

**VIRTUAL PREPARATORY ACADEMY OF OKLAHOMA INC**  
**BOARD MEETING**  
**OPSRC, 309 NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 103**  
**Oklahoma City, OK 73103**

**MINUTES**

**Monday, August 12<sup>th</sup> @ 4:00 p.m.**

1. Call to order, roll call, and introductions.

*The meeting was called to order at 4:02 PM.*

*Board Members:*

*Tom Newell- President – Present*

*Marcus Jackson – Present*

*Keili McEwen – Finance Director – Absent*

*Robert Ruiz – Secretary – Present*

*Joshua Williams – Vice President – Present*

*Guests:*

*Megan Sandoval – ACCEL Regional Vice President*

*Erin Robins – Head of School*

*David Harp – Treasurer*

*Blaire Harrison – Minutes Clerk*

*Brad Talley – VPrepOK Principal*

*Danielle Dewese – Student Success Coordinator*

*Amber VanBuskirk – School Registrar*

*Barry Schmelzenbach – Oklahoma Public Charter School Association*

*Skyler Lusnia – Oklahoma Statewide Charter School Board*

*Becky Wilkinson – Oklahoma Statewide Charter School Board*

*Brandon Hull – ACCEL Financial Team*

**Consent Agenda**

The following items concern reports and items of a routine nature normally approved at Board meetings. These items will be considered and voted on together as a group with one vote; provided that any Board member may ask that one or more items be considered and voted on separately. The Consent Agenda includes discussion, consideration, and possible action upon the following items:

2. Minutes from July 2024, regular board meeting.

*Discussion on the election of officers to confirm that was completed legally.*

*Legal William Hickman stated that the board will need to move the vote of Keili McEwen to September consideration/action for another term effective back to July 1, 2024*

*Amend the minutes to remove the reference to Keili McEwen being reappointed to a three-year term.*

*Motion to approve the Consent Agenda with an amendment to the minutes to remove the first part of item 7 made by Robert Ruiz. Motion seconded by Joshua Williams.*

*Tom Newell – Yes*

*Marcus Jackson – Yes*

Robert Ruiz – Yes  
Joshua Williams – Yes

### **Discussion & Update Items**

3. School update- Erin Robins
  - a. Staff hiring status
  - b. Enrollment updates
  - c. Update on Josh's question from last month about data security
  - d. School partnership updates

*Barry Schmelzenbach from the Oklahoma Public Charter School Association (OPCSA) provided an overview of the association's mission to advocate for charter schools at both local and state levels. He discussed the association's legislative efforts, including a recent update on Senate Bill 516. This bill eliminates the sponsorship fee for virtual charter school boards, allowing these funds to be redirected to school activities.*

*Mr. Schmelzenbach is actively collaborating with charter school boards and leaders to address current educational challenges in the state. He also highlighted the association's work with the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) on accreditation requirements. Charter schools are only subject to laws specified in their charter agreements, with autonomy being a key focus for the association.*

*He expressed interest in returning during the next legislative session to update the board on potential legislation impacting charter schools and noted that the OPCSA will remain engaged throughout the election cycle.*

*Legal counsel William Hickman praised Mr. Schmelzenbach for his valuable expertise in drafting charter school contracts with authorizers. Currently, 98% of charter schools in the state are members of OPCSA.*

#### ***a. Staff hiring status***

*Erin Robins, Head of Schools, provided an update on staff professional development and the first day of school, which was today. She reported a smooth start, with staff quickly adapting to their roles and new team members integrating well with returning staff. The professional development included three days of in-person training at the OPSRC followed by a week of virtual training. Mrs. Robins shared clips from the first day's orientation with both staff and students.*

*Member Ruiz inquired about staff training and teacher recruitment. Mrs. Robins explained that there is no current teacher shortage at VPrepOK, with high application rates. New hires undergo detailed training required by ACCEL and the State of Oklahoma. Principal Brad Talley outlined the comprehensive staff training paths and noted that new staff were brought in a day early. The hiring process was highly competitive, and the team was pleased with the outcome.*

*Member Jackson shared his experience as a VPrepOK parent on the first day. He noted that both his second grader and ninth grader accessed the platform smoothly. Quote: "It was like a well-oiled machine."*

*Mrs. Robins concluded by showing short clips from the first day of student orientation, highlighting various grade levels for the board members.*

**b. Enrollment updates**

*Mrs. Robins reported that VPrepOK currently has 205 enrolled students and forty-two applications in progress. We are on track to reach an enrollment of 400-500 students by October 1. The staff is actively working towards this goal, and board members have noted the increased visibility of our advertisements around Oklahoma City and on social media. Megan Sandoval mentioned that there are currently no incentives for families to recruit new students, but she will explore the feasibility of introducing such incentives in compliance with Oklahoma law.*

**c. Accel data representative**

*The Accel data representative will attend next month's meeting to address any concerns and answer questions.*

**d. School partnership updates**

*Partnership activities with Kidvation, The Bridge Impact Center, and the Oklahoma Aviation Academy have intensified. Member Jackson provided an update, noting that VPrepOK staff recently toured Kidvation and received a presentation from Les Thomas. Member Ruiz requested that Mrs. Robins reach out to the Latino Community Agency and Dean Gardner at OCCC to explore potential K-12 online concurrent partnerships that could expand opportunities for our students.*

*Regarding the Aviation Academy, VPrepOK is the only virtual school in Oklahoma authorized to use the AOPA curriculum. An agreement with Norman Public Schools, which will be discussed at the upcoming meeting, will outline how this partnership will benefit our students.*

*Additionally, a former VPrepOK student who collaborated with Kidvation last year is now engaging with Adidas and other national sports companies to advance her business focused on female wrestling singlets. Another student who previously presented her makeup company idea will return this year to continue developing her business. Kidvation will also collaborate with other ACCEL virtual schools this year.*

**4. Update on board required training hours**

*The board is continuing to work on training requirements. Most board members are at 12 of 15 months, Member Jackson is at the beginning of his 15-month time.*

**5. Updated board member roles for school year 2024-2025**

*No action was taken on this item.*

**Purchasing and General Business:** The following items will be considered for action by the board on an individual basis and a roll call vote will be conducted on each item.

**6. Presentation and possible action to approve encumbrances**

- a. TFCU credit card PO
- b. Staff travel reimbursements

- a. *David Harp, Board Treasurer, stated that Purchase Orders #1-40 were previously approved. Board needs to approve PO #41. Erin, Jeff, and David will work to produce a plan for tracking credit card purchases.*
- b. *No updates currently for staff travel reimbursements.*

*Motion to approve the encumbrances made by Robert Ruiz. Motion seconded by Joshua Williams.*

*Tom Newell – Yes  
Marcus Jackson – Yes  
Robert Ruiz – Yes  
Joshua Williams – Yes*

7. Presentation and possible action to approve the financial report

*Presentation and action made by David Harp, Board Treasurer. Currently the school has \$198,345.54 as total cash balances. The school is working to close out Fiscal Year 2024 and operating out of Fiscal Year 25. Looking forward to receiving our first state aid payment of \$98,000 later this week. Our activity fund will be open later this week when Erin Robins and Blaire Harrison provide signatures to the bank.*

*Brandon Hull, ACCEL finance, provided an update that the current balance is estimated to be \$900,000 currently due to ACCEL schools in Fiscal Year 2024. Member Williams requested clarification on if staff professional development items should be encumbered under activities fund or general fund. Legal and finance stated that professional development related funds should stay under the general fund.*

*Member Ruiz asked if the school has applied for all the available federal funds. The school has and is working with the OSDE and ACCEL to make sure that the appropriate procedures for acquiring federal funds.*

*Motion to approve the financial report made by Joshua Williams. Motion seconded by Marcus Jackson.*

*Tom Newell – Yes  
Marcus Jackson – Yes  
Robert Ruiz – Yes  
Joshua Williams – Yes*

8. Discussion and possible action to approve the Vprep Drug Free, Smoke Free Policy  
*Erin Robins presented policy overview. It was noted by the OSDE that the school adopt a more robust Smoke-Free and Drug-Free policy. This was identified during the school's annual accreditation.*

*Motion to approve the policy made by Robert Ruiz. Motion seconded by Joshua Williams.*

*Tom Newell – Yes  
Marcus Jackson – Yes  
Robert Ruiz – Yes  
Joshua Williams – Yes*

9. Discussion and possible action to approve the Educational Services Agreement between Norman Public schools and VPrep

*Head of Schools Erin Robins presented a unique partnership agreement between VPrepOK and a traditional school, which has garnered significant attention as it represents a novel collaboration in the education sector. The agreement has been approved by councils from both districts, with the Norman Public Schools (NPS) board meeting scheduled for tonight at 6 p.m. to finalize their district's approval.*

*Matthew McCoy, a science teacher from Dimensions Academy at NPS, will teach the aviation course for VPrepOK. Students from VPrepOK will have the option to attend the aviation course either in-person or in a hybrid format, as needed. Member Newell inquired about the cost per student, which is determined based on student Average Daily Membership (ADM). The teacher will integrate with our curriculum platform and be contracted through ACCEL.*

*Legal counsel indicated that a Purchase Order (PO) will need to be established with NPS for the transfer of funds to their district. The legal team commended Erin Robins for her role in creating this pioneering agreement, noting that it is the first of its kind in Oklahoma. The partnership, starting on a small scale, has significant potential for rapid growth and supports the aviation academy's goal of expanding its services statewide.*

*Principal Talley mentioned that the opportunity has not yet been marketed. Following approval from both district boards, a press release will be issued. The board congratulated Erin Robins on her efforts and acknowledged that this agreement aligns with our charter's focus on career pathways.*

*Motion to approve the educational services agreement made by Robert Ruiz. Motion seconded by Joshua Williams.*

*Tom Newell – Yes*

*Marcus Jackson – Yes*

*Robert Ruiz – Yes*

*Joshua Williams – Yes*

## **10. Board Member Comments**

*Member Ruiz stated that he is excited about the way that VPrepOK is growing. The pace at which we are growing and the items that have been developed are great. The school is meeting unique needs of students across the state.*

*Member Jackson is continuing to work on encouraging students at the Bridge to join VPrepOK.*

*Member Williams congratulated the school on starting Year 2 and stated that this is a great admin team and that contributes to the success.*

*HOS, Erin Robins asked the board if they would like to see or know anything else happening in the school. Member Williams said from his perspective going from Year 1 to Year 2, he wanted to see how we were going to incorporate the mission of being a Preparatory Academy and he is seeing that right out of the gate.*

## **11. Public Comments**

*Dr. Wilkinson congratulated the school on the agreement with Norman Public Schools.*

*All meetings of the Board of Education shall be open to the public, and any regular*

*meeting shall include an opportunity for the public to address the Board. Presentations under "Public Comments" are limited to three (3) minutes. Where several people wish to address the same subject, a spokesperson must be selected. The Board Chairman may interrupt and terminate any presentation that is not in accordance with any of these criteria. Board members may not respond to speakers' comments. Matters that are subject to any legal action or investigation are not proper topics of public comment and are not authorized.*

## 12. Adjournment

*Motion to adjourn meeting made by Robert Ruiz. Motion seconded by Joshua Williams.*

*Tom Newell – Yes*

*Marcus Jackson – Yes*

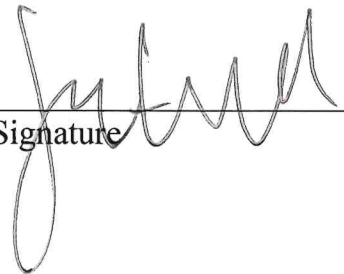
*Robert Ruiz – Yes*

*Joshua Williams – Yes*

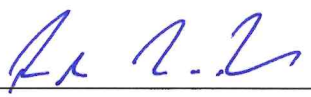
*Meeting adjourned at 5:14 PM.*

These Minutes were approved on September 9, 2024 by the Board of Education of VPA:

Joshua Williams, Vice-President  
Printed Name & Title

  
Signature

Robert M. Ruiz, Secretary  
Printed Name & Title

  
Signature