

1. Call to order

2. Roll Call

Present	Chair	Board Members
X	G	Lenny Ulloa Silva
	C	– Vacant –
X	I	Idara Uko - Treasurer
X	A	Sara Sweeney - Secretary
X	B	Brenda Maulik - Vice Chair
X	F	Sana Soussi
X	E	Durowaa Agyeman - Chair
X	D	Jacob Stith
X	H	Emily Uhl

Guests
Antonio Kuklok - Exofficio
Julie Kresh - Policy Chair
Amy Erickson- Friends of Education
Elise Santa- Friends of Education
Rania Almosawi
Hayat Elhilali
Mark Ustimchuk
Tori Sauve
Jennie Brannum

+ The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM

3. Reading of Mission Statement and Real-Life Examples 1 minute

DaVinci Academy of Arts and Science will cultivate a passion for learning through an enriched and individualized approach to education. The DaVinci community will work together to ensure positive character development and build a strong foundation for continuous learning.

- + Sara shared that 85 students auditioned for the fall musical, and we ended up with a cast of 33.
- + Durowaa shared that the school community is feeling Antonio's presence throughout the building at the beginning of the school year.

4. Community Comment 10 minutes

Community Comment is the only open forum portion of tonight's meeting and is an opportunity to present an issue or concern to the Board of Directors. There is a maximum of ten minutes set aside for Community Comment. Each presentation should be limited to no more than two minutes. I invite you to review DVA policy 206 in regard to the procedure followed to assure open and orderly public discussion as well as to protect the due process and privacy rights of individuals under the law. Similarly, per DVA policy 206 except as determined by the School board to be necessary or in an emergency, the school board will not take action at the same meeting on an item raised for the first time by the public. There is a countdown clock/timer that will be in place and used to provide each individual permitted to speak with a visual of their permissible time.

*Individuals must contact the Board Chair (dagyeman-mensah@davincicharterschool.org) at least **6 days in advance** of the scheduled Board meeting to request community comment. Please include "Community Comment" in the subject line and state your name and the subject to be addressed in the email body.*

Thank you for coming.

- Melanie Persellin: Fishing team opportunity for DVA 8th graders
- + Durowaa shared that a new community comment protocol is in effect where people can share if they are coming with notice so they can be in the agenda. Melanie is looking to change her community comment and will be present next month.

5. Adoption of Agenda and Addendums 2 minutes

- + There was a need to change date on seat C to June 2027 instead of May 2027
- + **Emily motioned to approve the agenda as revised, seconded by Brenda and it passed unanimously.**

6. Seat Lenny Ulloa Silva to Teacher Seat G 2 minutes

Congratulations to Lenny for becoming an official member of the DVA Board of Directors following the unanimous decision of the Board at the July regular meeting.

- + We welcomed Lenny to the board officially!

7. Consent Agenda

7.1 DONATIONS

Unrestricted donations: available for viewing in the office

Restricted donations:

7.2 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

[July 22, 2024 Meeting Minutes](#)

[July 29, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes](#)

7.3 APPOINTMENTS

New Hires:

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Position 24-25</u>	<u>Hire Date</u>	<u>Hourly 24-25</u>	<u>Salary 24-25</u>
Sarah	Richards	Teacher, ELL	8/5/2024	-	63,845
Bashir	Colaad	Teacher, MS Math	8/19/2024	-	54,106
Lubna	Moon	Teacher, Special Education	8/21/2024	-	60,000
Michelle	Leslie	Nurse Assistant	7/30/2024	23.00	-
Fatimah	Hadday	DaVinci Den	8/5/2024	13.00	-
Zoe	Whitney	DaVinci Den	8/5/2024	15.00	-
William	Charlesworth	DaVinci Den	8/5/2024	13.00	-
Kaitlyn	Palzer	DaVinci Den	8/6/2024	13.00	-
Lindsay	Roberts	Food Service Asst	7/30/2024	17.00	-
Michelle	Almquist	Food Service Asst	7/30/2024	17.00	-

Terms/Resignations:

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Position 24-25</u>	<u>Resig. Date</u>
Dominique	Jefferson	School Social Worker	08/19/2024

- + **Motion to approve the consent agenda by Durowaa, seconded by Sana and it passed unanimously.**

8. Update on FOE Event Board 2 minutes

Board members who attended the Friends of Education Boat Cruise Dinner on August 15, 2024 will briefly share any insight gained from the event with the entire Board.

- + Durowaa and Lenny shared that it was nice to enjoy time on the FOE cruise dinner while being able to connect and have collaborative conversations about our charter school. Durowaa, Sana, Sara, and Lenny attended.

9. Discussion- Administration Updates: Kuklok 20 minutes

Update regarding enrollment, activities and events at school, open positions for employment, and community involvement.

- + Down to 964 and enrollment is still a moving target and working to get enrollment up which may cause a need to revise the budget. As of today, we are at 956.
- + Antonio provided that we are looking into the why of families leaving the waiting list. Jake asked if there were plans for engaging families on the waitlist and to get students on our wait list. There will be a plan for marketing to get some more marketing opportunities and plans for targeted marketing.
- + We are going to be fully staffed in special ed after labor day! We currently have a few openings in middle school math, middle school PE, Educational Assistant, Long term subs (5, middle, elementary STEM).
- + Shared about musical auditions and the coming musical for 2-5 students, and a spring play for grades 5-8.
- + First two weeks of school are complete. Some streamlining to do.
- + Worked to complete a crisis team handbook to guide us moving forward.
- + Brenda shared about the first few weeks and the students were excited to be back. Lenny shared that the vibe in the school is positive and collaborative and relaxed. Sara said 4th grade is starting off great and is having fun learning.
- + Idara asked again about the enrollment changes and drop in enrollment and if there was a specific grade that was losing students but it has been here and there across the board.

10. BOARD COMMITTEE Updates MEETING DATE Board 20 minutes

10.1 Finance Committee & Treasurer's Update: August 21, 2024
[Reviewed monthly financial report.](#)

10.2 [HR/Compensation Committee:](#) August 21, 2024

- Reviewed goals for the 24-25 school year.

10.3 School Development Committee: Did not meet

10.4 Policy Committee:

August 16, 2024

See Policy updates/needs below

- + **Finance Update:** Currently under budget by \$340,000 and we will give it until mid-september to see where the numbers fall and then will discuss actions that need to be taken and create a revised budget if needed. Will talk through actions to take if enrollment does not rise. The fund balance is at 12.87% which should be ideally at 25%. They learned that we are able to get the rest of the ERC funds which could be around \$800,000 and this could happen soon. If we get ERC funds it will be a cash infusion and we may need to adjust the budget and set more realistic goals moving forward. Debt coverage is in a good place and we are looking to move away from SMS and get a different business manager. Audit will begin in September and target date for completion is October. There was an error in enrollment numbers in 2023 were underreported so we are appealing to gain more funding that was lost out on from the error in the system.
 - + **Durowaa made a motion to approve the monthly financial report, seconded by Idara, and it passed unanimously**
 - + **Sara motioned to approve the supplemented packet for financials, seconded by Idad, and it passed unanimously.**
- + **HR Update:** Discussed continuing to have staff engagement surveys, the executive director review process, and looking into how to retain staff. First staff survey will be sent to staff on 9/30 and will be open until 10/4
- + **School Development Update :** Will be meeting next month to kick off the Boosterthon.
- + **Policy Committee Update:** Reviewed four policies and 2 which will need board approval. The two that were approved by the committee were policy 515, and policy 609 were revised with minor changes. Meets next Friday, September 13, at 1:00 PM

11. Unfinished Business

11.1 Consideration of the ED/Board Relations Handbook Kuklok 15 minutes

The Board will provide feedback on the Executive Director/Board Relations Handbook again after the suggested revisions from the off-site meeting have been made. The Board will anticipate approving the handbook at the August Board meeting.

- + This is made to define the roles of the board and the executive director. It also shows how the two interact and what the expectations are of the executive director and the school board. The only changes that were made to identify the specific board committees to make sure there was no confusion with the school committees. This was modeled from Three Rivers handbook which was modeled off of the MSBA handbook.
- + **Brenda motioned to approve the ED/Board Relations Handbook, seconded by Sara and it passes unanimously.**

11.2 Consideration of the Board Binder/Onboarding Process Agyeman-Mensah 15 minutes

The Board provided suggestions for revisions to the board binder and onboarding process after the first read through at the July regular meeting. The Board will consider approving this binder and onboarding process to take effect immediately.

- + This will provide as a guide to board members and show the process, expectations, and responsibilities to community members.
- + There was an adjustment to the orientation of new members to show who is responsible for each section and this was customized to share the DaVinci process.

- + The grievance process will be brought to the board at the next meeting and it will be brought for approval in the September meeting.
- + Jake brought up that on page 9 of the board handbook should change to be less specific (to HR Director, and Development and Communications Member).
- + Idara asked who will maintain and update the documents and it will be maintained by Durowaa (Board Chair) and Antonio (Executive Director) or the Policy Committee for minor changes. This will be checked annually for needed changes.
- + Need to add strategic plan to handbook- will add link to it on page 16 or 17.
- + Information for board leadership positions was taken from the bylaws and some areas have been clarified. If bylaws changed then it will need to be updated.
- + There was a typo of extra bullet points that need to be adjusted.
- + **Durowaa motioned to approve the board of directors handbook and orientation materials, seconded by Brenda and it passed unanimously.**

11.3 Consideration of the ED Succession Plan Kuklok 15 minutes

Review and consider adopting the recommended Executive Director succession plan as suggested by the provisional consulting executive directors in June. The Executive Director has drafted a succession plan to facilitate a more seamless transition of the administrative team reflecting the consulting report's recommendations.

- + When we received our consulting report from our consulting ED's they suggested that we adopt and utilize an ED succession plan for emergency and short term purposes so we are well planned for the future. This will help create clarity and eliminate confusion for the community and staff.
- + Antonio's recommendation for an emergency/short-term ED change in leadership to become Acting Executive Director is Amy Erendu and she would collaborate with Cassy Anderson for building operations.
- + Antonio is working on flushing out a succession plan for DaVinci in case of emergency or short-term ED change and succession plan in general for the Executive Director position.
- + Shout out to Julie Kresh for being an amazing policy.
- + **Motion to approve Policy 403.1 Emergency/Short Term Executive Director Succession Plan by Durowaa, seconded by Brenda and it passed unanimously.**

11.4 Update on Strategic Plan Working Session Uko 10 minutes

The Board will discuss updates by Board Officers on strategic planning and discuss next steps to finalize the strategic plan in a scheduled working session. The Board will briefly go over plans for Board working sessions in the 24-25 school year.

- + The executive team of the board will be meeting to go over the strategic plan and then possibly have a special meeting to solidify the strategic plan and get it approved.

12. New Business – Discussion/Action items

12.1 Review of School Board Policies Kresh 15 minutes

- **New Policy 219 Charter School Board Member Violation of Policy**
 - School board approval needed at September school board meeting
- **Policy 515 Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records**
 - School board approval *not* needed
- **Policy 608 Instructional Services - Special Education**
 - School board approval needed at August school board meeting
 - Because the revisions consist of MN statutory provisions that each school district must follow, board approval can occur in a single meeting under policy 208

- Policy 609 Religion and Religious and Cultural Observances
 - School board approval *not* needed
- + Julie Kresh presented on two policies that need board approval. One is a new policy 219 Charter School Board Member Violation of Policy and would then be brought forward for approval in September. Lenny asked a question about how Policy 403 was similar to 219 and what documentation will be kept about board violations of policy. 219 is interpersonal conflict and 430 is more broad and 219 closes a loophole.
- + Policy 608 needed revisions based on statutory requirements and can be approved in one meeting due to policy 208.
- + **Motion to approve policy 608 by Emily, seconded by Idara and passes unanimously.**

12.2 Interview of Community Seat C Candidates Board 45 minutes

Seat C is vacant due to the resignation of the previous member for this role. Thus, pursuant to Section 7, the Board has the authority to fill the vacant community member seat by appointment, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 317A.227. Vacancies on the Board of Directors caused by death, disqualification, resignation, disability, removal or such other cause may be filled by appointment of a new director by the affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining directors, even if less than a quorum. A director filling a vacancy shall hold office until the term of the replaced Director expires, or until his or her successor has been duly elected and qualified, subject to his or her earlier death, disqualification, resignation or removal. This position will be up for election in the June 2027 elections.

The Board received the following application(s), all of which were received timely:

Sumera Islam	Application Questionnaire and Resume
Mark Ustimchuk	Application Questionnaire
Charlene Winter	Application Questionnaire

**As a reminder, pursuant to Minnesota Statute Section 124E.07, subd. 3(b):

(b) An individual is prohibited from serving as a member of the charter school board of directors if: (1) the individual, an immediate family member, or the individual's partner is a full or part owner or principal with a for-profit or nonprofit entity or independent contractor with whom the charter school contracts, directly or indirectly, for professional services, goods, or facilities; or (2) **an immediate family member is an employee of the school.** An individual may serve as a member of the board of directors if no conflict of interest exists under this paragraph, consistent with this section.

Minnesota Statute Section 124E.02 (g) specifically and unequivocally states as follows:

(g) "Immediate family" means an individual whose relationship by blood, marriage, adoption, or partnership is no more remote than first cousin.

A sister in law, brother in law, mother in law, father in law, are all relationships by marriage. All Board members are required to comply with this statute and in the event that your status changes, i.e. you have a family member employed by the school you are required to immediately disclose it and are no longer able to serve on the DVA Board. In the event you have a question on this issue, please contact the Board Chair and or the Chair of the Policy Committee.

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- + Mark Ustimchuk is present and Sumera Islam will join via Zoom. Charlene Winter notified earlier today that she is withdrawing her application. Some applications came in from parents and we notified them they were ineligible.
 - + We are now using uniform questions for our board interviews.
 - + Mark Ustimchuk will begin:
 - + **Please tell us a little bit more about yourself. Why are you interested in joining the DaVinci Academy Board of Directors?** Shared about his background of being from the area, and his work with MN Revival, Anoka County Parks and Recreation.
 - + **2. What specific skills, expertise, or contributions would you bring to the board? Additionally, what qualities or behaviors do you deem non-negotiable for board members to exhibit?** He likes to be a team player and partnering with others and listening to their initiatives and goals and working to see things come together. As a board member specifically it would be engaging in team member behavior to make sure we are working collaboratively with one another.
 - + **3. If elected, what are your top three goals for the school in the next 5 years?** Continue to present what this school is about and its values to others in the community and share the same information about Legacy Academy. Find more families and students and share our school to create partnerships.
 - + **4. What is your vision for education in this community? How does this vision align with DaVinci's stated mission and vision?** His vision for the DaVinci community is to continue to push the arts and sciences and share that creativity with the community. This aligns with the arts and science focus.
 - + **5. As a school board member, you represent the entire school community. In this role, it is expected that you are not on the board to advance your individual personal issues. Rather, you must make decisions with the entire school community in mind and in accordance with the fiduciary duties of a school board member. What is your process for determining how you would vote on or support an issue that is in the best interest of the school or school community even if it is in contrast with your personal views?** He shared a personal example from Anoka County where he has to work to look at the values and needs of differing opinions to make sure everyone is feeling community based by hearing all opinions and beliefs.
 - + **6. As a board member, how would you advance community engagement in DaVinci's arts and science programs?** He would suggest we partner with the county to look at what we represent and how to work with the parks department and other municipalities to bring more community engagement.
 - + **7. DVA board members must have an understanding of the unique issues that charter schools face. What initiatives would you take to advocate for charter schools in state and local politics? What is one issue charter schools face that you believe requires attention?** He believes that one challenge is trying to stay true to original values and what makes us unique.
 - + **8. In what ways have you previously engaged with the DaVinci community? What have you learned from this experience that better qualify you to be a representative of DaVinci's mission and values? What excites you about a continued relationship with DaVinci Academy in this leadership role?** He has met a lot of parents who have sent to this school and has only heard positive feedback from families he has met out in the community. He would like to continue to be more involved in his local community.
 - + **9. Is there anything else that you feel we should know about you in consideration for this board position that was not already included in the answers to any of the previous questions?** He had nothing further to share.

+ Sumera Islam:

- + **1. Please tell us a little bit more about yourself. Why are you interested in joining the DaVinci Academy Board of Directors?** She has been a resident in Blaine for 28 years and comes from a background in finance and has 2 children. She loves Minnesota and being involved in the community. She was on the board at her children's school for 10 years and has been looking for other projects and opportunities to be involved in the community. Looking for more experience and learn more and providing a different perspective. She visited and has interviewed for this position 3 times. She has many friends whose students attend the school. To provide her perspective to the community.
- + **2. What specific skills, expertise, or contributions would you bring to the board? Additionally, what qualities or behaviors do you deem non-negotiable for board members to exhibit?** She has been in finance for 18 years and is a financial analyst and does budgeting, planning, and event management. She would bring expertise to the finance and work with fundraising, planning, and long-term vision for the school, and interest of the community before individual interest. Look to well being of students and well being of the school. Non-negotiable is being respectful to everyone and not engaging in personal attacks. Values of sincerity and trust to serve the community.
- + **3. If elected, what are your top three goals for the school in the next 5 years?** One goal would be to learn more about what DaVinci has accomplished and then provide more precise information. We should raise children who can be good citizens in the community and work on finding a curriculum that focuses on character development. Also, looking to ensure the school is well funded.
- + **4. What is your vision for education in this community? How does this vision align with DaVinci's stated mission and vision?** To have a strong academic background and be curious and respectful and learn about different cultures and different ways to co-exist and set boundaries and what the school should be in charge of and what the parents need to control and be taught. It should be more collaborative and parents should have control of certain teachings. We should be strong academically but be open minded to different things.
- + **5. As a school board member, you represent the entire school community. In this role, it is expected that you are not on the board to advance your individual personal issues. Rather, you must make decisions with the entire school community in mind and in accordance with the fiduciary duties of a school board member. What is your process for determining how you would vote on or support an issue that is in the best interest of the school or school community even if it is in contrast with your personal views?** She deals with this at work and as a previous board member. The process would be putting the interests of the students and school first and think larger of how the school community needs. Her faith does drive her decisions but she can be respectful of others decisions. We will not be unanimous on everything and she will be respectful of what the majority chooses.
- + **6. As a board member, how would you advance community engagement in DaVinci's arts and science programs?** To have a sister school to visit and work with to connect with and collaborate in learning experiences. We should participate in more tournaments and things across the community and country to broaden our students' horizons.
- + **7. DVA board members must have an understanding of the unique issues that charter schools face. What initiatives would you take to advocate for charter schools in state and local politics? What is one issue charter schools face that you believe requires attention?** She would need to learn more about charter schools and how they function and work together. At the end of the day we are working toward students learning. She believes they should have more funding and how funds are being allocated and how our practices compare to other charter, public, and private schools.

- + **8. In what ways have you previously engaged with the DaVinci community? What have you learned from this experience that better qualify you to be a representative of DaVinci's mission and values? What excites you about a continued relationship with DaVinci Academy in this leadership role?** She does not have any children or staff member friends but does have friends who have children that attend and it is a very accepting and diverse community. We need to promote and learn from one another. She has interviewed for a few times and appreciates that the board is respectful and communicative. She would be excited to have an opportunity to learn more about the charter school system and be engaged in a larger school community.
- + **9. Is there anything else that you feel we should know about you in consideration for this board position that was not already included in the answers to any of the previous questions?** She has been in Blaine for a long time, her children are older, she loves to travel, and is open, friendly, and professional.
- + She asked if there were other candidates- and we shared that another candidate was interviewed and the third candidate withdrew.
 - + Our options would be to choose someone or move forward with no candidate.
- + **Durowaa made a motion to close the meeting at 8:21 PM and Jake seconded, and passed unanimously.**
- + **Sana made a motion to appoint Sumera, seconded by Idara. Votes in favor were Sana, Idara, Jake, and Emily. Votes opposed were Sara, Durowaa, Brenda, and Lenny. The motion failed.**
- + **Idara made a motion to appoint Mark, seconded by Sara. Votes in favor were Sara, Idara, Brenda, Durowaa, Jake, and Emily. Votes opposed by Lenny and Sana. Motion passed.**
- + **Mark Ustimchuk was appointed for community seat C.**
- + **Lenny made a motion to reopen the meeting at 8:55 and it was seconded by Sana and is passed unanimously.**
- + We reflected on the process and said we had a fruitful discussion and experience in finding common ground. Idara shared we might want to change or adjust questions to be more specific and how candidates have access to the questions.

12.3 Consideration of Change to Creative Planning as DVA Financial Services Provider Kuklok 15 minutes

The Executive Director will present a proposal to move from School Management Services to Creative Planning for financial services and payroll support. In this plan the school would take on a team of specialists to support their operations, including, a controller/financial advisor, a grant manager for government grant funding, a payroll specialist to support our payroll operations, an accounts payable/receivables representative to help with bill payments and invoices. These would be four different individuals who specialize in their respective areas and would bring a team approach to the support of DVA's financial services.

- + We are paid through November with SMS and they would provide us with a refund and We would work with a controller, grant accounting, payroll processing, accounts payable. CP can begin October 1 and SMS would end on October 31. SMS would do the audit and then transition out. We would also switch the expenditure approval system which goes to auditors. We would receive 2 reports a month and the HR director was in favor of the change. Antonio sees no downside and even sees some gaps that will be closed and there could be more of a maximization of funding use.
- + Idara said having a team of 4 would be better for us to have better checks and balances to have a cleaner audit.
- + They also look into grant funding for things like Title, RTI, and SpEd funding.
- + **Motion to approve the change to Creative Planning as DVA Financial Services Provider by Idara, seconded by Jake and it passed unanimously.**

13. Meeting Assessment and Closing Thoughts **Board** **2 minutes**

Did we spend our time effectively today? What could we do better? What should we, as a Board, focus on for the next meeting?

- Things that went well:

The Board did a good job with preparedness and talking through issues openly and respectfully, especially in closed meetings. We were able to find common ground during disagreements while maintaining our unique positions.

- Things that could have gone better:

There were quite a few issues with the technology that made it difficult for the Board to run an efficient meeting.

Additionally, the Board should tweak questions to be more specific for future interviews and provide candidates with written copies of the questions during the time of the candidate interviews.

14. Adjourn Meeting

Motion to close at 8:58 by Durowaa, seconded by Lenny and it passed unanimously.

Estimated end time:

9:00 pm