Board Meeting Minutes
August 27, 2026, 4:00 p.m.
Ornelas Activity Center, 3402 Old Omen Rd, Tyler, TX 75707

ATTENDING IN PERSON:

Voting Members:

Dr. Regan Beckham, arriving at 4:11 p.m.
Alan Buckland
Dr. Gina Doepker
Dr. Michele Marjason
Dr. Joanna Neel
Dr. Michael Odell
Eric Semlear, President

Non-voting notable attendees:

Sammi Broussard, Director of Academic Intervention
Patricia Davis, Longview Campus Director
Dr. Robert DeHaas, UT Tyler School of Education Dean
Dr. Aimee Dennis, Superintendent
Christian Chesnut, Finance Manager
Dr. Andrew Kohls, Tyler Campus Director
Shelly Parsons, Palestine Campus Director
Dr. Jaclyn Pedersen, Executive Director of Curriculum
Amanda Kaiser, Operations Manager, Minute Taker

BOARD MEETING

1. Call to Order
   Mr. Semlear called the UT Tyler University Academy Board Meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 27, 2026, confirming that a quorum was present.
2. Pledge
   The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was said, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas Flag.

PUBLIC COMMENT

3. Open for Public Comment
   a. Mr. Semlear noted that no one registered to speak during public comment.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

4. Introduction of Dr. Robert DeHaas, Dean of the School of Education
    a. Dr. Dennis welcomed Dr. DeHaas. Following introductions by the board members, Dr. DeHaas expressed his support for UT Tyler University Academy.

ACTION ITEMS

5. Consent Agenda
    a. Approve Previous Minutes, Thursday, July 30, 2026.
    b. Dr. Neel moved to approve the minutes, and Dr. Doepker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Marjason, Dr. Neel, Dr. Odell, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.
6. Request for Approval of the 2025-2026 Budget Amendments.
    a. Ms. Chesnut presented the Amendments.
    b. Mr. Buckland moved to approve the 2025-2026 Budget Amendments. Dr. Marjason seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Marjason, Dr. Neel, Dr. Odell, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.

4:11 p.m.: Dr. Beckham joined the board meeting.

7. Request for Approval of Title I, Part C- Migrant Program Action Plan.
    a. Dr. Pedersen presented the plan.
    b. Dr. Doepker noted page 4 needed the years 2025-2026 updated to 2026-2027.
    c. Dr. Neel moved to approve Title I, Part C- Migrant Program Action Plan with the edit as stated by Dr. Doepker. Dr. Doepker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Dr. Beckham, Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Marjason, Dr. Neel, Dr. Odell, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.
8. Request Adoption of the 2026-2027 Budget.
    a. Dr. Dennis and Ms. Chesnut presented the 2026-2027 Budget.
    b. Mr. Buckland moved to approve the 2026-2027 Budget, and Dr. Marjason seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Dr. Beckham, Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Marjason, Dr. Neel, Dr. Odell, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.
9. Request Approval of the Updated 2026-2027 Student Code of Conduct.
    a. Dr. Dennis presented the 2026-2027 Code of Conduct.
    b. Dr. Doepker moved to approve the 2026-2027 Student Code of Conduct, and Dr. Odell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with

Dr. Beckham, Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Marjason, Dr. Neel, Dr. Odell, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

10. Financial Updates:
    a. Ms. Chesnut presented the 2025-2026 Budget Report. The General Fund received $13.5 million and expended $12.5 million. The Activity Fund received $70,000 and expended $36,000.
11. Dr. Pedersen presented the 2026-2027 Gifted and Talented Handbook.
12. Dr. Dennis presented updates to the 2026-2027 Student Handbook.
13. Superintendent Report
    a. Dr. Dennis presented the District and Campus Improvement Plans
        i. District Improvement Plan 2026-2027
        ii. Longview Campus Improvement Plan 2026-2027
        iii. Palestine Campus Improvement Plan 2026-2027
        iv. Tyler Campus Improvement Plan 2026-2027
    b. Enrollment for 2026-2027, presented by Dr. Dennis.
    c. STAAR Accountability Ratings.
        i. Dr. Dennis shared the recent STAAR ratings, noting that the district and all campuses earned an A rating.
    d. Campus Updates:
        i. Longview: Dr. Dennis reported that TxDOT, the City of Longview, and UT Tyler remain actively engaged in a joint effort to address campus ingress and egress for traffic. Ms. Davis reported that 65% of the senior class qualified for the top 25% at UT Tyler. Students are actively working on PBLs within the Leader in Me framework for their Leader in Me Night, and she highlighted strong attendance for the senior sunrise on the first day of school.
        ii. Palestine: Ms. Parsons noted that their Chalk the Walk and Parent University Expo were both well attended, and their Leader in Me PBL night is scheduled soon. She highlighted that two members of their 2021 graduating class are now teachers on campus, and another alumnus is teaching at UT Tyler. Upcoming campus activities include a blood drive, National Honor Society (NHS) events, and See You at the Pole.
        iii. Tyler: Mr. Kohls reported a successful Back to School Bash, with an upcoming Information Rotation Day. Tyler campus is focused on Leader in Me activities, and announced that Lead, Grow, and Achieve awards are being established to recognize exceptional staff members.

e. Administrative Updates
    i. Lab School Updates:
        1. Dr. Odell reported four teaching staff have earned their Ed.D. degrees this year, grant funding was secured to host a Computer Science professional development day in December, and that he is working with the Tyler campus seniors on a project centered on the Phoenix Lander model on permanent loan from NASA.
        2. Dr. Pedersen reported over 30 UT Tyler students will be on campus this semester as part of the UT Tyler/UA Lab school cooperative.
    ii. Facilities
        1. Dr. Dennis reported that a wheelchair ramp has been constructed on the Palestine campus to aid in full access to the sports court.

f. Looking Forward: September 24 Board Meeting, Title III Annual Report and ESL Waiver (if applicable); Annual Report of the College, Career, and Military Readiness Plan; Annual amendments (if applicable); Financial Updates (if applicable).

12. Adjournment
    a. Dr. Neel moved to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Buckland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Dr. Beckham, Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Marjason, Dr. Neel, Dr. Odell, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.
    b. The meeting adjourned at 4:49 p.m.