

Kirby Hall School 60th Board Meeting: Minutes

September 14th, 2024 at 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM CST in person at Kirby Hall & via zoom

Participating Board members: Victoria Rase Shinn, Board President; MacDonald Kempf, Sara Pevaroff Schuh, Board Secretary; Ev Lunning, Adrian Colesberry (via zoom), Board Treasurer and VP; Sabina Behague (via zoom), Andy Liddell and Ianthe Brock Wooley.

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

Faculty/Staff members present: Martha Peters, Jared Dailey, Emily Roberts and Alyssa Drury

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER at 10:19 AM CST

- Welcome & introduction of new Board Members: Ianthe Brock Wooley and Andy Liddell.
- Minutes of the 60th Board Meeting were electronically approved in advance of meeting.

2. UPDATES

- Faculty Observer: not available today
- **Dean of Curriculum: Martha Peters**

Highlights from MP Presentation

—KHS Science curriculum is being revamped using the *Families In Nature* program (outdoor-based science curriculum) as a guide

—October 9th: several KHS teachers and MP will be trained in this curriculum —

Additional curriculum called *Studies Weekly* is also being introduced, brand new K-5 science with hands-on experiments and testing natural phenomena, allows for full class discussion

—Kids seem to be enjoying the new curricula and the hands-on component —New curriculum is “student driven” as opposed to teacher driven, which is preferred. It is research based, hands-on, spiraled and scaffolded, integrated with ELA

—New math curriculum called Singapore has been introduced. This model is different due to hands-on component, but teachers are liking this new approach and feel that students are benefiting more [eg. allows students to learn the “why” of math]

—Teachers noted new curriculum of Studies Weekly is easy to follow with the helpful manual

—Goal: less homework for students and more hands-on, manipulatives are good, foster problem solving

—MP is available to support teachers and to provide resources, especially with scope and sequence.

- **Dean of Students, Mathematics & STEM Instruction, & Athletics: Jared Dailey**

Highlights from JD Presentation

- Penguins won their first football game
- Lots of general excitement for athletics this year
- STEM Program ramping up, upcoming STEM night
- Student Council, speeches and elections coming soon, voting for 3rd-5th grade Student Council
- Kids proposed various clubs, newspaper coming back (Lauren will supervise), and there is now a student club every day at lunch including Archery Club, Star Wars Club, Pokémon Club (not digital)
- IT is going well, orders in for new equipment, expanding robotics instruction — Jared is continuing to familiarize himself with all students and providing support, especially for the younger ones
- Lauren made contact with “BookPeople” for the persuasive writing unit and students will have a display at the bookstore

• **Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, Alyssa Drury & Director of Admissions, Emily Roberts**

Highlights from AD/ER Presentation

- Presentation Recap available in Google drive for all Board Members
- Advertising & Marketing
 - Two biggest investments for KHS advertising right now: Austin Moms and Niche, ads and info will start on those platforms this month through May 2025
 - Recent Meet & Greet was well attended. It boosts interest when multiple families are touring together
 - Primarily families are finding KHS online and not through physical banners, yard signs etc. Plan to build up over time to radio spots on KUT etc.
 - Traditional Open House in January 2025
 - Parent Ambassador Program: Ask parents to help market KHS through online reviews, and/or talking with fellow parents. Specific tasks for parents will be needed to make the best use of this resource.
 - SPS suggests a Parent Liaison to Administration to increase the feedback loop so that we can increase retention
- Bring a Friend Day** is scheduled for October
- Plan social events to increase the parents’ feeling of community. [Parent Cafe or Parent Happy Hour on the Lawn] Make it casual and easy for parents to stay connected
 - Andy is happy to help organize parent events at KHS
- Sports program is great for retention
- 100 Year Campaign for Building**: letters going out this month targeting businesses, including those that have supported KHS in the past
- Deck the Halls** – big fundraising event for this year, scheduled for Friday

December 13th. A PreK parent is graciously organizing it.

- Vertical Raise is a fundraising platform that can be leveraged to increase donations, create video, push out on social media
- Alyssa will provide a template for Board Members to circulate to friends & contacts regarding the Deck the Halls fundraiser.

_ Admissions has started for 2025-26 school year

- Additional families are anticipated to join middle school. Paige will update the Board after December 4th.
- Paige has connected with Little Tiger Chinese Immersion (LTCI) and they are very interested in this pipeline to KHS, an option that would allow them to continue their Mandarin studies.
- Current school population: 69 students
- Admissions Application has been redone and the process is more efficient
- Middle School Enrollment Date moved up to December 4th, to facilitate planning

_ Admissions Targets

- Average is about 20 new students per year
- Emily would like to increase to 30-35 new students so there is growth beyond maintenance of population
- K has 9, PreK has 8.

_ New Program for Middle School is rolling out

- Paige is talking with all 5th grade families, trying to reduce pressure on families who should not feel responsible for making Middle School happen successfully
- Need a minimum of 7 students for 6th grade
 - Trends now: families are asking for more financial aid than previously, Austin's economy is making it expensive to live here and making it more stressful for families, and this presents a bit of a struggle for KHS. Emily anticipates this will continue. Across the nation, PreK-K enrollment is decreasing, possibly due to Covid and/or economic conditions
- 4th Grade: 11 kids in class

• Interim Head of School- Paige Arnell

Highlights from PA Presentation

_Continuous enrollment contract in Google Drive for review.

- Continuous enrollment contract replaces former contract - **now parents are only required to let KHS know that they are NOT returning.**
 - Signing the contract is legally binding commitment to pay the full tuition
 - Goal: get parents into online payment portal as automation is preferred by parents
 - Advantage of separating tuition payments allows Claire to separate and track the payments in alignment with the Annual Budget and fees

_Middle School Program document in Google Drive Goals are to make it feel new and different, to get kids excited, and to forge relationships with other schools

- Paige had a great meeting with the director of LTCI. LTCI students have no school post 5th grade for advanced Mandarin instruction.
- LTCI made commitment to families to offer continued Mandarin instruction

so Paige is working on program where these students enroll at KHS and continue Mandarin with LCTI teachers during school day

- Paige says some of KHS's strongest teachers are ready to step up for Middle School
- Block scheduling for middle schoolers allows for longer periods in which students can explore topics with greater depth and reduce the homework load

—**Increased Focus on PreK-2nd Experience**- chart the journey, track benchmarks

—**KHS Work Environment:** Faculty is receiving support from Martha Peters

— **Board Discussion**

- *MacDonald:* Consider offering a free evaluation for 5th grade (eg AIMS in Dallas) which would be a battery of tests, social/emotional/educational and clearly identify what their student needs moving forward. Issues would be how to fund
- Consider discount to current families IF they bring in a friend (maybe \$5000 incentive)
- Consider 10 as minimum for middle school class size
- Are we talking to the 4th grade parents about middle school? Board needs to discuss this more
- Intentionally set up procedures to help new students acclimate as they enter KHS
- *Ilanthe:* consider marketing the small size and individualized attention to assist students with some learning differences

— **Additional Board Meetings:** Claire recommends two additional meetings to discuss Financials, December and mid-February when re-enrollment for school is clear.

○ **Board Meeting scheduled for Thurs. December 12th at 7-8pm CST**

- February 2025 Board Meeting will be scheduled in December
- Paige will have data in Google Drive two weeks prior so all Board members can read and prepare for discussion during February Board Meeting.

● **Strategic Plan**

—Board needs to complete Strategic Plan by end of December 2024 —Faculty Feedback is in Google Drive, mostly on Educational Attainment —Andy suggests conducting additional in-person conversations instead of survey to gather more feedback – eg. why aren't you at public school or another private school, teasing out the essential reasons WHY families are here now, building that trust as feedback is gathered, good for community building and culture

—Consider adding some individual in-person or virtual sessions between Board members and parents

- SPS will send out Calendly link to meet with parents virtually

—**Board Committees:** Education (Sara), Finance & Governance (Tori), Communication (Ev)

- Add Andy to Communications and Ianthe to Education committees
- Committees should review their docs based on input from Parent meetings on September 12th and 14th

- Each committee needs to make sure the KPIs are clear and measurable
- Committees to reconvene no later than November 1st

_ All Board members to type up Notes from Feedback Sessions and add to Google drive by October 1st

- Jared to adjust permissions so all Board members have full access to edit, upload and contribute to Google Drive

_ Board Meeting to finalize Strategic Plan December 14th: 10am - 12noon

- **Next Steps**

— **New Board Members** (MacDonald, Andy and Ianthe) **to submit brief Bio and headshot** to Alyssa Drury [adrury@kirbyhallschool.org] for use on KHS website _ All Board Members to sign annual *Conflict of Interest Disclosure* after Tori adds it to the Google Drive.

_ All are encouraged to submit suggestions for new Board Members. _ Future Board meeting should include discussion of desired qualities and qualifications for new Board Members. KHS Bylaws specify a Board of 3-11 members. This will also be detailed in the new governance section of the Strategic Plan.

— **2025 Board Meeting Schedule:** Board needs to discuss whether there should be more than 3 meetings annually, suggested more frequent meetings or shorter duration would be more productive

Meeting adjourned at 1:10pm

