

## **Kirby Hall School 59<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting: MINUTES**

June 22nd, 2024 at 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM CST via Zoom Video Call

*Board members present on Zoom were: Victoria Rase Shinn, Board President; Macdonald Kempf, Amy Clements, Board Secretary; Teri Fickling, Ev Lunning, Adrian Colesberry, Board Treasurer and VP; Sara Pevaroff Schuh. Sabina Behague was unable to join us.*

*Ex Officio members present: Paige M. Arnell, Interim Head of School and Claire LaChance, Financial Officer*

*Staff and faculty members present: Sydney Loyd, Martha Peters, and Jared Dailey, Emily Roberts, Alyssa Drury,*

*Parent representative present: Andy Liddell*

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**1. The meeting began at 9:00 AM CST** with a welcome to Board Members, Administrative Staff, Faculty Members, and Parent Representative.

- Minutes of the 58<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting had already been electronically approved

**2. Update from Parent Representative, Andy Liddell.** Andy again expressed how much he and his family feel Kirby Hall is just what they want in a school. He suggested a directory of families to help people get to know each other and that we also let other parents observe at board meetings on a rotating basis. We brainstormed ways to get the families involved as the Strategic Plan comes out of its committee work. He also gave his thoughts on where to target outreach and advertising about Kirby Hall. We appreciated his thoughts and input.

**3. Sydney Loyd, our former Primer teacher who will teach K this coming school year, joined us as the Faculty Observer today.** We appreciated her presence.

**4. Martha Peters gave a brief update as Dean of Curriculum.** She is working on ways to increase hands-on learning at KHS and to support the teachers.

**5. Jared Dailey as Dean of Students spoke of continuing the KHS Student Council and PSIA participation.** He is looking into new service based field trip ideas and is eager to get parents more involved at school.

**6. Data related to admissions and marketing was jointly presented by Emily Roberts, Alyssa Drury, and Paige Arnell with the aid of a nice slide presentation.**

- Emily plans to begin Pre-K/K admissions in the Fall, give potential families a richer experience, and enrich the onboarding of new families to smooth their transition. There will be more open houses, some during the school day, days where groups of middle school bound students can tour together, invite-a-friend days, more outreach to the UT community. There are 61 students currently enrolled for the '24-'25 school year. She

summarized findings on surveys about what families love best about KHS: Fine Arts, STEM, Spanish, sports, small class size, and academics. Suggestions from families included more events for families to attend, having teachers on the same page for syllabi and communication, giving a clearer vision of the Middle School, more board transparency and updates, stronger differentiated instruction, and a bus for field trips. (Slide Deck in Board's Google Docs file under 59th board meeting.)

- Alyssa's slides on marketing activities also appear in the Google Docs file. There will be increased spending on Google Search ads and we will also invest in NICHE and Austin Mom's Blog as ways to get our word out. There will be a re-launch of the KHS FAN Club (Family Ambassador Network). There have been 2 wonderful issues of the Friends of Kirby Hall Newsletter sent to our contact list. The Helen M. Kirby Hall Centennial Capital Campaign has launched online. There will be a birthday party for the building in December. We continue to ask families to share personal stories and to write reviews to enrich and strengthen our online presence. There are plans to work on a new school video tour. Multiple board members suggested creating a presence on LinkedIn to add to the other social media sites that Alyssa manages. In the 24-25 school year Alyssa will focus on 1) Online presence/Google searches/and continuing to improve the KHS website 2) Parent/word of mouth promotions 3) Community outreach for close and surrounding neighborhoods and 4) New targeted outreach to the UT community and faculty. Marketing costs will be tracked in relation to inquiries, tours, applications, and enrollment.

**7. Report from our Interim Head of School:** Ms. Arnell presented enrollment data over the years in graph and table form. She will continue to collect data and follow the effects of our plans and actions at KHS. She is eager to clarify and articulate Kirby Hall's niche in the community with clear and accurate messaging which expresses what we actually do in the classroom. The faculty and staff have joined her in many brainstorming sessions. Kirby Hall will plan to launch the new Middle School in the '25-'26 school year.

- Ways to schedule, brand, organize (class size goals etc), focus the curriculum, and market the new MS are all subjects of much discussion amongst Paige, the faculty, and staff. As in the Lower School, the new KHS Middle School will remain tech intentional and have much hands-on learning. There is more to come and the board is strongly in favor of the direction!
- Class size goals for Primer are (1-10), K (1-12) and Elementary classes (1-15). This was discussed with hopes of being able to accept potty-trained 3 year olds to attend Primer, for full or ½ days along with the 4 year olds.
- Paige also mentioned several fundraising ideas, possible revenue streams, and money saving options: starting an endowment fund, going forward with the Centennial Campaign, possibly renting out parts of the building in non-school hours, and a teacher sharing consortium with another school which can share part-time teachers. Paige proposed a \$5,000 match from the Board for a \$5,000 donation to the new Centennial Campaign. The Board was in favor of this.
- Paige's goals for herself as Head of School in the next year are:

- 1) to increase the retention rate by 5%
- 2) to support admissions and the new Middle School
- 3) to put out a State of the School report giving information to the school community that includes broad financial information, and a vision for the future. *The Board will base our future evaluation of Paige in part on these goals.*

**8. Claire LaChance offered the Financial Update.**

- There are currently 61 students enrolled with 56.5 full tuition payments expected.

**9. Strategic Planning based on three committee drafts was not discussed in depth since we want to gather further input from the families and the faculty.** We are glad to have these drafts. Alyssa offered to put the 3 drafts into the same format so we can work through them and share them with other members of the KHS community more easily. Our three committees remain:

- 1) Educational Attainment, Facilities, and Learning Environment
  - 2) Stakeholder Engagement and Communications
  - 3) Financial Stability, Management, and Governance.
- The Board had discussion on the best way to offer parents the option to be involved in the Strategic Plan. We will write a letter to be sent around at the beginning of school. The Strategic Plan on which we are working is itself a response to listening to parent comments from surveys, focus groups, the administrative panel, and personal conversations including our interactions with Andy Liddell and other observers. We have listened and learned from multiple consultants over the years. And accomplished further board training last December. This Strategic Plan, due at the end of 2024, is intended to summarize what has been an ongoing conversation for the Board since the last Strategic Plan was put into action in 2019. The current plan is to give parents the option to attend a forum on the Strategic Plan on September the 12th, the Thursday before our next Board meeting. We assume an evening timeframe might work best, but can investigate further. As previously planned there will still be a “meet and greet” with the parent community and the board from 9-10 AM the morning of the board meeting. We will offer another forum if others are interested in the option to participate in this process. Paige will begin to involve more members of the faculty and staff.

**10. Board Actions included:**

- Sara Pevaroff Schuh was unanimously elected by the 7 members present to serve as the Secretary of our KHS Board.
- Ev Lunning Volunteered to be the local signer for the Wells Fargo checking account. He was unanimously elected by those members present. This position, though essential, is a back-up function, unlikely to require any action. We appreciate Amy doing this during her

tenure on the board. Ev will communicate with Claire before he goes to a Wells Fargo Bank branch to be verified.

- Some names mentioned as ideas for new board members include: Ianthe Brock and Peter Austin, a former Head of KHS who is now a History Professor at St. Edward's.

The Board and the Kirby Hall community is full of respect, appreciation and love for Amy Clements and Teri Fickling. We are sad to see them both rotate off the board after today's meeting, but so happy to have come to know them well. They are wonderful women, amazing educators, and incomparable board members who have helped Kirby Hall School so much with their wisdom, knowledge and kind considered approach. We wish them all the best in the future. We will keep in touch. Thank you both!!

**The 60<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024.**

The event will include a meet & greet at 9:00 AM with the parent community at Kirby Hall for those who are able to attend in person. Official board business will begin at 10:00 AM and end by 1:00 PM CST.