

Saginaw Covenant Academy  
508 S. Washington Ave.  
Saginaw, MI 48607

**Board of Directors Special Meeting Minutes**  
**999 S. Washington Ave. Saginaw, MI 48601**  
**May 6, 2025 at 3:30 P.M.**

- A. The meeting was called to order at 3:40 P.M. by Mr. Mier
- B. Roll Call was taken and those present were Ty Mier, Dr. Elsa Olvera, Becky Gerzseny, Mike Jury and Callie Schultz. Others present were Edd Synder, Joe Kaplan, Tim Ostrom, Chris Gray, Steven Killey, John Humphreys, Carmen Stricker, Bill Barker. Present online was Leah Breen. Matt Hyatt and Matt Cawood were absent.
- C. The Mission Statement was read by Mr. Mier.
- D. There was no Public Comment on the agenda items.
- E. Approval of agenda motion was made by Mr. Jury, seconded by Dr. Olvera, approved by all board members present. No objections.
- F. Approval of the April 23, 2025 regular meeting minutes tabled until the June 4, 2025 regular meeting taking time to attach more information. Motion made by Mr. Jury, seconded by Ms. Schultz, approved by all board members present. No objections.
- G. Old Business centered on the SCA building expansion project sponsored by CAF. Mr. Kaplan informed the board of the project's progress: CAF is talking with two construction companies, building plans have been approved locally but not yet by the State of Michigan. The architect is investigating the delay.
- H. The review of the GVSU educational school performance report was tabled until the June 4, 2025 meeting when Jeff Maxwell will be able to present to the board.
- I. The review & approval of the GVSU Charter Contract were tabled until the June 4, 2025 meeting pending legal review. A motion made by Mr. Jury, seconded by Ms. Schultz, approved by all board members present. No objections.
- J. GVSU Renewal: Ms. Breen discussed the school's performance report and three-year renewal, emphasizing that academic achievement is the most important factor, but

other aspects like student engagement and school operations are also considered. They noted mixed results in academic achievement and high instances of student disengagement. She explained that Saginaw Covenant Academy uses alternative goals focusing on credit attainment, student engagement, and NWA progress, different from traditional schools. These goals are being redesigned, and new goals will be proposed for approval in the upcoming charter contract. She clarified that these alternative goals do not involve comparisons to other schools then described the site visit process, which includes data-driven observations and qualitative information gathered through interviews with students, parents, and staff. The site visits typically last one day. Dr. Olvera expressed concern over the late delivery of the March 4th letter and lack of communication regarding prior meetings and decisions made without the full board's knowledge. Dr. Olvera stated she felt this was not transparent and created distrust among board members. Ms. Breen explained that the March 4th letter, sent to the board president and Sam Joseph, reassured the school that their evaluation would be independent and not based on assumptions about other CAF managed schools. The letter also requested an evaluation of academic performance and a plan for rapid turnaround efforts during the three-year renewal. Ms. Breen indicated that school performance reports will be issued annually. They also plan to work with the school team to develop interim measures to track progress, potentially increasing site visits if needed. The board discussed approving the charter contract terms with Grand Valley, but decided to postpone approval pending legal counsel review by Mitch Piper. Concerns were raised regarding the limited classroom observations noted in the document. Mr. Killey and other board members discussed the challenges in assessing the school's performance using solely quantitative data, highlighting the unique student population and the need to consider qualitative factors and individual student growth. The board discussed their concerns that Grand Valley's assessment may not fully capture the unique nature of Saginaw Covenant Academy and its non-traditional approach to education. Mr. Humphrys highlighted his long-term involvement with the academy, emphasizing the importance of considering the broader impact of the school on student

lives beyond standardized metrics. A recurring issue was noted between the school's academic focus and its unique mission, which wasn't fully reflected in evaluation metrics. They highlighted the need for increased collaboration and transparency with Grand Valley State University (GVSU) to reconcile these differences.

- K. The board decided to delay approval of the charter contract and educational goals (Schedules 71 and 74) pending legal review, due to concerns about alignment with the school's unique mission and the flexibility allowed within the provided goals. Motion to delay approval made by Mr. Jury, seconded by Ms. Gerzseny, approved by all board members present. No objections.
- L. The 2025 - 26 school year curriculum was reviewed and approved. Motion was made by Mr. Jury, seconded by Ms. Schultz, approved by all board members present. No objections.
- M. Revised board policies from the National Charter Schools Institute were reviewed and approved. Motion made by Dr. Olvera, seconded by Ms. Gerzseny, approved by all board members present. No objections.
- N. The 2024-25 budget amendments were reviewed and adopted. The board approved budget amendments, reflecting increased revenue for at-risk youth, and adjustments to salaries and other expenses. They noted that a 6% teacher raise, retroactive to January 1st, was included, alongside an 8% 401k match. Motion made by Mr. Jury, seconded by Ms. Gerzseny, approved by all board members present. No objections.
- O. Management Agreement Review and Approval: The board tabled the review and approval of the agreement for the continuation of the management agreement with Covenant Academy Foundation (CAF). Clarifications were requested regarding building facilities, the 15% management fee, and plans to support the school's educational goals. The board also decided to defer final approval of the management agreement until their next meeting, June 4, 2025, pending resolution of several outstanding questions. Discussions centered on the school building's ownership and lease arrangements. CAF clarified that the original loan for the building purchase served in lieu of rent payments and that the plan moving forward was a zero-dollar lease agreement, alongside a future

letter of intent on the deed to the building. Motion to table approval was made by Ms. Schultz, seconded by Mr. Jury, approved by all board members present. No objections. On a side note, Questions arose about the school's authority over student conduct outside of school property, with legal precedent cited to support the school's authority in certain situations.

- P. After speaking in favor of Kareem Bowen and Carmen Stricker, the SCA board recommended them for appointment to the board, pending GVSU approval and a future board vote to expand the board size from five to seven members. Motion was made by Mr. Jury, seconded by Ms. Schultz, approved by all board members present. No objections.
- Q. Discussion - Mr. Mier addressed concerns from the previous meeting, emphasizing the importance of mutual respect and teamwork among board members. They highlighted their commitment to the school's mission and expressed a desire for collaborative leadership. Both Ms. Schultz from the board and CAF members expressed their commitment to supporting SCA and its students, emphasizing the importance of understanding the unique context of the school and its students' backgrounds. They also conveyed the need for the evaluation team to receive further education on evaluating non-traditional schools. Mr. Barker said he would "take back" to GVSU the board and CAF's concerns raised about inconsistencies between initial positive feedback and subsequent negative evaluations. He agreed that the evaluation process should better reflect the unique nature of the school and its student population. It was highlighted that the school's current record high enrollment, attendance rate, and projected graduation rate, emphasize significant progress made. Ms. Gerzseny identified errors in the Board of Director's calendar for the next academic year, noting incorrect year designations for upcoming meetings. Mr. Killey assured her that the discrepancies would be reviewed and corrected.
- R. There was no public comment on non-agenda items.
- S. Reminders were given concerning the annual budget hearing on June 4th at 12:00PM, a regular meeting on June 4th at 12:10PM, and SCA's graduation on June 4th at 6:00PM.

5/6/

T. The meeting adjourned at 5:25PM. A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Gerzseny, seconded by Dr. Olvera, approved by all board members present. No objections.

**Minutes Certification**

Proposed minutes submitted:  <i>Steven Killey May 13, 2025</i>
Approved by the Saginaw Covenant Academy Board of Directors Special Meeting: Date: June 4, 2025  <i>Michael Jany</i>

Board Secretary

A copy of the meeting minutes is available for public inspection at SCA 508 S. Washington Ave, Saginaw, MI 48607, within 8 business days for "proposed minutes and within 5 business days of approval for approved minutes. The Academy shall comply with subtitle A of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Public Law 101-336, 62 USC § 12101 et seq or any successor law. Should you require specific accommodation(s) please contact Steven Killey at (989) 596-1100 prior to the meeting.