

**Minutes of the Meeting of  
The Davidson Academy of Nevada  
Governing Board**

**November 17, 2008**

**Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Governing Board was called to order at 2:00 p.m. in the Tahoe Room of The Davidson Academy of Nevada located at 1164 N. Virginia St., Reno, Nevada, 89503.

**A. Roll Call**

Roll call was completed by President Jan Davidson. Mark Herron, Annette Whittemore, Eugene Paslov, Keith Rheault, Paul Dugan and Colleen Harsin were present. Chairman Bob Davidson was present via telephonic conferencing. Hon. Bruce R. James, Milton Glick and Hon. Brian Krolicki were not present.

**B. Welcome and Introductions**

Welcome and Introductions were completed by President Jan Davidson.

**C. Approval of Minutes for Meeting of September 29, 2008**

President Jan Davidson requested approval of the minutes for the meeting of September 29, 2008. Motion was made by Eugene Paslov for approval of the Minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Annette Whittemore. Motion carried unanimously.

**D. Approval of Agenda**

President Jan Davidson requested approval of the Agenda as submitted. Motion was made by Mark Herron and seconded by Eugene Paslov. Motion carried unanimously.

**E. Reports**

**E.1. Vice President and Chief Financial Officer**

**a. Audit Report**

**Mark Herron, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer** began his report with introduction of John VanTrigt of the Certified Public Accounting firm of Holthouse, Carlin & VanTrigt who completed an Independent Auditors' Reports of June 30, 2008 (incorporated herein by reference). Mr. Herron also introduced Karin Dixon, The Davidson Academy Controller who assisted Mr. Van Trigt with the audit. Mr. VanTrigt reported to the Board that no significant audit adjustments were made and nothing was out of the ordinary. The amount of rent paid for the previous academy facility carried forward from the previous audit. There were no accounting or audit disagreements in the financial statements and no significant differences other than for the last audit when the Davidson Academy was 100% funded by Jan and Bob Davidson. For the 2008 audit, 25% of the Academy's funding came from DSA funds and 75% was provided through gifts from the Davidsons and other donors. The completed audit resulted in a clean audit opinion with no findings or issues with accounting or financials. Mark Herron

**Minutes of the Meeting of  
The Davidson Academy of Nevada  
Governing Board**

**November 17, 2008**

confirmed that the annual Independent Auditors' Reports are submitted to the Office of the Superintendent for the Nevada Department of Education at the end of each fiscal year. This concluded the report on the audit and Mr. VanTrigt excused himself from the meeting.

**b. Budget**

Mr. Herron continued his report by directing the Board members to the Budget (incorporated herein by reference). He confirmed that moving forward, the budget will be reported to the Board earlier in the year. At this time approximately 27% of the Academy's revenue comes from DSA funding with the balance from private gifts. For details of the expenses he referred the Board to the budget summary.

President Jan Davidson asked for a motion for approval of the budget. Motion was made by Annette Whittemore and seconded by Eugene Paslov. Motion carried unanimously.

**E2. Academy Director**

**a. Parent Group Comments**

**Colleen Harsin, Director** began her report by introducing guest speaker, Valerie Acklin the Davidson Academy's Parent Group President. Ms. Acklin reported that the Parent Group was meeting on an as-needed basis and currently completing transition from the previous Parent Group Executive Committee since elections had been completed. She confirmed improving communication between the parent group and Academy staff through weekly meetings between herself and Academy Director Colleen Harsin. Changes to the Parent Group Bylaws will be requested in the future, including a change in the executive committee terms to run from June 1<sup>st</sup> - May 31<sup>st</sup>.

Upcoming events arranged by the Parent Group include a roller skating event for students and families, a holiday staff appreciation gift and organization of a school Media Center/Library at the Academy which will include counseling and college application resources. This concluded Ms. Acklin's report to the Board members.

**b. Instructor Comments**

Ms. Harsin's report continued with the introduction of Carmen Garcia, Director of Curriculum and Instruction for The Davidson Academy. Ms. Garcia reported that at this time the curriculum team is working to add courses to the Academy's course catalog including Writing, Philosophy, History of Greco-Roman Roots in Western Civilization. Ms. Garcia has made connection with the University's College of Education which is making recommendations for practicum students and lecturers for support of the Academy's curriculum. This concluded Ms. Garcia's report to the Board members.

Ms. Harsin introduced Mathematics Chair, Darren Ripley, to provide updates concerning the Academy's mathematics program and to discuss some issues concerning Academy students. Mr. Ripley reported that at this time the Academy is looking into assistance for students currently working at the lower end of the math spectrum and considering the options of peer and professional tutoring. Reasons for some students working at the,

**Minutes of the Meeting of  
The Davidson Academy of Nevada  
Governing Board**

**November 17, 2008**

“lower end of the spectrum” sometimes has to do with age, but can also be due to study habits and academic setting differences. At this time the Academy is working with the University’s Mathematics Department for consideration for the option for students taking math courses taught at the Academy at a level of Algebra II or above, with a successful score on credit by examination at the University to receive dual credit. This opportunity may also be possible for other courses in other subject areas. Mr. Ripley also indicated that he and Ms. Harsin were working through the details of designating courses as “honors” courses. Ms. Harsin commented that this has been difficult as technically our baseline courses are “honors” level. Thus, it is unclear at this time what level may be designated an honors level course, but this matter is being deliberated by the faculty and staff.

Mr. Ripley further reported that the Academy’s Math Club is participating in the Mandelbrot, AMC 8/10/12 and Math Counts competitions. He reported a great group of kids were participating this year and that John and Dawn Fidaleo were invaluable resources. Mr. Ripley concluded his report by advising the Board that he had recently attended the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics conference and would be submitting a proposal for Smart Boards for the math classrooms.

**c. General Program Update**

Ms. Harsin reported that The State Attendance Audit was completed on October 21, 2008 and resulted in a successful audit with no findings. At this time 71 students are reflected in the Academy’s Master Register with the recent addition of one student starting later in the school year. In the future, the Academy recommends that all new students start at the beginning of the school year.

A revised copy of NRG 901 was included in the Board packets (incorporated herein by reference) based on the discussion occurring at the September 29, 2008 Board meeting that the mandatory uniform grading system is on hold by the State. The uniform grade system language was removed from the NRG.

NRS388.090 indicates that a report on the alternative school calendar for the previous year be submitted by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year. This report was submitted as required in reference to the 2007-2008 school year and we are currently awaiting feedback.

The Academy has begun the process of Application for Accreditation including a meeting with consultant Nancy Sanger. The initial paperwork has been submitted; a copy was included in the Board packets and is (incorporated herein by reference). There are nine pages of Accreditation Standards with items that the Academy is looking to meet or exceed, which we will submit annually. A Response Team and Steering Committee are being formed and the Academy will likely hear something on the initial submission by the next Board meeting. Colleen Harsin and Rochelle Baxley recently attended a meeting on Accreditation held at Wooster High School.

**Minutes of the Meeting of  
The Davidson Academy of Nevada  
Governing Board**

**November 17, 2008**

**d. Application and Admissions**

Ms. Harsin advised the Board that the Academy is currently in the very early stages of the admissions process for the 2009-2010 academic year. Fifteen applications have been received to date; 12 of those applicants have been invited to interview and complete achievement assessment. For this year, the Academy has fused the achievement/ placement assessment with the interview process to ensure and applicant's academic readiness. In addition to the application ratings the assessment accounts for approximately half of the rubric in the decision making process. Decision letters on interviewing applicants are sent within the two weeks following interview. At this time the Academy will accept anyone who qualifies and are looking for a total enrollment of 100 students comprised of returning and new students for the 2009-2010 school year. There is not cap on enrollment at this time.

**3. Media and Outreach**

**a. Update**

**Julie Dudley, Communications Director** reported that most recently, Davidson Academy student Alex Wade and his father Jon Wade appeared on Nevada Newsmakers with Bob Davidson to discuss the Academy and Alex's experience as an Academy student. The KRNV Channel 4 News Team also interviewed Alex when he was at the station filming the Nevada Newsmakers interview. Ms. Dudley advised that she is in the process of updating the Academy's public website. These website updates include posting letters from Colleen Harsin and the Parent Group President, Valerie Acklin.

Katie Graham, Director of Outreach reported there are 286 subscribers for the Explore The Davidson Academy e-Newsletter, not including staff. There were 30 attendees for the September prospective student tour and informational event, 24 attendees in October and 12 families in November. The Davidson Young Scholars Summit will be held at The Davidson Academy in the summer of 2009 and will include a tour for prospective families on June 22. Various Academy and Davidson Institute staff attended the NAGC, NCTM and Texas Association of Gifted seminars this year. The Davidson Academy Annual Report is complete and a copy was included in the Board packets (incorporated herein by reference). A direct mail campaign of 12,000+ has been completed and the public line at the Davidson Institute continues to receive many calls.

**F. Correspondence**

There was no correspondence at this time.

**G. Public Comments**

There was no public comment at this time.

**Minutes of the Meeting of  
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**November 17, 2008**

**H. Consent Calendar**

There were no Consent Calendar items at this time.

**I. General Business**

1. President Jan Davidson requested motion for Approval of Updated Degree Seeking Options for Davidson Academy Students at the University of Nevada, Reno. Motion was made by Annette Whittemore and seconded by Mark Herron. President Jan Davidson opened this General Business item up for discussion. Colleen Harsin advised that this update was a clarification concerning communication between students and the Academy concerning a Davidson Academy student's intent to change status to degree seeking or matriculation into the University. The update specifically afforded for a statement to capture this communication. Motion carried unanimously.
  
2. President Jan Davidson requested a motion for approval of the 2009 Davidson Academy graduates listed under TAB 6 of the Board packets (incorporated herein by reference). Motion was made by Annette Whittemore and seconded by Mark Herron. Motion carried unanimously.

**J. Adjournment**

**a. Review of Proposed Meeting Dates for 2009**

The following dates were approved for Governing Board meetings in 2009:

Monday, January 26, 2009 at 2:00pm  
Monday, June 15, 2009 at 2:00pm  
Monday, October 5, 2009 at 2:00pm  
Monday, November 16, 2009 at 2:00pm

President Jan Davidson requested a motion for adjournment. Motion was made by Mark Herron and seconded by Annette Whittemore. There being no further business to come before the Board in public meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 3:17pm.

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Respectfully submitted by  
Colleen Harsin, Clerk of the Board