

Meeting Minutes

Kids Unlimited Academy a public charter school Board meeting

Date: Oct. 31, 2023

Time: 7:30 a.m. (in person)

1. Preliminary

Call to Order: 7:48 a.m. by Chair Jani Hale

Determination of quorum: Martha Ibarra, Julia McFadden, Greg Aldridge, Ignacio Sanchez, Pat Barry

Absent: Ryan Bernard

Guests: Students Joshua Jacobo-Cortes and Jimena Velez

Staff: Tom Cole, Cass Weiland, Lindsay Ochs, Emmanuel Balan, Sarah Lemon

Approval of agenda (additions/corrections): unanimous

2. Review and approval of minutes: approved as read unanimously

3. Public comment: none

4. Student representative report: (3-5 min.) Staff members Andrea Gee and Tyrone McDonald accompanied student council members as advisors. Joshua Jacobo-Cortes, sixth grader, and Jimena Velez, seventh grader, came to talk about bullying and kindness. Both were star actors in KUA's murder-mystery dinner theater, Tom said. One idea they have is to create T-shirts with KUA's five standards printed on them, said Josh. Cultural acceptance, honesty, kindness and others are the standards Jimena cited. They don't think there are "major bullying problems," said Jimena. Josh said it persists because other kids won't tell teachers and because bullies threaten victims, silencing them. He thinks students stand up for each other. Jimena said middle schoolers say bad words in front of younger students. "We don't want that to happen anymore," she said. Josh talked about middle schoolers being an example to younger kids but also spreading bullying to younger grades. "We're trying to make a positive impact on the whole school," said Jimena. Josh said he wants to remind kids to be respectful, responsible and kind.

5. Teacher/Staff report: See Principal's report

6. Business update — Cass Weiland/Pat Barry: Nothing “earth-shaking to report,” said Pat. We’re in a good financial position. The annual audit is happening. It likely will conclude in mid-November, and hopefully a report will come in January.

7. KU Executive Director report — Tom Cole: KU is close to a certificate of occupancy on the new building. He said he hopes this week they can start moving furniture. “We’re looking forward to enrollment strategies.” Tom has a meeting with the school district next week for preliminary discussions that will lead to larger consideration for the board. He said he’s had positive meetings, but Medford’s superintendent is trying to determine why students are leaving the Medford school district. Nationally, charter school enrollment is up. There are significant enrollment losses projected, based on national census data. Actual negotiations with the Medford school district likely will begin in early 2024. The board will have to determine what the right number of students is, what the trajectory should be. Tom said he doesn’t believe that maximum growth is advisable. “We’re trying to make some determinations about White City now.” KU is left in a tough spot there because the land use regulations have eliminated options to grow the school. KUA can’t really serve students older than second grade. But the charter is for K-5. The Big Chimpin’ bullying campaign is “out to change the world,” he said. He played Gemineye’s rap for the board. He said bullying goes far beyond kids; it’s perpetuated by parents toward the staff. “You can say anything now, and there’s no consequences.” He said the admin team has done a great job with reinforcing standards. From January to June last year, the lift that the school had was “tremendous,” he said. “There’s a huge hope that we finish even higher.” Data shows that what they did was not only responsible but also meaningful. When they have bullying now, they can see if there were interventions, if parents were contacted, etc. He gave Lindsay and Emmanuel credit for making changes.

8. KUA Principal report — Lindsay Ochs: One of things that the admin team is addressing is the deficit of skills that they notice in behavior issues. They have a push-in model that is building up those skills, rather than staff running around trying to address the issues. Emmanuel said that after fall break, the VIBES room compiled data that showed that most behaviors are happening in the classrooms and the halls, so they’re working on fundamentals with teachers. “We’re starting to see big trends in a positive direction,” said Emmanuel. Now the school has positive behavior checks, not just negative. The matrix helps teachers to understand what they should handle and what they need assistance with. Last night’s Harvest Festival had more than 400 people. Lindsay credited Tom with the idea of healthy snacks. Site Council still has low attendance, but Lindsay is working on more two-way communication. The first round of iReady data is compiled, and it will be used in team meetings. The school is working on adopting a new social-emotional curriculum. Two staff just went to a training in Sources of Strength. They will start building that into staff meetings before rolling out with students. She and Emmanuel recently came up with a new evaluation system that’s going well. “The goal is that all teachers will have two formal observations.” All the teachers have been “super receptive,” she said. They are trying to get away from whether teachers are doing the right thing but rather developing. Attendance data is informing the staff to try to determine if it’s tied to behavior. They’re finding morning enrichment hasn’t really prevented tardies. Tom said the new state assessment data has held teachers accountable, and it has changed the whole culture. Emmanuel also said everyone bought into and appreciated the Hispanic Heritage Month celebration. Lindsay said fifth grade teachers are really excited about combining a small class into the two others. The extra teacher will become the building substitute. They plan to call families to notify them. Pat asked about aides. Lindsay said almost all the classes have aides. It’s a priority for K-2. Martha asked about a report on pre-K. It’s not under KUA but the umbrella of KU. They are at full capacity at both sites, Tom said. The tough part is finding enough

qualified staff. "We're moving IAs into teaching positions constantly ... There is no labor pool outside what we have internally." Medford school district has the same problem, he said. The trend is people are not going into education, he said. Teachers are less likely to want the job when they're mitigating behaviors, he said. A preschool teacher resigned yesterday. She was kicked and bitten until black and blue last year, Tom said. The student couldn't be removed because of Preschool Promise, he said. Tom implied there's a movement toward privatization of education to hold kids and parents accountable for behaviors. Kids should not be exposed to other students' violent behaviors in their earliest learning environments, he said.

9. Other business

Board chair report: Jani said she was so surprised several years back that teachers were absolved from dealing with student behaviors because it was someone else's job. Now teachers are working on those most basic relationships. "We have brought back common sense and true leadership to this building." "That's what our parents want." She presented a "proposed schedule and initiative for an executive committee to steer the business of the regular board meetings. "I'm excited about the future of this board." She said she wants the board to come to family fun nights and participate.

Consent agenda

None

Executive session

None

10. Adjournment 9 a.m.

Next meeting, Nov. 28, 2023, in person, 7:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Greg Aldridge, Secretary