing Board Updates

#### February 2021

---

#### Media Updates/ Notable Website Mentions

- *Maintaining Academic Growth During a Pandemic*  
 February 11, 2021 – Digital Learning Collaborative (Davidson Academy Online Director Dr. Stacy Hawthorne moderating a panel on online learning)  
<https://www.digitallearningcollab.com/webinars>
- *Student's Award-winning App Matches Volunteers With Organizers*  
 January 31, 2021 - KOLO-TV (features student Julia Schneider showcasing her volunteering app)  
<https://www.kolotv.com/video/2021/01/31/student-award-winning-app-matches-volunteers-with-organizers/>
- *Science Olympiad Top 25 Middle School Leaderboard*  
 January 29, 2021 - Davidson Academy student Annabelle Wang was named a Top 25 finisher in the Science Olympiad Division B Middle School Anatomy and Physiology STEM Showdown!  
<https://twitter.com/SOAlumniNetwork/status/1355216281834762248>
- *Sharing Approaches to Teacher Professional Development*  
 January 26, 2021 - MIT J-WEL (Dr. Stacy Hawthorne and Dr. Jessica Potts of the Davidson Academy's online campus recently shared their professional development processes for teachers and provided tips for adapting them in schools.)  
<https://jwel.mit.edu/events/sharing-approaches-teacher-professional-development-jan-26-2021>
- *Zoom and Google Outages: How Schools Should Prepare for Tech Problems*  
 January 19, 2021 - Education Week (features Davidson Academy Online Director Dr. Stacy Hawthorne; recognizes the Davidson Academy as a school that does a great job proactively planning for tech outages)  
<https://www.edweek.org/technology/zoom-and-google-outages-how-schools-should-prepare-for-tech-problems/2021/01>
- *Regeneron STS 2021 Finalists*  
 January 2021 – Society for Science (student Derek Chien was named a top 300 scholar in Regeneron's Science Talent Search. Both Derek and the Davidson Academy will receive \$2,000 to be used toward STEM-related activities.  
<https://www.societyforscience.org/regeneron-sts/>

## Website Metrics

(Nov. 1, 2020 – Feb. 1, 2021)

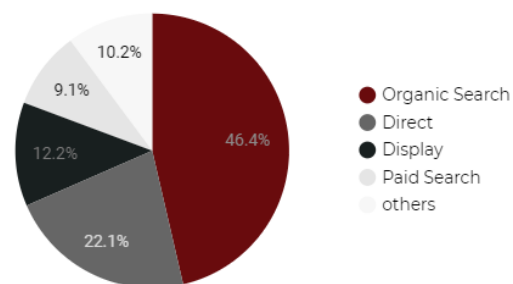
### Key Takeaways

- Total website visits are up 31.1% year-over-year primarily due to organic search (such as Google) and direct visits to website.
- Traffic coming from search engines (i.e. Google) is up 38.8%.
- The highest traffic day this period was Dec. 2, with a 113% over the same day in 2019.
- Organic traffic to the Admissions pages is up 45%. Average time on page is up 12%

### Key Performance Indicators (Y/Y)

All Traffic Sessions	Organic Sessions	Start App Pageviews
24,635	11,422	178
↑ 31.1%	↑ 38.8%	
Institute Links	Newsletter Links	
1,535	30	

### Website Visits by Source



### Organic Sessions by City

City	Session...	% Δ
1. Reno	2,437	143.2% ↑
2. (not set)	1,361	359.8% ↑
3. Las Vegas	649	177.4% ↑
4. Chicago	458	328.0% ↑
5. New York	445	155.7% ↑
6. Los Angeles	375	169.8% ↑
7. San Francisco	299	43.1% ↑
8. Sparks	278	137.6% ↑
9. San Jose	253	228.6% ↑
10. Houston	238	244.9% ↑

1 - 100 / 3233 < >

### New Keywords in Top 3 Rankings

Keyword	Pos.	Prev. Pos.
online classes for gifted children	3	6
online gifted middle school	1	5
online gifted education	2	6
online gifted programs	1	4
online programs for gifted students	3	4

**Organic search:** search engines such as Google

**Direct:** directly visiting our website

**Referral:** Arriving on our website via a link from another website, such as NAGC or a news article

**Social:** Social Media such as Facebook and Twitter

### Keyword Rankings

Keyword	Position	Position change ▼	Previous position
highly gifted program	39	29	68
school for the gifted	35	28	63
gifted academy	31	18	49
school for highly gifted students	19	17	36
programs for gifted middle school students	56	16	72
academy for the gifted	9	5	14
online gifted middle school	1	4	5
school for the highly gifted	28	3	31
online gifted programs	2	2	4
online gifted education	4	2	6

### Ongoing Outreach

#### Virtual Open House - Davidson Academy Reno Campus

- March 2, 2021 (upcoming)
- February 2, 2021
- January 5, 2021

#### Virtual Open House - Davidson Academy Online Campus

- January 20, 2021
- December 8, 2020
- November 16, 2020

#### Davidson Academy eNewsletter

- Distributed every other month to 6,000 recipients
- [December 2020](#)

#### eNews-Update

- Often prominently features the Davidson Academy; distributed every other month to more than 15,200 recipients
- [January 2021](#)
- [December 2020](#)

#### Social Media

- Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/thedavidsonacademy/>
- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/TheDavidsonAcademy/>
- Twitter - <https://twitter.com/TheDavidsonAcad>
- YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/user/DavidsonAcademyNV>

---

#### Davidson Academy

**Proposed Resolution**  
**The Davidson Academy Governing Board Meeting**  
**February 2021**

---

VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Review, discuss and possibly adopt revised policy regarding multiple signatures on Academy checks for amounts in excess of \$10,000.



## Proposed Resolution

### The Davidson Academy Governing Board Meeting

### February 2021

---

Having made satisfactory progress toward the requirements specified in NRS 388C and all other published and recorded requirements for graduation from the Davidson Academy of Nevada, and pursuant to NRS 388C.120.4, the Governing Board of the Davidson Academy recommends the issuance of a high school diploma to each of the following students as members of the Class of 2021:

Piper Bitney	Reaghan Moore
Alyssa Brown	Ryan Moore
Rex Burnham	Luke Noonan
Sydney Chen	Ikenna Okpukpara
Derek Chien	Aayan Patel
Dravid Chitturi	Alex Peng
Meghana Dodda	Delaney Plecha
Justin Ferguson	Tree Pulver
Erika Filter	Jason Scharoun
Caitlin Hamilton	Priyanka Senthil
Asher Hansen	Gracie Squier
Samantha Hasegawa	Wendy Thompson
Hunter Holt	Paul Thornton
Ellie Huh	Zoya Vincent
Henry Korver	Cecilia Wade
Megan Li	Jessica Wei
Michelle Liu	Zane Williams
Harshavardhini Manivannan	Amanda Zhu
Luke Mauer	Louise Ziegler
Cliona McEnery	

This recommendation is subject to satisfactory completion of the remaining scheduled coursework, required credits, and standardized testing as noted in each student's Personalized Learning Plan and/or academic transcript.