Merit Preparatory Academy Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 14, 2026
7:37 p.m.
Merit Prep Academy (in person) / Zoom

Present In Person:
Ashley Watts, Dave Jensen, Aaron Cook, Jeri Mellor, Rachel Jay

Present Online: Mike Condie, Casey Holmes, Sadie Davidson, Mary Howell, Kelly (last name unclear), Stephanie Healy (marketing), Heidi Bingham, Jessica Siton, David Wiseman

Recording: The meeting was recorded.

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 7:37 p.m. by Rachel Jay. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Good News / Staff Recognition (Meritorious Night Awards)

Mike presented the awards:

- **Support Staff of the Month**: Kami Kelley (paraprofessional, highly positive and organized).
- **Teacher of the Month**: Sadie Davidson (outstanding rapport, role model; departing for Purdue PhD program).

Gift cards and trophies were noted as tokens of appreciation. Both awardees were thanked and invited to stay.

3. Marketing Report – Stephanie Healy

- Upcoming summer parades (Art City Days June 13; working on others).
- Social media growth (10–15 new followers/month); planning more reels/carousels with student government.
- Feeder school visits and tours (4–5 per week, ~45% conversion rate).
- Current enrollment: 405 students total; 98 re-enrolled, 31 new, 36 pre-enrolled (as of May 5).
- Summer campaigns planned to boost enrollment.

Discussion/Questions: Enrollment numbers and re-enrollment rates were discussed (noted as typical but needing attention). Marketing vs. registrar responsibility for follow-up was clarified.

4. Financial Report – Casey Holmes

- FY26 budget at 83% through April.
- Forecasting **net income of $47,000** (improved from projected loss).
- Key factors: Stipend revenues recognized, higher student fees/donations, health insurance adjustments, and expense run-rate corrections.

Discussion: Appreciation expressed for teachers' efforts amid budget challenges. Next month: FY27 budget and FY26 final budget will be presented for board approval (to be provided with adequate review time).

5. Online Programs / Quest Time Report – David Wiseman

- Grant update expected soon (previously delayed).
- New CTE teacher hired for online courses; marketing campaign to begin.
- Quest Time committee changes: Rotation of teachers, increased mentor oversight, better student surveys conducted in-person.

- Plans for summer booklet and continued improvements.

Discussion: Rachel Jay and David planned a follow-up meeting post-graduation to review survey results.

6. Stakeholder Survey Report – Rachel Jay (Jeri)

Presented side-by-side comparisons (students, parents, staff) vs. prior year.

- Improvements noted in school cleanliness/environment across groups.
- Student responses mostly positive or stable.
- Parent responses generally improved.
- Staff responses showed some declines (fewer respondents); concerns around professional development, Quest Time effectiveness, and feeling valued.

Discussion: Emphasis on reviewing comments, addressing trends (especially staff morale and Quest Time), and using data for improvement. Access to full responses to be shared.

7. Director's Report – Mike (with Jessica)

- Staff appreciation event held (nacho bar, games, staff-voted awards: Christie Gilbert – Staff Member of the Year; Kylie Hales – Support Staff of the Year).
- Strong growth in testing results across all areas (math department highlighted with significant gains).
- Fully staffed for next year (social worker position open).
- Graduation seating resolved – all families accommodated.

8. Approval of Previous Minutes

Motion: Approve April 16, 2026 board meeting minutes (Aaron Cook).
Second: Jeri Mellor.

Vote (Unanimous Yes):

- Rachel Jay: Yes
- David Jensen: Yes
- Ashley Watts: Yes
- Aaron Cook: Yes
- Heidi Bingham: Yes
- Jeri Mellor: Yes
- Mary Howell: Yes

Approved.

9. Board Business & Action Items

- **Yearly Audit Preparation:** Reviewed checklist (new items in red). Jerry, Ashley, Aaron, and Dave to assist Rachel with policy review and documentation before August.
- **Board Self-Evaluation:** Template shared; all members to complete and return to Rachel within 2 days (board as a whole + personal contributions).
- **Strategic Plan:** Discussed and refined sections (Finance, Culture, Student Performance, Governance, School Development & Improvement). Key focuses: enrollment/retention, parent partnerships (MVP/volunteers), student

achievement, professional development, policy enforcement, and culture (including dress code/appearance). Plan to be finalized and shared with Mike for alignment with mentoring framework.

- **Yearly Board Goals:**
    - Facilitate improved parent-administration communication and PTO/volunteer involvement.
    - Establish systems for director/school evaluations and tracking progress.
    - Create a board calendar of recurring events, trainings, and responsibilities.
- **President Elect:** Aaron Cook nominated and approved by consensus to serve as President Elect (transition timing to be determined).
- **Graduation/Nighting Ceremony Attendance:** Mandatory for board members (May 15, 8:20/8:30 a.m.).
- **Policies:** Alternative language policy vote tabled to next month.

10. Executive Session

Motion: Enter executive session to discuss the character, professional competence, or physical/mental health of an individual (Aaron Cook).
Second: Jeri Mellor.

Vote (Unanimous Yes):

- Rachel Jay: Yes
- Jeri Mellor: Yes
- Mary Howell: Yes
- Aaron Cook: Yes
- Ashley Watts: Yes
- David Jensen: Yes
- Heidi Bingham: Yes

No action taken upon return. The executive session ended at 10:40 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at **10:40 p.m.**

Next Meeting: June 2026 (date to be confirmed; FY27 budget approval planned).

Minutes Prepared By: [Board Secretary David Jensen]
Approved By: The board by vote in the next board meeting