

University Academy Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 28, 2025 4:00 p.m.
Mayerberg Hall, University Academy

Present: (6) Mrs. Shirley Bush Helzberg, Secretary (Via Zoom at 4:09 pm)
Mr. Paul Greenwood, Treasurer (Via Zoom)
Mrs. Katie Kwo Gerson, Board Chairman (Via Zoom)
Mr. Randy Wisthoff
Mrs. Laura Threatt
Mr. Jeron Ravin (arrived at 4:23 pm)

Absent: (2) Dr. J. Camille Hall
Mr. LeRay Warrior, Board President

Call to Order and Roll Call

Board Member Mr. Randy Wisthoff called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

Enrollment Report

Mrs. Kivett began her report with the total number of students enrolled: 1,099. The number of withdrawals for November 19, 2024- January 23, 2025, is nine. Two have moved to other charter schools, and seven have moved out of the district.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Randy Wisthoff requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda Items.

Motion: Paul Greenwood

Second: Laura Threatt

Vote: 5-0 Unanimous approval: motion carries

Finance Report

Chief Financial Officer Mr. Tyler Kemp opened with statements for the months ending in November and December 2024 (please refer to your packet for November's report). December shows a \$828,000.00 gain compared to December 2023, which was a \$300,000.00 loss. Revenues are up by \$1,000,000.00. Our expenses are also higher by \$400,000.00. Salaries are up by \$300,000.00- this is driven mainly by merit increases and stipends that were given out. Purchases are also up \$325,000.00. This is due to increased transportation costs and more Pre-K students this year. Federal funding and grants have been frozen; we are looking into what this will mean for the University Academy's free and reduced lunch program.

Operations Report

Assistant Superintendent Mr. Stacy Graff began his report with the current Operations projects throughout the campus. The LED lights, a few boxes, and switches previously installed are not up to code, and we are working on a plan to replace them. R&R Landscaping has been working on the snow and ice removal. Our facility crew checks and addresses any slick spots daily. To recruit possible

candidates, Mr. Graff, Ms. Blackstock, and Mrs. Kemp will attend the upcoming career fairs at UMKC, Missouri State, Pitt State, and Harris Stowe University. Staff have been asked to complete and return their “intent to return” forms by January 31, 2025.

Superintendent’s Report

Superintendent Mrs. Rebecca Gudde opened her report by sharing our recent APR results provided by DESE. University Academy earned an impressive 89.2% for the 2024 school year. This score ranks our school as the second-highest-performing school among the other 19 charters and the Kansas City School District. A Strategic Plan Committee has been established and meets biweekly. The group consists of staff members, parents, and students working together on academics, social/emotional health, and community contributions. This is our fourth year working with Mr. John Bluford and the Be The Change program through the Bluford Institute. With this program, our students receive dual credit for participation and are introduced to opportunities in the medical field, such as doctors, nursing, radiology, accounting, behavioral science, etc. University Academy’s student Lilyanne Harris, 7th grade, was given the privilege to lead the Pledge of Allegiance on January 3, 2025, during the inauguration ceremony for Prosecuting Attorney Melesa Johnson Esq.

School Reports

K-2

Ms. Danielle Blackstock shared that this is the first year of NWEA testing in the K-2 school. Data from previous testing shows that the students have grown in ELA and Math. Ms. Blackstock has recognized Ms. Lindsey Goff as her employee of the month. The K-5 reading Title Program allows all our Kindergarten students to receive four free books to promote literacy at home and a guest reader from the Mid Continent Library. In December, students made and decorated ornaments for our community project for the senior class, central office staff, maintenance team, and various support staff.

3-5

Mrs. Aisha Smith opened her report by announcing Ms. Araiana Thomas as her employee of the month. Mrs. Smith shared that the 3-5 grade level’s vision is to have every student show 100% growth in their reading ability or above grade level. Recent NWEA tests have shown that 50% or more have met growth. This data is helpful and provides feedback to let staff know the student’s needs and gaps so we can continue to help and support them. During December’s School and Community theme, we had a visit from KMBC Channel 9 meteorologist, Bryan Busby.

Middle School

Mrs. Levette Amerison shared that her student’s NWEA assessments showed improvement in all four areas (Math, ELA, Science, and Social Studies). Sixty-two students achieved Honor Roll and Principal’s Honor Roll, and sixteen have maintained perfect attendance. The Middle School Student Spotlight is Landon Robinson, 6th grade. Landon was featured in the Amazon Prime movie *Unstoppable*. For community contributions, one of our 7th-grade Advisory class visited Brookside Medical Center to hand deliver a holiday banner and cards. Girls in Tech Conference participated in the Kansas City Area Tech conference, gaining mentorship and hands-on learning with computer science. Mrs. Amerison reported Mrs. Elise Kwenin as the employee of the month for December 2024 and Mr. Brendan Graff for January 2024.

Upper School

Mrs. Lashonette Kemp started her report with the Upper School student-teacher assistant program, which

has grown from six students to an additional five new students this semester. The student T.A. helps in K-5 classrooms. During their exit interview with Mrs. Kemp, four students from the original group are now reconsidering their career choices. College acceptances are still coming in as of today. The deadline was January 21, 2025. Eighty students made the honor roll or principal's honor roll and will be rewarded by seeing the stage play *Underground* at the Folly Theater in February. Upper School students are working on their NWEA testing. Results will be announced at the next meeting. Mrs. Kemp and her staff have nominated Mr. Evan Schroeder as the employee of the month for January 2025. Students gave handwritten holiday cards to the two assisted living centers on 68th Street, Brookside Research Medical, and the Cleaver YMCA.

University Academy Foundation Report

Mrs. Sonja Shaffer began her report by announcing eighteen middle school students were awarded summer camp scholarships to the following camps: Birchwood Wilderness (boys), Camp Birchwood (girls), Sanborn Western Camp, and Camp Lincoln/Lake Hubert. Invitations for the Upper School student study abroad program will be given out on Thursday, February 20, 2025. All are invited to attend. This is the first year we have increased the levels and awards for the College Incentive Program to seniors for their highest ACT scores. We ask that students submit their applications and transcripts (they must be enrolled in the current semester). The Foundation has had forty-six applicants apply for the summer internship program, with forty of them moving forward for interviews with the following companies: Children's Mercy Hospital, Helzberg Diamond, Commerce Bank, Girl Scouts, Job One, Preferred Physical Therapy, American Century, Lockton, DEMDACO, The Kansas City Zoo, City of KC, Novella Brandhouse, Swope Health, and University Academy. We welcome Mr. Sam Cook as our newest Development and Community Engagement Director. The next Monday Mixer will be on February 24, 2025—location to be announced. The Gala is scheduled for Saturday, April 26, 2025; invitations were mailed out on December 5, 2024. The Second Annual Alumni Awards Banquet was December 19, 2024. There were fifty-seven in attendance from the class of 2004 to 2024.

Old Business - None

New Business

2025-26 Calendar Approval

LAU Plan

Updated Board Policies

Mr. Randy Wisthoff requested a motion to approve the 2025-26 Calendar.

Motion: Jaron Ravin

Second: Laura Threatt

Vote: 6-0 Unanimous approval: motion carries

Mr. Randy Wisthoff requested a motion to approve the LAU Plan.

Motion: Jaron Ravin

Second: Laura Threatt

Vote: 6-0 Unanimous approval: motion carries

Mr. Randy Wisthoff requested a motion to approve the Updated Board Policies.

Motion: Katie Kwo Gerson

Second: Paul Greenwood

Vote: 6-0 Unanimous approval: motion carries

Adjournment

With no further business before the board, Mr. Randy Wishtoff adjourned the meeting at 4:56 p.m. and requested a motion to enter Executive Session.

Motion: Laura Threatt

Second: Jaron Ravin

Vote: 6-0 Unanimous approval: motion carries

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 4:00 pm

I, Shirley Bush Helzberg, Secretary of the University Academy Board of Directors, certify that the above is a true and correct transcript of the minutes from a meeting of the Board of University Academy held at University Academy on September 24, 2024. The meeting was duly called and held in all aspects in accordance with the laws of the State of Missouri and the school's bylaws, and a quorum was present.

Signature



Date

