

**1. Call to order @7:06 a.m.**

This Special Board meeting is being called pursuant to and under Minnesota Statute Section 13D.04, subd. 2.

**2. Roll Call**

Present	Chair	Board Members
X	G	Melanie Persellin - President
	C	Community Board Member Seat:seated March 25, 2024
X	I	Idara Uko - Vice-Chair
X	A	Sara Sweeney
X	B	Brenda Maulik
X	F	Sana Soussi
X	E	Durowaa Agyeman - Secretary
X	D	Jacob Stith
X	H	Emily Uhl - Treasurer

Guests
Stephanie Severson
Guy Forstad
Lori Forstad
Jenny Kopecky
Julie Kresh
Jack Shields
Amy Erendu
Torri Sauve
Jake Otterness

Guests (cont.)	Guests (cont.)	Guests (cont.)
Cassy Anderson	Marsha McCathran	Jamal Ben Abballehi
Catherine Manella	Debi Walter	Nadia Soussi
Alicia Ruhle	Walid Shadi	Chala Ahmed
Pam Carlson	Slah Mkhinini	
Jenny W.	Michelle Thorpe	
Allison Smith	Mona Soussi	
Lauren Metty	Amna Soussi	
Annelise Draheim	Fatima Elhaddi	
Kristin Hoppe	Ruqiya Ahmed	

**3. Adoption of Agenda and Addendums**

**2 minutes**

Motion to approve the March 9, 2024 agenda by Jake, seconded by Emily, it passes.

**4. Receive and discuss Notice of Resignation submitted by DVA personnel under the purview of DVA Board of Directors Persellin 15 minutes.**

- Motion to accept the resignation of Ms. Holly Fischer, Executive Director, which is effective March 22, 2024 by Durowaa, seconded by Sana, it passes unanimously.

**5. Discuss and take action on contingency and/or transition plan for continuity of DVA operations. Persellin 60 minutes.**

- Jack Shields and the DVA Leadership team brought forward a proposal distributing the Executive Director responsibilities amongst the following DVA staff: Jack Shields,

Amy Erendu, Kelly Zender, Jenny Kopecky, and Cassy Anderson. The proposal is attached.

- In this proposed plan, Jack Shields would be named the Interim Executive Director of DVA until the end of the school year while remaining Middle School Principal. Kelly Zender would take on the title of Special Education Supervisor in addition to Elementary School Principal.
- Stated strengths of this proposal by the Leadership team include the ability to work together well and familiarity with the DVA community and staff.
- Expressed concerns about this proposal included increase in workload being potentially unmanageable for the Leadership team and uncertainty as to whether the Authorizer would approve of this plan given the need for the 5-year contract to be finalized shortly.
- Melanie Persellin, Board Chair, presented a proposal naming Jason Ulbrich (Executive Director at Eagle Ridge Academy and Dr. Brett Wedlund (Executive Director at Nova Classical Academy) as Provisional Consulting Executive Directors of DVA
  - Stated strengths included reviewed by the Authorizer, the vast experience and network of Jason and Brett (expanded upon below), and the robust SPED plan.
  - There are concerns about bringing in an outsider to make decisions about our community.
- Motion to approve the attached transition plan proposal by Jack Shields and the DVA Leadership team for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year by Idara; seconded by Sana;
  - votes in favor: Sara, Brenda, Jake, Sana, Idara;
  - votes against: Emily, Melanie, Durowaa;
  - votes in abstention: none;

the motion passes.

- Motion to approve the consulting agreement with Nova Classical as revised to remove paragraphs 1e and 1i and give the Board Chair the authority to sign the revised consulting agreement by Idara; seconded by Emily;
  - votes in favor: Sara, Brenda, Emily, Jake, Melanie, Idara, Durowaa;
  - votes against: Sana;
  - votes in abstention;

the motion passes.

**6. Discussion on DVA policies and applicable laws regarding communication by Board Member and Board communication protocols. Persellin 60 minutes**

- Motion to move Item 6 to the March 12th, 2024 Board meeting by Emily, seconded by Jake, it passes unanimously.

**Adjourn Meeting**

- Motion to adjourn the March 9, 2024 special meeting at 10:17am by Jake, seconded by Sana, passes.

Actual end time: 10:17 a.m.

Estimated end time: 9:30 a.m.



Friday, March 8, 2024

Board of Directors,

We would like to propose the following transition plan in light of the resignation of Holly Fischer. We have reviewed the Executive Director Job Description so that each responsibility area is distributed among multiple team members while Jack Shields will add the Interim Executive Director title to his Middle School Principal role. Kelly Zender would take over the Special Education Supervisor role.

We suggest that this transition plan start immediately so our team can get started on strengthening communication and trust among our school community.

We would also suggest that you immediately start a search for a full-time Executive Director so that the Executive Director can be in place by July 1, 2024.

We have a planned professional development meeting with all staff on March 18, 2024, and we have penciled in a time from 7:30-8:00 am for representatives from the Board to update the staff if you would like to do so.

### **Executive Director Responsibilities:**

#### **Instruction and Assessment**

- Primary Person(s) Responsible: Amy Erendu
  - Support: Kelly Zender and Jack Shields
  - Reasoning: Amy, as Academic Director, is already responsible for the majority of these tasks

#### **Human Resources and Personnel Management**

- Primary Person(s) Responsible: Jenny Kopecky and Jack Shields
  - Support: Rest of Leadership Team
  - Reasoning: Jenny is the head of Human Resources. Since everyone on the Leadership Team is supervising staff, we will work to collaborate on all supervision and make any necessary changes.

#### **Financial Management**

- Primary Person(s) Responsible: Cassy Anderson, Jenny Kopecky and Jack Shields
  - Support: Rest of Leadership Team

- Reasoning: All members of the Leadership Team oversee different areas of the budget. Cassy and Jenny have been attending Finance Committee meetings, and the rest of the Leadership Team will now join these meetings as well. This week Jack led two staff meetings around problem-solving the financial concerns for the FY25 budget. Due to schedule conflicts, the rest of the Leadership Team were able to join one meeting each and respond to questions from staff. The Leadership Team met after the two staff meetings, and we are finalizing a draft proposal that will help us reach a balanced budget for FY25.

#### **Legal and Compliance Management**

- Primary Person(s) Responsible: Amy Erendu, Cassy Anderson, and Jack Shields
  - Reasoning: All three have experience in different compliance areas.

#### **Effective Communication**

- Primary Person(s) Responsible: Jack Shields and Kelly Zender
  - Reasoning: Jack will work with the Leadership Team as well as Dan Rhinhart to make sure families have clear, concise, and timely information so that families can regain trust with the organization.

#### **Board, Authorizer, ABC, and Community Relations**

- Primary Person(s) Responsible: Jack Shields, Amy Erendu, and Cassy Anderson
  - Reasoning: Jack's varied experiences at DaVinci working as a K-8 Dean of Students, Middle School Principal, Athletics Supervisor, and Special Education Supervisor at different points throughout his six years here would lend itself to be the one person families may go to if they feel a need to go to the Executive Director. Amy's experience with charter school boards and authorizers will benefit our school as our team works hand-in-hand with the school board to finish the year strong. Due to the academic portions, Amy will also lead contract negotiations with Friends of Education. Cassy will work with the ABC board in meeting all requirements.

#### **Facility Management**

- Primary Person(s) Responsible: Cassy Anderson
  - Support: Rest of Leadership Team
  - Reasoning: Cassy already oversees most of the facility management tasks and works with the Leadership Team to address any concerns.

Many of us will be at the March 9 board meeting, and we would be willing to speak more to this transition plan.

Sincerely,

Cassy Anderson  
Amy Erendu  
Jenny Kopecky  
Jack Shields  
Kelly Zender



Dear Jason Ulbrich and Brett Wedlund.

We appreciate and welcome the opportunity to work with you both, Jason Ulbrich and Brett Wedlund, as Provisional Consulting Executive Directors for DVA. We appreciate the strong and unyielding commitment by you both, by the Eagle Ridge Academy Board, the Nova Classical Academy Board, and Friends of Education toward the continued success of DaVinci Academy; particularly during this time of transition. The continued success of DaVinci Academy is of the utmost importance to its Board, community, parents, teachers and staff. Further, pursuant to the FOE contract renewal, the Board is committed to there being “no significant adverse changes in DVA financial, operational or academic status.” Your assistance and your commitment thereto is greatly appreciated.

The Board has considered the amount of time we would be seeking from you commencing March 11, 2024 through August 1, 2024. In consideration of the anticipated projects set forth herein, the phases of work, and anticipated project completion DVA respectfully requests that you each consider being available and onsite at DVA an average of no less than 8 hours per week and that you each be available offsite no less than 10 hours per week. This average will take into consideration that there may be some weeks in which you are on on-site more than 8 hours and there may be some weeks in which you are on-site less than 8 hours per week.

1. **Project:** Review and Finalize the 2023 Audit Findings and Corrective Action Plan.  
**Lead:** Brett Wedlund.

**Issue.** The Board would like your assistance in resolving and finalizing this issue/project and obtain the signed Corrective Action Plan from Julie Schrieber with School Management Services. The Board cannot move forward with approving the 2023 Audit until Julie Schrieber signs the Corrective Action Plan. There has been some dispute between Julie Schrieber, Jim Eichten the Auditor and J. Kou Vang. J. Kou Vang is involved as well and has expressed that if the CAP is not signed soon that the Board should consider suspending the SMS contract. The Board has expressed concern regarding Julie’s performance as the Audit for the past 2 years has had some minor issues. DVA’s audits prior to her involvement were always exemplary. Thus, part of your scope will be to determine whether the school should keep SMS as its financial manager or whether we should obtain quotes from 3 new providers.

**Documents to provide:**The SMS Contract for Services, the 2023 Audit Report, and Correspondence regarding the CAP.

**The primary contacts for this project currently are:**

Julie Schrieber: School Management Services, Business Manager, 402-841-1342,

[jschreiber@schoolmanagementservices.org](mailto:jschreiber@schoolmanagementservices.org).

Todd Netzke, School Management Services President, 507 - 254-6215,

[tnetzke@schoolmanagementservices.net](mailto:tnetzke@schoolmanagementservices.net)

Jim Eichten, MMKR,952-545-0424 [jeichten@mmkr.com](mailto:jeichten@mmkr.com)

J. Kou Vang, 651-491-1970 [Jkvang@vbjvang.com](mailto:Jkvang@vbjvang.com)

**Estimated Date of Completion:** April 1, 2024

2. **Project:** Review and prepare the 2024-2025 Budget for submission to the Board for approval at the April, 2024 Board meeting.

**Lead:** Brett Wedlund and Jason Ulbrich

**Issue:** This process will include but not be limited to:

- A deep dive into the bus contracts (3 bids should be presented at the April, 2024 meeting).
- Total expenses of the school (current items for consideration are an enrollment increase to help reach bond projection numbers and cost saving ideas that could include reducing the school days to realize savings). There have been a number of “ideas” regarding the impact enrollment has on the budget. The Board has considered the shortfall, and the initial recommendation by the ED to increase enrollment by two students per class. The Board has not voted on that remedy as the ED wanted to receive additional “ideas” from Leadership in brainstorming sessions.
- Ensuring that the new budget addresses the bond covenant agreements (assistance with this can be found by working with Kou Vang who manages our bond);
- Provide initial drafts of documents to communicate budget decisions, including potential budget cuts or class size changes, rationale, and impacts to stakeholders in a clear, transparent, and accessible manner, aligned with research-based best finance communication practices from the Edconomics Lab. The PCEDs will be primary communicators of said decisions to the community and stakeholders.

**Documents:** [Drive folder](#) will be shared with resources.

**The contacts for this project currently are:**

Amy Erendu (Academics Director) - Schools Calendar & Master Schedule

Debi Walter (Finance Specialist) - Budget

Jenny Kopecky (Human Resources Director) - Salary

Cassandra Anderson (Operations Manager) - Transportation

Julie Schrieber, Business Manager, SMS  
Melanie Persellin, Board Chair  
Emily Uhl, Board Treasurer and Chair of Finance Committee

**Estimated Date of Completion:** May 1, 2024

- Project:** Completion of the DVA 5 year Contract Contingencies and Documents.  
**Lead:** Jason Ulbrich

**Issue:** The school and the Authorizer need to reach agreement on the goals for the next 5 year contract. There has been a site visit and the Academic Director has made recommendations to Friends of Education regarding potential goals in the various areas. The school is ready to collaborate with Beth Topoluk, Friends of Education Authorizer, on finalizing those goals and signing the contract. Amy Erendu is very capable of negotiating on the school's behalf, so this is more of an oversight and accountability request.

**Documents to provide:** The 2023 Application for Contract renewal, the 2024 5 year contract and correspondence from FOE with contingencies and remaining items to be completed.

**The contacts for this project currently are:**

Amy Erendu (Academic Director)  
Beth Topoluk (FOE)

**Estimated Date of Completion:** April 15, 2024

- Project:** Hiring of Executive Director effective July 1, 2024  
**Lead:** Jason Ulbrich

**Issue:** Recruiting, interviewing, hiring and onboarding of a new Executive Director. This would include being available to the Executive Director for a period of three months on an as-needed contract basis up to 10 hours per month. In addition to your lead on the recruitment, interviewing, hiring and onboarding process, we would ask that the Board and the current Academic Director, Amy Erendu, be involved in that process. Jason Ulbrich would work closely with Brett Wedlund in the development of the appropriate salary for the ED based on the budget and experience.

**Documents to provide:**

**The contacts for this project currently are:**

Board Chair and Board Leadership Team  
Amy Erendu, Academic Director



**Estimated Date of Completion:** July 1, 2024

5. **Project:** Address and rehabilitate school culture and establish a strong supportive Leadership Team and foundation for the incoming Executive Director.  
**Lead:** Jason Ulbrich

**Issue:** Analyze current DVA Leadership and post and interview candidates for Leadership positions at DVA. Issue letters of assignment for the 2024-2025 academic year for teachers and staff. Jason Ulbrich will have sole authority and decision making authorization to evaluate leadership structure, organization and hiring.

- Evaluating current leadership positions and salaries. The Board will provide Jason Ulbrich with the lead authority to determine and issue letters of assignment to DVA Leadership, teachers and staff. This would include posting and interviewing candidates for the Leadership Team, including but not limited to Operations Manager, Human Resources Director, Elementary School Principal, Middle School Principal, and Communications and Development Manager. In general, letters of assignment have been issued in the past at the end of March/beginning of April. Amy Erendu was hired by Holly Fischer within the last 12 months.

**Documents to provide:** HR Committee previous staff survey results

**Estimated Date of Completion/Goal:** April 15, 2024

6. **Project:** Recruit, hire and onboard SPED Leadership and staff.  
**Lead:** Jason Ulbrich and Brett Wedlund

**Issue:** As can be seen throughout many schools across the nation, DVA has had high turnover in both SPED Leadership and teachers. We are seeking assistance in the recruitment of SPED Leadership and staff in alignment with student needs and budget.

**The contacts for this project currently are:**

Jack Shields, Middle School Principal and Special Education Supervisor  
Liz Anderson, Special Education Compliance Coordinator  
Cassandra Poser, Special Education Finance

**Estimated Date of Completion:** July 1, 2024

7. **Project:** Attend and Participate in the June/July Offsite Retreat.  
**Lead:** Jason Ulbrich and Brett Wedlund

**Issue:** Attend the summer off-site retreat where the Board reviews and develops its 3-10 year Strategic Planning. In the event that a new Executive Director is hired in advance of the offsite that you both would still be present to assist and mentor them through the offsite.

**Documents to provide:** 2023-2024 Strategic Plan, DVA Bylaws, Board Packet.

**The contacts for this project currently are:**

School Board

Julie Kresh: Chair of the Policy Committee

Hired Executive Director

8. **Project:** Monitor Any Ongoing issues that might arise and maintain relationship with Legal Counsel for DVA.

**Lead:** Jason Ulbrich and Brett Wedlund

**Issue:** There has been a data request regarding a behavior incident that occurred in September of 2023 between two special education students, neither of whom attend DaVinci Academy anymore. Although no actual complaint has been served, the language in the document request coming from the parent's attorney assumes that litigation is "threatened" sufficient to a closed board meeting in February. All staff have been interviewed and all documents requested have been shared.

**Documents to provide:** Access to Google Drive file that contains all data requested or preserved documents.

**The contacts for this project currently are:**

Kari Dahlin, Associate Attorney Arthur, Chapman, Kettering, Smetak & Pikala, P.A.

612-375-5906, [kmdahlin@arthurchapman.com](mailto:kmdahlin@arthurchapman.com)

Eugene Shermoen, Attorney Chapman, Kettering, Smetak & Pikala, P.A. 612-239-3500

[ecshermoen@arthurchapman.com](mailto:ecshermoen@arthurchapman.com)

Jack Shields, Middle School Principal and Special Education Supervisor

Liz Anderson, Special Education Compliance Coordinator

9. **Project:** Attend monthly Board meetings and present the Administrative Update which addressed enrollment, open positions.

**Lead:** Jason Ulbrich or Brett Wedlund.

**Documents to Provide:** Access to the Shared Google Drive for Board. At DVA, the Board Chair prepares the Agenda in alignment with the ED and their requested agenda items. Additionally, the Board Secretary will compile all of the reference documents in a packet and share with ED and Board in advance of the meeting.

10. **Review of Scope/Status of Project Completion.** We agree to schedule a review on or about June 1, 2024 to review the scope of services required and the benchmarks met and yet to be reached. This meeting will include the Board, Amy Erendu, the DVA Leadership Team and the new Executive Director.

11. **Communication Protocols.** As for communication protocols; we agree that your primary contacts will be the DVA Leadership Team and the Board Chair. The Board Chair will communicate and designate items to the Board Leadership Team as necessary. Parents will not have access to either of the Provisional Consulting Executive Directors. We will direct elementary school parents to communicate with the Elementary School Principal and that middle school parents communicate with the Middle School Principal. We suggest that teachers and staff communicate with Academic Director Amy Erendu.

We will provide you with a DVA email address to ease your communications with the Board Chair and the DVA Leadership, teachers and staff.

Respectfully yours,

Melanie Persellin  
DaVinci Academy Board Chair.