

Minutes of the Meeting
The Davidson Academy Governing Board
February 21, 2025

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Governing Board of the Davidson Academy was called to order at 2:01 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 Bob Davidson, Roger Davidson, Lauralyn McCarthy-Sandoval, and Brian Krolicki. Brian Sandoval, Richard Trachock, Annette Whittemore, Joseph Ernst, and Jhone Ebert 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. Present were Legal Counsel, Ann Alexander; Vice President of Finance and Administration, Karin Dixson; Director of Accounting, Kevin Connelly; General Counsel for The Davidson Group, Matthew Maccoby; Academy Director, Colleen Harsin; Governing Board Clerk, Aimee Fredericks; and IT Support, Ken Bouchard.

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 a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Motion was made and seconded for approval of the meeting agenda as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Approval of Minutes

Mark Herron requested approval of the minutes for the meeting of November 8, 2024, included in the board book for this meeting. Motion was made and seconded for approval of the minutes as submitted. There was one voting abstention by Brian Krolicki as he was not present at the November meeting. The motion carried.

F. Reports

1. Academy Director

a. General Program Updates

Colleen Harsin began her report of general updates by referring Board Members to Tab 2 of their board books for review of the Profit and Loss Statement for The Davidson Academy, from July 2024 through January 2025. An updated version of the document was provided to the Board and the public via the Davidson Academy website from what was initially included in the board books. However, there was no substantial change in the information provided, only corrected formatting of the document. Ms. Harsin asked if the Board had questions concerning this information. Board Member, Brian Krolicki, asked whether there was anything significant in the report that the Board should take note of. Mark Herron confirmed that the report includes seven months of financial information with 58% of the fiscal year expired at this point. The information can be viewed to see if items are within that range. There is management fee that is out of alignment because it was accounted for differently after being reported to the Board, however, is “a wash” in terms of a noted loss. Mr. Herron confirmed there were no items of concern or unexpected to bring to the Board’s attention at this meeting.

Ms. Harsin reported that 46 Academy students participated in the DECA competition in Las Vegas, several of whom will be moving on to the international competition in Orlando, FL. Additionally, 20 students participated in the regional Speech and Debate competition. Students on Davidson Academy Science Bowl teams recently competed and won several thousand dollars in cash prizes, and Science Olympiad is set to complete at an invitational in Berkeley, CA. Required ACT testing is scheduled to be administered at the Academy, along with Smarter Balanced Assessment Testing (SBAC), and AP testing is scheduled for the end of the school year. It is reporting season, and the bi-annual state report will be submitted to the state, on time by the March 1, 2025, deadline. It will also be provided to the Board. The Civil Rights Data Collection report is also due and will be submitted on time. The Alternative School Calendar request is pending submission to the state. Discover Science and Energy Forum speakers continue to visit and present during school day lunch breaks. Ms. Harsin continues to host monthly Parent Meetings, which provide a great opportunity for sharing updates and answering questions. Morning and evening Zoom events are offered for these parent meetings. The Improvisation Class recently held a lunchtime performance, Student Leadership held a Salsa Dance instruction session, and members of the GECKO Club led e-Waste collection and recycling opportunity. One student also started a warm clothing collection for the local homeless population called *Heartwarming*. The GECKO Club will soon be hosting their garage sale, which is a fundraising event for their club. There are also several senior activities planned, including the Senior Sunset Event, and getting ready for graduation and the spring formal dance.

The admissions review cycle for the 2025-2026 school year continues with two final readiness assessment and interview dates planned. Admissions are planned to conclude in April. To date, 28 new students have been accepted. Of note, 23 of these new students are male and 5 are female. This is something that the Academy will be looking at as previously it’s been experienced that enrollment numbers have been at about 60% males and 40% females. It is observed that there are a number of factors that could contribute to this shift. Brian Krolicki asked why students would not enroll if accepted. Ms. Harsin confirmed it has primarily been related to employment and relocation challenges.

Under Tab 3, Ms. Harsin referred Board Members to a copy of the Academy’s Student Publication Policy. She thanked Legal Counsel, Ann Alexander, for her help in drafting the policy. It was brought to the Academy’s attention that student publications, such as school newspapers, are subject to NRS 388.077 pertaining to non-censorship or negative impact concerning content

of student publications on students or staff members. While the Academy was acting within the spirit and intent of NRS 388.0777, there was not previously a written policy which now addresses all points of this legislation.

b. College Planning Updates

Under Tab 4, Ms. Harsin included a letter from the Regeneron Science Talent Search that included a Davidson Academy Senior, Adrian Lim, who was named one of the top 300 student scientists.

A summary of college acceptances for Davidson Academy proposed graduates was provided to the Board. Many college decisions have not yet been received except for early action and early decision, which are captured in the current summary. More details will be available at the next meeting as the general decision deadlines approach. Students continue to travel for college visits.

2. Media and Outreach

Concerning Media and outreach updates, Ms. Harsin referred board members to their board books for press releases announcing a Davidson Academy senior named as a Coca Cola Scholar Regional Finalist and a second senior named as a National STEM Champion. She also referred Board Members to a list National Merit recipients and those students who are candidates to apply to be Presidential Scholars.

Under Tab 6, Ms. Harsin provided a summary of website metrics updates. SEO searches still list Davidson Academy at the top in organic searches. Most recently, the Academy appeared in the #1 spot in searches for “school for geniuses”, from previous #11 spot. Searches now include an AI overview. The search for “school for exceptionally gifted” put the Davidson Academy to the #1 spot from the #8 spot. Page views for the website, “How to Apply” page are up 13% and application page up 17%. Newsletter subscribership continues to increase.

G. General Business

1. Review, discuss, and possibly approve Second Amended Lease Agreement effective as of March 10, 2025, between Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), and The Davidson Institute for Talent Development.

Mark Herron advised that this General Business item is for Board consideration and has to do with the leased space for the Davison Academy in the Jot Travis Building. He reported that for purposes of history, in 2005 the Legislature approved the governing legislation for the Davidson Academy. Also, in 2005 the Davidson Institute entered into an arrangement with the University of Nevada, Reno and NSHE and in 2006 it entered into an agreement with KNPB/PBS Reno, to utilize an interim space for the Davidson Academy campus. In 2007, the Academy entered into an agreement with NSHE in conjunction with a gift made by Jan and Bob Davidson toward the building of the Davidson Mathematics and Science Building, for the Davidson Academy to lease its current space in the Jot Travis Building.

The consideration for that lease was rent of \$1.00 per year, plus approximately \$3,700,000 to pay the cost for renovation of the Jot Travis space. NSHE pays for all building operation and maintenance expense for the Jot Travis space. The lease has an initial term of 20 years, running through December 2027. The Academy then has four, five-year options to renew the lease. NSHE has a one-time three-year notice to not renew the lease, exercisable in December 2024.

Last fall in conversations with NSHE regarding the new Annex space, formerly the University Honors College space, also in the Jot Travis Building, Mr. Herron and Ms. Harsin were approached concerning NSHE's desire to update the economic portion of the Jot Travis lease arrangement, specifically relating to operations and maintenance expenses. Mr. Herron and Ms. Harsin were advised that the estimate of the operations and maintenance expense of the space was \$12-15 million, over the 20-year lease option period, and that NSHE was looking to have the Davidson Academy pay these expenses in a potential re-negotiation of the lease agreement.

Based on timing, a request to extend the three-year non-renewal notice time to March 2025 was made and approved by NSHE. Discussions were then entered into with NSHE. NSHE proposed the lease agreement be updated to include a Davidson contribution of approximately \$10 per square foot, per year toward operation and maintenance costs starting in March 2025. Following negotiations, it was agreed that this charge would not be imposed until the conclusion of the current 20-year lease term in December 2027. Other changes were included and relate to fixing items not originally addressed in 2007, in order to bring the lease up to current NSHE standards.

Mr. Herron referred to Davidson Group General Counsel, Mr. Maccoby who participated in the negotiations and documentation for further comment. Mr. Maccoby indicated that NSHE made a number of requests. Requests were also made on behalf of the Academy. Among other things it was agreed in the lease amendment that previously designated "joint use" areas would be reserved for the Academy's exclusive use. The four, five-year renewal options were retained, but it was agreed to give NSHE the right to terminate the lease after 10 years by giving three years' advance notice. NSHE will continue to provide the operations and maintenance services currently provided in return for the additional payment from the Academy. The Academy may obtain its own janitorial services apart from NSHE. If the Academy obtains its own janitorial services, the operations and maintenance costs will be reduced to reflect that change.

Other changes were made to bring the agreement up to current NSHE standards, including incorporating a "funding out" provision. It was further agreed that if the University could not perform its lease obligations (for example, providing utilities) because it didn't have the required funding, the Academy could continue to occupy the space and perform those obligations itself, with a commensurate reduction in the Academy's operations and maintenance payments. The insurance requirements were updated, and it was agreed that no improvements would be made to the property without NSHE approval. This updated lease agreement is not effective without Davidson Academy Board approval and approval by the Board of Regents.

Mark Herron advised this is subject to Board approval and realistically there is no further opportunity for negotiation of the lease terms. Mr. Herron requested a motion and second for approval of the updated lease agreement. A motion and second were received. Mr. Herron opened the motion for Board discussion and public comment. Brian Krolicki commented that the changes are reasonable. He commented that he hopes that appropriate parties will be discussing future opportunities for the Davidson Academy campus. Mr. Herron confirmed that the updated lease agreement would not affect Davidson Academy student access to UNR activities. Mr. Herron confirmed no further Board comment or comment from the public and requested approval of Second Amended Lease Agreement effective as of March 10, 2025, between Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), and The Davidson Institute for Talent Development. Board Member, Lauralyn McCarthy-Sandoval recused herself from the discussion and the vote on this matter. Motion carried.

H. Public Comment

There were no comments from the public at this time.

I. Adjournment

There being no further business coming before the Board in a public meeting, Mr. Herron asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2:59 p.m.

Aimee Fredericks

Respectfully submitted by Aimee Fredericks, Governing Board Clerk