

School Name Upper Mississippi Academy		
Charter Number		
	Board Meeting	November 16, 2021
Address 19 East Exchange St. St. Paul, MN 55105		
Authorizer Innovative Quality Systems		

Call to Order

By	Chad Lauber
Time	4:56

Roll Call

Board Member Names	Present	Absent
Chad Lauber (Parent)	x	
Zoe Breimhorst (Parent)	x	
David Born (Parent)	x	
Dina Berray (Teacher)	x	
Anna Walters (Teacher)	x	
Mickey Jurewic (Teacher)	x	
Pat Maxwell (Community)	x	
Tisa Mitchell (Community) Joined at 6:00 via Google Meet	x	
Pao Moua (Community)		x

Others Present	Role	Comment
Amy Erickson	Admin	
Amy Elverum	Public (Staff)	
Alyssa Ableson	Public (Staff)	
Kristy Snyder	Public (Parent)	
Nora Snyder	Public (Student)	

Following the roll call, Chad Lauber read the following statement to all assembled:

Before we begin tonight's meeting, I want to acknowledge that some may be looking for the Board to address recent social media complaints involving UMA and its administration. Please know that the Board and UMA administration cannot fully respond to these concerns due to state and federal laws governing data privacy. However, I can share that the UMA Board recently worked with legal counsel to investigate a number of concerns a former employee raised with respect to UMA administration. UMA appropriately responded to the results of the investigation with input from legal counsel. To the extent the investigation involved allegations of discrimination and harassment, the allegations were not substantiated. There are now many rumors circulating regarding this personnel matter, including allegations of racial discrimination at UMA. To address the rumors that are circulating, I am able to share the following:

1. A former UMA employee has been spreading false information to students and other individuals connected to UMA. UMA administration and the Board are unable to comment further on the reasons this individual is no longer working at UMA. However, UMA can share that the rumor she was fired is not true.
2. A post on the Black Lives Matter Minnesota Facebook page falsely states that UMA students are being harassed and the "N-word" has been used at UMA without repercussion. The Board and UMA administration are not aware of any evidence that supports this statement.
3. In the rare situations this year in which UMA administration has been notified that a student used inappropriate language concerning race, UMA administration quickly and appropriately addressed the issue. UMA is unable to share specific details about student behavior incidents due to state and federal laws governing the privacy of student information.
4. There is a rumor going around that UMA staff, including Amy Erickson, have used racial slurs at school. The UMA Board is not aware of any credible evidence that UMA staff have used racial slurs at school. UMA would not tolerate that type of behavior.

The Board will not comment further on the recent complaints. Also, please know that the public comment period at School Board meetings is not the appropriate venue to make complaints against students or employees. Speakers may not make allegations, charges, or complaints against any student or employee during public comment. If a person wishes to make an allegation or to file a charge or complaint against a student or employee, the person should make the allegation, charge, or complaint to Amy Erickson. If the concern is about Amy Erickson, it should be submitted in writing to me in my capacity as the Board Chair.

Following these remarks, the meeting resumed according to the Agenda.

In the Matter of		Minutes of the Prior Meeting			
Motion to Approve. Majority		By Breimhorst		2nd	By Maxwell
Vote		Absent	Yea	Nay	Abstain
Board Member					
Chad Lauber (Parent)			x		
Zoe Breimhorst (Parent)			x		
David Born (Parent)			x		
Dina Berray (Teacher)			x		
Anna Walters (Teacher)			x		
Mickey Jurewicz (teacher)			x		
Pat Maxwell (Community)			x		
Tisa Mitchell (Community)		x			
Pao Moua (Community)		x			

In the Matter of		Agenda for the Current Meeting			
Motion to Approve		By Born		2nd	By Breimhorst
Vote		Absent	Yea	Nay	Abstain
Board Member					
Chad Lauber (Parent)			x		
Zoe Breimhorst (Parent)			x		
David Born (Parent)			x		
Dina Berray (Teacher)			x		
Anna Walters (Teacher)			x		
Mickey Jurewic (Teacher)			x		
Pat Maxwell (Community)			x		
Tisa Mitchell (Community)		x			
Pao Moua (Community)		x			

Lauber confirmed no Board member had a conflict of interest with any topic on the agenda.

Public Comment	Kristy Snyder and Nora Snyder
<p>Comment: Ms. K. Snyder spoke to issues of racism in the school and the apparent inability of existing staff members to adequately address parental and student concerns. She strongly encouraged the Board to fund staff training and other programming to address the matter. A copy of her remarks was not submitted in advance, although she has promised to provide a summary statement for the record.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Comments continue on next page)</p>	

Ms. Nora Snyder spoke to issues of racism in the school from her perspective as a UMA student. She also spoke to the need for more effective programming to promote cultural sensitivity and student safety. A copy of her remarks was not submitted in advance, although she has promised to provide a summary statement for the record.

A period of discussion followed at the suggestion of Maxwell, who expressed appreciation to the Snyders for their participation and expressions of concern. He further noted the urgency of the matter and urged the Board to respond. Maxwell remarked that racism had no place in the school and, beyond the “moral issue,” enrollment losses as a result of the school’s culture and climate would significantly impact the budget. Listening to people, particularly those from various minority communities is essential, Maxwell stated.

Erickson noted the Equity August which is scheduled to begin in December and will conclude in March should give us a much better understanding on the culture as well as providing insight into the attitudes and concerns of parents and students, as well as those of staff. Breimhorst noted that member Tisa Maxwell (who had not yet joined the meeting) works on occasion as a consultant on racial matters and should be involved in Board discussions. Chad Lauber asked Erickson what was being done to provide a platform for hearing the concerns of parents and students, and to train staff.

The use of a “community” forum via Google Meet or Zoom was recommended. Enhancing the matter in the Strategic Plan and in the Executive Director’s evaluation plan were agreed upon, as was the recommendation that the topic be included on subsequent agendas to ensure ongoing discussion of and action on the matter. Finally, Erickson, Breimhorst, and Mitchell (who had joined the meeting at this point) will develop plans for action for discussion at the December Board meeting, Lauber requested that budgetary estimates be included in their presentation.

Discussion led by Chad Lauber and Pat Maxwell				
<p>Comment: Copies of the October financial report were distributed, with no significant concerns. Lauber announced the pending availability of addition funds which can be used to offset enrollemtn declines.</p>				
Motion to Approve the report		By Briemhorst	2nd	By Born
Vote	Absent	Yea	Nay	Abstain
Board Member				
Chad Lauber (Parent)		x		
Zoe Breimhorst (Parent)		x		
David Born (Parent)		x		
Dina Berray (Teacher)		x		
Anna Walters (Teacher)		x		
Mickey Jurewic (Teacher)		x		
Pat Maxwell (Community)		x		
Tisa Mitchell (Community)		x		
Pao Moua (Community)	x			

In the Matter of	Conflict Resolution Process
Discussion led by: David Born	
<p>Comment: Born presented a framework for strengthening the school’s grievance and complaint processes. He commented that since his time on the Board he has seen a number of complaints and conflict issues arise involving administration, staff, parents, and students. Some of these issues have come to the Board itself, which is not in a position to resolve such matters. Discussion in the meeting sought to clarify the process Born’s document outlines and more generally focused on the need for clarity and transparency surrounding conflict in the school. Breimhorst moved that the framework he had proposed, along with observations from Board members, be forwarded to Amy Erickson with instructions that ‘new and improved’ procedures for handling matters be brought back to the Board for review and approval. Walters seconded the motion.</p>	
Vote	The motion was adopted by consensus.

In the Matter of	Strategic Plan
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Discussion led by Zoe Breimhorst				
<p>Comment: Breimhorst presented a draft of the strategic plan based on the Board's earlier brainstorming session and subsequent discussion. A recommendation was made to add more specific language on racial equity, diversity, and cultural competency. Likewise, a re-ordering of the goals was requested in order to place greater emphasis on cultural competency in the institution.</p>				
Motion to Approve the report (with modifications as noted)		By Briemhorst	2nd	By Maxwell
Vote	Absent	Yea	Nay	Abstain
Board Member				
Chad Lauber (Parent)		x		
Zoe Breimhorst (Parent)		x		
David Born (Parent)		x		
Dina Berray (Teacher)		x		
Anna Walters (Teacher)		x		
Mickey Jurewic (Teacher)		x		
Pat Maxwell (Community)		x		
Tisa Mitchell (Community)		x		
Pao Moua (Community)	x			

In the Matter of	Director's Report
Discussion led by. Amy Erickson	
<p>Comment: The Director's report was brief, focused primarily on enrollment, which shows a modest improvement from earlier in the academic year.</p>	
Vote	
None Required	

Comment: Absent formal motions or Board decisions, the Director's Report itself does not require a vote.

In the Matter of	Evaluation of Executive Director
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Discussion led by: Zoe Breimhorst and David Born	
<p>Comment: Breimhorst noted minor changes to the prior year's evaluation rubric as well as the inclusion of modifications to the Director's Professional development plan, to include cultural competency training. Expectations regarding progress toward improved conflict resolution procedures in the school were also added. Born moved to adopt and move forward with the plan; Jurewic seconded.</p>	
Vote	The motion was adopted by consensus.

In the Matter of	Adjournment				
	Comment There being no further business, the Chair requested a motion for adjournment.				
Motion	To Approve	By	Born	2 nd	None required
Vote	By Consensus	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Action
		X			

Adjourned	
By	Chad Lauber
Time	7:05