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Board Meeting Minutes
September 24, 2026, 4:00 p.m.
Ornelas Activity Center, 3402 Old Omen Rd, Tyler, TX 75707

Voting Members in Attendance:

Alan Buckland
Dr. Gina Doepker
Dr. Michele Marjason
Eric Semlear, President

Voting Members Not in Attendance:

Dr. Regan Beckham
Dr. Joanna Neel

Non-voting notable attendees:

Sammi Broussard, Director of Academic Intervention
Christian Chesnut, Finance Manager
Patricia Davis, Longview Campus Director
Dr. Robert DeHaas, UT Tyler School of Education Dean
Dr. Aimee Dennis, Superintendent
Rachel Hawkins, Executive Director of Operations
Leila Henderson Gary, Counsel for Administration
Dr. Andrew Kohls, Tyler Campus Director
Shelly Parsons, Palestine Campus Director
Dr. Jaclyn Pedersen, Executive Director of Curriculum
Austin Kinghorn, Counsel for the School Board
Amanda Kaiser, Operations Manager, Minute Taker
Tina Bullion, Parent Representative in Grievance
Madyson Bullion, Student Representative in Grievance

BOARD MEETING

1. Call to Order
   Mr. Semlear called the UT Tyler University Academy Board Meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 24, 2026, confirming that a quorum was present.
2. Pledge

Initial

11/19/2026

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The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was said, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas Flag.

PUBLIC COMMENT

3. Open for Public Comment
    a. Mr. Semlear read the board's rules and procedures regarding public comment, noting there were two registrants.
    b. The Board listened to comments from Ms. Tina Bullion. Ms. Madyson Bullion waived her comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

4. The Board retired to Executive Session as authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 551.071 to consult with the Board's attorney. No action will be taken.
    a. The Board entered Executive Session at 4:08 p.m. and exited at 4:34 p.m.

ACTION ITEMS

5. Consent Agenda
    a. Approve Previous Minutes, Thursday, August 27, 2026.
    b. Dr. Doepker moved to approve the minutes, and Mr. Buckland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Marjason, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative. Dr. Beckham and Dr. Neel were not present to vote.

STUDENT/PARENT HEARING

6. Consider the Consolidated Level Three Appeals under UT Tyler University Academy Board Policies PG-1.205 of parents T.B. and M.B. and student M.B.
    a. Mr. Semlear stated that the Level Three hearing regarding the complaints of Tina and Mike Bullion, parents of Madyson Bullion, challenging the Level 2 decisions of Ms. Hawkins and Dr. Dennis started at 4:38 p.m. and confirmed that the hearing was being recorded.
    b. Mr. Semlear confirmed that the two parties were present: Ms. Leila Henderson Gary, counsel for UT Tyler University Academy; Dr. Aimee Dennis, Superintendent of UT Tyler University Academy, representing the administration; and Ms. Tina Bullion and daughter Madyson Bullion, representing themselves.
    c. Mr. Semlear read the rules and procedures for the hearing and reminded each party that they would have 10 minutes to address the board.

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d. Mrs. Tina Bullion and Ms. Madyson Bullion addressed the board regarding Madyson's UT Tyler University Academy transcript.
e. Ms. Henderson Gary addressed the board.
f. Each party kept their comments within their allotted 10-minute time limit. The Board asked questions to both parties.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

7. The Board retired to Executive Session as authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 551.071, to consult with the Board's attorney. No action will be taken.
    a. The Board entered Executive Session at 5:20 p.m. and exited at 6:19 p.m.

ACTION ITEMS

8. Ruling on Consolidated Parent/Student Grievance Appeal for parents T. B. and M.B. and student M.B. under PG-1.205.
    a. Mr. Buckland made a motion to deny relief and uphold the findings of the Level Two decisions. Dr. Doepker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Marjason, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative. Dr. Beckham and Dr. Neel were not present to vote.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

9. Financial Updates:
    a. Ms. Chesnut presented the 2025-2026 Budget Report. The General Fund received $13.5 million and expended $12.9 million. The Activity Fund received $70,000 and expended $38,000.
10. 2025-2026 Charter FIRST (FY25 data), presented by Ms. Chesnut.
    a. 2024-2025 Charter Management Report
    b. 2024-2025 Charter FIRST Indicators
    c. 2025-2026 Charter Management Report
    d. 2025-2026 Charter FIRST Indicators
11. Title III Annual Report/ESL Waiver, presented by Ms. Hawkins, on behalf of Nikki Hart.
12. Annual Report of the Early Childhood Literacy/Math Plan and Annual Report of the College, Career, and Military Readiness Plan were presented by Dr. Pedersen.
13. Superintendent Report
    a. Enrollment for 2026-2027, presented by Dr. Dennis.
    b. Campus Updates:

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i. Longview: Ms. Davis reported that UA-Longview held its first Lead & Learn night, combining their former Leader in Me and What Was That Again? parent's nights. PBL presentations were given, the Lighthouse team provided Leader in Me activities, and parents received Stop the Bleed and CPR training. They will be hosting their first STEM career conference for 8-12th grades on November 13th, where parents who work in STEM-related fields will be presenting to the students. Lastly, their sixth/seventh graders participated in a 9/11 PBL, Ground Zero. They learned more about a 9/11 hero, Welles Crowther, and were honored with communication from Crowther's mother.

ii. Palestine: Ms. Parsons reported celebrating the induction of twenty-two students into National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society. They had a successful See You at the Pole, with attendance from staff, students, and community members. They are excited to report that they are partnering with local artist Deanna Frye to paint a mural on the side of one of their buildings, with assistance from students. Looking ahead, they have ACT, Top 25%, PSAT, Monster Mash dance, Red Ribbon Week, and Fall Fest.

iii. Tyler: Mr. Kohls recognized that they dedicated an outdoor learning lab to Dr. Odell, led by staff members Dr. Fischer, Dr. Urieta, and Ms. Smith-Weerts. Their Staff Member of the Month is focused on the Leader in Me qualities of Lead, Grow, and Achieve. Their September winners were Ms. Smith-Weerts for Lead, Ms. Palmer for Grow, and Mr. Davis for Achieve. Their kindergarten class hosted a successful Grand-Friends Day and Fall Fest with a Trunk or Treat is coming up.

c. Administrative Updates
   i. Lab School Updates had no additional news.
d. Looking Forward: November 19th Board Meeting, Budget Amendments (if applicable); Financial updates (if applicable); Complete Annual Trainings by October 1st; Governance Reporting, Performance of Students Receiving Special Education Services, Charter Renewal, Cybersecurity Annex, Non-Expansion Amendment for Virtual Courses.

12. Adjournment
   a. Dr. Doepker moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Buckland. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Buckland, Dr. Doepker, Dr. Marjason, and Mr. Semlear voting in the affirmative. Dr. Beckham and Dr. Neel were not present to vote.

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b. The meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.