

## **Minutes for Kirby Hall School 56<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting**

**June 10, 2023, at 11:00 AM EST via Zoom Video Call and In-Person**

Virtual Welcome to Board Members (all present) and KHS Staff - Victoria Rase Shinn, M.D., Board President; also in attendance, Howard Rase, Board Treasurer; Amy Clements, Ph.D., Board Secretary; and Board Directors Teri Fickling, Ph.D. (also Dean of Curriculum), Sabina Behague, and Sara Pevaroff Schuh.

Ex-officio members Helen Roberts, KHS Executive Director; Claire LaChance, Financial Officer.

Staff Members who joined us for a portion of the meeting were Emily Roberts, Director of Admissions; Alyssa Drury, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer; and Sarah Jane Devins, School Counselor.

Minutes from 55<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting had previously been electronically approved.

Agreement was made to continue meeting as our Board is currently meeting.

### **Updates and Introductions:**

The Board welcomed Ms. Devins, the new School Counselor, over Zoom. She shared that she is excited to be at Kirby Hall and has been counseling KHS community members and assisting Dr. Fickling in planning the SEL (Social Emotional Learning) and Sex Education curricula. The Board was also glad to welcome Ms. Paige Arnell, the incoming Dean of Curriculum, and Mr. Connor Hollis, the new Middle School Lead, who will both begin their duties at KHS on July 17, 2023. The Board asked Ms. Roberts to pass along a welcome to those staff members not present on the Zoom meeting today.

Current Dean of Curriculum Teri Fickling will continue in her post until Ms. Arnell assumes that role. Dr. Fickling reported on the phonics and reading materials planned, leveling and cataloguing all books, completing reading assessments on students toward years' end, and choosing SEL (Social Emotional Learning) and Sex Education curricula.

Alyssa Drury gave the Marketing update. She has been and will continue focusing her energies on the KHS online presence, updating the website, keeping the blog current, and updating the logo. The Board reviewed new design options that keep many of the symbols of the original logo. The Board voted unanimously to give Helen final say over the choice of the new logo.

Emily Roberts gave the report on Admissions and the Landscaping/Playground/Garden. Emily and Alyssa together will update the admissions materials with the involvement of the logo designer. They will strive to focus Kirby Hall's message. There are currently 90 students going into the '23-'24 school year. Others are touring, decisions pending with interest, and the Pre-K assessment is scheduled. Google ads continue to be seen as helpful. The Board heard that many applicants are testing low academically in some areas. The Board is aware of learning loss during the pandemic and discussed ramping up a program to aid in the transition to KHS, a summer intensive, for example. Amy suggested academically nurturing supplemental instruction or tutoring with the tentative name of the "Bloom Program." Emily continues to reach out to develop relationships

with other schools. Those overtures have been welcomed. The Playground will be completed this Summer after much parental input and using \$60,000 raised at the Gala. The Board agrees that an employee dedicated to development would be a great asset and is on our wish list. Lastly, needs for more space for the younger students will be investigated.

The goals and structure of “The Friends of Kirby Hall” project were presented by Amy Clements with the help of committee members Sabina Behague and Sara Pevaroff Schuh. A summary document is now in the Board’s Google Docs folder for this meeting. The vision is for a positive voluntary group of those formerly involved with KHS in any way. This official KHS group will be overseen by the Marketing Director, explained on the website, and have goals of a yearly newsletter and a yearly gathering (registration required) held at the school. The Board is very much in favor of this new project. Friends of Kirby Hall could be tapped for capital campaigns or other specific fundraising initiatives.

Howard Rase gave the Retention Committee report. The committee also includes Teri Fickling and Victoria Shinn. The committee discussion has so far focused on faculty retention with recommendations for more opportunities for bonding, cohesion, and team building. Another topic explored was whether the school had the ability to increase the teacher salaries sooner than planned in order to better keep up with rising costs of living in Austin and the AISD pay scale. Finally, a new policy defining full-time employment at KHS was created and approved by vote of the entire Board. Full-time will be defined as 25 or more instructional hours. Those with fewer than 25 hours can have duties added to their schedules by helping in the Maker Space or tutoring, for example, to achieve full-time pay and benefits. We hope this promotes evenness of work distribution among the faculty. This policy is now in the Google Docs files. (Howard and Claire will meet offline to discuss salaries.)

Financial Update was given by Claire LaChance. She predicts a deficit for the 2023-2024 school year. Reasons for this include increased payroll due to multiple new and important staff positions approved by the Board since the September Board meeting at which the budget was approved.

Helen Roberts gave the Executive Director’s Report. a) The final report from the school’s accrediting body, Cognia, is expected later in June or July. The preliminary recommendation is in favor of full Accreditation of KHS. They were pleased with plans for increased SEL curriculum and more time face-to-face with the administration. b) At this time KHS is not requiring that masks be worn, though some community members still do. There is still attention to careful hand washing. There is no COVID testing being done at school now. c) Ms. Roberts uploaded “bios” of newly hired faculty and staff to the Google Docs file. She is pleased with staffing to date and has felt the effects of the national teacher shortage. Prospective teachers are all required to present a demonstration of their teaching as part of the interview process. d) The parent group remains in the formative stages. By-laws are expected for Board approval in the Fall. The Board expressed enthusiastic appreciation for all those of good will who are involved in this effort. Andy Liddell was invited to the Zoom Board meeting today, but could not attend due to travel. He sent his kind regrets. e) During discussion of fund

raising, a Board-level Development Committee was proposed and committee members Amy Clements, Sabina Behague, and Victoria Shinn unanimously approved. The committee aims to set goals in celebration of the school's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2026 and for the next 50 years. The Board hopes to involve parents in development efforts, including those with any experience in fund raising f) A local security company has done a comprehensive security review of KHS and its campus. They have recommended measures that will be accomplished this summer and will be present to answer questions when the improvements are announced to the KHS community.

Next Board meeting was scheduled for Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11:00 AM Central Standard Time.

Respectfully,

Amy Clements, Board Secretary