

Meeting Minutes

Kids Unlimited Academy

a public charter school

Board meeting

Date: Sept. 23, 2025

Time: 7:30 a.m.

1. Preliminary

Call to Order: 7:41 a.m. by Chair Jani Hale

Present: Jani Hale, Pat Barry, Gonzalo Duran, Lisa Hutchins, Martha Ibarra, Larissa Medina, Rocio Mendoza, Ignacio Sanchez

Determination of quorum: quorum

Staff: Tom Cole, Cass Weiland, Lindsay Ochs, Lupita Vargas, Sarah Lemon

Approval of agenda (additions/corrections): approved unanimously

2. Review and approval of minutes: Rocio Mendoza moved to approve the minutes; Ignacio Sanchez seconded the motion; minutes were approved as read unanimously.

3. Public comment: None

4. Business update – Cass Weiland/Pat Barry: The financial situation is similar to last month. The student population is still 445; that's 25 students below what was projected. KUA is getting money based on 470 students, so a financial adjustment will be coming, and money will have to be paid back to the state. Good news from the finance committee: The school got an increase for the SIA grant by \$23,000, and the literacy grant increased by \$13,000. KUA is staying within its budget and continues to spend wisely. Jani said the focus on enrollment is something that should be clear in upcoming meetings with the city about the new property and new building. Cass is working on the annual audit through the rest of the year, and we'll have a report in January.

5. KU Executive Director report – Tom Cole: KU is meeting with the board about getting a commitment to continue the work if the numbers don't get to 470. The deficiencies for spending are not going to be around classrooms; the school staffing philosophy is all hands on deck. "There's no way you can cut back staff in the classroom." Staffing decisions in the school start with Principal Lindsay Ochs and Director of Educational Services Lupita Vargas. Pat asked how the KUA board could get a better look at salaries. It's not really itemized in the service agreement, he said. Tom said there could be more itemization of KUA operations, but it comes with the recognition of how significant it is that KUA does not carry the financial burden of PERS.

Lisa Hutchins said she knows because she taught at KUA that it's not a typical school. Gonzalo Duran pointed out under the service agreement there's not much room for cutting. A staff position is most obvious. As much as we want to say cutting a staff member should be the last result, there's not many other options.

Tom pointed out that the board is going to have to do another RFP process. If there was another organization that could come in and create the facilities and run the food program, it would be in the best interest of the board to contract with that organization, he said. We have to do that exercise this year; the board has to go out and do comparables on the operation. Pat said we owe it to the kids and parents to keep doing what we're doing.

Rocio asked for clarification on the number of students versus staff. And Tom indicated the numbers aren't strictly in alignment. KUA could use another licensed behavioral therapist who would be busy all day. We have to be realistic about what funds are being used for. Cass said staffing is based on the number of classrooms, not the number of students. Each classroom still has to have a full-time teacher and a full-time aide. Rocio asked whether the state would reconsider taking back ADM payments. Tom said they rejected that appeal last time.

Lindsay has a special ed substitute, but there's no plan going forward. So Lindsay just puts the sub with her highest-need student one-on-one all day. The special ed teacher is on leave, and they don't know if she's coming back. Pat clarified that KUA is still getting 85% ADM.

6. KUA Principal report – Lindsay Ochs: She shared a report from the special ed director for Medford School District. She said MSD officials think KUA will be out of federal identification soon. "We are on the heels of ending that." It started in 2022-23, the year Lindsay got here.

Lindsay then shared the annual report for the Integrated Program Plan. It discusses outcomes and progress in implementation. We're making referrals to special education based on data. There also are WIN groups — reading, math, social-emotional and even "take-a-break" groups. She feels like there are ways for parents to communicate, but she doesn't always get it. We have a Site Council on Zoom and now a PTO, and those groups are going to be combined. KUA students are above their growth rate target in both reading and math.

She gave Cheryl Graham, KUA's instructional coach, and parents Mayra Duran and Sarah Thuer kudos for getting a PTO started. Sarah Lemon pointed out that there is a new PTO page on the KUA website with a parent survey and updates on volunteering events.

Regarding special education, the school has 65 kids who received speech services. Tom said they shared with MSD that they were looking at legal advice with special ed attorneys.

Lisa made a motion to approve the IPP 2024-25 annual report, Rocio seconded and the board unanimously approved the IPP annual report.

7. Other business Jani called attention to upcoming KUA events. The theater performance has been moved to November. Math Carnival night is this Thursday, and family night Oct. 14 is a dance night.

Consent agenda

None

8. Adjournment 9 a.m.

Next meeting, Oct. 28, 2025, 7:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Lemon

Director of Mission Advocacy