



## The Rock Academy

### Board Meeting Minutes

**Date:** February 11, 2026

**Time:** 5:36pm – 7:03pm

**Location:** Virtual - Google Meet

**Meeting Type:** Regular

### Attendance

**Board Members Present:** Jennifer Wade (Chair), Tera Hambrick (Vice Chair), Jennifer Miller (Secretary), Lupe Davalos (Treasurer)

**Staff / Guests Present:** Dr. Ahmed White (Executive Director), Lekita Sims (Director of Operations)

### Call to Order

Meeting called to order at **5:36 PM** by Jennifer Wade. A quorum was established.

**MOTION:** Tera Hambrick moved to approve the agenda as presented. Jennifer Miller seconded.

**VOTE:** Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

### Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes from the January 28, 2026 meeting were reviewed.

**MOTION:** Tera Hambrick moved to approve the minutes. Jennifer Miller seconded.

**VOTE:** Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

### Facilities

- TRA is progressing toward securing the Knowledge Academy (KA) facility with legal and logistical steps advancing to finalize the lease and sublease agreements.
  - Attorneys are working on the sublease agreement which will cover an initial two-year term with two additional one-year options.
  - KA's parent organization, Noble, has already approved the lease negotiation process, reducing potential delays.
  - KA's board can call a special meeting to approve the sublease quickly, ensuring execution before the April 1st state submission deadline.

#### **Rock Academy's Mission:**

*The Rock Academy aims to re-engage disconnected youth, ensuring they succeed in the post-secondary pathway of their choice.*

**Website:** [www.therockacademynashville.org](http://www.therockacademynashville.org) **Email:** [help@therockacademynashville.org](mailto:help@therockacademynashville.org) **Phone:** (615) 569-3992

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- If negotiations fall through with Knowledge Academies, additional spaces have been identified as possible solutions including Martha O'Bryan Center and Olive Branch Church.

### **Insurance Coverage and Vendor Selection**

- The team is ready to finalize insurance coverage with Martin & Zerfoss, having completed due diligence and received favorable reviews.

### **Funding Strategy and Development Staffing**

- The leadership is focused on strengthening funding efforts through key portfolios and hiring a fractional Director of Development to accelerate fundraising goals.
- Strategic Fundraising Initiatives leverage relationships with major funds such as Charter School Growth Fund and New School Venture Fund for credibility and financial support.
- Smaller grant opportunities (e.g., \$25,000 to \$50,000) are being pursued through funder networks.
- Hiring a Director of Development is a priority to professionally manage fundraising, with a goal of raising \$500,000 for facilities and program support within the calendar year.
  - The position is budgeted and critical for sustaining and expanding fundraising efforts.
  - The director will focus on targeted asks for specific positions and initiatives to align funding with strategic needs.
- Anticipated State Funding Increases include a proposed \$40 million increase for charter facilities in the upcoming state budget, which may benefit future facility projects.

### **Student Recruitment**

- Recruitment efforts are intensifying with a goal to enroll 10 to 12 students by the next board meeting, supported by new partnerships and outreach strategies.
- Current Enrollment Status includes one fully enrolled student and four pending applications, with a target to double leads to 60 solid leads per week generating 7-10 applicants weekly.
- The executive director and team are directly engaging in recruitment calls and outreach.
- A national recruitment organization, Mariposa, is being considered for a proposal to enhance recruiting through proven scientific methods.

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- New Staff and Community Liaisons are being added to support recruitment efforts, including a new boots-on-the-ground recruiter with high community impact and plans for expanding to full-time community engagement roles.
  - This role will facilitate door-to-door outreach, tabling events, and phone banking campaigns, with board members encouraged to participate in phone-a-thons.
  - Targeted Outreach and Partnerships are expanding to include juvenile justice programs, foster care organizations, and culturally specific groups such as Hispanic Family Foundations and LGBTQIA+ support centers.
  - The team is coordinating with local social services, detention programs, and community events like baby showers and back-to-school fairs to maximize exposure.
  - Digital ad campaigns include inclusive messaging to attract diverse student populations.
- Board and Staff Engagement in recruitment activities is planned, with opportunities for members to connect with community events and organizations to support student outreach.

### **Organizational Structure and Staffing Plans**

- The leadership is refining the school's staffing model to balance administrative support and direct instructional impact while managing budget constraints.
- Administrative Staffing Decisions include hiring an academic lead (styled as an instructional coach) rather than a traditional assistant principal, focusing on live coaching and academic support for teachers.
  - The AP role is described as a \$70,000 to \$80,000 position focused solely on instructional coaching without discipline duties.
  - Culture and discipline responsibilities will be managed by the executive director and academic leadership.
  - Balancing Staffing with Enrollment Risks acknowledges the challenge of funding multiple admin roles with projected enrollment of 85 students but emphasizes the need for sufficient adult support given the students' complex needs.
- Leadership's Capacity and Prioritization involves choosing between focusing on culture and academics or fundraising, with current plans to stretch leadership across academics while hiring for development roles.
- Board Feedback on Staffing raised concerns about top-heavy administration for first-year enrollment, prompting ongoing reflection and adjustment by leadership to balance effectiveness and budget prudence.

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## Financial Oversight and Governance

- Discussions are underway to improve financial management through a fractional CFO and updated governance documents to support accountability and organizational growth.
- Exploration of Fractional CFO Services is in progress with meetings held and proposals expected from multiple candidates.
- The new CFO model aims to provide proactive financial leadership beyond basic bookkeeping.
- One candidate offers flexible contracts focused on performance rather than long-term commitments.
- A national firm specializing in nonprofits is a strong contender, promising compliance and audit expertise.
- Board and Executive Director Accountability training and resources are being pursued through New School Venture Fund to enhance governance and performance management.
- The board has a guide for charter school executive directors and is open to additional support.

## CTE

- Provided an overview of the Snap-on Tools for CTE and the careers that are associated with those skills.
- Board asks → different job lanes that are aligned for careers and job opportunities for CTE partners

## Additional Proposals

- Infused Ed was engaged for fractional fundraising assistance, including grant writing.

## Action Items

Action Item	Responsible Person	Due Date
Sign the Knowledge Academy Letter of Intent and coordinate receipt of sublease agreement for review	Dr. White	April 1, 2026
Follow up with insurance providers to finalize coverage	Lekita	ASAP

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decisions and communicate status, including polite decline to Associated Insurance with professional courtesy

Lead student recruitment efforts including coordinating phone bank on February 28 and outreach to juvenile justice and community partners	TRA Staff	Ongoing
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Pursue additional funding opportunities with New School Venture Fund and Charter School Growth Fund; prepare for and participate in Big Payback fundraising event in early May	TRA Staff	Ongoing
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Coordinate fundraising asks to local funders targeted to specific positions and programs	Board Members	Ongoing
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Explore and evaluate fractional CFO proposals and make a decision on financial management provider	Dr. White	ASAP
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## Announcements

- **Next Meeting.** The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2026 at 5:30 pm via Google Meet.

## Adjournment

**MOTION:** Jennifer Wade moved to adjourn the meeting.

**VOTE:** Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

## Minutes Submitted By:

Jennifer Miller, Board Secretary

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**Date:** April 3, 2026

**Approved by Board on:** April 13, 2026

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