

**Minutes of the Meeting**  
**The Davidson Academy Governing Board**  
**August 17, 2021**

**Call to Order**

The special meeting of the Governing Board of the Davidson Academy was called to order at 2:03 p.m. This public meeting was held by videoconference. Members of the public were invited to provide comments by telephone, through the videoconference, or by email.

**A. Roll Call**

Roll call was completed by the chair of the meeting, Mark Herron. In attendance were Roger Davidson, Lauralyn McCarthy-Sandoval, Brian Krolicki, and Brian Sandoval. Also present, Academy Director, Colleen Harsin; Director of Online Learning, Dr. Stacy Hawthorne; Legal Counsel, Ann Alexander; and Clerk of the Board, Holly Lorge'. Not present were Bob Davidson, Kristen McNeill, Jhone Ebert, Annette Whittemore and Richard Trachok. 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.

**C. Public Comment**

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

Mr. Herron stated that the meeting is being held without a physical location, but in compliance with Nevada legislation, was available for visual participation and audio call-in for public comments. He referenced the public comment details provided in the agenda and confirmed that public comments, if made, would be received by email or by telephone. No comments were received.

**D. Approval of Agenda**

Mr. 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 May 24, 2021, on page 4 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. Vice President and Chief Financial Officer**

#### **a. Report on plan to operate the Davidson Academy Online as an independent (private school)**

Mr. Herron began his report by sharing how the Davidson Academy Online (DAO) program began in 2015 as a limited version of what is in place now. This was started as a trial for school years of 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. In 2017 the Davidson Academy Online program was added to the Davidson Academy Reno public school as a full-time parallel distance learning program offering academic credit under common accreditation.

Mr. Herron continued by stating that in consultation with the Nevada Department of Education it was determined that Nevada students in the online program would receive per pupil state funding support and would not pay tuition for DAO. Those students outside of Nevada would pay tuition, although noting that the Davidson Institute offered financial assistance where necessary.

Mr. Herron shared that offering the DAO program has had advantages, and challenges. Operating as a Nevada public school across state lines was groundbreaking, and the Institute has been appreciative of support from Nevada Department of Education. Factors such as compulsory attendance requirements, seat time and calendar restrictions, and other public education laws in different states has made it cumbersome for families outside of Nevada to enroll in an out-of-state online public school program as currently structured and remain in compliance with local laws.

Mr. Herron commented that there is now opportunity for growth in the U.S., Canada and ultimately, internationally, for working with profoundly gifted students in a full-time online learning environment. After careful consideration and planning the goal is to convert the current online program to a private, independent school, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year. This would be a program of the Davidson Institute separate from the Davidson Academy Reno campus. Mr. Herron noted that the Davidson Academy Reno campus is organized as an unincorporated division of the Davidson Academy Institute which is a 501(c)(3) public charity.

Mr. Herron added that the timing of this is particularly relevant as the operations and application for 2022-2023 will open in September, and there is a need to accurately describe the nature of the DAO to prospective students and their families.

Mr. Herron noted that the state of Oregon has the most conducive laws and regulations for an independent school. The plan is to create a special purpose entity in Oregon as part of the Davidson Institute while operating DAO and offering a range of classes, programs and services leading to high school diploma as it does currently. However, as

an independent (private) school, DAO would not be required to offer certain programs and services that public schools are mandated to provide.

Mr. Herron commented that this report brought before the Board today is as an information item, not an action item. Mr. Herron reminded the Board that upon reviewing Board Minutes of 2015, the Board did not take action to start the DAO program, and Board action is not necessary to remove the program from under the Davidson Academy public school. Mr. Herron continued that the audit for the fiscal year just concluded in June and the audit report will be presented in September. Mr. Herron expects the auditors to add a footnote to that audit report addressing what was just described.

Mr. Krolicki asked Mr. Herron about budget implications to Davidson Academy Reno itself with this upcoming separation. Mr. Herron replied that DAO accounts for 40% of the budget as combined between Reno campus/Online program. At the current state, the separation will be financially beneficial to Reno campus.

Mr. Krolicki also asked about aspects of this separation from a human resource perspective. Mr. Herron pointed out there is a clear dividing line between resources receiving state support for Reno campus, being careful how to allocate costs. The downside is there won't be opportunity for sharing staffing resources as in the past. Mr. Herron stated that they will be reaching out to Jhone Ebert's office for further guidance on moving forward.

Ms. Sandoval asked about any potential effects on the 'brick and mortar' students. Dr. Hawthorne answered that she and Ms. Harsin have discussed this, with the analogy of this being an amicable separation, and both wanting to provide opportunities when appropriate, without crossing any boundaries, reassuring the main goal of no negative impact for students.

Mr. Sandoval asked about how this change will affect Nevadans who are attending online. Mr. Herron stated that there is no current plan to charge Nevada students tuition.

## **G. General Business**

Mr. Herron asked the Board to consider moving the day or time of the next two board meeting dates of September 20 and November 8, as this was a suggestion from Board members who have conflicting schedules. An email will be sent out on the subject of possible day or time change regarding next two Board meetings.

## **H. Public Comment**

Mr. Herron reminded everyone of the process for public comment. No comments were received.

**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 2:25 p.m.

*Holly Lorge*

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