

Board Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2022 at 12:00 PM



ATTENDING:

Dr. Yanira Oliveras-Ortiz, Dr. Michael Odell, Dr. Dominic Fazarro, Dr. Joanna Neel, Mr. Eric Semlear, Mr. Jeffry Kennemer, Dr. Jo Ann Simmons, Ms. Jaema Krier, Ms. Christian Chesnut, Ms. Jaclyn Pedersen, Ms. Aimee Dennis, Ms. Katie Adams, Ms. Rachel Hawkins, Ms. Umami Bode, Mr. Dalton Abrams. Parents/guests were also present/watching via online streaming through Zoom.

OPENING:

The board meeting of the UT Tyler University Academy was called to order at 12:05 p.m. by Dr. Yanira Oliveras-Ortiz on Thursday, March 3, 2022.

1. Call to Order

Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz confirmed a quorum of board members were present.

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. Oliveras-Ortiz noted no requests for public comment were received.

ACTION ITEMS:

4. Consent Agenda

a) Previous Minutes, Thursday, January 13, 2022.

It was noted that the name of the organization under item 6a. was listed as Mercy Mansion when it is actually Mercy Manor.

1st Motion: Dr. Michael Odell, 2nd Motion: Dr. Dominic Fazarro.
Motion passed 6-0.

5. Request Approval to File a Staff Development Waiver for 2022-2023 Calendar

This waiver allows the district to include up to 5 days of staff development toward the 180 days requirement. Now that we will not be pursuing ADSY funding for summer programs, the district can consider utilizing these toward the 180-day requirement again.

It was noted that the proposed calendar being presented next includes staff development days for consideration, which would require this waiver to adopt/implement.

1st Motion: Mr. Jeffry Kennemer, 2nd Motion: Mr. Eric Semlear.
Motion passed 6-0.

6. Request Approval of 2022-2023 District Calendar

The proposed calendar was discussed by Dr. Simmons and Ms. Krier. The calendar must align with university as much as possible due to our dual credit student schedules. The university pushed Spring Break back, which will now align with TISD again. The Winter Break was adjusted in December to release later, allowing for a return later in January. This was done to hopefully curb COVID attendance concerns that occurred this past year. Dr. Simmons explained that Directors/Teachers will be tasked with engaging students and families in campus activities leading up to the break to ensure attendance rates are maintained. The calendar allows for the last day of school and graduation to be before Memorial Day, which is better for overall attendance rates at the end of the year; data shows that engagement after the 3-day weekend is weak.

1st Motion: Dr. Fazarro, 2nd Motion: Dr. Joanna Neel.
Motion passed 6-0.

7. Request for Approval of 2022-2023 Board Meeting Calendar

The proposed calendar was presented for consideration. It was noted that trainings would once again be conducted in the Fall semester.

1st Motion: Dr. Odell, 2nd Motion: Dr. Fazarro.
Motion passed 6-0.

8. Request Approval of Policy Update.

a. PG – 2.12 – Credit by Exam

Ms. Jaclyn Pedersen explained that state law requires we offer both CLEP and AP courses as options, as well as UT Austin and Texas Tech. It was decided to add all tests to the list because it is difficult to know what a transfer student may need to earn their credits. Credit by Exam requests are rare at UA and require approval from the Counselor, so the test being listed does not mean that we must provide it. She provided Spanish as an example, a student who has taken Spanish I and needs Spanish II could test out if needed.

1st Motion: Dr. Odell, 2nd Motion: Dr. Neel.
Motion passed 6-0.

9. Request Approval for Budget Amendments for 2021-2022

Ms. Christian Chesnut presented the amendment needed to cover food service expenses.

1st Motion: Dr. Fazarro, 2nd Motion: Mr. Kennemer.
Motion passed 6-0.

10. To allow those not involved with the closed session and Superintendent evaluation to not be held up, Dr. Yanira Oliveras-Ortiz moved to the Information Items with intent to return to the Executive Session after all other items were addressed.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Dr. Simmons gave her condolences for the passing of Danny Rodriguez's father, he was unable to attend today to tend to his memorial.

11. Superintendent Report

- a) **2020-2021 Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) & Annual Report**
The report was presented and explained that this is represented of academic, student, and staff data for the 2020-2021 year. Ms. Krier noted that Section 6 has not been able to be populated over the years as it pertains to graduate performance in their first year of higher ed, the data is 3 years behind a graduating class. This would be the first year to report our class of 2019, however the data is not publicly available on the THECB data sources since we graduate under 25 students per campus. A request has been made to THECB to hopefully receive the data by district level, they had not yet responded to our request.
- b) **Financial Update FY22**
Christian Chesnut presented the University Academy Financial Report for the current 21-22 school year through February.
- c) **District/ Campus Enrollment and Attendance**
Dr. Simmons noted that enrollment is at 842 (357 Tyler, 262 Longview, and 223 Palestine). ADA is currently 84.82%. TEA announced that some sort of adjustment would be made to assist with low attendance rates that occurred both at start of school and upon return from Winter Break. They have not yet given details on what that will look like.
- d) **Campus Updates**
Dr. Simmons noted she appreciates the hard work of the Campus Directors this time of year as Spring is always busy with testing, activities, field trips, awards, graduation, and prepping for summer programming.
- There is a significant educator shortage and recruitment of personnel is a top priority this time of year.
- e) **Administrative Updates**

i. Senior Banquets and Graduation

Celebrating the completion of our 10th year. Dr. Odell will be the Guest Speaker at graduation on June 4th at the HPC.

ii. Recruitment

The charter applications were published in February, Longview received 60 applications in just 2 days. Commitment Letters are scheduled to go out March 14th to determine the number of spots available for the upcoming lottery. Commitments are due March 25th and the lottery will be held April 1st.

As noted, staff recruitment is a top priority, the job market is suffering, with limited qualified applicants seeking employment. We will be attending job fairs both in-person and virtual, handing out recruitment brochures, visiting classrooms with student teachers, and communicating with educator prep programs. We used to have approximately 50% of our staff from UT Tyler education program, but that is not the case anymore. Number of applicants have decreased statewide, which causes extra work on those employed and effects campus culture.

Our hiring process and the approvals now being required from university and HR take time, the process is quite extensive. Other schools are also offering large sign-on bonuses, salary increases and stipends, where we are more limited in this area. When we have an immediate need, there are no exceptions to the hiring authorizations, we have attempted to get exceptions/exemptions in certain cases with no luck.

iii. Teacher Promotion Plan

Now that employees have a 1 year wait to begin courses, as well as have extended training requirements with TEA, the charter has extended the requirement to receive the degree and Distinguished Teacher status to 8 years. They must have 5 years teaching experience on their service record, be employed as a UA teacher for 2 years, and hold a Master's Degree before being eligible to apply.

iv. Facilities

Tyler needs portables to allow for the growth associated with 2 sections from K-4. These will be installed this summer and should provide 4-6 classrooms. The President is presenting the HS proposal to Regents later this summer as well. Current discussion is to include labs, a gym, cafeteria, and additional office spaces. There is also discussion about

possible expansion in Longview due to their extensive waitlist and inability to currently add Kindergarten.

Dr. Odell noted that the original plan was to have 2 sections in K-8 and 1 section in 9-12 due to the drop off that occurs between 8th and 9th grade; students go to the local schools for sports, performing arts, etc.

Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz noted it would be great if there were a lab school classroom between the classrooms, to allow for College of Ed teaching/observations to occur; or possibly webcams.

f) **Lab School Activities**

Dr. Joanna Neel explained that students are making progress on Reading Academies and that 42 students tutor UA Tyler students twice per week.

Dr. Oliveras went back to item #10 under action items.

10. Executive Session

At 1:21 p.m. the Board went into Executive Session under Texas Government Code 551.074 to discuss the Superintendent's Evaluation.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 1:45 p.m.

12. Adjournment

1st Motion: Dr. Neel, 2nd Motion: Mr. Semlear, adjournment occurred at 1:46 p.m.

Adopted at a meeting of the Board on May 5, 2022.

DocuSigned by:
Yanira Oliveras-Ortiz
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Yanira Oliveras-Ortiz
President, UTTUA School Board
5/5/2022

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Signer Events

Yanira Oliveras-Ortiz
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President, UTTUA School Board
The University of Texas at Tyler
Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (None)

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