

Board Meeting Minutes

November 11, 2021 12:02 PM



ATTENDING:

Dr. Michael Odell, Dr. Dominick Fazarro, Dr. Joanna Neel, Mr. Eric Semlear, Mr. Daniel Rodriguez, Mr. Jeffrey Kennemer, Dr. Jo Ann Simmons, and UA Staff. Multiple parents/guests were present/watching via online streaming through Zoom.

OPENING:

The board meeting of the UT Tyler University Academy was called to order at 12:02 p.m. by Dr. Simmons on Thursday, November 11, 2021.

1. Call to Order

- Dr. Odell confirmed quorum of board members were present with board president, Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz absent.

2. Pledge:

Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag
Pledge of the Allegiance to the Texas Flag

PUBLIC COMMENT:

3. Open for Public Comment

- Dr. Simmons confirmed no request for public comment were received.

ACTION ITEMS:

4. Consent Agenda

- a) Previous Minutes, Thursday, September 9, 2021.
1st Motion: Mr. Rodriguez, 2nd Motion: Dr. Fazarro

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

5. District Report on Educational Performance of the ESL Program

- Dr. Simmons requested that Aimee Dennis present and explain the District report on educational performance of the ESL program to the board. Ms. Dennis detailed the number of students for each campus that are currently enrolled in the ESL

program and how many have completed the program. Within the last five years 18 students have been reclassified as English language proficient.

Jaclyn Pedersen explained to the board that all University Academy teachers undergo yearly training in English language proficient standards through Region 7. Teachers will also begin documenting ESL lesson plans.

Ms. Dennis explained the district has teachers who are in need of ESL training/certification to be compliant. A waiver has been filed with expectation they will receive the certification by the end of the school year.

6. 2020-2021 Charter FIRST (FY20 data)

- Jaema Krier explained to the board that University Academy passed their Charter FIRST (Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas). She also presented to the board the Charter FIRST Annual Financial Management Report.

Dr. Simmons commented that the budget team works diligently to ensure that the school operates within the allotted budget.

7. Superintendent Report

a) Financial Update

Christian Chesnut presented the University Academy Financial Report for the current 21-22 school year. The general fund, select funds, activity funds, grant funds, device repair and afterschool funds, were all explained in detail to the board.

b) District/ Campus Enrollment and Attendance

Dr. Simmons presented and explained to the board the attendance rate for University Academy across the district. Overall attendance rate is 95.11%, an increase from the last board meeting. Dr. Simmons commented that there is only one confirmed COVID case in the district.

Dr. Fazarro asked if the University Academy was offering COVID vaccines to age group 5-11. Dr. Simmons answered that the University Academy is not offering the vaccine to students. She noted that some of the larger districts are hosting vaccine clinics, the districts are providing the facility while the health organization runs the clinic.

c) Campus Updates

Dr. Simmons expressed her gratitude for having parents returning to their respected campus for in-person events. Dr. Simmons also informed the board that the Palestine facilities projects are nearly complete. Longview campus is at max capacity and expanding the school is currently being discussed as an option.

Rachel Hawkins informed the board that Longview has an active PTO, and that students are participating in several school events, such as the Academic Rodeo and band.

Katie Adams informed the board of the speech and debate club that Tyler just started. Despite the newness of the program, the Tyler campus has two students that are heading to the UIL state competition, with two other students serving as alternates.

Umami Bodede informed the board that the Palestine campus has competitions that the students are training for and expects great things to come of it.

Dr. Simmons commented on the hard work the campus directors are doing and thanked them for their commitment to excellence.

d) Administrative Updates

i. TCLAS Application

The district applied for decision three, high quality instruction material, and decision eight, strong summer program, and was awarded \$12,141 to support the implantation of the Texas college bridge program. The district was also awarded \$125,000 to support the strong summer program.

ii. School Safety and Security Committee Update

Dr. Simmons explained that the district submitted and received approval for their annual school safety and security report. Each campus has their own safety and security team.

iii. Evaluation Timeline

Mrs. Krier explained to the board that the university has pushed performance evaluations to the Spring, rather than November as they have been for the past few years. As a result, the Superintendent evaluation was not scheduled for today's agenda. The change should allow for easier budgeting since any merit increases awarded would likely begin with the start of the fiscal year, rather than mid-year. Full details have not yet been released from the university.

Dr. Odell commented that the evaluation system that University Academy is returning to, is the same system followed by every other UT System institution.

Dr. Simmons noted that the university evaluation timeline does not impact teachers. They will remain under the same evaluation timeline as outlined

in the UTTUA Teacher Promotion Plan, with portfolios due in April. This is due to the fact their performance is based on the entire academic school year and takes into account student performance data.

iv. Governance Forms & Annual Board Trainings

Mrs. Krier explained to the board that their annual governance forms are due and once all originals are on file, will be submitted to TEA by the deadline. She also explained that the annual training requirement offerings/deadline will be shifted to late Fall to allow everyone time to complete them over the extended break, as well as ensure all members complete prior to the end of their terms (or potential resignations). Since the training requirement is tied to our annual finance audit, we must ensure all members complete the training before departing.

- v. Dr. Simmons commented that the University Academy is having their first annual High School Leadership Conference, occurring on January 5th through the 6th and that Board Members are invited to attend.**

Dr. Odell suggested that for future meetings, under informational items, adding a lab school update.

8. Adjournment

1st Motion: Mr. Kennemer, 2nd Motion: Dr. Fazarro, adjournment occurred at 12:36 p.m.

Adopted at a meeting of the Board on January 13, 2022.

DocuSigned by:
Yanira Oliveras Ortiz
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Yanira Oliveras-Ortiz
President, UTTUA School Board
1/14/2022

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