



KCA is a personalized learning community that respects individuality, encourages independent thinking, and values creativity in all disciplines.

KCA Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 9th, 2025

6:00 pm KCA

Board Members Present: Margaret Chaffee, Jessica Royer, Kathy Baldwin-Heitman, Diane Beal, Gray Lupton-McSpadden, Ande Sanderson, JJ McDonald, Gail Robertson, Jonnie Irvine, Brad LaPlante, Jennifer Dykes, Dana Dorssom, Kendall Kerr

Board Members Not Present: Colleen Squire, Cade Klein, Dave Chaffee

Ex-Officio Members Present: Brian McDavitt, Katie Wells

Ex-Officio Members not Present: Martha Sanders

Emeritus Present: Anne Goldkamp

Emeritus Not Present: Carole Eschen, Penny Wade

Guests: Andrew Ganahl, Robin Ganahl, Michael Hartnett, Allison Hartnett, Shalimar Hartnett

I. Welcome and KCA Mission Moment

a. Board President, Jessica Royer, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

b. Mission Moment- For our Mission Moment, Brian McDavitt gave a shout-out to Anne's commitment to professional growth. Anne comes into KCA once a month on Saturdays to do a PD with her science group.

II. Approval of July Agenda and June Minutes

a. Approval of the July Agenda- Motion by Jessica Royer to approve the July Agenda. Gail Robertson motioned to accept the agenda. Kathy seconded the motion. July Agenda approved.

b. Approval of the June Minutes- Motion by Jessica Royer to approve the June minutes. Kathy motioned to approve the minutes. Jonnie seconded the motion. June minutes approved.

c. Jessica asked everyone to introduce themselves and share the roles they serve on the board.

III. Committee Reports

a. Finance Committee-

We approved the budget last month but found a \$120,000 line item for unfunded scholarships was not listed under financial aid. So this money will need to be found through donations and fundraising and should be listed as an expense in the budget. We have an \$85,000 deficit and need to amend the budget. There are some options as to how we can handle it. Now that we know about it, what do we do next? Gail agreed to set up meetings with advisors at UMB.

Diane Beal said she has listened to concerns from parents, and would like clarity about what can be shared with them and the best method in which to share. Diane would like to be able to communicate to parents when there are changes and when they need more details about what is happening at KCA. Current questions relate to the budget, 501c3 status, and what other cost saving measures we are taking, other than reducing faculty and staff.

Kathy and Brian responded, saying there has never been a time, except right now, when we have had any sort of reserve, referring to the legacy gift. We have always hoped for this sort of reserve to balance tuition and give teachers better pay, while providing personalized attention for students. Kathy said all constituencies have always checked into if the school is being managed correctly, so parents aren't risking their student's education.

She went on to say that we have never had a time when we were not struggling with the balance. Now, how do we ensure we are preserving our reserves and becoming sustainable? What are we trying to do from here?

We are at low enrollment and have an opportunity to take action and make changes. Parent Council can help educate the community on ways to collaboratively work with the board councils and create an ongoing conversation.

Brian shared that the Executive Committee and the Board have had conversations about how to preserve the reserves. Brian said fundraising pays bills, but tuition pays staff salaries. When we are down by 18-20 kids, that's a huge cut.

Brian said he and Melissa Jobe made the budget based on 78 kids, but we had to adjust the budget by 14%. Dana said when she hears we made a 14% cut, it makes it more clear.

501c3 Brian shared the paragraphs created by Melissa Jobe, Brian, Kathy, and our attorney. He also shared that the Governance Committee and the board are ultimately responsible for making sure all filings are happening and on time. On June 12th, Brian spoke with our attorney and our paperwork has been accepted- we are just waiting for reinstatement.

Gail suggested minutes are mailed out to parents. If the session is closed, then we would decide what parts of the minutes would be shared.

Enrollment Report-

We have 57 students enrolled. Two middle school kids have withdrawn. Two have been accepted by the admissions committee (9th and 10th graders) so we're expecting 59. There are two in process right now (9th and 10th grade). Kathy asked if Martha could send the report so it can be included in the minutes.

One student is coming in for a tour on Friday (9th grade).

Gray suggested we plan an event with the new kids before school starts. Bowling was suggested.

b. Executive Committee-

We discussed roles non-board parents could have on board committees. They are welcome to join these and attend board meetings, unless they are closed meetings. We need Katie to post board meetings on the calendar.

The Governance Committee is in charge of making sure we meet all IRS deadlines.

c. Enrollment- Ask Martha for a report to include with the minutes.

d. Development- Report made during closed session.

e. Principal/Head of School Report-

Brian shared the hard decisions we've had to make. He feels the support from the board and feels we're in a place of growth to become stronger.

Brian shared about course requests and scheduling. This year we were able to do this process earlier. Each scheduling committee member advised a small group of kids. Each kid chose their electives, and we always try to give them their top 1st or 2nd choice. If there are not enough kids wanting a class, we may not be able to offer it, and there may not be a class for the teacher to teach.

Last month, we passed a reduced budget. Patrick's job was cut, and we also did not have interest in theater classes. We did not cut the theater program, but we did cut theater classes. We are hoping Tara will be able to still do the play, and keep the theater going.

Brian will be keeping theater in the course catalogue and if we have the interest next year, it can return.

The Admissions Director position was moved to part time by taking away the extra duties not related to the original job description. Martha was offered the PT job and turned it down to find FT work. As of July 17th, she has taken a temporary position with us until we find a PT permanent Admissions Director. We will post this position next week.

Diane asked if there is a possibility to get feedback from students to see if there is an interest in theater before the semester starts. That would allow us to prepare for a production, if the interest is there. Brian has agreed to send a survey to parents to gauge interest.

Dana asked what happens when there is no interest in a class, but money is there to pay. Brian described that last year this situation happened, but we were able to offer the theater teacher other electives for retention.

Jessica said it was a combination of low interest and low enrollment/budget issues that led to the decision this year.

Andrew Ganahl asked about the low enrollment and questioned the decision to cut the funds/hours that go toward growing the enrollment. Jonnie shared that the part of the Admissions job that was taken away was everything but the admissions part. (supervisions, crew, a class, etc.) JJ asked if Martha had enough time to focus on enrollment/admissions? Andrew asked what went wrong? He wanted to know how to prevent this problem from becoming a chronic issue.

Kathy stated that historically our enrollment has ebbed and flowed, that hasn't made much sense, long term. The main element of our enrollment is word of mouth and that makes predicting enrollment difficult. Any number of things could have caused this. The addition of the Recruitment Committee will serve to support the person who ends up in this role.

Dana asked to see the enrollment and recruitment things we have done so far- that way the board and the committee can really help. Kathy suggested they need to elect a chair to the Enrollment and Admissions Committee so they can report out and begin to meet.

Gail said as a board we have to make decisions to maintain and sustain the school. We need to honor that the Enrollment/Recruitment position prompted many discussions, but the board cannot discuss the performance of employees.

JJ asked about receiving data about the recent recruitment activities, how the HOS participates, and overall, what is happening with Enrollment/Recruitment and the committee could help. Diane suggested a tracking rubric, possibly created by the new committee, to help share information and understand what is useful or not useful.

Jonnie shared that currently, the Admissions Director creates a monthly report that is shared at the board meetings.

We would like the person in the position to conduct exit interviews about why someone is not applying, or why a family chooses to leave, so we can make changes if needed.

It was brought up that our school has the highest enrollment fees. Most schools are \$50 and we charge \$350. Jonnie suggests we make it easier to help people commit.

Jessica said the Enrollment and Recruitment Committee will be meeting July 17th.

Brian shared that over the next month, we will host a New Family Orientation with the intention of building community with a Family Mentor program.

Brian also shared that he had filed for expedited processing for an employee's H1B work visa.

Brian said that a developer approached us offering a plot of land to use as a community garden. Janet looked at the plot with Katie and a rep from KCCG. Gail said we can contact the city to see who owns the land. Kathy mentioned the neighborhood association, taxes, insurance, legal considerations, etc...and adding another residential property may be too much. Gray asked what the students' role would be. JJ suggested if there was someone who wanted to look into it on our behalf, maybe it could be worth pursuing.

Gail said the board would like to see some paperwork about the land and while we are waiting for that, we can get some answers.

f. Facilities Report-

Brian shared parking lot repair bids from \$16,000-\$22,000 and \$8,000-\$7,500. Ted is scheduling the repair to happen before the August 9th event. The total area to be repaired is about 21' x 24'. They will tear down several inches, repour, and haul away the mess.

The front is looking less overgrown. Zach, from KC Native Landscaping, has been pulling overgrowth and digging trees. He's pulling out the groundcover and putting sunshade and mulch down. It will look bare for a while. \$1500 is the cost. Ted is doing maintenance stuff- patching concrete and deep cleaning. UMKC donated chairs that will go to Bing's room.

g. Strategic Planning-

Thrive Plan- Margaret shared that we need to focus on the important work we do here. Listening sessions will be planned with staff, parents, students, board members, and community members. There will be two different ways for students to share (evening and school day). The evening of September 9th will be set for the community, parents, and students to participate. We will have a facilitator and a script to make it thorough and equitable, and it will be recorded. Topics will be our hopes, dreams, goals, and challenges and obstacles. Some questions will be open ended to allow everyone's thoughts and ideas. Meetings are limited to an hour. We will then digest the information and have a retreat style conversation with people from each constituency. Lead and Scribes are needed. The evening of Sept 9th meeting, with other meetings aligning with this date. We need accountability and checks and balances.

h. Governance Report-

Margaret said this committee has not met since April or May, but sent all committee chairs a monthly calendar of things that need to be happening and who is responsible for that happening. Reminded committees to meet and set goals for the year. There will be a bylaw review and update this year from Governance.

IV. Constituent Sharing-

a. Parent Council-

Parent leaders are making gifts for parents for the first day back. JJ scheduled a meeting to let people talk about actionable tasks/ideas they can do to help KCA. They are aware they can't do fundraising now but they want to start brainstorming to help in any way possible. The Parent Council is hoping to gain great ideas and deeper involvement with the parents. Diane would like an updated list of the committees for parents to join, and they are hoping the parent council reps will be at the meeting. It will be focused on solutions and problem solving. Gail asked about developing a survey of parents of skills they have for a board resource.

b. Student Council- none

c. Teacher Council- none

Old business- none

New business- Dates for future board meetings-we will keep them on the 2nd Wednesdays at 6pm. Gail reminded us to include a board section in the parent newsletter.

Gail motioned for the remainder of the meeting to be closed session, with the addition of Katie and Brian. Kathy seconded the motion. Motion approved. Closed session minutes included at the end.

IX. Adjournment-

a. Jessica asked for a motion to end the meeting. Diane motioned to end the meeting. Gail seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.

b. The Board's next meeting will be **August 13th, 6 pm at KCA.**