Merit Preparatory Academy

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

September 3, 2026

8:34 p.m.

Online Meeting Only (Zoom)

I. Welcome, Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 p.m. by Board Chair Aaron Cook. The meeting was conducted entirely remotely via Zoom and was recorded.

Board Members Present:

- Aaron Cook (Chair)
- Jeri Mellor
- Ashley Watts
- Mary Howell
- David Jensen

Staff/Administration Present:

- Kristi Gilbert (Director)
- Jessica

Absent: Heidi Bingham

David Price was present and participated in discussion prior to being formally added as a board member later in the meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. No members of the public were present.

II. Public Comment

No members of the public were present. Public comment was not opened.

III. Board Business

Bank Signatory Changes

Discussion focused on needed updates to bank signatories. Jeri Mellor had researched the process with Wells Fargo. Because of the school's enterprise-level account structure under Red Apple, changes must go through corporate customer service rather than a local branch. Jessica is the only current Merit employee still listed on existing bank documents and will serve as the designated contact to initiate the process of removing former signers and adding new ones. The board discussed the expected process (likely digital signature cards) and expressed appreciation for Jeri's research and Jessica's role.

Abusive Behavior, Bullying, Cyber-bullying, Harassment, and Hazing Policy

Whitney Clegg had recommended updates because the current policy was out of compliance. She prepared a revised version based on the state template (and noted it matched the version used by Reagan Academy).

Discussion points included:

- Changes in investigation language (references to "LEA" / Local Education Agency designee instead of specifically the Board of Trustees or Director).

- Concerns that the LEA designation language is vague and does not clearly specify who appoints the designee.

- Preference by some members for certain definitions and language developed in the prior (May 2026) version of the policy.

- Recognition that the policy primarily addresses student-related issues and that staff/director matters would still fall under the Conflict Resolution Policy.

- Consensus that adopting the state-aligned version now would bring the school into compliance, with the understanding that refinements (including clearer LEA designation language) could be made at a future meeting.

Mary Howell expressed discomfort with the open-ended LEA language given recent experiences and indicated she would abstain. Other members indicated willingness to approve the policy as an interim compliance measure.

IV. Action Items

1. Motion to approve the August 8, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

Made by Jeri Mellor; seconded by Ashley Watts.

Vote:

- Aaron Cook – Aye
- Jeri Mellor – Abstained
- Ashley Watts – Aye
- Mary Howell – Aye
- David Jensen – Aye

Result: Approved.

2. August 20, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

Tabled. A portion of the transcript required further review for clarity. To be addressed at a subsequent meeting.

3. Motion to approve changes to the Abusive Behavior, Bullying, Cyber-bullying, Harassment, and Hazing Policy

Made by Jeri Mellor; seconded by Ashley Watts

Vote:

- Aaron Cook – Aye
- Jeri Mellor – Aye
- Ashley Watts – Aye
- David Jensen – Aye
- Mary Howell – Abstained

Result: Approved (with the understanding that the policy may be refined at a future meeting for clearer LEA designation language and any preferred definition updates).

4. Motion to add David Price as a Board Member

Made by Jeri Mellor; Ashley Watts.

Roll-call vote:

- Aaron Cook – Yes

- David Jensen – Yes

- Ashley Watts – Yes

- Mary Howell – Yes

- Jeri Mellor – Yes

Result: Unanimous. David Price was officially added to the Board of Directors. Background check and required trainings to be completed. All board members were reminded of upcoming annual training and conflict-of-interest requirements (to be addressed in October).

5. Motion to change/update bank signatories

(Authorize removal of former signers Mike Condie and Riley Lazaga and addition of Kristi Gilbert, Whitney Clegg, and Aaron Cook; formalized via board resolution prepared by Jeri Mellor.)

Made by Jeri Mellor; seconded by Ashley Watts.

Roll-call vote:

- Aaron Cook – Yes

- David Jensen – Yes

- Ashley Watts – Yes

- Jeri Mellor – Yes

- Mary Howell – Yes

- David Price – Yes

Result: Unanimous. Resolution adopted.

V. Executive Session

No executive session was held.

VI. Adjournment

Kristi Gilbert noted she would prepare a presentation for the next regular board meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Notes:

- David Price’s addition was effective upon the unanimous vote; he participated in the subsequent bank signatory vote.

- Heidi Bingham was not present and did not vote.

- Follow-up items include completing bank signatory changes through Wells Fargo corporate channels, refining the bullying/harassment policy language as needed, distributing training requirements, and reviewing the tabled August 20 minutes.

Meeting minutes submitted by Dave Jense, current board secretary