



## **LA ACADEMIA BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

### **MONTHLY MEETING (VIRTUAL)**

**APRIL 28, 2021**

#### **OUR MISSION**

A dynamic learning community sustained by partnerships, La Academia transforms today's learners into tomorrow's leaders through innovative instruction, comprehensive student supports, cultural competency, and work-based learning.

#### **OUR VISION**

Our students will be critical thinkers and global citizens, recognized by their commitment to lifelong learning and meaningful contributions to the world.

#### **AGENDA:**

##### **· Call to Order / Roll Call**

##### **Voting Members:**

**Aida Ceara, Board President**  
**Colleen Wagner, Board Vice President**  
**Chris Boyd, Board Secretary**  
**Ted Darcus, Board Treasurer**  
**Carlos Graupera, Board Member**  
**Leonel Silva, Board Member**  
**Guy Kingree III, Board Member**  
**Kenneth Hammel, Board Member**  
**Victor Ramos, Board Member**  
**James Rovito, Board Member**  
**Jessica Edonick, Board Member**  
**Jessica Gehman, Board Member**

##### **Non-Voting Members:**

**Salina Almanzar, SDoL Board Representative**  
**Pam McCartney, IU-13 Board Representative**  
**Aidalis Lopez, Parent Representative to the Board**  
**Steve Rally, HS Staff Representative to the Board**  
**Brittany Smith, MS Staff Representative to the Board**  
**Amy Ferg, Interim Principal**  
**Brian Booher, Secretary to the Board/Director of Student Services**

##### **Guests:**

**Christina Bowers, Teacher**  
**Jerry Johnson, Teacher/Athletic Coach**  
**Tracy Jones, Chief Operations Officer**

Emily Marks, Teacher  
Lissette Colon, Staff Member  
Betsabe Hernandez, Teacher  
Jeo Ramos, Staff Member  
Nicole Garress, Counselor  
Aicia Marquez, Staff Member  
Perseus Gross, Teacher  
Carmen Epstein, Teacher  
Wanda Suarez, SIP Facilitator

4:03pm

**·Introduction of new Board Members**

Introduction by Board President Aida Ceara

Jessica Edonick

Guy Kingree III

**Approval of March Minutes**

1st : Victor Ramos

2nd: Kenneth Hammel

Motion requested by Aida Ceara Board President

Motion passed without objection

4:11 pm

**Leadership Team report to Board**

**1. Focus: Dannette Remillino**

Tracy Jones “she is our Point Guard”.

**2. 30/60/90 day plan - presented by Amy Ferg to Board in general**

a. We are at the 30 day plan. Amy shares plans and updates the Board in general on plan at the 30 day mark.

**3. Covid-19 update presented by Tracy Jones**

a. Recently 9.6% positivity rate

b. Stressing safety within building - our responsibilities on site to ensure safety of scholars, staff, and community within building (safe, clean, and health)

c. No exposures since opening learning hub reported by Tracy Jones

d. (Chris Boyd requests leadership introduce themselves and position when

- speaking for new board members to know position/title as well as community attending meeting)
- e. Adalis Lopez, Parent Representative to the Board, - concern/question - SDOL is offering vaccinations to students. Adalis wants to know if we are planning the same or something similar. Tracy Jones offered local community resources to scholars.
  - f. Victor Ramos, Board Member, - asks Tracy Jones what are the scholars' expectations of scholars reporting who have a positive case at home - Tracy Jones explains trust from scholars and their homes, and indicated that the Operations Team asks questions to each individual when entering the building including a call home to ensure home is covid free. 1 member of Operations Team is at every door entry and Operations Team tracks movement of each scholar (for tracing purposes and cleaning)
  - g. Victor Ramos - if one member of family has covid or symptoms - what do we do? Tracy Jones responds - we reach out to home and inquire to ensure safety and to follow up with home. We will send scholar home to self quarantine, if needed
  - h. Amy Ferg shared- we do things differently than some local districts - they may not screen at the door - we do screen every one, every day at every entry.
  - i. Amy Ferg - shares Learning Hub hours and expectations to Board in general
  - j. Chatbox question from Jessica Edonick (Board Member) - questioning vaccination opportunities at park city mall and local areas. Tracy Jones - we do not currently send any mailings out. But encouraged Jessica Edonick to share information with him and he will share with families even though the park city mall site is expected to close within the next 2 weeks.
  - k. Steve Rally (HS Representative to the Board)- sharing positives about how scholars are doing when onsite. Steve is extremely encouraged by outcomes and scholar reactions. Steve reported multiple successes and amazement to be back in-person 1 - 2 times a week when he is in building. He fully supports the building being open for scholars to see teachers face to face for instruction/support. He did admit he was a tad bit apprehensive entering the building but the apprehension quickly disappeared.
  - l. Operations Team update - Tracy Jones - shared that a plumber has been onsite preparing for the health clinic for next academic year. The Plumber should be done with onsite preparation by mid-June. Tracy Jones shared that externally - garden beautification, as well as shrubs, and curb appeal will be the next to get the Operations Team attention
  - m. Finance side, reported by Tracy Jones - going over budget for next year with Baker Tilly. He is working collaboratively trying to get a grasp on budget and balancing budget as well as not concentrating income from 1 school district. Discussions are being had to look for new funding streams as well as indicates that some grants will be diminishing after this academic year.
  - n. Tracy Jones shared - a lot of work with Audits - Title 1 and 630 Financial Audit
  - o. Jessica Gehman, Board Member questioned - how are we identifying new funding streams? Tracy Jones added within the financial committee - we are discussing. Tracy Jones- right now we are at 90% scholar funding but goal is 60/40 with scholar being 60% and 40% being outside sources
  - p. Enrollment: Jones reports Enrollment - 200 scholars currently. Number fluctuates throughout the year. Month over month, the numbers change constantly April 6 - returning scholars mailing for spots for next academic

year 2021-2022. Grade level cap on each grade and we need to be mindful. Intent to return conversations and then next monday - information will be posted on the website. After application/enrollment - onsite completion will start. We ask for specific documentation from families. We have 2 spots on SACA radio commercial

- q. Amy Ferg - Instructional Focus - using data to close gaps and provide targeted feedback
- r. Amy Ferg shared upcoming testing:
  - i. Exams - AP US HIST/AP ENG LANG
  - ii. Exams - CDT's Week of May 24
- s. Wanda Suarez is introduced by Amy Ferg when she joined the meeting. Wanda is our regional coordinator for the School Improvement Plan - she is not in attendance to be introduced. Plan will be posted and brought to the board for approval; Areas of focus: 1) evidence based PBIS, 2) scope and sequence
- t. AP Exams - purpose explained and question regarding pass rate on AP exams. Steve Rally (Teacher) reports that he is not aware of any passed AP exam. No scholar has earned a "3" or above yet. Steve Rally reports AP Exams are hard core specifically around written components. This is why he co-teaches with Emily Marks to support Scholars with written pieces. Background - this is the first year that we offer AP History to 10th grade. Steve shares the date ranges for AP History and grade levels -10th and 11th grades
  - i. Victor Ramos - asks about teaching AP over 2 years and is it normal to do it over 2 years? Steve Rally shares that the College Board has shifted to the 2 year model and we follow their model. One thing we will do better next year - solid review for the 11th grade year for the information learned in 10th grade. Steve Rally shares that information is connected from 10 to 11 grade and that they have content checks in their co-taught courses. Tests are paid by LAPCS and we leverage it to get scholars to take the AP exams. Steve shares that at his local district, the parents have to pay for the AP Exam which increases stress. Amy Ferg - shares the background that AP for ALL started in New York City - basically 5 AP courses by the end of senior year of school. AP FOR ALL was piloted in New York City. Steve Rally reminds the board that these are college-level courses for our Scholars. Jessica Gehman - shares personal scarring from her HS experience. She asked about study guides for AP exams. Do we LAPCS offer them? Steve Rally reports we have some of them but we need more. He indicates that study guides change often and that there are many, many practice sites for AP Exam. Steve Rally states it would be nice to have more materials for 11th graders. Pam McCartney offered more insights of AP courses - purpose to expose scholars for high-level academics - AP for ALL - all can have exposure. Passing is not the only reason and Pam applauds LAPCS for taking this on as a model for the scholars in many many ways. Steve Rally emphasizes scholar exposure and it can help build college competencies due to exposure.
- u. Dr Brian Booher shared Special Education slides
  - i. From Compliance Monitoring - procedures needed to be added and put in place
    - 1. Surrogate Parents

## 2. Independent Educational Evaluations

- ii. Special Education Seminars - 1 was hosted last Thursday (4/22) and there are 2 more upcoming. The next is May 13 and then June 3 at 5:00pm. Information will be sent to Board for support and potential attendance at Seminars. Dr. Booher shared that 3 attendees were able to make the zoom presentation on 4/22/21
  - v. Pass Rate chart shared with board in general. Amy Ferg shares chart and what the chart and data mean
  - w. Nicole Garress - senior highlights slide (technical difficulties) - Amy Ferg stepped in and shared Nicole's work and slide presentation. Nicole Garress joins and apologizes. She shared slides with the Board in general. Nicole Garress shared senior t-shirt ideas and that she is awaiting school credit cards to pay for scholar application fees to colleges. CAREERLINK has been in 2-3 days a week to work with scholars.
  - x. Victor Ramos - asking about tickets to graduation set for June 8 6:15pm provided. Tracy/Amy - share specifics and information regarding tickets and capacity. Tracy Jones - shares specific information and capacity at the Eden Resort on June 8. Communication will be forthcoming to the board and community. Jessica Edonick - questions about seniors going to college? Number on screen is 15 - Jessica Edonick wants to know how she can encourage more to consider completing FAFSA. Nicole Garress shares her personal opinion - that she does not believe all scholars should have to fill out the FAFSA. Aidalis Lopez - states that she and her company, HIGH CO, can support any and all scholars -- potentially paid tuition and/or paid positions.
  - y. Summer Learning - Amy Ferg shares slides - Credit Recovery, Enrichments, and Educational Explorations. Staffed by LAPCS teachers and after-school staff members. Dates are posted on slides to begin June 13 and program to run for 6 weeks. Perseus Gross - program director - we are looking to include special events during summers programs on Fridays - including HersheyPark, Philly Zoo and other area locations/attractions
  - z. Sports Update - Jerry Johnson - teacher/coach - shares Jacobo Alvarez will be Softball Coach, and still looking for a soccer coach. Partnering with Boys/Girls Club for fields/facility usage. Jerry Johnson shared that he believes that athletics can help build scholars into all-round citizens. Jerry Johnson shares that DeMahj Salisbury was offered by University of Albany (NY). Orlando Taveras will be able to continue his basketball career at Thaddeus Stevens. DeMahj was an all-state A basketball team selection this year 2020-2021. Sports provides life skills and communication skills to better their livelihood. Jerry Johnson shares that he is originally from the City of Lancaster and that he is happy to be back in the area and excited about the future of sports and athletic programs.
  - aa. Meetings upcoming slide
    - i. Monday, May 3, 2021 PTO Meeting
    - ii. Thursday, May 27, 2021 Board Meeting w/Re-scheduled Board Training
  - bb. Folder items for approval listed on next slide
4. Amy Ferg states that leadership team presentation has ended

Items on the Consent Agenda will be enacted without a separate discussion of each entry but may be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed as a separate action item per a Governing Board Member request for discussion/action.

• **Reports, information and Discussion Items**

**Finance Committee**

Health Clinic MOU  
2021-2022 Budget

**Governance Committee**

Recharting Letter

**Planning / Development Committee**

Updated Board Roster



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*La Academia Partnership Charter School  
Board of Trustees*

• **Action Agenda Items:**

Special Education Procedures (Surrogate, IEE)  
Staff Renewals  
Leadership Stipends  
School Psychologist Position  
BakerTilly Engagement Letter  
Food Contract Extension

• **Reports, information and Discussion Items**

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1. **Finance Committee report - Ted Darcus - Tracy/Amy shared most of the report regarding most approvals; good financial spot currently but we will need to keep an**

eye on it; specifically related to SDOL/Charter is written for 200 scholars; Some approvals are for personnel. Aida Ceara (President) asks Ted Darcus to share background. Ted Darcus - BakerTilly engagement letter and our stance on engagement letter. Committee agreed with an engagement letter until 2022 when the contract ends with BakerTilly. At that point - we will open up to other companies to be considered for quotes. Finance will then recommend to the Board at that time. Moment: accept 1 year engagement with BakerTilly.

Ted Darcus, Chair of Finance Committee asks for a motion to approve committee report.

1st - Victor Ramos

2nd - Leonel Silva

Motion passed without rejection/objection

2. 1 year food contract extension - per Ted Darcus - previously commented by Tracy Jones. Ted Darcus, Committee Chair asks for a Motion to approve through Kramer Katering

1st Kenneth Hammel

2nd Leonel Silva

Motion passed without rejection/objection

3. Leadership team stipends discussion - finance committee and executive committee - stipends for additional monies to cover extra work. Ted Darcus asks Tracy Jones for specific amounts. Tracy Jones said it was a breakout room conversation. Amy Ferg refers Ted Darcus back to the Board folder. Colleen Wagner and Chris Boyd ask for a breakout room to discuss specific stipends. Amy Ferg is the host and she created a breakout room for the Board to step away and discuss in further detail regarding leadership stipend and the varying amounts to each member.

5:06pm - board sent to break out room

5:18pm - board returns from break out room. Ted Darcus, Chair and Aida Ceara, President state that in Executive Session, Board approved items regarding personnel and stipends.

Stipend for the leadership team was approved. Staff renewals were discussed and approved as well in Executive Session.

4. Ted Darcus - asks Amy Ferg for information regarding School Psychologist position.

Amy shares the cost to pay IU13 itinerant cost for their Psych. Which is approx \$82/hour. Our special education population is growing and the leadership team saw hiring a full time psychologist would provide additional rewards. Scholars and Staff would reap the benefits of a full-time School Psychologist. The benefits would outweigh the rest by hiring our own starting around \$65,000 with no experience. School psychologists would need to have a minimum of a Masters degree to be certified and have to have passed PDE exams, Motion requested by Aida Ceara.

1st Kenneth Hammel

2nd Ted Darcus

Motion approved without objection

**GOVERNANCE Committee as reported by Aida Ceara, Board President**

1. Put a letter to the SDOL on behalf of the LAPCS Board of Directors. Aida Ceara sharing feedback and background information on purpose of the letter. With our former CEO/Principal leaving, the Governance Committee is halting requests to expand the charter/size of school and scholars. Letter to SDOL is to put the request on hold, for now. Salina Almanzar wanted to say "thank you" to the LAPCS board for taking this necessary step and action. She recommends and encourages her to be the BRIDGE prior to undue tension. She is stepping away from the SDOL in the near future (November). Colleen Wagner asks if the SDOL school board heard about the communication from Dr. Rau (Superintendent) to LAPCS Board of Directors. Salina shares that they did discuss in an Executive Board meeting. There are some unclear/ties with the SDOL Superintendent and Board.
2. Recharter in 2023 with SDOL and if we choose to expand, there is a \$1.5 million grant. This is an opportunity stated by Colleen Wagner to strengthen our relationship with SDOL.
3. Creating a personnel committee - Aida Ceara states that we can add an AD HOC committee. This would require a change of by-laws. Additionally, we have a EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE committee which is stated in our by-laws. We need to populate these committees.
4. Kenneth Hammel shared- Finance committee had MOU for Clinic on agenda - it was accidentally skipped. Amy Ferg updates MOU to address clinic with dates and fiscal responsibilities. New director and Amy new to her position has put some barriers in the way, but a relationship has been established.
5. Amy Ferg admits that she forget to add academic calendar for 2021-2022 school calendar.
6. Aida Ceara asks for a motion to accept 2021-2022 Academic Calendar
  - a. /1st - colleen wagner
  - b. 2nd - Ted Darcus
  - c. Motion passed without objection
7. Governance Committee - thank you to the Leadership Team for stepping up to assist with transition. Board should observe Amy Ferg and the Leadership team to pop into HUDDLE meetings on Monday afternoon to observe team interactions and Friday afternoons at 3:00 for shout outs. Opportunity to get to know the staff and leadership team.



## Planning/Development Committee reported by Kenneth Hammel

1. Still some work needs to be done as well as LINKEDIN accounts to Tracy Jones and their URLs. Please share with Tracy Jones.
2. Presented by Kenneth Hammel
3. Discussed comprehensive plan
4. Governance Committee - policies to be reviewed as stated by Legal Counsel to start immediately and our legal counsel provided a schedule to maintain review
5. There are approximately 50 policies.
6. Attorney gave us a schedule to review every 2-3 years.
7. We are in our 3rd year of a 3 year plan. Discussion needed to update the plan. Needs to occur over the summer
8. Thank you to Dr Booher for updating the Board Roster
9. Impressed with DeMahj Salisberry's scholarship offer. Kenneth thinks this is a huge press release opportunity and potentially a recruiting piece.

5:32pm

Tracy Jones - scheduling a congratulations post to social media - regarding success of our High School athlete receiving an athletic scholarship. Tracy Jones shares hesitancy and perspective of PIAA onto academic records and transfer from public school to charter school has NOTHING to do with athletics. This would/could violate PIAA transfer eligibility rules. Athletics is a component of our school and we do not recruit. We are a school of academics.

Aida Ceara thanked board reports and all board members for being here and feels it is important to hear from staff and the hard work they do every day. In addition, the extension of the learning hub and what we are doing for our scholars.

Aida Ceara also requested the Board, please put this date in your calendar: June 8, 2021 is our graduation.

### Public Comments:

Emily Marks - introduces herself and her position at LAPCS. Emily Marks is our Humanities Chair/ELA teacher. She has One statement and one question.

Statement: I did encourage our staff members to encourage you to join their onsite classrooms or zoom rooms - this was intentional.

Question: As a humanities dept chair - is there any update on our principal search?

Aida Ceara - next steps for school? Right now, we are discussing next steps. Right now we want transition to be solidified and will discuss at the governance committee in near future.

5:41pm

Emily Marks shared her appreciation and thanked the Board. I appreciate that. I appreciate Kenneth Hammel for attending our SIP meetings.

· **Adjournment** :

5:44 meeting is adjourned.

**Upcoming Dates:**

- **Next Board Meeting: May 26, 2021, 4-5 pm** (possible presentation for Board)

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