

**Kalamazoo Covenant Academy
Board of Directors
September 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

**Kalamazoo Covenant Academy
*Board of Directors***

Date: September 17, 2025

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: Kalamazoo Covenant Academy - Board Room
400 Crosstown Pkwy, Kalamazoo, MI 49001

BOARD MEETING AGENDA

A. Call to Order ~ Meeting called at 12:07pm

B. Roll Call

Casey Alger, President	xPresent	oAbsent
Marc Schupan, Vice President	xPresent	oAbsent
Dr. Luchara Wallace, Secretary	xPresent	oAbsent
Dr. Sandy Standish, Treasurer	oPresent	xAbsent
Jason Luke, Member	oPresent	xAbsent
Sara Amy, Member	xPresent	oAbsent
Marcus Kole, Member	xPresent	oAbsent

Other Attendees:

Kares Johnson, KCA School Leader	Ross Keilen, KCA Legal Counsel
Gretchen LaHaie, GVSU	Laurel Capobianco, ReImagine
Andrew Hulbert, ReImagine	
Ben Hoppe, ReImagine	
Sherrie Schanzenbaker, KCA	

C. Mission Statement: The Kalamazoo Covenant Academy (KCA) provides disengaged, dropout youth, ages 15-22 years, hope and the opportunity to earn their high school diploma. KCA believes that all students are valuable members of our community. KCA students will be guided by a caring, compassionate staff that will provide students with an academic foundation guiding them to post-secondary careers, training and college. KCA believes providing this foundation for our youth will prevent youth homelessness and incarceration. This will be done with absolute respect and unconditional love while offering hope and encouragement to all students.

Meeting paused so Luchara could take the oath of office; Casey Alger, Board President, administered the oath

D. Public Comment on Agenda (agenda items only, reserved for three minutes per person)

- Jen (KRESA) provided updates on staff and student device orders and Google Workspace EDU application delays. Orders are being processed manually; no firm shipping timeline. Kares requested expedited shipments due to limited inventory.

E. Approval of Agenda (Sept, 17, 2025) ~ Passed

Motion: Luchara Second: Sara
Ayes: 5 Opposed: 0

F. Approval/Acceptance of Standard Business ~ Passed

a. Approval of Aug 13, 2025, Board Meeting [minutes](#):

Motion: Marcus Second: Marc
Ayes: 5 Opposed: 0

b. School Report (Kares Johnson)

Enrollment & Student Demographics

- 182 students enrolled
 - 142 re-enrolled from previous years
 - 42 brand new students
 - 9 dropped/transferred
 - 1 graduated
- Average daily attendance: 47 students
- Weekly reach: Up to 120 unique students seen in a given week
- Student interactions: 85% of students had some engagement last week
- Daily attendance pattern:
 - ~70 students per day overall
 - 20-25 students attend in the afternoon (up from only ~10 when Kares started)
- Students mainly come from KPS, Portage, and Battle Creek districts
- Average Age: 18.5
- 18 and Under: 66%
- Female: 51%
- Male: 49%
- Special Education: 46 (25%)
- EL: 9

Enrollment Campaign

- Goal: 236 students enrolled by October 1st
- Staff are working in teams to canvas the city
- Teams follow up on new students leads/inquiries

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- Also contacting past students to re-enroll
- Agencies are now referring students to KCA

Staffing - New Positions Posted

- Dean of Students
- Special Education Teacher
- Health/PE Teacher
- Part-time Pupil Accountant

Technology

- Device distribution challenges: school running low on devices for students
- Kares asked for expedited shipments from vendor due to delays
- Technology issues that had been a concern have now been resolved

Additional Updates

- New clubs coming this year: Knitting Club and Music Club. Continuing theatre classes with Kalamazoo Civic
- Monthly presentations from Michigan Department of Health and Services
 - This week: The Dangers of Radon
- Pumpkins have been donated for a carving contest.
- Count Day preparation - prizes, activities, food, crafts
- After name change is official, there will be a rebrand celebration

c. Financial Update (Andrew Hulbert)

i. August [Financials](#)

- Budget is based on 197 FTEs
- Several new line items added to budget
- Reimagine has a new staff member dedicated to bookkeeping
- Additional funding opportunities:
- Special education funding is being utilized
- 23A funding has not been used recently, but efforts are underway to restart it
- KCA was previously at 100% fund balance
- State October payment may be delayed; however, school has enough reserves to operate for 2-3 months without issue
- A grant follow-up was assigned to Holly (Partner Solutions); Drew will follow up on progress

d. ReImagine Update (Laurel Capobianco)

- Campaign Goal: 236 students enrolled by Count Day (October 1)
- Ultimate Goal: 197 FTE
- Campaign Duration: September 3 (Wed) - September 30 (Tue), 2025
- Campaign Kick-Off: Wednesday, September 3, 2:30–3:30 PM

- Clean-up Window: September 29 - October 31, 2025
- Campaign Celebration: Friday, October 31, 1:00–3:00 PM
- Current Enrollment (as of 9/17): 182 students
- Students yet to re-enroll (as of 9/3): 25 students
- Progress toward goal: 77% (182 / 236)
- Students needed to reach goal: 54 (new or re-enrolled)
- Shared Campaigner Toolkit: yard signs, rack cards, social media content, scripts, and enrollment instructions
- Plans to hire a Dean of Students
 - Position will take on operational responsibilities, allowing Kares to focus on higher-level leadership
- Google Ads Campaign Update (Ben)
 - Over 1,000 new website visitors since campaign launch on August 22nd
 - 40-50 interest form fills generated
 - Search-based targeting strategies reach leads with high “purchase” intent
 - Mohammed has been assigned specifically to following up with google ads leads
- e. **GVSU Update (Gretchen LaHaie)**

Annual academic grant reminder

- \$30/student if all sections are completed

Governance training

- Specialized, customized board training based on specific needs of this board
- 5 of 6 board members completed the survey
- 2 board members still need to attend a virtual training
- Thanks to Casey for signing up for board president training

30th year of MI authorizing charter schools - grant opportunity

- 10 grants of \$5k, 10 grants of \$15k, and 10 grants of \$30k
- Application deadline: November 19th

Division update

- Renamed to “The Division of K12 Education Innovation and Scholar Success”
- No practical changes other than name

KCA name change process

- GVSU board will consider name change at Friday, October 24th board meeting
- Gretchen will confirm same day once Leah officially signs off on it
- Next steps: refile articles of incorporation; GVSU creates contract amendment
- Suggestion: Approve amendment at October 15th board meeting, contingent on GVSU approval
- Question raised about who updates name across systems; Gretchen explained process

Renewal

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- Deadline extended to mid-October
- Site visit remains unchanged

Note Regarding New business item G

- Chief Administrative Officer role should be filled by a board member (traditionally treasurer)

Policies reminder

- Many policies already created and available in the board portal

f. Legal Update (Ross Keilen)

- Will develop updated articles of incorporation once GVSU approves the name change
- Tasked with reviewing policies included on the agenda (from Charlie) to determine which are required and by whom

G. Old Business

- Turfworks is handling exterior cleanup of the building
- A+ Powerwashing completed work on the building and campus
- Focus is on getting the building and grounds “dialed in”
- Marc raised question about signage after the rebrand
- Gretchen reminded board that the sign must include both the management company and the authorizer

H. New Business

- Approval of [KCA Parent Compact 25-26](#)
 - *Tabled until October*
- Approval of [KCA FERPA Policy 25-26](#)
 - *Tabled until October*
- Approval of [KCA Parent & Family Engagement Policy 25-26](#)
 - *Tabled until October*
- Approval of [KCA Homeless Policy 25-26](#)
 - *Tabled until October*
- Approval of [KCA Parents' Right to Know Letter 25-26](#)
 - *Tabled until October*
- Approval of the updated [KCA Student & Family Handbook](#)

Motion: Luchara	Second: Sara
Ayes: 5	Opposed: 0
- Approval of Kares Johnson as Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
 - *This item tabled at Gretchen's recommendation; Chief Administrative Officer role should be filled by a board member (traditionally treasurer)*
- Approval of Jenny Lawson as FOIA Officer

Motion: Marcus	Second: Luchara
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|----|---|-----------------|
| | Ayes: 5 | Opposed: 0 |
| i. | Approval of Ross Keilen as KCA School Board legal counsel | |
| | Motion: Marc | Second: Luchara |
| | Ayes: 5 | Opposed: 0 |
| j. | Approval of Kares Johnson as School Safety Liaison | |
| | Motion: Luchara | Second: Marcus |
| | Ayes: 5 | Opposed: 0 |
| k. | Acceptance of Jason Luke's board resignation | |
| | Motion: Luchara | Second: Sara |
| | Ayes: 5 | Opposed: 0 |
| l. | Presentation of New Mission Statement | |

- **Shared a few drafts**

- Mission statement doesn't need to be pitched to trustees for October meeting
- Sara: Kares: pick some words/phrases that describe the mission of the school
 - Flexibility
 - Acceptance
 - Graduation
 - Engagement
 - Meeting you where you are, and staying with you

m. October Board Meeting

I. Discussion

a. New Board Member

- Losing Jason; Erin Dominianni is interested in joining
- Can put it on the agenda for October to nominate her
- Decided to delay this until the board has a chance to meet her. Could nominate her next time, then GVSU trustees would vote to approve in February.
- Gretchen commented that the board must be 5, 7, or 9

J. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

K. Reminder for Next Board Meeting:

Board Meeting: October 15, 2025 @ 10:00am - 2:00pm

L. Adjournment ~ Meeting Ended at 1:27pm

Motion: Luchara	Second: Marcus
Ayes: 5	Opposed: 0