



The University of Texas at Tyler  
**UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMY™**

Board Meeting Minutes

April 23, 2026, 4:00 p.m.

Ornelas Activity Center, 3402 Old Omen Rd, Tyler, TX 75707

**ATTENDING IN PERSON:**

Voting Members:

Alan Buckland

Dr. Gina Doepker

Dr. Joanna Neel

Dr. Yanira Oliveras

Eric Semlear, President

Non-voting attendees:

Ashlie Aguilar

Heather Bailey

Sammi Broussard

Christian Chesnut

Dakota Conway

Dr. Aimee Dennis

Amanda Kaiser

Andrew Kohls

Dr. Jaclyn Pedersen

Chandra Tucker

Elizabeth Ventura

Non-voting attendees on Zoom:

Rachel Hawkins

Shelly Parsons

**Board Meeting**

1. Call to Order

Mr. Semlear called the UT Tyler University Academy Board Meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. on Thursday, April 23, 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 for public comment.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

4. Consent Agenda
  - a. Approve Previous Minutes, [Thursday, February 26, 2026.](#)
  - b. Mr. Semlear noted that the words “not only” were not needed in Section 10.1.ii and should be removed.
  - c. Dr. Neel moved to approve the minutes with the change, and Dr. Doepker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Dr. Doepker, Dr. Neel, Dr. Oliveras, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative. Mr. Buckland had not yet arrived at the meeting.
5. Request for Approval of Policies:
  - a. [PG-1.601 Integrated Pest Management](#)
  - b. [PG-3.201 Admissions and Enrollment](#)
  - c. [PG-3.317 Sexual Abuse, Sex Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children](#)
  - d. [PG-3.319 Support Services Highly Mobile Students](#)
  - e. [PG-3.320 Support Services Transition Assistance](#)
  - f. [PG-3.401 Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)
  - g. [PG-3.402 Student Discipline](#)
  - h. [PG-3.403 Care of School Property](#)
  - i. [PG-3.404 Personal Communication Devices](#)
  - j. [PG- 4.205 Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect](#)
  - k. [PG-4.605 Social Media and Electronic Communications with Students](#)
    - i. Dr. Dennis presented updates to policies PG-1.601 through PG-3.317, and PG-3.401 through PG-4.605. Dr. Pedersen presented the updates to policies PG-3.319 and PG-3.320.
    - ii. Dr. Oliveras moved to accept policies PG-1.601, PG-3.201, PG-3.317, PG-3.319, PG-3.320, PG-3.401, PG-3.402, PG-3.403, PG-3.404, PG-4.205, PG-4.605 as presented by Dr. Dennis and Dr. Pedersen. Mr. Buckland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Neel, Dr. Oliveras, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.
6. Request for Approval of [2026-2027 Student Code of Conduct](#)
  - a. Dr. Dennis presented the updates to the 2026-2027 Student Code of Conduct.
  - b. Dr. Doepker moved to approve the 2026-2027 Student Code of Conduct as presented. Dr. Oliveras seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Neel, Dr. Oliveras, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.
7. Request for Approval of [District 2026-2027 Professional Development Schedule](#)
  - a. Dr. Dennis presented the 2026-2027 Professional Development Schedule.

- b. Dr. Oliveras moved to approve the 2026-2027 Professional Development Schedule as presented. Mr. Buckland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Neel, Dr. Oliveras, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.
- 8. Request Approval of [District Improvement Plan Goals](#)
  - a. Dr. Dennis presented the District Improvement Plan Goals.
  - b. Mr. Buckland moved to approve the District Improvement Plan Goals, and Dr. Doepker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Neel, Dr. Oliveras, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.
- 9. Request Approval of Annual [Certification of Provision of Instructional Materials](#)
  - a. Dr. Pedersen presented the Certification of Provision of Instructional Materials for 2026-2027.
  - b. Dr. Oliveras moved to approve the Certification of Provision of Instructional Materials for 2026-2027, and Dr. Doepker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Neel, Dr. Oliveras, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.
- 10. Request Approval of [High School Course Codes](#)
  - a. Dr. Pedersen presented the High School Course Codes.
  - b. Mr. Buckland moved to approve the High School Course Codes as presented, and Dr. Oliveras seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Neel, Dr. Oliveras, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.

## INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- 11. [HB 2 Special Education Funding Update](#)
  - a. Sammi Broussard, UT Tyler University Academy Special Education Director, presented the changes in Special Education funding starting in the 2026-27 school year.
- 12. [2026-2027 Student Handbook](#)
  - a. Dr. Dennis presented all [updates to the 2026-2027 Student Handbook](#).
- 13. [Grading Procedures](#)
  - a. Dr. Pedersen presented the revised grading policy, reflecting closer alignment with the district WIG.
- 14. Financial Updates:
  - a. Ms. Chesnut presented the [2025-2026 Budget Report](#).
  - b. The General Budget received \$7.1 million and expended \$8.9 million. The Activity Funds received \$28,000, and expenditure was \$7,500.

- c. Ms. Chesnut also presented the [TEA Review of Annual Financial and Compliance Report \(2023-2024\)](#).

#### 15. Superintendent Report

- a. [District Enrollment and Attendance](#) presented by Dr. Dennis.

- b. Campus Updates:

- i. Longview: Ms. Hawkins reported that the Art and Garden Clubs have been very active across campus, the Big Rock purchased through fundraisers by the PTO arrived this week, their STUCO attended the state conference and Longview had a student receive the Lonestar Award, nine students qualified for and will be attending regional UIL academic competitions this weekend, and 2 students will be recognized this weekend at Region 7 for first place in a poetry contest.

Dr. Dennis congratulated Rachel Hawkins on her promotion to Executive Director of Operations for the district next year.

- ii. Palestine: Ms. Parsons reported that they were excited to have wrapped up STAAR testing with only one student remaining to test, their students helped at a local food bank, and their forestry class, with help from the Lighthouse Team, created a master design for their campus garden space, including a dry creek. Students attended a performance at the Cowan Center, Discovery Science Center, Prom, and toured Lufkin Zoo. They have four students competing in regional UIL academic competitions this weekend, and a group won the local Rotary Quiz Bowl.
- iii. Tyler: Mr. Kohls reported that Dr. Odell's Code Jam event in the OAC led a group of students to start a coding club on campus, and NHS students were all choosing service projects to benefit the campus. Numerous high school students qualified and will be attending the regional UIL Academic competition this weekend, and two students won third place at the State CX Debate tournament in their first-year attempt. The campus art and talent show is this Friday.

- c. Administrative Updates

- i. Dr. Dennis reported that the campus nurses would instruct all staff who supervise lunches on the proper care of a student who is choking, including the Heimlich maneuver.

- ii. Lab School Updates:

- 1. A discussion is underway with the UT Tyler Speech Language Pathologist program about a potential partnership for internships on our campuses.

