



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

Board Meeting Minutes  
February 26, 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. Dominick Fazarro

Dr. Michael Odell  
Dr. Yanira Oliveras  
Eric Semlear, President

Non-voting attendees:

Keren Acuna  
Ashlie Aguilar  
Heather Bailey  
Sammi Broussard  
Christian Chesnut  
William Craft

Dr. Aimee Dennis  
Rachel Hawkins  
Amanda Kaiser  
Andrew Kohls  
District Nurse, Cori  
Mackey

Jennifer Murphy  
Shelly Parsons  
Dr. Jaclyn Pedersen  
Chandra Tucker

**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, February 26, 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, January 22, 2026](#).

- b. Dr. Doepker moved to approve the minutes, and Dr. Oliveras seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Fazarro, Dr. Odell, Dr. Oliveras, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.
5. Request Approval of [2026-2027 District Calendar](#)
    - a. Dr. Fazarro moved to approve the 2026-2027 District Calendar and Dr. Oliveras seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Fazarro, Dr. Odell, Dr. Oliveras, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.
  6. Request Approval of [2026-2027 School Board Meeting Calendar](#)
    - a. Dr. Oliveras moved to approve the 2026-2027 School Board Meeting Calendar and Mr. Buckland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Fazarro, Dr. Odell, Dr. Oliveras, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.
  7. Request Approval for [2026-2027 Staff Development Waiver](#)
    - a. Dr. Oliveras moved to approve the 2026-2027 Staff Development Waiver and Dr. Odell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Fazarro, Dr. Odell, Dr. Oliveras, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.
  8. Request Approval to Submit [Renewal Waiver- Teacher Portal for the Texas Assessment Program Data](#)
    - a. Dr. Odell moved to approve the submission of the Renewal Waiver-Teacher Portal for the Texas Assessment Program Data and Dr. Doepker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Fazarro, Dr. Odell, Dr. Oliveras, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.
  9. Executive Session- The Board will go into Executive Session under Texas Government Code 551.089 to address the School Safety & Security Committee reviews of:
    - a. District Vulnerability Assessment Full Report
    - b. Weekly Door Inspection Data
    - c. Safety Updates
      - i. UA Longview Campus Evacuation
      - ii. School Safety Standards Compliance Assessment SY 26

The Board moved to Executive session at 4:07 p.m., and returned from Executive Session at 4:20 p.m.

10. Request Approval of Policies:
  - a. [PG 3.304 Communicable Diseases](#)
  - b. [PG 3.305 Medical Treatment](#)
  - c. [PG 3.307 Students At Risk for Anaphylaxis and Seizure Management Plan](#)
  - d. [PG 3.308 Notice Regarding Steroid Use](#)
  - e. [PG 3.309 Wellness Policy](#)
  - f. [PG 3.310 Health Screenings and Physical Examinations](#)
  - g. [PG 3.311 Fentanyl Poisoning Awareness](#)
  - h. [PG 3.312 School Safety Transfers](#)
  - i. [PG 3.313 Prohibited Organizations and Hazing](#)
  - j. [PG 3.314 Suicide Prevention, Intervention, Postvention](#)

- k. [PG 3.315 Interrogations and Searches](#)
  - l. [PG 3.316 Child Abuse and Neglect](#)
    - i. Dr. Dennis presented all updates to the policies, including the need for the Board to express a recommendation on how often to require staff to participate in Child Abuse and Neglect training, and an update to PG 3.316, Section E with the change of reports being required within 24 hours after the professional first has reasonable cause to believe abuse or neglect instead of the 48 hours noted in the document.
    - ii. After discussion, Dr. Odell moved to not only accept policies PG 3.304, PG 3.305, PG 3.307, PG 3.308, PG 3.309, PG 3.310, PG 3.311, PG 3.312, PG 3.313, PG 3.314, and PG 3.315 as presented. Additionally, PG 3.316 was moved to 'accept with change' to revise Section E, stating that a report must be made within 24 hours after the professional first has reasonable cause to believe abuse or neglect, rather than the previously listed 48 hours. The Board also recommends completing Child Abuse and Neglect training at least once each semester. Dr. Oliveras seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Fazarro, Dr. Odell, Dr. Oliveras, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.
11. Request Approval of [Missed School Days Waiver](#)
- a. Tyler, Longview, and Palestine- January 28, 2026.
  - b. Dr. Dennis presented the waiver.
  - c. Dr. Fazarro moved to approve the Missed School Day Waiver and Dr. Doepker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Fazarro, Dr. Odell, Dr. Oliveras, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.
12. Consider and take action on proposed board resolution or associated policy related to a period of prayer and reading of the Bible or other religious text, in accordance with Section 25.0823 of the Texas Education Code.
- a. [Resolution Not to Adopt Policy for Providing a Period of Prayer and Reading of the Bible or Other Religious Text.](#)
- OR
- b. Approve [PG- 3.405 Prayer and Reading of Religious Texts](#)
  - c. Mr. Buckland moved to approve the resolution that UT Tyler University Academy would not adopt the policy PG-3.405 Prayer and Reading of Religious Texts and Dr. Fazarro seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Fazarro, Dr. Odell, Dr. Oliveras, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative.

## INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

13. Executive Session- The Board will go into Executive Session under Texas Government Code Section 551.074 to deliberate about personnel matters, specifically district organizational structure.

- a. The Board moved to Executive Session at 4:42 p.m., and returned from Executive Session at 4:58 p.m.
- 14. [2024-2025 Texas Academic Performance Report \(TAPR\) & Annual Report](#)
  - a. Dr. Dennis presented the Annual TAPR report.
- 15. Student Technology Devices for Grades 8-12
  - a. Dr. Pedersen discussed the district's current BYOD (bring your own device) policy, faculty preferences, and affecting state policies.
- 16. Financial Updates:
  - a. Ms. Chesnut presented the [2025-2026 Budget Report](#).
  - b. The General Budget received \$5.5 million and expended \$6.3 million. The Activity Funds received \$23,000 and expenditure were \$7,500.
- 17. Superintendent Report
  - a. [District Enrollment and Attendance](#) presented by Dr. Dennis.
  - b. Campus Updates:
    - i. Longview: Ms. Hawkins reported that Mr. Marshall won Conservation Teacher of the Year in Upshur/Gregg County, and that February was full of student competitions at multiple grade levels: robotics, Model UN, TAME (engineering), 4-H cooking, and UIL.
    - ii. Palestine: Ms. Parsons reported that Palestine students were also involved in many competitions in the last month, including Model UN and A+ UIL. Their campus celebrated a senior student who won a \$40,000 honors scholarship to UT Tyler. Palestine had five students recognized by the College Board. Coming up, they have students participating in the Livestock Rodeo in Houston and their Lighthouse team is organizing a talent show.
    - iii. Tyler: Mr. Kohls reported that the high school robotics team was going to regionals in both VEX and CX robotics, Speech placed at Congress, and students participated in the UT Tyler Ratliff Relays and presentations. Tyler has four students recognized by the College Board, and their UIL Calculator Applications team was consistently competing successfully against larger school districts. This weekend, the cheer club is cheering at a UT Tyler game.
  - c. Administrative Updates
    - i. To prepare board members for the April meeting, Dr. Dennis presented information on HB 2, which requires districts to ensure that uncertified teachers are not paid more than certified teachers.
    - ii. Lab School Updates:
      - 1. Dr. Odell invited all to attend Code Jam on April 11th at the Tyler campus. They would also be celebrating the UTeach program's 15th anniversary.
      - 2. Dr. Pedersen reported that she had eleven students in her UTeach class. Nine are placed on the Tyler campus and two in Longview. Proudly, several of the students have also become favored substitutes on the Tyler campus.

iii. Facilities: Dr. Dennis reported that there has been some progress in the need for a school zone in Longview, with meetings expected to be set up between all participating entities.

d. Looking Forward: Budget Amendments; Financial Updates; TEKS Certification for 2026-2027; School Board Elections- Tyler Parent Representative and UT Tyler Non-CEP Member.

18. Adjournment

a. Dr. Fazarro moved to adjourn the meeting, and Dr. Odell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Fazarro, Dr. Odell, Dr. Oliveras, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative. The meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.