

Minutes of Kirby Hall School's 55th Board Meeting
January 21st, 2023 at 2:00 PM via Zoom

Attendees:

Board Members: Victoria Rase Shinn, M.D.- Board President, Howard Rase, Jr.- Board Treasurer, and the following Board Directors- Sabina Behague, Amy Clements, Ph.D, Teri Fickling, Ph.D, and Sara Pevaroff Schuh

KHS Administration: Helen Roberts- Executive Director and Claire LaChance- Financial Officer (both Ex-officio board members) and Alyssa Drury- Marketing Officer

Also present for part of the meeting were five current Kirby Hall parents: Jef Rice, Andy Liddell, Julie Liddell, Kathy Block, and Betsy Culliton.

Virtual Welcome: Board members, parents and administrators introduced themselves to each other.

Parent Presentation: Jef Rice and Andy Liddell made a well organized and kind presentation with thoughts and suggestions gathered from conversations with others in the parent community. They discussed what they called "The Parent Perspective" including their wish to better articulate Kirby Hall's identity, their request for more transparency from the board including Kirby Hall's finances, their wish to form a parent group, their wish to assist with communication to the parent community, to maintain morale, to help with teacher and student retention, and to spread positive word of mouth. They expressed their wish for the parent group to support the school while not overstepping their parental role.

The whole board and the administration representatives listened carefully and were excited about the parents' interest and positive energy. We expressed our thanks sincerely to the 5 parents in attendance.

After the parents adjourned from the Zoom meeting:

- 1) Board voted to approve the minutes of the special board meeting held October 8, 2022 at which we had discussed the continuation rate. Minutes for 54th Board Meeting had already been electronically approved.
- 2) Further conversation about issues raised by the parent presentation with the following items voted upon or decided: a) A parent group was approved by unanimous board vote, all directors being in favor of a parent group forming, name to be announced. A request for board approval of the group's by-laws prior to the official inception was part of this decision. The board and parents also will agree on the scope of responsibilities of the parent group which they have already offered. b) The board unanimously voted in favor of the head of the parent group being allowed to attend part of our board meetings as a non-voting observer starting from the beginning of each meeting and with

the understanding that there would still be portions that would need to be private. We will request that issues to be raised be presented in writing at least 7 days prior to the upcoming meeting so those may be added to the meeting's agenda. c) The board was agreeable to the parent group meeting monthly at the school as long as the events are scheduled with Ms. Roberts ahead of time. d) We will ask for the parents' ideas and assistance about how to best communicate with them and the rest of the parent community. e) We will ask if any parents might be able to attend the 1/28/23 Open House for prospective families to share experiences and spread their positive word of mouth. f) General discussions were held about the Kirby Hall Handbook, communicating the institutional architecture, communicating institutional policies and by-laws. g) Howard Rase and Claire LaChance will prepare to discuss a financial overview with a select group of parents as was requested. Meeting to be scheduled within the next 7-10 days. h) Board directors Sabina Behague, Amy Clements, and Sara Pevaroff Schuh volunteered to work on Communications, Marketing, and "Friends of Kirby Hall" (the chosen name for the alumni group).

Dr. Teri Fickling, Board Member and Kirby Hall's Curriculum Dean, gave her update on the Columbia College Teachers' ELA Program. She is serving as an instructional coach to the teachers in order to support the implementation of this curriculum. The Writing Workshop is rolling out in grades K-6. The Reading Workshop is rolling out in grades 4-6. First grade has begun a workshop approach with differentiated learning and leveled books. Student progress is being carefully tracked. To maintain Kirby Hall's famously high standards in literacy Dr. Fickling and English teacher, Paige Arnell, have engaged in a review of the reading program as a whole. As a result of this review, we are transitioning to a new phonics program, to be announced. In addition, we are adding kinesthetic learning tools by introducing manipulatives in Kindergarten. We will have further updates once the review is complete and are so appreciative of Dr. Fickling and Ms. Arnell's expert focus on this topic.

Claire LaChance presented a financial update for the school. The tax return draft comes back from the CPA this time of year and Claire has just reviewed it. She was proud to announce that the school is financially ahead on operational costs even before accounting for any donations. She estimates that the school will be in the black for the 2022-2023 school year. Thank you for your careful shepherding of the school's finances, Claire. (The KHS financials as of December 31, 2022 were shared with the Board.)

Ms. Roberts gave her Executive Director's Report.

- 1) The re-enrollment contract is due February 1st. Admissions is traditionally busier in the Spring and Summer.

- 2) Alyssa Drury shared highlights of her monthly and ongoing marketing activities. We are so appreciative of all she does and for her presence during the initial part of the meeting today.
- 3) Kirby Hall's accreditation renewal cycle is ongoing and has been an intense focus recently. Supporting materials are due to Cognia on February 1st. The faculty and administration including Ms. Roberts, Emily Roberts, Dr. Fickling, and Ms. Drury are heavily involved in this every six year effort. Cognia is a well-respected accrediting agency. Ms Roberts reports that their preliminary comments have been very positive. Lori Mowrey, one of the Cognia team members, conducted observations of Kindergarten Math (Ms. Rohmann), 6th grade science (Mr. Schumann) and 3rd grade history/geography (David La Londe) and was very much impressed with both the teachers' presentation of the materials and of the student engagement and participation.
- 4) Recent landscaping upgrades have gone well with healthy grass reported, April plantings scheduled, and a new play scape being researched prior to purchase.
- 5) There have been a very few cases of COVID. Careful protocols continue to be followed.
- 6) Continuation Rate for Middle School Students- 6 students will go from 5th to 6th grade and 2 students from 6th to 7th grade using the new continuation rate.
- 7) Administration continues to search for a certified counselor for the school community. Amy Clements offered to go over the position description.
- 8) Administration is also still searching for candidates for the Middle School Lead position.
- 9) There are currently only 2 students in the whole of high school. They may leave after this school year to graduate elsewhere. After the school fulfills our commitment to them, the board votes unanimously to put the high school on hiatus. This continues our ongoing discussion on the viability of the high school that began as early as 2018. Starting immediately Kirby Hall School will be marketed as a Pre-K through 8th grade institution. The website and how KHS appears in Google searches will need to be updated. We will focus on building the Middle School and stressing the value of a Kirby Hall education to the future high school and college success of our learners. We will still accurately style ourselves a college preparatory school. If in the future there is a demonstrated need for a high school that can again be considered.
- 10) Sadly, our beloved history teacher of 28 years, Joe Rumrich, passed away. He was celebrated by the KHS community shortly before his passing in December. He felt loved and appreciated. Kirby Hall will host a memorial service and reception in his honor on February 18th. Opportunities to discuss and mark his passing are being offered to all community members. Ideas to dedicate a place in the school to his memory are being examined.

By the end of the meeting Mr. Jef Rice had emailed the slides from the parents' presentation. Thank you.

Our next board meeting is scheduled for Saturday, June 10th at 11:00 AM CST.

Meeting adjourned with thanks to all board members and our wonderful administration.

Respectfully, Victoria Rase Shinn