

**Minutes of the Meeting of
The Davidson Academy of Nevada
Governing Board
January 26, 2009**

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, Eugene Paslov, Hon. Brian Krolicki, Paul Dugan, Hon. Bruce R. James, Annette Whittemore and Colleen Harsin were present. Chairman Bob Davidson was present via telephonic conferencing. Keith Rheault and Milton Glick were not present.

B. Welcome and Introductions

Welcome and Introductions were completed by President Jan Davidson.

C. Approval of Minutes for Meeting of November 17, 2008

President Jan Davidson requested approval of the minutes for the meeting of November 17, 2008. Motion was made by Hon. Bruce James for approval of the Minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Eugene Paslov. Motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Agenda

President Jan Davidson requested approval of the Agenda as submitted. Motion was made by Hon. Bruce James and seconded by Bob Davidson. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Reports

E.1. Academy Director

a. General Program Update

Colleen Harsin, Director, began her report by advising the Board that the Davidson Academy staff was making progress on the Academy's Accountability Report Card information submission for the state. The Academy was excused from this requirement for the 2007-2008 academic as the Academy had not completed its second year with DSA funding. Mr. Steve Canavero with the Nevada Department of Education has assisted the Academy with this process and is finding ways to accurately reflect the Academy's information within their system. Recently the Academy was advised that it was required to submit an annual School Improvement Plan. Ms. Harsin drafted the report and completed the submission by the deadline. A copy of the Inquiry Process section that addresses Key Strengths and Priority Concerns of the Academy was included in the Board books under TAB 2 (incorporated herein by reference). At this time she is in the process of putting together a calendar with all state reporting deadlines for the Academy.

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At this time the Academy's Annual Yearly Progress data (AYP) remains a challenge given our student's availability to complete HSPE. The Academy's Testing Coordinator, Rebecca Coleman, is working with the state on this issue.

Ms. Harsin referred the Board to NRG 901 under Tab 3 of their Board books (incorporated herein by reference). She indicated that following meetings with representatives from the State Department of Education in 2008 and receipt of Board approval, Davidson Academy students were placed into grade levels for state testing purposes only. The intent was that a grade level would not affect Academy student placement in any way and would not be published or released outside of the Academy. Unfortunately grade level placement has affected students to the extent that it has limited involvement in different competition and opportunities for Academy students. Issues associated with graduation dates have also developed. At this point some options being considered so that grade level placement does not influence students except for state testing includes grade level placement and testing at age level, an alternate testing plan or possibly employing grade 13 (ungraded) as needed.

The process for school accreditation has been initiated through the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools. An initial questionnaire has been completed and submitted on the Academy's behalf and the first visit from the Accreditation team of Kitty Bergin, Superintendent of Catholic Schools and Nancy Sanger, Senior Director, High Schools Washoe County School District, is scheduled for March 11, 2009. The purpose of their visit is to gather information to assure the commission that the Academy has the resources in place and is ready to achieve accreditation. The visit will serve to assess the Academy's ability to meet standards and to discuss how standards can be adapted as needed. Chairman Bob Davidson and Hon. Bruce James plan to be present for Ms. Bergin and Ms. Sanger's visit. <<Please note: this date has changed.>>

b. Graduation and College Planning Update

The 2009 Davidson Academy Graduation Ceremony is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 14, 2009. Preceding the ceremony there will be a dinner for the graduating class and the Academy's instructors and staff. Board members are also invited to attend. Official diplomas will be issued following submission of final grades. At this time there are 8 Academy students approved for graduation. Ms. Harsin referred the Board to Tab 4 of their Board books for a summary of colleges of interest and GPA information for current Academy students slated for graduation. Soon Academy staff will have access to and receive training for Naviance, an online college planning tool. Ms. Harsin expects the program to be in use by mid-spring term.

There are ongoing discussions and evaluations of the Academy's transcripts, grades and credit. The evaluation of content and rigor has resulted in a need for alterations to required courses with a goal of keeping students challenged and awarding credit and weighting appropriately. Ms. Harsin referred the Board to Tab 5 of their Board books for an outline of proposed changes to credit and grade weightings for DA and UNR courses (incorporated herein by reference). Ms. Harsin advised the Board that she would be requesting approval from the Board for the proposed changes under General Business.

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Ms. Harsin continued her report by advising the Board that the fall semester had been concluded with a Winter Bash, Jazz Band concert, drama club performance, geography bee, robotics competition/ award of a trophy and Community Crusaders activities. The spring semester is starting with a spelling bee, science fair submissions, continued math competitions and 1 more new student.

Concerning the student population Ms. Harsin commented that the Academy may experience some unexpected attrition due to families experiencing economic and job related issues. In these cases, families will still have access to the Young Scholars Program.

The Academy has received a request from the Washoe County School District Department of Public Policy Accountability & Assessment to provide transcripts of students no longer attending the Academy. Ms. Harsin let the Board know that the administrative staff is unsure if we are required to comply with this and questioned whether it may be more appropriate to forward this information to the state instead as the Academy is not part of the Washoe County School District. The Board suggested following up with Dr. Rheault on this issue.

c. Application and Admission Update

To date the Academy has received 31 applications; 21 male and 10 female. Sixteen reviews are complete with 15 pending. Nine applicants have been accepted with 7 of those returning Intent to Attend forms; 7 applicants have been declined.

E2. Media and Outreach

a. Update

Julie Dudley, Director of Communications, referred the Board to a summary of Media and Outreach Updates dated January 26, 2009, not included in the Board books, but provided during the meeting (incorporated herein by reference). Ms. Dudley reported that recent media impressions include a television public service announcement featuring Paul Dugan and 3 Academy students for the Intel International Science & Engineering Fair (ISEF) coming to Reno in May, a philanthropy article in RLife featuring Jan and Bob Davidson and a January re-run of a 2008 Academy segment on KVBC-NBC, Las Vegas.

Katie Graham, Director of Events and Outreach, reported that recent Academy outreach efforts included web updates and website visitor numbers, ongoing monthly tours for prospective students and the general public and staff attendance at various conferences in January and February. The "Explore the Davidson Academy" eNewsletter is currently subscribed to by 400 recipients. Hon. Bruce James suggested that this be sent to all individuals in Davidson Institute for Talent Development programs. Ms. Dudley indicated that she would look into further distribution options for the eNewsletter.

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F. Correspondence

There was no correspondence at this time.

G. Public Comments

There was no public comment at this time.

H. Consent Calendar

There were no Consent Calendar items at this time.

I. General Business

1. **Proposed changes to credit and grade weightings for Davidson Academy and University of Nevada, Reno courses**

The Board agreed to postpone a vote on proposed changes to credit and grade weightings for Davidson Academy and University of Nevada, Reno courses as outlined under Tab 5 in the Board book (incorporated herein by reference) pending discussion with Dr. Rheault.

J. Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted by
Colleen Harsin, Clerk of the Board