Public Meeting of the Combined Board of Trustees
for
Universal Alcorn Charter School
Universal Vare Charter School
Universal Audenried Charter High School
Meeting held Virtually via Zoom
January 20, 2026, at 6:00 PM
Meeting Minutes

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
1. Christopher Hill, Board President
2. Dr. Keith Pretlow, Vice President
3. Michael Rice, Board Member
4. Wendel Holmes, Board Member

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:
1. Trumell Lamb, Board Secretary

Attendees Present:
1. Dr. Penny Nixon, Superintendent/CEO
2. Wallace Dawan, Chief Financial Officer
3. Aaron Starke, Alcorn Principal
4. Josh Anderson, Audenried Principal
5. Karen Howell-Toomer, Vare Principal
6. Latoya Finney, Board of Directors Compliance Officer
7. Crystal Gary-Nelson, Chief Learning Officer
8. Kelli Woods, Director of Climate Culture and Safety
9. Lawrence Threadgill, Director of Facilities
10. Kevin Corcoran, Consultant, Vertex Education

Meeting called to Order at 6:02pm, a quorum was confirmed.

I. **Meeting Minutes**
   a. December 16, 2025 Public Meeting Minutes
      i. Dr. Pretlow moved to approve the December 16, 2025 Public Meeting minutes, with the understanding that any corrections would be submitted to the board president or board liaison, Mr. Holmes seconded.
      ii. By a unanimous vote the motion carried.
         - **Board Vote:**
            - **Yes: 4**
            - **No: 0**
            - **Abstain: 0**

II. **Unfinished Business**
   a. There was no unfinished business brought before the Board.

III. **Superintendent's Remarks**
   a. Dr. Penny Nixon opened with New Year greetings and deferred detailed remarks to the Central Office Reports.

IV. Committee Reports

i. **Financial Report,** Presented by Kevin Corcoran, Vertex Education.

Overview:
Mr. Corcoran provided a detailed financial overview for each school, reporting on actual financial performance from July 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025, with projections through June 30, 2026. Across all schools, favorable district funding rates, enrollment trends, and disciplined expenditure management were highlighted.

a. **Alcorn Charter School**

1. **Profit/Loss and Budget Statement:** Vertex Education financial management consultant. Kevin Corcoran presented the finance report for Alcorn Charter School.
2. Mid-year financials reflect strong fiscal performance. Net income: approximately $869,000, projected to reach $1.7 million (16% margin).
3. Favorable variance driven by: Increased district funding rates (+17% general education; +13% special education), Stable enrollment and controlled expenditures, Cash position: $6.5 million (~9 months of operating reserve).
4. There was discussion amongst board members regarding the Alcorn financial report.
5. Mr. Holmes moved to accept the Alcorn financial report, Dr. Pretlow seconded the motion.
6. By a unanimous vote the Alcorn financial report was accepted and approved.
   - **Board Vote:**
     - **Yes: 4**
     - **No: 0**
     - **Abstain: 0**

b. **Vare Charter School**

1. **Profit/Loss and Budget Statement:** Vertex Education financial management consultant. Kevin Corcoran presented the finance report for Vare Charter School.
2. Operating in final year with 68 students enrolled.
3. Cash reserves exceed $2 million, sufficient to sustain operations.
4. Board discussion included: Charter law requirement for remaining assets upon closure, and Dissolution planning obligations, including reserve for post-closure liabilities (e.g., healthcare, special education claims).
5. Mr. Holmes moved to accept and approve Vare finance report and Mr. Rice seconded that motion.
6. By a unanimous vote the Vare Financial Report was accepted and approved.
   - **Board Vote:**
     - **Yes: 4**
     - **No: 0**
     - **Abstain: 0**

c. **Audenried Charter High School**

1. **Profit/Loss and Budget Statement:** Vertex Education financial management consultant. Kevin Corcoran presented the finance report for Audenried Charter School.
2. Strong financial position with: Net income: $1.5 million YTD, projected $2 million year-end, and strong Cash reserves
3. Enrollment exceeding projections: expenditures aligned with budget
4. Board acknowledged exceptional financial health
5. There was discussion amongst board members regarding the Audenried financial report.
6. Mr. Holmes moved to accept and approve Audenried finance report and Dr. Pretlow seconded that motion.
7. By a unanimous vote the Audenried Financial report was accepted and approved.

➢ **Board Vote:**
- **Yes: 4**
- **No: 0**
- **Abstain: 0**

ii. **Facilities Committee Reports**

a. **Alcorn Charter School**

1. Chris Hill and Lawrence Threadgill Presented the facilities report for Alcorn Charter School.
2. Bathroom renovation bids in progress (1st & 3rd floors)
3. Safety upgrades: lock replacements funded by grant
4. Ongoing plumbing repairs across facility
5. There was discussion amongst board members regarding the Alcorn facilities report.
6. Mr. Holmes moved to accept Alcorn facilities report and Dr. Pretlow seconded that motion.
7. By a unanimous vote the Alcorn facilities report was accepted.

➢ **Board Vote:**
- **Yes: 4**
- **No: 0**
- **Abstain: 0**

b. **Vare Charter School**

1. Chris Hill and Lawrence Threadgill Presented the facilities report for Vare Charter School.
   Completed projects:
   - Elevator repairs completed
   - Plumbing repairs addressed
   - Inventory and asset tracking initiated in preparation for closure
   - Facilities coordination underway aligned to dissolution plan
2. There was discussion amongst board members regarding the Vare facilities report.
3. Dr. Pretlow moved to accept Vare facilities report and Mr. Rice seconded that motion.
4. By a unanimous vote the Vare facilities report was accepted.

➢ **Board Vote:**

- **Yes: 4**
- **No: 0**
- **Abstain: 0**

c. **Audenried Charter High School**

1. Chris Hill and Lawrence Threadgill Presented the facilities report for Audenried Charter School.

   Completed projects:
   - Replacement of light bulbs and air filters

   Pending projects:
   - Delivery of automotive shop air compressor
   - HVAC RFP development (via Pennoni Engineering)
   - Bleacher installation (scheduled March 2026)
   - Culinary refrigerator replacement (vendor quotes in progress)
   - Solar panel implementation delayed pending district documentation
2. There was discussion amongst board members regarding the Audenried facilities report.
3. Mr. Holmes moved to accept Audenried facilities report and Mr. Rice seconded that motion.
4. By a unanimous vote the Audenried facilities report was accepted.
   - ➢ **Board Vote:**
     - **Yes: 4**
     - **No: 0**
     - **Abstain: 0**

V. **Presentations**

i. **Central Office Report**

i. Dr. Nixon presented the Central office report for Alcorn, Vare and Audenried.

1. Dr. Nixon presented a proposal for a Spring 2026 Board Retreat focused on strengthening governance, alignment, and strategic planning.

   Key Highlights:
   - Increased accountability expectations from PDE, SDP CSO, and federal systems

   Emphasis on:
   - Governance clarity (board vs. management roles)
   - Academic oversight
   - Financial stewardship
   - Strategic planning (3–5 year outlook)

   Use of a "ship model" to define roles:
   - Board = ownership & direction
   - Leadership = execution

   Retreat will include:
   - Board self-assessment
   - Governance training
   - Strategic alignment activities
2. The Board engaged in discussion regarding Superintendent's update.
3. Dr. Pretlow moved to approve the Central Office Report and Mr. Holmes seconded that motion.

4. By a unanimous vote the Central Office Report was approved.
   - ➢ **Board Vote:**
     - **Yes: 4**
     - **No: 0**
     - **Abstain: 0**

ii. **Universal Alcorn Charter School**

a. Principal Aaron Starke presented the Principal Report for Universal Alcorn,
   1. Alcorn's current enrollment: 472 scholars; positive growth trend
   2. Alcorn's academic performance: ranked 3rd in ELA, 5th in Math among peers
   3. Alcorn continued initiatives include but are not limited to: PSSA preparation (Firefly Tuesdays, Saturday Boot Camps)
   4. Recruitment and attendance improvements continue throughout the school year
   5. Some challenges Alcorn face include: Academic stagnation in some cohorts, and Need for continued instructional refinement.
   6. The Board engaged in discussion regarding Alcorn's update.
   7. Dr. Pretlow moved to approve the Alcorn principal's report and Mr. Holmes seconded that motion.
   8. By a unanimous vote the Alcorn's principal's report was approved.
      - ➢ **Board Vote:**
        - **Yes: 4**
        - **No: 0**
        - **Abstain: 0**

iii. **Universal Vare Charter School**

a. Principal Karen Howell-Toomer presented the principal report for Universal Vare.
   1. Principal Howell-Toomer Focus on the following for Vare:
      - Academic growth despite closure transition
      - Improved attendance and student engagement
   2. Vare continues to focus on the whole child approach including:
      - Social-emotional learning
      - Parent engagement initiatives
      - Ongoing challenge:
   3. Principal Howell-Toomer in partnership with Central Office continue Managing transition and staff/student placement upon Vare closure.
   4. The Board engaged in discussion regarding Vare's update.
   5. Dr. Pretlow moved to approve the Vare principal's report and Mr. Holmes seconded that motion.
   6. By a unanimous vote the Vare's principal's report was approved.
      - ➢ **Board Vote:**
        - **Yes: 4**
        - **No: 0**
        - **Abstain: 0**

iv. **Universal Audenried Charter High School**

a. Principal Josh Anderson presented the principal report for Universal Audenried.

1. Principal Anderson report had a strong focus on:
    - Career readiness and CTE programming
    - Academic performance improvement
    - Staffing
    - Enrollment strategies
    - Program expansion
2. The Board engaged in discussion regarding Audenried's update.
3. Dr. Pretlow moved to approve the Audenried principal's report and Mr. Holmes seconded that motion.
4. By a unanimous vote the Audenried's principal's report was approved.
    - **Board Vote:**
        - **Yes: 4**
        - **No: 0**
        - **Abstain: 0**

VI. Board Action Items

i. Universal Alcorn Charter School

a. Resolution AL25-26-014: 2025-2026 Service Agreement: MERA Consulting

1. Dr. Pretlow made a motion to accept and approve Resolution AL25-26-014 and Mr. Holmes second that motion.
2. By a majority vote Resolution AL25-26-014 was approved.

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees authorizes Universal Education Company, through the Superintendent or her designee, the execution, delivery, and performance by MERA Consulting in an amount not to exceed $30,000 for Universal Alcorn

- **Board Vote:**
    - **Yes: 4**
    - **No: 0**
    - **Abstain: 0**

ii. Universal Aunderied Charter School

a. Resolution AU25-26-033: Technology Purchase Request: CDW

1. Dr. Pretlow moved to accept and approve Resolution AU25-26-033 and Mr. Holmes seconded that motion.
2. By unanimous vote Resolution AU25-26-033 was approved.

RESOLVED, the Board of Trustees hereby authorizes the execution, delivery, and performance by Universal Community Homes, through the Chief Operating Officer or her designee, of a purchase for Chromebooks from **CDW** for education curriculum in an amount not to exceed **$45,375** for Audenreid

- **Board Vote:**
    - **Yes: 4**
    - **No: 0**
    - **Abstain: 0**

b. Resolution AU25-26-034: Technology Purchase Request: CDW

1. Dr. Pretlow moved to accept and approve Resolution AU25-26-034 and Mr. Holmes seconded that motion.
2. By unanimous vote Resolution AU25-26-034 was approved.

RESOLVED, the Board of Trustees hereby authorizes the execution, delivery, and performance by Universal Community Homes, through the Chief Operating Officer or her designee, of a purchase from **Home Depot** in an amount not to exceed **$21,000** for Audenreid

- **Board Vote:**
  - **Yes: 4**
  - **No: 0**
  - **Abstain: 0**

VII. Public Comments

a. There were no public comments.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- New Board members recruitment strategy was discussed
- The Board needs to identify 3 new board members
- Governance structure and onboarding expectations reviewed

IX. Adjournment

a. Dr. Pretlow moved to adjourn, and Mr. Holmes seconded that motion.
b. By unanimous vote the motion to adjourn passed.
c. The meeting concluded at 7:45 p.m.