UNIVERSAL CHARTER SCHOOLS

Public Meeting of the Board of Trustees
for
Universal Institute Charter School
Meeting held Virtually via Zoom
May 7, 2026, at 6:00 PM
Meeting Minutes

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

1. David Thompson, Board President
2. Michelle Martin, Board Secretary
3. Dr. Zenida Driver, Trustee

Attendees Present:

1. Dr. Penny Nixon, Superintendent/CEO
2. Wallace Dawan, Chief Financial Officer
3. Taleka Waters, Principal, Universal Institute Charter School
4. Lawrence Threadgill, Director of Facilities
5. Latoya Finney, Board of Directors Compliance Officer
6. Crystal Gary-Nelson, Chief Learning Officer
7. Kelli Woods, Director of Climate, Culture and Safety

The meeting was called to order by Board President David Thompson at approximately 6:03 p.m. Roll call was conducted and a quorum was confirmed.

I. MEETING MINUTES

a. January 22, 2026 Public Meeting Minutes

i. The Board reviewed the January 22, 2026 Public Meeting Minutes.
ii. Ms. Martin moved to approve the January 22, 2026 Public Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Dr. Driver.

➢ Board Vote:

• Yes: 3
• No: 0
• Abstain: 0

The motion carried unanimously.

II. Superintendent Remarks

a. Dr. Penny Nixon welcomed the Board and attendees and thanked the school leadership team for their continued commitment to scholar achievement and operational excellence.

b. Dr. Nixon highlighted the school's continued financial stability, strong academic focus, and strategic planning efforts. She noted that administration continues to evaluate future growth opportunities and facility expansion options to support Universal Institute's long-term sustainability and programmatic needs.

III. Committee Reports

a. Finance and Audit Committee Report

i. Mr. Dawan presented the Charter Choice financial report for the period ending March 31, 2026.

Financial highlights included:

- Universal Institute completed approximately seventy-five percent of the fiscal year.
- Net income through March 31, 2026 totaled approximately $919,831.
- Projected year-end net income is approximately $1.9 million.
- The school maintains cash reserves exceeding $10 million.
- Days cash on hand exceeds 277 days.
- Enrollment remains approximately thirty students below budget projections; however, increased district funding rates have more than offset enrollment variances.
- Expenditures continue to track favorably against budget projections.
- Personnel costs remain below budget while maintaining instructional and operational services.
- Universal Institute continues to meet all financial performance indicators monitored by the School District of Philadelphia Charter Schools Office.
- Administration has begun development of the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 operating budget for Board review.

ii. Board members discussed the school's financial position and commended administration for maintaining strong fiscal stewardship.

iii. Ms. Martin moved to accept the Finance and Audit Committee Report. The motion was seconded by Dr. Driver.

- Board Vote:
  - Yes: 3
  - No: 0
  - Abstain: 0

The motion carried unanimously.

b. Facilities Committee Report

i. Mr. Threadgill provided a facilities update regarding ongoing maintenance projects and capital improvement planning.

Highlights included:

- Continued evaluation of scholar restroom renovations throughout the facility.
- Planning for summer construction and improvement projects.
- Assessment of building infrastructure and maintenance priorities.

- Review of equipment needs to improve snow removal, grounds maintenance, and campus safety.
- Exploration of facility expansion opportunities to address current and future space constraints.
- Development of long-term capital improvement planning to support instructional programming and enrollment growth.

ii. The Board discussed facilities priorities and future building needs.

iii. Ms. Martin moved to accept the Facilities Committee Report. The motion was seconded by Dr. Driver.

➢ Board Vote:

- Yes: 3
- No: 0
- Abstain: 0

The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Presentations

a. Principal's Report

i. Principal Waters provided a comprehensive update regarding academics, enrollment, school culture, attendance, and end-of-year planning.

Academic Performance

- Scholars completed state assessment testing.
- Administration implemented multiple scholar incentive programs designed to increase participation and testing engagement.
- Staff focused on maximizing scholar effort and maintaining a positive testing environment.
- Teachers continued targeted instructional interventions based on benchmark and formative assessment data.

Enrollment and Attendance

- Enrollment remains stable.
- Administration continues active recruitment efforts for the upcoming school year.
- Attendance interventions continue through scholar support teams and family outreach initiatives.

School Culture and Climate

- School leadership continues implementing restorative practices and positive behavior supports.
- End-of-year celebrations and scholar recognition activities are underway.
- Staff remain focused on maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment.

- Principal Waters also highlighted upcoming student activities, graduation preparations, and planning initiatives for the 2026-2027 school year.

ii. The Board commended Principal Waters and staff for their dedication and leadership.

b. Central Office Report

i. Presented by Dr. Penny Nixon and Wallace Dawan

ii. Administration presented proposed revisions to the Procurement Policy and Procedures.

Key revisions included:

- Purchases below $10,000 remain classified as micro-purchases.
- Purchases above $10,000 require Board approval and competitive procurement procedures.
- Purchases exceeding $100,000 require a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) process.
- Policy revisions align Universal Charter Schools procurement practices with School District of Philadelphia standards.
- Revisions strengthen accountability, transparency, and fiscal oversight.

iii. The Board discussed the proposed changes and their impact on future procurement activities.

V. BOARD ACTION ITEMS

i. Resolution UICS25-26-004 Technology Purchase Request – CDW

1. Ms. Martin moved to approve Resolution UICS25-26-004. The motion was seconded by Dr. Driver.

   RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees authorizes the purchase of eighty (80) Chromebook devices through CDW at a cost not to exceed $22,600.

   ➢ Board Vote:

   • Yes: 3
   • No: 0
   • Abstain: 0

   Motion carried unanimously.

ii. Resolution UICS25-26-005 Facilities Purchase Request – DDA Development Group

1. Ms. Martin moved to approve Resolution UICS25-26-005. The motion was seconded by Dr. Driver.

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees authorizes Universal Education Company to execute an agreement with DDA Development Group for scholar restroom renovation and improvement projects at Universal Institute Charter School in an amount not to exceed $288,000.

- ➢ Board Vote:
  - Yes: 3
  - No: 0
  - Abstain: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

iii. Resolution UICS25-26-006 Facilities Purchase Request – Burke Equipment

1. Ms. Martin moved to approve Resolution UICS25-26-006. The motion was seconded by Dr. Driver.

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees authorizes the purchase of a Toro Dingo 323 Mini Skid Steer and related equipment from Burke Equipment in an amount not to exceed $25,335.00 for snow removal and grounds maintenance operations.

- ➢ Board Vote:
  - Yes: 3
  - No: 0
  - Abstain: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

iv. Resolution UICS25-26-007 Special Education Legal Recommendation – Scholar J.S.

1. Ms. Martin moved to approve Resolution UICS25-26-007. The motion was seconded by Dr. Driver.

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees approves the special education settlement agreement involving Scholar J.S. in the amount of $8,900 and authorizes administration and legal counsel to execute all necessary settlement documents.

- ➢ Board Vote:
  - Yes: 3
  - No: 0
  - Abstain: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

v. Resolution UICS25-26-008 Special Education Legal Recommendation – Scholar N.L.

1. Ms. Martin moved to approve Resolution UICS25-26-008. The motion was seconded by Dr. Driver.

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees approves the special education settlement agreement involving Scholar N.L., including compensatory education services valued at $18,000 and attorney fees in the amount of $3,600, for a total settlement amount of $21,600, and authorizes administration and legal counsel to execute all necessary settlement documents.

- Board Vote:
  - Yes: 3
  - No: 0
  - Abstain: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

vi. Resolution UICS25-26-009 744 Broad Street Acquisition Authorization

1. Ms. Martin moved to approve Resolution UICS25-26-009. The motion was seconded by Dr. Driver.

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees authorizes administration to proceed with due diligence activities, negotiations, and related actions necessary to pursue acquisition of the property located at 744 Broad Street to support future operational and educational needs of Universal Institute Charter School.

- Board Vote:
  - Yes: 3
  - No: 0
  - Abstain: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

vii. Resolution UICS25-26-010 Procurement Policy and Procedures Revised 2026

1. Ms. Martin moved to approve Resolution UICS25-26-010. The motion was seconded by Dr. Driver.

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees approves the revised Procurement Policy and Procedures for 2026 as presented by administration.

- Board Vote:
  - Yes: 3
  - No: 0
  - Abstain: 0

Motion carried unanimously.

VI. Public Comment

i. No members of the public requested to provide comment.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

a. Board Member Vacancy Nomination

i. Board President Thompson presented the nomination of Mr. Mark Johnson to fill the current Board vacancy.

ii. Mr. Johnson's professional background, qualifications, and commitment to the mission of Universal Institute Charter School were discussed.

iii. Ms. Martin moved to nominate and appoint Mark Johnson to serve as a member of the Universal Institute Charter School Board of Trustees. The motion was seconded by Dr. Driver.

- Board Vote:
  - Yes: 3
  - No: 0
  - Abstain: 0

The motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Adjournment

1. There being no further business before the Board, Ms. Martin moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Dr. Driver. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:48 p.m.