

LIFE Male STEAM Academy

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, August 17, 2022

Time: 7:15 PM

Location: Virtual / Conference Call

Agenda

Opening

Financial Update

Staff Reports

New Business

Old Business

Community

Adjournment

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 PM by the Chairman.

2. Attendance

Present:

- Chairman Darryl Canady
 - Vivian Wilson
 - David Griffin
-

3. Opening Remarks

- Chairman Canady shared a personal health update, noting ongoing recovery and temporary limitations in preaching responsibilities.
- Expressed gratitude for continued support and commitment from the board.

4. Title I Funding & Policy Approvals

The board reviewed required policies for the Title I federal funding application. These policies are necessary for compliance with federal guidelines.

Policies Presented:

1. Allowability of Costs
2. Cash Management
3. Conflict of Interest
4. Procurement Policy (Use of Federal Funds)
5. Travel Reimbursement

Discussion Highlights:

- Policies developed in collaboration with Charter Choices (back-office support partner).
- Emphasis on compliance, accountability, and oversight responsibilities.
- Board encouraged to review details further if needed.

Motions & Votes:

All policies were:

- Properly moved and seconded
- **Approved unanimously**

5. Bridge Loan Authorization

- Chairman requested approval to pursue a **bridge loan (up to \$20,000)** through Ridgeway Capital.
- Purpose: Maintain cash flow due to delayed payments and operational expenses.

Discussion:

- Loan would be short-term (approx. 9 months)
- Interest-only payments initially

- Intended to stabilize payroll and operational needs

Decision:

- Motion approved unanimously to pursue the bridge loan
-

6. Leadership Transition

- Recommendation for Reverend Taleeta Canady to:
 - Step down from the Board
 - Assume role of **Chief Administrative Officer (CEO)**

Key Responsibilities of CEO:

- Strategic leadership and operational oversight
- Support mission of college readiness and STEM pipeline expansion
- Supervise school operations and leadership team
- Oversee budgeting, reporting, and compliance
- Lead enrollment growth and fundraising efforts

Decision:

- Motion approved unanimously
 - Rev. Canady will serve as CEO (non-voting board participant)
-

7. Financial Transparency & Reimbursements

Emergency Loans to School:

- Darryl & Taleeta Canady: \$50,000
- David Griffin: \$13,000

Actions:

- Board approved reimbursement of funds when financially feasible
- Established policy for **future emergency loan reimbursements**

Decisions:

- All motions approved unanimously
 - Commitment to transparency and proper documentation emphasized
-

8. School Operations & Enrollment Update**Enrollment:**

- Current: 100+ students
- Goal: 120 students minimum
- Strong retention (approx. 90%+)

Recruitment Efforts:

- Billboards and mail campaigns
- Increased word-of-mouth awareness

Staffing Additions:

- Licensed Social Worker (MSW)
 - Expansion of teaching staff (Math, Science, ELA, Social Studies)
 - Development of school counseling program
-

9. Academic & Program Updates

- Implementation of **PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports)**
 - Teacher training aligned with **Smithsonian STEAM curriculum**
 - Continued emphasis on college readiness for all scholars
-

10. Orientation & School Opening

- Teacher orientation underway
- Student orientation scheduled across multiple days:
 - Aug 31: 6th Grade

- Sept 1: 7th Grade
 - Sept 2: 8th Grade
 - Board members invited to attend orientation sessions
-

11. Facilities & Funding Updates

- Third-floor renovation still pending due to funding gaps
 - Grants in progress:
 - Allegheny County Economic Development (\$668,000 request)
 - Yass Prize (up to \$1M potential)
 - Continued pursuit of additional grant funding
-

12. General Discussion

- Board reaffirmed commitment to:
 - Maintaining founder-led vision
 - Strengthening operational oversight
 - Supporting school growth and sustainability
-

13. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn was made and seconded
 - Meeting adjourned unanimously
-

Key Action Items Summary

- Finalize and submit Title I application
- Proceed with Ridgeway Capital bridge loan application
- Implement CEO leadership transition
- Track and plan reimbursement of emergency funds

- Continue enrollment and fundraising efforts
 - Advance grant applications and facility expansion plans
-

LIFE Male STEAM Academy

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: September 21, 2022

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

Agenda

Opening

Financial Update

Staff Reports

New Business

Old Business

Community

Adjournment

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Darryl Canady with an opening prayer.

2. Attendance

Present:

- Darryl Canady (Chairman)
- Vivian Wilson
- David Griffin
- William Simmons
- Lenny McAllister (Board Member)
- Greg Spencer (New Member)
- Tawana Cook Purnell (New Member)

3. Opening Remarks

- Chairman Canady welcomed attendees and acknowledged:
 - The **second year** of LIFE Male STEAM Academy
 - Both the **exhilarating and challenging nature** of building the school
 - Emphasized that LIFE is a **“ground floor opportunity”** and a **transformational mission**
-

4. Introduction of New Board Members

Introduced:

- **Greg Spencer** – Business leader with strong community ties
- **Tawana Cook Purnell** – Veteran educator with extensive experience in boys’ education and charter schools
- **Lenny McAllister** – Policy expert and former CEO of PA Coalition of Public Charter Schools

Board Action:

- Motion made and seconded to approve Greg Spencer and Tawana Cook Purnell as board members
 - **Vote: Approved unanimously**
-

5. Financial Overview & Challenges

- School currently experiencing **significant cash flow challenges**
- Key points:
 - Enrollment ~100 students (goal: 120+)
 - Revenue tied directly to student enrollment
 - Payroll obligations (~\$46,000 biweekly)

- Limited cash reserves (approx. 5 days on hand)

Contributing Factors:

- Delayed payments from school districts
 - Missed federal and COVID-related funding opportunities
 - Lower-than-projected enrollment due to pandemic
 - Lack of consistent corporate funding support
-

6. Funding & Development Strategy

Current Efforts:

- Bridge loan application (up to \$250,000)
- Multiple grant applications:
 - Allegheny County Economic Development (\$668K)
 - National grant (up to \$1M potential)

Board Discussion Highlights:

- Need for **stronger corporate and philanthropic relationships**
 - Importance of **in-person engagement and relationship-building**
 - Recommendation to:
 - Develop a **target list of funders**
 - Conduct a **“charm offensive”** (strategic outreach campaign)
 - Leverage board members’ networks
-

7. School Operations Update

Enrollment & Recruitment

- Current: ~100 students
- Additional applications in process
- Recruitment strategies include:

- Digital billboards
- Mail campaigns
- Parent referrals (word-of-mouth)

Key Challenge: Transportation

- Pittsburgh Public & Woodland Hills not consistently providing transportation
 - Impact:
 - Parent burden
 - Enrollment limitations
 - Potential legal concerns
-

8. Academic & Staffing Update

Staffing Challenges

- Recent loss of **three teachers** (not financially related)
- Ongoing need for:
 - Science Teacher
 - Social Studies Teacher
 - Art Teacher

Root Cause:

- Demands of working in an all-boys, high-needs environment
 - Need for mission-aligned, resilient educators
-

Student Profile

- Approximately **30% special education / high-needs students**
- School increasingly serving:
 - Academically struggling students
 - Students with behavioral challenges

Program Enhancements

- Expanded special education services
 - PBIS (Positive Behavior Support) implementation
 - Increased focus on STEAM instruction
-

9. Strategic Challenges Identified

Key Issues:

- Financial sustainability
 - Teacher recruitment & retention
 - Transportation barriers
 - Need for stronger branding & visibility
 - Limited corporate engagement
-

10. Governance & Legal Considerations

- Discussion regarding student identity issue and implications for:
 - School policy (all-male academy)
 - Legal compliance as a public charter school

Action:

- Board advised:
 - Engage legal counsel immediately
 - Ensure documentation and compliance procedures
 - Maintain multiple staff presence in sensitive meetings
-

11. Board Development & Strategy

- Emphasis on:
 - Leveraging board relationships for funding

- Building partnerships with other schools and organizations
 - Exploring national affiliations and collaborations
-

12. External Strategy Recommendations

- Consider hiring a **lobbyist** for state-level advocacy
 - Pursue **strategic partnerships** for joint grant applications
 - Increase visibility among foundations and corporate donors
-

13. Encouragement & Vision Alignment

- Board reaffirmed belief in the mission:
 - Transforming outcomes for African American male students
 - Encouragement from experienced educators:
 - Early struggles are **normal for charter schools**
 - Sustainability improves after initial years
-

14. Adjournment

- Meeting concluded with final remarks and appreciation
 - Motion to adjourn carried
-

Key Decisions Summary

- New board members approved
 - Continued pursuit of bridge loan and grants
 - Commitment to strengthen fundraising strategy
 - Legal consultation required for emerging issues
-

Key Action Items

- Develop targeted corporate and foundation outreach plan
 - Leverage board relationships for fundraising
 - Follow up on transportation legal options
 - Recruit teachers (Science, Social Studies, Art)
 - Engage legal counsel on student policy matters
 - Explore partnerships and national affiliations
-

LIFE Male STEAM Academy

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: November 16, 2022

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Virtual Meeting

Agenda

Opening

Financial Update

Staff Reports

New Business

Old Business

Community

Adjournment

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Darryl Canady.

2. Attendance

Present:

- Darryl Canady (Chairman)
 - Vivian Wilson
 - David Griffin
 - Lenny McAllister
 - Greg Spencer
 - Tawana Cook Purnell
-

3. Opening Remarks

- Chairman Canady welcomed the board and provided updates on:
 - The ongoing development of LIFE Male STEAM Academy
 - Continued challenges and progress in Year 2
 - Reaffirmed commitment to the school's mission of preparing African American males for college and career success
-

4. Financial Update

Current Status:

- Ongoing **cash flow challenges**
- Continued reliance on:
 - Bridge funding strategies
 - Grants and fundraising efforts

Key Points:

- Delayed district payments continue to impact operations
 - Payroll and operational costs remain significant
 - Leadership actively pursuing financial stabilization strategies
-

5. Fundraising & Grant Updates

Grants in Progress:

- Continued pursuit of major grant opportunities
- Competitive funding pipelines remain active

Fundraising Strategy:

- Emphasis on:

- Expanding donor base
 - Strengthening corporate partnerships
 - Leveraging board networks
-

6. Enrollment Update

- Enrollment remains a key driver of financial sustainability
 - Continued efforts to:
 - Increase student enrollment
 - Improve retention rates
 - Marketing strategies include:
 - Community outreach
 - Word-of-mouth engagement
-

7. Academic & Staffing Update

Staffing:

- Ongoing teacher recruitment needs
- Focus on hiring educators aligned with:
 - Mission
 - Student population needs
 - STEAM curriculum delivery

Student Support:

- Continued emphasis on:
 - Special education services
 - Behavioral support systems (PBIS)
 - Whole-child development
-

8. Operational Challenges

Key Issues Identified:

- Transportation barriers impacting enrollment
 - Teacher retention challenges
 - Financial constraints affecting expansion plans
-

9. Strategic Discussion

Board Focus Areas:

- Strengthening financial sustainability
 - Expanding visibility and awareness of the school
 - Building partnerships with:
 - Corporations
 - Foundations
 - Community organizations
-

10. Governance & Compliance

- Continued emphasis on:
 - Transparency in financial reporting
 - Compliance with charter and public school regulations
 - Proper documentation and accountability
-

11. Vision Alignment

- Board reaffirmed commitment to:
 - The LIFE mission and vision
 - Long-term sustainability and growth
 - Increasing impact within the community

12. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn was made and seconded
 - Meeting adjourned
-

Key Decisions Summary

- Continued pursuit of funding and financial stabilization strategies
 - Ongoing commitment to enrollment growth and staffing support
 - Reinforced need for board engagement in fundraising and partnerships
-

Key Action Items

- Increase fundraising outreach and donor engagement
 - Strengthen recruitment strategies to reach enrollment targets
 - Address transportation challenges
 - Continue teacher recruitment and retention efforts
 - Pursue grant funding opportunities
-

LIFE Male STEAM Academy

Leadership Meeting Minutes – Woodland Hills Partnership Discussion

Date: November 14, 2022

Time: 10:00 am

Location: In-Person Meeting with Woodland Hills School District

1. Meeting Purpose

To strengthen the relationship between **LIFE Male STEAM Academy** and **Woodland Hills School District**, explore collaboration opportunities, and address key operational and partnership issues.

2. Attendees

- LIFE Male STEAM Academy Leadership Team
 - Woodland Hills Superintendent and Leadership Team
 - Woodland Hills Board Representatives
-

3. Opening Context

- Woodland Hills leadership acknowledged:
 - The **value and uniqueness** of LIFE Male STEAM Academy's model
 - The importance of **servicing African American male students**
 - Expressed **support for LIFE's mission** and willingness to collaborate
-

4. Enrollment & Student Demographics

Current Enrollment Snapshot

- Approximately **99–100 students total**
- **24 Woodland Hills students enrolled**
- Students drawn from **14 different school districts**

Key Insight

- Families are highly committed:
 - Some students travel long distances (multiple buses) to attend LIFE
 - Demonstrates strong demand for LIFE’s educational model
-

5. Transportation Challenges

Issues Identified

- Inconsistent transportation support from districts
- Policies limiting transportation based on distance (e.g., 10-mile rule)
- Parents often required to provide transportation

Impact

- Barrier to enrollment growth
 - Burden on families
 - Potential inequity in access
-

6. Collaboration Opportunities

A. Joint Programming

- Potential for **shared student experiences and activities**:
 - Cross-district learning opportunities
 - Cultural and academic exchanges
 - Example model:
 - Students engage in joint activities, then reflect on shared experiences
-

B. Joint Professional Development (PD)

- Opportunity for **shared teacher training initiatives**
- Align instructional practices across district and charter

C. Joint Grant Opportunities

- Potential to pursue **collaborative funding**:
 - Charter–district partnership grants
- Identified interest from funders supporting collaboration

D. Model Partnership Vision

- LIFE + Woodland Hills positioned as a **state/national model**:
 - Demonstrating how charter schools and districts can collaborate
 - Focus on **student success over competition**

7. Strategic Positioning of LIFE

Key Messaging

- LIFE provides a “**private school-quality education at no cost**”
- Founded to:
 - Increase access
 - Ensure sustainability
 - Serve underserved populations

Additional Contributions

- Support district diversity efforts:
 - Increasing representation of African American educators
- Provide a **specialized model not currently offered by the district**

8. Relationship Dynamics

Tone of Meeting

- Positive and collaborative

- Shift from potential tension to **partnership mindset**

Key Insight

- Mutual recognition that:
 - Both entities serve the same students
 - Collaboration benefits the broader community
-

9. Key Strategic Themes

A. Collaboration Over Competition

- Emphasis on working together rather than competing

B. Student-Centered Focus

- Shared goal: improving outcomes for all students

C. Innovation Opportunity

- Ability to create a **replicable partnership model**
-

10. Challenges Identified

- Transportation limitations
 - Funding inequities across districts
 - Structural barriers in charter-district relationships
 - Need for clearer communication and alignment
-

11. Key Outcomes / Takeaways

- Woodland Hills expressed **support for LIFE's mission**
- Agreement to explore:
 - Joint programming
 - Professional development collaboration
 - Grant opportunities

- Recognition of potential to become a **model partnership**
-

12. Action Items

For LIFE Leadership

- Develop formal **partnership proposal framework**
- Identify **joint grant opportunities**
- Continue enrollment outreach within Woodland Hills

For Woodland Hills

- Review transportation support options
- Explore participation in collaborative programming
- Identify areas for shared professional development

Joint Actions

- Schedule follow-up meeting
 - Outline pilot collaboration initiative
 - Define communication structure between organizations
-

13. Strategic Insight (Important for Board)

This meeting represents a **critical turning point**:

- From **authorization relationship** → **partnership relationship**
 - From **compliance** → **collaboration**
 - From **local impact** → **potential national model**
-

14. Adjournment

Meeting concluded with mutual agreement to continue collaboration and build a stronger partnership.

Executive Summary (Board Use)

- Strong opportunity to build a **district-charter partnership model**
 - Transportation remains a major barrier to growth
 - High demand for LIFE program validated
 - Immediate opportunity for **joint grants and programming**
 - Strategic shift toward **collaboration and shared impact**
-

WHY THIS PARTNERSHIP MATTERS

LIFE Male STEAM Academy + Woodland Hills School District

The Opportunity

This partnership positions LIFE and Woodland Hills to move from **coexistence to collaboration**—creating a model that improves outcomes for students while strengthening both institutions.

Shared Mission Alignment

- Serving **African American male students** with excellence
 - Increasing **college and career readiness**
 - Expanding access to **high-quality STEAM education**
 - Addressing **equity gaps across districts**
-

Why This Matters Now

- Students are already choosing LIFE across **14+ districts**
 - Families are making sacrifices (transportation barriers)
 - Both institutions serve the **same community—but separately**
 - ➡ *Together, we can multiply impact instead of duplicating effort*
-

Strategic Benefits

For Students

- Expanded academic and enrichment opportunities
- Greater access to resources and support systems
- Stronger pathway to college, careers, and leadership

For LIFE

- Increased enrollment pipeline
- Stronger funding opportunities (joint grants)
- Enhanced credibility and visibility

For Woodland Hills

- Access to an innovative **all-male STEAM model**
 - Support in serving high-need student populations
 - Strengthened community and academic outcomes
-

What We Can Build Together

- Joint student programming & experiences
 - Shared professional development for educators
 - Collaborative grant funding (state, federal, private)
 - A **national model for district-charter partnership**
-

Key Barrier to Address

Transportation

- Limits enrollment growth
 - Creates inequitable access
 - ➡ *Solving this unlocks immediate expansion*
-

🔥 The Big Idea

This is bigger than a partnership...

- 👉 It is an opportunity to create a **replicable national model**
 - 👉 It positions LIFE as a **destination school**
 - 👉 It demonstrates that **collaboration can outperform competition**
-

📌 Board Call to Action

- Leverage your networks to support **funding & partnerships**
 - Advocate for **transportation solutions**
 - Support development of a **formal partnership agreement (MOU)**
 - Champion LIFE as a **model of innovation and impact**
-

✨ Vision Statement

“Together, we are not just educating students—we are building a pipeline of leaders and transforming a community.”

LIFE Male STEAM Academy

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: March 31, 2023

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Conference Room

Agenda

Opening

Financial Update

Staff Reports

New Business

Old Business

Community

Adjournment

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Darrell Kennedy.

2. Attendance

Present:

- Darryl Canady (Chairman)
- Vivian Wilson
- David Griffin
- Greg Spencer
- Lenny McAllister
- Tawana Cook Purnell
- Members of LIFE leadership present

3. Opening Remarks

- Chairman Canady provided an update on recent decisions and ongoing challenges
 - Emphasized commitment to making decisions in the **best interest of the school's long-term health**
-

4. High School Expansion Decision

Discussion:

- Decision made to **pause expansion into 9th grade for the 2023–2024 school year**
- Rationale:
 - Need to **strengthen middle school foundation**
 - Academic gaps among students (some below grade level)
 - Impact of pandemic on readiness
 - Leadership transition and operational capacity concerns

Key Considerations:

- High school expansion requires:
 - Strong curriculum infrastructure
 - Fully prepared leadership and staffing
- Consensus that the school is **not yet ready for high school expansion**

Decision:

- Board affirmed decision to **delay high school expansion until 2024–2025**
-

5. Parent & Student Transition Plan

Current Situation:

- Approximately **31 students impacted** by the decision
- Parent concerns include:
 - Missed opportunities (magnet schools, deadlines)
 - Safety concerns with assigned district schools
 - Desire for continuity within LIFE

Planned Actions:

- Parent meeting scheduled to communicate decision and next steps
 - Development of **transition support packets**
 - Commitment to:
 - Maintain relationships with students
 - Provide guidance beyond LIFE enrollment
-

6. Student Placement Strategy

Schools Identified for Placement Support:

- Woodland Hills High School
- Gateway School District
- City Charter High School
- Urban Pathways Charter School
- Environmental Charter School
- Propel Charter Schools
- Neighborhood Academy (limited availability)

Additional Options Discussed:

- Independent/private schools (financial barriers noted)
- Specialized schools (e.g., Spectrum for select students)

Board Input:

- Emphasis on:
 - Personalized placement approach for each student
 - Matching students to best-fit environments
 - Leveraging relationships to open doors
-

7. Student Support Commitment

- LIFE will continue to:
 - Provide **mentorship support** to transitioning students
 - Maintain relationships with families
 - Offer guidance during high school transition

Key Principle:

“We are not abandoning our students—we are supporting them beyond LIFE.”

8. Leadership Search Update**Candidate Identified:**

- Kevin Bivins (Assistant Superintendent, Pittsburgh Public Schools)

Strengths Highlighted:

- 30+ years in education
- Proven instructional leadership
- Strong background in:
 - Academic improvement
 - Teacher development
 - STEM education
- Experience across multiple districts

Board Discussion:

- Need for:
 - Instructional leadership
 - Accountability systems
 - Academic rigor

Concerns Raised:

- Whether candidate can:
 - Think **innovatively (outside traditional systems)**
 - Align with LIFE's unique model

Next Step:

- Candidate interview scheduled
-

9. Financial & Fundraising Strategy

Current Status:

- Ongoing financial challenges
- Need for proactive, not reactive, fundraising

Key Recommendations:

- Dedicate significant leadership time to:
 - Relationship-building
 - Donor engagement
 - Strategic fundraising

Strategic Insight:

- Fundraising must be:
 - **Relational, not transactional**
 - Built over time with consistent engagement

10. Grant Funding Update

Major Grant Opportunity:

- \$1.5 Million Grant (submission pending)

Updates:

- Professional grant writer engaged
- Improved submission strategy (including documentation and hyperlinks)

Board Advisory:

- **Do not rely solely on grant funding**
 - Maintain diversified funding strategy
-

11. Branding & Value Proposition Discussion

Key Issue Identified:

- Need to clearly define LIFE's **unique value proposition**

Discussion Points:

- Differentiation from other organizations serving similar populations
- Alignment between:
 - STEAM identity
 - Actual programming and resources

Action Needed:

- Develop a **clear, compelling narrative** for fundraising and partnerships
-

12. Enrollment Strategy

- Continued recruitment efforts showing positive response
- Emphasis on:
 - Strengthening middle school (Grades 6–8)

- Positioning middle school as a **critical intervention stage**
-

13. Strategic Priorities Identified

1. Strengthen middle school academic program
 2. Secure strong instructional leadership
 3. Develop sustainable fundraising strategy
 4. Clarify school's unique identity and value
 5. Support student transitions effectively
-

14. Adjournment

- Meeting concluded with agreement on next steps
 - Motion to adjourn carried
-

Key Decisions Summary

- High school expansion paused until 2024–2025
 - Student transition support plan implemented
 - Leadership candidate identified and interview scheduled
 - Fundraising strategy prioritized
 - Grant submission moving forward
-

Key Action Items

- Conduct parent meeting and provide transition support
- Finalize student placement partnerships
- Interview and hire Head of School
- Develop fundraising engagement plan

- Submit \$1.5M grant application
 - Clarify LIFE's value proposition and messaging
-
-

LIFE Male STEAM Academy

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: May 17, 2023

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Conference Room / Virtual

Agenda

Opening

Financial Update

Staff Reports

New Business

Old Business

Community

Adjournment

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Darryl Canady, followed by opening remarks and review of the meeting agenda

2. Attendance

Present:

- Darryl Canady (Chairman)
- Vivian Wilson
- David Griffin
- Greg Spencer
- Lenny McAllister
- Tawana Cook Purnell

- Board Members and Leadership Team
 - Charter Choices Representative (Financial Partner)
-

3. Opening Remarks

- Chairman Canady welcomed board members and outlined the meeting agenda:
 - Introduction of new Head of School
 - Financial update and preliminary 2023–2024 budget
 - Grant updates (PACSP)
 - Fundraising, marketing, and next steps
-

4. Introduction of New Head of School

Kevin Bivins – Head of School

- Introduced to the board and provided background:
 - 30+ years in education (teacher, principal, assistant superintendent)
 - Proven track record of improving academic outcomes
 - Strong focus on:
 - School culture
 - High expectations
 - Instructional improvement

Leadership Priorities:

- Establish a **culture of learning and excellence**
- Strengthen staff development and instructional quality
- Align school schedule and systems to support student success
- Seek clarity from the board on expectations and outcomes

Board Response:

- Strong affirmation and support expressed

- Commitment to partner with and support new leadership
-

5. Financial Report & Budget Overview

A. Financial Status (April 2023 Snapshot)

- Cash on hand: ~\$91,000 (~13 days operating cash)
- Accounts payable: ~\$190,000
- District receivables: ~\$130,000
- Ongoing **cash flow challenges** due to under-enrollment

Revenue & Expenses:

- Revenue: ~\$1.7M (below projections due to enrollment gap)
- Expenses: ~\$1.9M
- Projected year-end deficit: ~\$50K–\$60K

Key Insight:

- Financial strain driven primarily by:
 - Enrollment below projections
 - Fixed staffing and operational costs
-

B. 2023–2024 Preliminary Budget (Draft)

Revenue Projections:

- Total projected revenue: ~\$3.0M
- Enrollment assumption: **105 students**
- Private fundraising goal: ~\$300,000
- Federal and state funding included

Expenses:

- Personnel (salaries & benefits): ~\$1.6M (~60% of budget)
- Operational expenses (services, facilities, food, etc.)

- Planned capital improvements (third floor renovation)

Projected Outcome:

- Estimated **small surplus (~\$37,000)**
-

C. Key Financial Insights

- School currently operating **inefficiently due to small size**
 - Growth in enrollment will improve financial sustainability
 - Goal: move toward **surplus and fund balance growth**
-

D. Board Action

- Motion made to accept:
 - Financial report
 - Preliminary draft budget
 - Motion seconded and **approved unanimously**
-

6. PACSP Grant Award (Major Milestone)

Grant Overview:

- Award: **\$1.5 Million (3-year grant)**
- Classification: **New School Expansion**

Purpose:

- Fund:
 - Third-floor expansion
 - Technology upgrades
 - Transportation (vans)
 - Academic staffing (reading/math specialists)
 - Program enhancements

Key Impact:

- Provides critical capital for growth
- Reduces financial strain
- Enables expansion and program strengthening

Board Emphasis:

- Grant must be used as **leverage for additional funding**
 - Do not reduce fundraising efforts
-

7. Facilities & Expansion Update

- Plans underway for **third-floor renovation**
 - Timeline goal: Completion by August 2023
 - Next steps:
 - Secure permits
 - Begin construction planning
 - Utilize existing architectural partners
-

8. Enrollment & Marketing Strategy**Key Priority:**

- Increase enrollment to **120+ students**

Strategies:

- Radio and media outreach
- Billboards and advertising
- Community engagement
- Partnerships with marketing firms

Additional Exploration:

- Charter School Capital:

- Enrollment marketing support
 - Potential line of credit (cash flow support)
-

9. School Operations Update

End-of-Year Activities:

- 8th Grade Promotion Ceremony (June 8)
- School Picnic (June 9)
- First Annual Spring Dance
- Career Day and field trips

Student Transition Support:

- Continued placement support for rising 9th graders
 - Strong outcomes with student acceptance into quality high schools
-

10. Staffing & Program Development

New Additions:

- Spanish Teacher hired
- Planned hires:
 - Reading Specialist
 - Math Specialist

Academic Focus:

- Strengthen STEAM programming
 - Align curriculum with school mission
 - Improve instructional rigor
-

11. Leadership Transition

Outgoing Leader:

- Mr. Jim Chavis recognized for:
 - Foundational leadership
 - Stabilizing school operations
 - Commitment and sacrifice

Board Response:

- Formal appreciation expressed
- Commitment to honor his contributions

Transition:

- Leadership transition to Head of School Kevin Bivins
 - Positive collaboration between outgoing and incoming leadership
-

12. Strategic Priorities Moving Forward

1. Increase student enrollment (top priority)
 2. Leverage \$1.5M grant for growth and visibility
 3. Strengthen fundraising and donor engagement
 4. Improve financial sustainability and cash flow
 5. Enhance academic programming and outcomes
 6. Expand facilities and infrastructure
-

13. Key Announcements

- Grant Orientation Session (Virtual) – May 18
- Press Conference Announcing Grant:
 - **Date:** May 30, 2023
 - **Time:** 10:00 AM

- **Location:** LIFE Male STEAM Academy
-

14. Closing Remarks

- Chairman emphasized:
 - Grant is a **major breakthrough**
 - Continued urgency around enrollment and fundraising
 - Importance of board engagement and advocacy
-

15. Adjournment

- Meeting concluded with prayer and appreciation
 - Adjournment followed
-

Key Decisions Summary

- Financial report accepted
 - Preliminary budget accepted
 - Continued expansion and grant utilization approved
-

Key Action Items

- Finalize and approve 2023–2024 budget (June meeting)
 - Begin third-floor renovation process
 - Execute enrollment and marketing campaign
 - Leverage grant for additional funding opportunities
 - Explore line of credit / financial support options
 - Support leadership transition and onboarding
-
-

LIFE Male STEAM Academy

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: June 21, 2023

Location: Conference Room / Virtual

Time: 7:00 PM

Agenda

Opening

Financial Update

Staff Reports

New Business

Old Business

Community

Adjournment

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by **Dr. Darryl Canady**. Opening remarks were provided, including acknowledgment of the completion of the school's **second academic year** and a pastoral moment of prayer for a student's family experiencing tragedy.

Present: Darryl Canady, David Griffin, Greg Spencer, Vivian Wilson, Tawana Cook Purnell

2. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was presented and accepted, including:

- Open Remarks
- School Year Report
- Summer Plans
- Facilities & Renovation Updates

- Head of School Update
 - Financial Report
 - Proposed Budget Approval
 - Fundraising & Marketing
 - Next Meeting Date
-

3. School Year Report

- LIFE Male STEAM Academy successfully completed its **second year of operation**.
 - Strong participation in school events, including **8th Grade Promotion Ceremony**.
 - Positive parent engagement and increasing participation trends noted.
 - Recognition of staff contributions and end-of-year celebrations.
-

4. Summer Plans & Programming

- Launch of **summer programming** following July 4th.
 - Continued academic preparation for scholars entering the next grade level.
 - Ongoing student support and intervention planning.
 - Teacher engagement and planning for upcoming school year.
-

5. Facilities & Renovation Update

Dr. Canady presented updates on capital improvements:

Third Floor Renovation (Priority Project)

- Construction of permanent classroom walls
- Addition of:
 - Bathroom facilities
 - Washer & dryer
 - Catering-style kitchen

- Student dining/multipurpose space
- Behavioral health/mental health support room
- Assembly and cafeteria space development

Future Plans

- **Seventh Floor Renovation (Long-Term)**
 - Potential banquet/event space
 - Renovation funded primarily through CSP Grant allocations
 - Permitting process underway
-

6. Grant & Financial Strategy Update

- LIFE received a **\$1.5 million CSP (Charter School Program) Grant**
 - Funds are **reimbursable**, requiring upfront capital
 - Leadership is pursuing a **line of credit (PNC Bank)** to leverage grant funds
 - Challenge noted: **Delayed district payments during summer months**
-

7. Board Development Feedback (Peer Review)

- External review highlighted need for:
 - Increased **board engagement**
 - Greater **board diversity**
 - Expanded governance involvement
-

8. Head of School Report – Mr. Kevin Bivins

Mr. Bivins shared key strategic developments:

Academic & Institutional Partnerships

- Partnerships established with:
 - University of Pittsburgh
 - Carlow University
 - Duquesne University
 - Indiana University of Pennsylvania
 - Grand Canyon University

Key Initiatives

- Teacher pipeline development (student teachers)
- Staff professional development (monthly training opportunities)
- Curriculum expansion across all subject areas
- Acquisition of **170+ curriculum supply boxes at no cost**

Professional Development Focus

- Theme: **Culture, Systems, Instruction**
- Training areas include:
 - PBIS
 - Restorative Practices
 - Cultural Competency
 - Danielson Evaluation Framework

Recruitment Strategy

- Database of **20,000+ prospective student contacts**
- Increased focus on enrollment growth

9. Financial Report – Charter Choices

Current Financial Status

- Cash on hand: ~\$66,000 (~10 days operating cash)
- Outstanding payables: ~\$150,000
- Revenue below projections due to lower enrollment
- Current deficit projected

Key Challenges

- Summer cash flow gaps
- Delayed district payments
- Reimbursement-based grant structure

Positive Developments

- Reduced reliance on donations compared to prior year
- Operational cost controls implemented

10. Proposed 2023–2024 Budget

Key Assumptions

- Enrollment increase: **86 → 114 students**
- Revenue growth tied to enrollment expansion
- CSP grant funding supports:
 - Staffing additions
 - Facilities improvements
 - Academic programming

Budget Highlights

- Total Budget: ~\$3.96M
- Projected Surplus: ~\$55,011
- Fundraising Goal: ~\$325,000

11. Motions & Approvals

A. Budget Approval

- Motion: Approve 2023–2024 Proposed Budget
- Moved by: Greg Spencer
- Seconded by: Tawana Cook Purnell
- **Vote:** Approved unanimously

B. Lease Reimbursement Authorization

- Motion: Authorize Charter Choices to submit lease reimbursement paperwork
 - **Vote:** Approved unanimously
-

12. Board Development & Recruitment

Identified needs for future board expansion:

- Finance/Accounting expertise
 - Legal expertise
 - HR/Personnel background
 - K–12 Education experience
 - Fundraising/Marketing
 - Facilities/Real Estate Development
-

13. Enrollment & Marketing Strategy

- Emphasis on:
 - Community outreach (Juneteenth engagement noted)
 - Grassroots recruitment
 - Board member involvement in promotion
- Key message:
“The money follows the students.”

14. Announcements

- Teacher professional development trip to Norfolk State University
- Upcoming community engagement events
- Distribution of school marketing materials

15. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned with closing remarks and acknowledgments.

16. Key Strategic Takeaways

- Enrollment growth is the **top priority**
 - CSP Grant is a **game-changer but requires cash flow strategy**
 - Board engagement and expansion is critical
 - Year 3 positioned as a **breakthrough year for LIFE**
-
-

LIFE Male STEAM Academy

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Meeting Title: Special Board Meeting – Resolution Vote (Charter School Capital)

Date: July 26, 2023

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: [Virtual]

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at **9:00 AM** by **Dr. Darryl Canady**, Board President.

Present: Darryl Canady, Greg Spencer, David Griffin, Tawana Cook Purnell, Vivian Wilson

2. Purpose of Meeting

The purpose of this special called meeting was to:

- Review and vote on a **resolution related to Charter School Capital funding/financing.**
-

3. Presentation of Resolution

- The proposed resolution regarding **Charter School Capital** was presented to the Board.
 - Discussion included:
 - The purpose and structure of the capital arrangement
 - Financial implications and benefits to LIFE Male STEAM Academy
 - Alignment with the school’s growth and facilities strategy
-

4. Board Discussion

Board members engaged in discussion, including:

- Clarification of terms and obligations

- Impact on school expansion and sustainability
 - Financial stewardship and long-term planning considerations
-

5. Motion & Vote

Resolution Approval

- **Motion:** To approve the Charter School Capital Resolution as presented
- **Moved by:** Tawana Cook Purnell
- **Seconded by:** Vivian Wilson

Vote Outcome:

- Approved unanimously
-

6. Next Steps

- Upon approval, leadership will:
 - Execute necessary documents
 - Coordinate with Charter School Capital representatives
 - Implement next steps related to funding and/or facility development
-

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned following the resolution vote.

8. Key Takeaway

This meeting represents a **strategic financial step forward**, positioning LIFE Male STEAM Academy to:

- Strengthen its capital structure
- Support facility expansion
- Advance the long-term vision of growth and sustainability

LIFE Male STEAM Academy

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: September 20, 2023

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: [Virtual]

Agenda

Opening

Financial Update

Staff Reports

New Business

Old Business

Community

Adjournment

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at **7:00 PM** by **Dr. Darryl Canady, Board President**.

Present: Darryl Canady, David Griffin, Greg Spencer, Tawana Cook Purnell, Vivian Wilson

Members of LIFE Staff

2. Opening Remarks

- Welcome to board members and leadership
- Acknowledgment of the new school year and ongoing growth of LIFE Male STEAM Academy
- Emphasis on continued focus on **vision, enrollment, and operational excellence**

3. Approval of Agenda

- The meeting agenda was presented
 - **Motion:** To approve the agenda
 - **Vote:** Approved
-

4. School & Leadership Update

A. Start of School Year

- Successful opening of the academic year
- Continued development of school culture and expectations
- Focus on scholar engagement and academic rigor

B. Enrollment Update

- Enrollment remains a **key priority area**
 - Continued emphasis on:
 - Recruitment strategies
 - Community outreach
 - Board involvement in student recruitment
-

5. Academic & Program Updates

- Continued emphasis on becoming a **true STEAM school in practice (not just name)**
 - Strengthening curriculum implementation
 - Focus on:
 - Instructional quality
 - Student achievement
 - Experiential learning opportunities
-

6. Facilities & Operations Update

- Updates provided on **facility usage and expansion planning**
 - Continued progress toward maximizing space for:
 - Classrooms
 - Programming
 - Student support services
-

7. Financial Update

- Review of current financial position
 - Continued awareness of:
 - Cash flow challenges
 - Enrollment-driven revenue
 - Need for ongoing fundraising efforts
-

8. Board Development & Governance

- Continued discussion around:
 - Expanding board membership
 - Strengthening board engagement
 - Adding expertise in key areas:
 - Finance
 - Legal
 - Education
 - Community leadership
-

9. Fundraising & Marketing

- Reinforcement of the need for:

- Strategic fundraising efforts
 - Increased visibility of LIFE Male STEAM Academy
 - Board participation in outreach and partnerships
-

10. Discussion Items

Board members discussed:

- Enrollment strategies and community connections
 - Opportunities for increased visibility and partnerships
 - Strengthening the LIFE brand within the region
-

11. Next Steps

- Increase enrollment efforts immediately
 - Continue facility planning and improvements
 - Strengthen board recruitment
 - Expand marketing and outreach initiatives
-

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned following closing remarks.

13. Key Strategic Takeaways

- **Enrollment drives sustainability**
 - **Board engagement must increase**
 - **Year 3 is a defining growth year**
 - **LIFE must continue moving from vision → execution**
-

LIFE Male STEAM Academy

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: January 17, 2024

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: [Virtual]

Agenda

Opening

Financial Update

Staff Reports

New Business

Old Business

Community

Adjournment

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by **Dr. Darryl Canady, Board President.**

Present: Darryl Canady, David Griffin, Greg Spencer, Tawana Cook Purnell, Vivian Wilson

2. Opening Remarks

- Welcome to board members and acknowledgment of the new calendar year
- Emphasis on growth, sustainability, and continued advancement toward high school expansion

3. Enrollment & Marketing Update

- Strategic marketing plan includes:
 - **Direct mail campaigns** (February and March)

- Evaluation of most effective outreach methods (mailers vs. grassroots engagement)
 - Community-based recruitment efforts (events, school visits) have already produced **new family interest and enrollment leads**
 - Continued emphasis:
Enrollment growth is critical to long-term sustainability
-

4. Financial Report

Key Highlights

- Financial performance directly tied to enrollment growth
- Significant **increase in expenses** due to:
 - Lease cost increases
 - Additional staffing positions
 - Cost-of-living adjustments

Staffing Additions

- Reading Specialist (improving literacy outcomes)
- Special Education Coordinator (compliance & student services)
- STEAM Coordinator (curriculum integration & grant acquisition)

Board Action

- **Motion:** To accept the financial report with necessary adjustments
 - **Vote:** Approved unanimously
-

5. Academic Progress Update

- Evidence of **student growth in reading and academic performance**
- Focus on:
 - Measurable progress rather than unrealistic grade-level jumps
 - Data-driven instruction and intervention

6. High School Development Report

Presented by **Curriculum Developer**

A. Strategic Planning

- Development of a **70+ page high school implementation plan**
- Focus on:
 - Graduation requirements (aligned with Pennsylvania standards)
 - Multiple pathways to graduation
 - Backward planning from outcomes

B. Academic Model

- Integrated STEAM curriculum
- Flexible scheduling options (block/modified schedules)
- Emphasis on:
 - Project-based learning
 - Real-world application
 - Student-centered instruction

C. Career Pathways

Proposed pathways include:

- Health, Wellness & Medicine
- Environment & Social Justice
- Computer Science & Engineering
- Entrepreneurship & Economics

D. Graduation Vision

- Students complete a **capstone project (project management-based)**
- Goal: Students graduate with:
 - Certifications

- Digital badges
- Workforce-ready skills

E. Student Support Systems

- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) integration
- Restorative discipline approach

F. Special Education Rebranding

- “Special Education” renamed to:
Learning Exceptionalities Department
- Focus on:
 - Strength-based language
 - Removing stigma
 - Improved service delivery

G. Facilities & Innovation

- Development of a **Fab Lab (PPG-funded)**
- Integration of STEAM labs and technology-rich environments
- Community access to facilities

H. Athletics & Extracurriculars

- Initial offerings:
 - Basketball, Track, Soccer, Golf
- Clubs:
 - Robotics, Debate, Mock Trial
- Arts:
 - Drama, Choir

Board Action

- **Motion:** To accept High School Development Report

- **Vote:** Approved unanimously
-

7. Head of School Report – Mr. Kevin Bivins

A. Enrollment

- Current enrollment: **85 students**
- Goal: Increase enrollment through targeted recruitment

B. Academic Performance

- CDT Assessment Results:
 - 6th Grade: 73% improved
 - 7th Grade: 69% improved
 - 8th Grade: 80% improved

C. New Initiatives

- Launch of “**Connections**” class:
 - Focus on social-emotional learning
 - Life skills development

D. Instructional Focus

- Integration of:
 - ELA, Math, and Science
- Use of **Danielson Framework** for teacher evaluation

E. College & Career Readiness

- Implementation of **Smart Futures platform**
- Focus on career awareness and planning

F. Partnerships & Opportunities

- Exploration of partnership with **Bank of America / Merrill Lynch**
 - Expansion of external opportunities for scholars
-

8. CEO Report

- Staff transitions and promotions:
 - STEAM Coordinator position filled internally
- Hiring updates:
 - Special Education Teacher
 - Teaching Assistant

Facilities Update

- Third Floor Renovation (Critical Priority):
 - Cafeteria space
 - STEAM Lab (Fab Lab)
 - Catering kitchen
 - Shower & laundry facilities
 - Additional classrooms

Transportation

- Purchase of school van to address transportation challenges

Community Partnerships

- Use of local church facilities for athletics
- Continued collaboration with community organizations

9. Fundraising & Development

- Secured **\$100,000 PPG Grant** for Fab Lab
 - Continued pursuit of:
 - Corporate partnerships
 - Philanthropic support
 - Emphasis on storytelling and demonstrating impact
-

10. Board Development & Governance

- Continued need for:
 - Additional board members
 - Diverse expertise (finance, legal, education)
 - Discussion of new meeting structure:
 - Proposal: **Third Saturday of each month**
 - Hybrid option (in-person + Zoom)
-

11. Key Strategic Priorities

- Increase enrollment
 - Complete facility expansion
 - Launch high school successfully
 - Strengthen financial sustainability
 - Expand partnerships and funding
-

12. Adjournment

- Meeting closed with prayer and expressions of gratitude
-

13. Key Takeaways

- **High School Launch is the next major milestone**
- **Enrollment remains the lifeline of the school**
- **Facilities expansion is critical for growth**
- **LIFE is evolving into a full ecosystem (academic + community + workforce pipeline)**

LIFE Male STEAM Academy

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: February 17, 2024

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: [Virtual]

Agenda

Opening

Financial Update

Staff Reports

New Business

Old Business

Community

Adjournment

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by **Board Leadership**.

Present: Darryl Canady, Greg Spencer, Tawana Cook Purnell, Vivian Wilson, David Griffin

Members of LIFE Leadership Staff

2. Academic & Instructional Report

- Continued **student growth and engagement** observed through CDT assessments
- Increase in students moving toward proficiency (“green” performance level)
- Focus areas:
 - Academic intervention and targeted support
 - Interdisciplinary instruction (ELA, Math, Science, Arts integration)
 - Teacher collaboration through PLCs

- Ongoing professional development
 - College & Career Exposure:
 - Student participation in **Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) programs**
 - Robotics lab experiences and STEM programming
 - CMU providing **40 computers** to support instruction
-

3. Personnel Update

- Staffing challenges due to:
 - Teacher resignation (ELA – medical reasons)
 - Teacher leave (Science)
 - Reading Specialist resignation
 - New hires:
 - Math Teacher
 - ELA Teacher
 - Special Education Teacher
 - Ongoing concern:
 - **Teacher stress and retention challenges**
 - Need for increased **staff wellness and support systems**
-

4. Enrollment & Marketing Report

Key Concern

- Enrollment for **Fall 2024 is a major priority and concern**

Strategies in Progress

- Partnership with **Vertex Marketing Group**:
 - Direct mail campaigns (targeted households)
 - Data-driven geographic targeting

- Branding consistency across materials
- Social media marketing improvements
- Outreach efforts include:
 - Information sessions (school-based)
 - Community events
 - Black History Program (hosted at Rodman Church)
 - Email campaigns (39,000 contacts; goal: 3 touches/month)
- Board engagement requested:
 - Distribute flyers and mailers
 - Share within personal and professional networks
 - Participate in grassroots outreach

Marketing Insights

- Multiple touchpoints (2–3 mailers) increase response rates
 - Best email engagement days: **Tuesday & Wednesday**
-

5. Strategic Enrollment Goal

- Target for 2024–2025:
 - **160–200 students**
 - Minimum: 40 students per grade level
 - Emphasis:
“We must get students in seats to sustain and grow the school.”
-

6. Facilities & Program Development

- **Third Floor Renovation Plans:**
 - Expanded clinic (with private exam rooms)
 - STEAM Lab / Fab Lab

- Additional classrooms
 - **Health Clinic Expansion:**
 - Full-service care (excluding X-rays)
 - Available to students, families, and community
 - **PPG Fab Lab Initiative:**
 - \$100,000 grant secured
 - Naming opportunity: “PPG Fab Lab”
-

7. High School Expansion Planning

- Continued preparation for **high school launch (Fall 2024)**
 - Need for:
 - High school teachers
 - IT personnel (priority hire)
-

8. Transportation Update

- Purchase of **12-passenger school van**
 - Addressing transportation barriers:
 - Concerns with public bus usage (safety perception)
 - Goal:
 - Acquire additional vans before next school year
-

9. Athletics & Student Life

- Launch of **Basketball Program (Club Level):**
 - A Team and B Team established
 - Plans to join WPIAL in future
- Exploration of additional sports:

- Track
 - Golf (potential partnership with First Tee)
 - Key Insight:
Athletics are critical for student recruitment and retention (especially for high school).
-

10. Partnerships & Programs

- CMU STEM partnerships
 - Pennsylvania Charter Schools Program engagement
 - Hosting **PACSP Summit (October 2024)**:
 - Request for board participation and representation
-

11. Fundraising & Development

- Need identified for:
 - Fundraising partner or consultant
 - Structured development strategy
 - Potential models:
 - Fee-based partnership
 - Percentage-based fundraising collaboration
-

12. Board Governance Updates

- **Board Resignation:**
 - Lenny McAllister resigned due to increased commitments
- Ongoing need:
 - **Recruitment of new board members**
- **Mandatory Training:**
 - Act 55 Board Training

- Date: **Friday, May 17, 2024 (9:00 AM, Virtual)**
-

13. Community Engagement Strategies

- Increased grassroots outreach:
 - Church-based flyer distribution
 - Community events and presentations
 - Youth engagement in marketing efforts
 - Target communities:
 - Wilkinsburg
 - Monroeville
 - Penn Hills
 - Swissvale
-

14. Key Strategic Priorities

- Increase enrollment (top priority)
 - Strengthen teacher retention and support
 - Complete facility upgrades
 - Launch high school successfully
 - Expand transportation capacity
 - Develop fundraising infrastructure
-

15. Action Items

Action Item	Responsible Party	Timeline
Distribute marketing materials	Board Members	Immediate
Support enrollment outreach	All Stakeholders	Ongoing

Action Item	Responsible Party	Timeline
Identify IT candidate	Leadership/Board	ASAP
Recruit additional board members	Board Leadership	Ongoing
Attend Act 55 Training	Board Members	May 17, 2024
Support PACSP Summit	Board Representatives	Fall 2024

16. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned with appreciation for participation and continued commitment to the mission.

17. Key Takeaways

- **Enrollment is the most urgent priority for sustainability**
 - **High school launch is a defining next step**
 - **Marketing + community engagement must accelerate immediately**
 - **LIFE is building a full ecosystem (academic, health, athletics, workforce readiness)**
-

LIFE Male STEAM Academy

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: April 20, 2024

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: [Virtual]

Agenda

Opening

Financial Update

Staff Reports

New Business

Old Business

Community

Adjournment

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by board leadership.

Present: Darryl Canady, Tawana Cook Purnell, Vivian Wilson, David Griffin, Greg Spencer

Members of LIFE Leadership Staff

2. Academic & Program Updates

- Continued focus on **student performance analysis** using CDT data
- Planned **Professional Development Session (April 26, 2024):**
 - Review of student performance trends
 - Identification of instructional strengths and growth areas
 - Goal: Enter next school year with clear academic strategy
- Student enrichment experiences:

- Robotics and engineering field trips
 - CMU engagement and hands-on learning opportunities
-

3. Upcoming School Events

- **Career Day:** May 10, 2024 (9:00 AM – 12:00 PM)
 - **Sneaker Ball:** May 17, 2024 (6:00 PM – 9:00 PM)
 - **August Wilson Block Party:** April 27, 2024
 - **8th Grade Promotion:** June 6, 2024
 - **End-of-Year Celebration:** June 7, 2024
 - Additional initiative:
 - Open invitations for prospective students and families to visit the school
-

4. College & Career Readiness Initiatives

- Introduction of expanded opportunities for students:
 - **Learn & Earn Program** (college credits + workforce exposure)
 - **University of Pittsburgh STEM Program** (4-week summer program + tutoring support)
 - Strategic focus:
Expose students to college pathways, careers, and real-world opportunities early
-

5. High School Development Update

- Curriculum development in progress under leadership team
- Key distinctions:
 - **Physics offered in 9th grade** (instead of traditional biology sequence)
 - **Black History required course** (not elective)
 - Integration of Black History within broader U.S. History curriculum

- Curriculum priorities:
 - Rigorous academic standards
 - Culturally relevant teaching
 - Real-world application
 - Staff collaboration:
 - Full faculty involvement in curriculum design and approval
-

6. Student Retention & Enrollment (High School Transition)

- Survey results:
 - Approximately **50% of students committed to staying**
 - Some students considering leaving due to **athletics (sports availability)**
 - Key insight:
 - Students prefer LIFE's environment and education
 - Parents often influence decisions based on extracurricular offerings
 - Strategic response:
 - Improve communication about participation in district sports
 - Expand in-house athletic offerings
-

7. Athletics & Extracurricular Development

- Current and planned offerings:
 - Basketball (developing program)
 - eSports (high student interest)
 - Track (proposed)
 - Exploration of additional programming
- Key takeaway:
Athletics and extracurriculars are essential for retention and high school growth

8. Enrollment & Recruitment Strategy

- Ongoing targeted outreach:
 - Wilkinsburg
 - Hill District
 - Surrounding communities
- Strategies discussed:
 - Email marketing campaigns
 - Church-based outreach (flyer distribution)
 - Community presence at events
 - Word-of-mouth engagement
- Emphasis:
Direct engagement and grassroots marketing are critical to enrollment growth

9. Facilities Update (Third Floor Renovation)

- Renovation bid received at approximately **\$800,000 (over budget)**
- Plan to **scale back project scope**:
 - Prioritize code compliance (walls, bathrooms, usable space)
 - Delay non-essential enhancements
- Goal:
 - Begin visible progress quickly
 - Complete necessary work before next school year

10. Grants & Fundraising Update

- **Yass Prize Application Submitted**:
 - Potential awards: \$250K – \$1M

- **New Grant Awarded:**
 - \$10,000 from Hospital Aid Society
 - Upcoming opportunity:
 - Photo opportunity with major donor (potential relationship-building)
 - Fundraising strategy:
 - Emphasis on **relationship-based fundraising and direct engagement**
-

11. Partnerships & Professional Development

- Continued partnership with **Grand Canyon University:**
 - Free professional development
 - Access to advanced STEAM/Fab Lab resources
 - Potential instructional support and materials
 - Leadership attending upcoming training and networking sessions
-

12. Testing & Academic Accountability

- Upcoming **PSSA Testing Schedule:**
 - ELA, Math, and Science over next three weeks
 - Concern:
 - Student anxiety around testing
 - Request:
 - Continued support and encouragement for students
-

13. Community Engagement & Outreach

- Participation in **August Wilson Block Party**
- Increased presence in community events
- Strategy:

- Build visibility and trust within the community
 - Position LIFE as a premier educational option
-

14. Board Discussion Highlights

- Importance of:
 - Relationship-building for fundraising
 - Leveraging board networks for support and resources
 - Continued focus on enrollment growth
 - Acknowledgment of:
 - Progress made
 - Need to remain **population-driven for sustainability**
-

15. Key Strategic Priorities

- Increase student enrollment
 - Strengthen student retention (especially for high school)
 - Expand athletics and extracurricular programs
 - Complete facility upgrades within budget
 - Secure major funding opportunities
 - Deepen community and institutional partnerships
-

16. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned with appreciation for participation and continued commitment to the mission.

17. Key Takeaways

- **Enrollment and retention remain the lifeline of the school**

- **High school launch is a critical next phase**
 - **Facilities progress must be visible and strategic**
 - **Partnerships and exposure opportunities are expanding student success**
 - **Fundraising must be relationship-driven and intentional**
-
-

LIFE Male STEAM Academy

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: May 18, 2024

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: [Virtual]

Agenda

Opening

Financial Update

Staff Reports

New Business

Old Business

Community

Adjournment

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by board leadership.

Present: Darryl Canady, David Griffin, Vivian Wilson, Tawana Cook Purnell, Greg Spencer

2. Opening Remarks

- Acknowledgment of continued progress as the school approaches the end of the academic year
- Emphasis on maintaining momentum in **enrollment, academics, and high school planning**

3. Academic & Instructional Update

- Continued focus on:
 - Student performance improvement

- Data-driven instruction
 - Preparing for end-of-year assessments
 - Staff actively engaged in:
 - Professional development
 - Instructional alignment
 - Preparing strategies for the upcoming school year
 - Ongoing emphasis:
Closing achievement gaps and strengthening academic outcomes
-

4. Student Activities & School Culture

- Successful execution and planning of key events:
 - Career Day
 - Sneaker Ball
 - Student engagement activities
 - Positive impact:
 - Strengthening school culture
 - Increasing student morale and connection
-

5. Enrollment & Recruitment Update

- Continued concern:
 - Enrollment numbers for the upcoming school year
- Strategies in place:
 - Community outreach
 - Direct engagement with families
 - Events and open house opportunities
 - Targeted communication campaigns

- Key message:
Enrollment remains essential to sustainability and growth
-

6. High School Expansion Update

- Ongoing preparation for high school launch:
 - Curriculum planning progressing
 - Staffing needs identified
 - Program structure being finalized
 - Continued focus on:
 - Differentiation (STEAM, culturally relevant curriculum)
 - College and career readiness
-

7. Facilities & Operations Update

- Continued work on **third floor renovation planning**
 - Focus on:
 - Budget alignment
 - Prioritizing essential upgrades
 - Preparing space for expansion
-

8. Financial & Fund Development Update

- Continued pursuit of:
 - Grants
 - Donor partnerships
 - External funding opportunities
 - Emphasis on:
Building sustainable funding streams beyond enrollment revenue
-

9. Partnerships & External Engagement

- Ongoing and expanding partnerships:
 - Higher education institutions
 - Community organizations
 - Workforce development programs
 - Goal:
 - Increase student exposure and opportunity
 - Strengthen institutional support
-

10. Board Governance & Development

- Continued need for:
 - Board engagement in recruitment and outreach
 - Identification of new board members
 - Strengthening governance practices
-

11. Key Strategic Priorities

- Increase enrollment for upcoming school year
 - Successfully launch high school program
 - Strengthen academic outcomes
 - Complete facility upgrades within budget
 - Expand partnerships and funding opportunities
-

12. Action Items

Action Item	Responsible Party	Timeline
Support enrollment outreach efforts	Board Members	Immediate

Action Item	Responsible Party	Timeline
Assist with community engagement	Board & Leadership	Ongoing
Finalize high school planning	Leadership Team	Summer 2024
Advance facility planning	Leadership Team	Ongoing
Identify funding opportunities	Board & Leadership	Ongoing

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned with appreciation for participation and continued commitment to the mission.

14. Key Takeaways

- **Enrollment remains the top priority for sustainability**
 - **High school expansion is a critical milestone**
 - **Student culture and engagement efforts are strengthening the school community**
 - **Partnerships and funding will be key to long-term success**
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