

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

Call to Order

The regular 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 allowing members of the public to hear and observe the meeting. Members of the public were invited to provide comments by telephone, through videoconference, or by email.

A. Roll Call

Roll call was completed by Meeting Chair, Mark Herron. In attendance were Roger Davidson, Bob Davidson, Richard Trachok, Lauralyn McCarthy-Sandoval, and Kristen McNeill. Also present were Academy Director, Colleen Harsin; Director of Online Learning, Dr. Stacy Hawthorne; Legal Counsel, Ann Alexander; and Clerk of the Board, Aimee Fredericks. Ben Brown provided technical support for the meeting. Annette Whittemore, Brian Sandoval, Jhone Ebert and Brian Krolicki were not present. Following completion of roll call, a quorum of voting members was confirmed.

B. Welcome and Introduction

Mark Herron welcomed Board members and members of the public in attendance.

C. Public Comment

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

Mark Herron stated that this meeting would be 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

Mark Herron requested approval of the meeting agenda. Motion was made and seconded for approval of the agenda as submitted. There was no discussion and the motion carried unanimously.

E. Approval of Minutes

Mark Herron requested approval of the minutes for the meeting of September 29, 2021, included in the board book for this meeting. 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

Colleen Harsin began her report with a summary of admissions for the Reno Campus. She confirmed that 142 students were currently enrolled for the 2021-22 school year. Thirty-six new students joined the academy for the current school year with 25 moving from out of state to attend. She advised that admissions for the 2022-23 school year may be challenged by the current housing market in the Reno-Tahoe area and that it could factor into decisions made by out-of-state families when they consider applying.

To date, one virtual tour and informational event for prospective students and families had been completed, with three more events planned through February. Eight applicants meeting eligibility criteria will participate in assessment in December, with approximately 200 applications in progress in varying stages of completion. Three Davidson Academy Online students are being assessed for transfer to in-person learning at the Reno campus. Other testing options, such as the SSAT, were added as accepted tests to accompany the written application, as obtaining standardized testing has been challenging for applicants over the last year due to COVID-19.

Ms. Harsin confirmed for the Board that \$15,000.00, an out of budget expense, had been spent on laptops for staff members. This was in response to COVID-19, with the interest of making remote instruction more accessible should the academy need to revert to online learning at any given time, as well as the need for teachers to change classrooms throughout each school day due to COVID-19 protocols, and thus not having access to a designated classroom and/or desktop computer.

Ms. Harsin referred Board members to Tab 2 of their board books for review of the updated school profile letter for the current school year. The letter includes information for both the Reno campus and Davidson Academy Online. Counselors from both campuses drafted information and updates, so that colleges have access to current details about the Davidson Academy.

Richard Trachok asked for an estimate of the capacity of the Reno campus. Ms. Harsin confirmed it had been discussed as about 200 people, but with that number of staff and students, the academy would likely need additional space due to the varied sizes of the classroom spaces. Bob Davidson suggested to the Board that it may be time to approach the University's president and provost concerning additional classroom space options.

2. Director of Online Learning

a. General Program Updates

Dr. Stacy Hawthorne began her report by confirming that Davidson Academy Online received a \$10,000.00, grant from Future of Schools as recognition for its development of supports to foster student resilience. This accomplishment was reported in Nevada Today and covered by local station Channel 4 News.

Dr. Hawthorne referred Board members to a list of new courses to be offered through Davidson Academy Online in the spring of 2022. The online campus is in its second year of fielding a Speech and Debate team. This year the team took first and second place in a competition.

Richard Trachok asked how many graduates matriculate into the University of California system. To date, no Davidson Academy Online students have enrolled in a UC school. Ten students are slated for graduation in spring 2022.

Lauralyn McCarthy-Sandoval commented about students moving to in-person learning and that she would start the conversation with the University of Nevada, Reno, about more instructional space for the Reno campus.

3. Media and Outreach

Dr. Hawthorne provided a summary of media placement and outreach events for the Davidson Academy. An academy student was a semi-finalist for the Coca Cola scholarship. AP news featured quotes from Dr. Hawthorne in a national article about the state of gifted education. Davidson Academy Online received a \$10,000.00 grant from Future of Schools for development programs relating to student resilience. Davidson Academy was named a top school in the state of Nevada by 24/7 Wallstreet. Colleen Harsin was featured in Work-Live-Play on local Channel 8 KOLO News.

The Davidson Academy's newsletter webpage, which has been averaging 55 visitors a month, saw an increase to 205 visitors in October. The new Academy website is helping increase the digital presence of Davidson, as we are continuing to gain rankings for key word and search terms relevant to gifted education. Open houses and outreach including in-person recruiting will be starting again soon.

G. Public Comment

There were no comments from the public at this time.

H. Adjournment

There being no further business coming 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 2:37 p.m.

Aimee Fredericks

Respectfully submitted by Aimee Fredericks, Clerk of the Board