

Minutes of Board Meeting
November 18, 2025
6 p.m.

The meeting was held at the Lakeland Achievement Academy. Board members in attendance were Trish Buchanan, Nick Sellars, Adil Khan, Paige Campbell, Janice Jones, Karli Wilkinson, Jesse Naranjo, Jill Haladay, Ana Kalman, Liz Plemons, Brant Masters, Sheilitha Williams and Steve Earley. Staff members present included Kristin Aiken, Cindi Parker-Pearson, Deborah Sulsona, and Kelly Lane.

Approval of Minutes

Trish Buchanan called the meeting to order at 6:01p.m. Jill Haladay moved to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2025 Board meeting. Sheilitha Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public Comment

None

Financial Report

Paige Campbell presented the financial report for the three months ending October 31, 2025. Cash and investments total \$2.29 million. Total assets and net assets are \$3.6 million. Total revenue was \$1,315K and total expenses were \$1,444K resulting in a net deficit of \$129K. Even with the deficit, we are better than this time last year. This is typical for this time of year as much of our fundraising revenue comes in the second half of the fiscal year.

Parents Report

Parents are wrapping up the fall basket fundraiser. Winners will be drawn tomorrow, Wednesday. We had one family that donated \$1,000 to the fundraiser! This parent group fundraiser helps fund the staff holiday luncheon put on by the parents group.

Development Report

We had a successful "Craft & Cultivation" event last week. Four previous and/or current donors came to the Lakeland campus and spent some meaningful time with a few students and therapists. They all enjoyed themselves. We are considering another one in the spring. Thank you to Ashlee Cofer for spearheading this new event.

The Development team is working on the year-end donor letter and have asked last year's community leaders and board members to personalize some of the letters. Kelly Lane provided a calendar of her available times to meet with board members and have the letters ready for you.

Janice Jones reminded board members of the Top Chef sponsorships. You can even pledge an amount before year-end and pay it in 2026.

Principal's Report

Teachers are completing progress reports and from now until Christmas break they will meet with parents to go over them.

Cindi Parker-Pearson received a letter from the state attorney's office regarding the security incident that happened in August. Cindi was listed as the witness/victim and was unexpectedly asked what she would like to see happen to the plaintiff. Cindi responded with suggestions such as a ban from being on any school campus, a possible mental health evaluation and to be monitored through probation.

The teacher that was out on medical leave that Cindi has been subbing for has been released by the doctor and will return the Monday after Fall Break.

President's Report

The state of Florida has approved children receiving services through Early Steps "Extension Option" beyond age three. Early Steps does not have specifics on what that looks like but changes will be implemented by July 1, 2026. The impact to our program offering services beyond age three would likely be in the form of playgroups.

We will be notified December 1 of our approved allocation for Birth to Three for the 2026 calendar year. Depending on our allocation, we will then look to hire another full-time EI.

Kristin Aiken thanked the board members for their generosity in donating funds that allowed us to help our families and staff with food/groceries while SNAP benefits were on hold. More than 100 bags were picked up in the first three days they were offered.

Also, continue to look around your sphere of influence and see who you can bring in for a tour!

Committee Reports

The Personnel committee recently met to discuss Paraprofessional salaries. The starting salary is \$15/hour but since they work 1393 annual hours their annual salary is low which makes hiring very difficult. The Personnel committee recommends giving all paras a \$1/hour increase effective January 1, 2026. This would have an impact to our budget of \$17,780 for this fiscal year. Then they recommend when creating the 26/27 budget, that any para making less than \$18/hour get another \$1/hour increase and those over \$18/hour would get the typical 3% increase. Steve moved to approve the personnel committee's recommendation. Karli Wilkinson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The Personnel Committee is also looking at other non-salary benefits for staff and will continue to meet.

The Vision Committee was created from the 2024 board retreat to keep the future of Achievement Academy at the forefront. The committee unanimously agrees that moving towards a single combined campus is more efficient. Janice Jones made a motion to approve the Vision Committee to move forward with efforts to plan a consolidated site. A presentation is being created for a possible major donor with hopes that their contribution could be up to a third of the total needed. This will be a big undertaking and will be divided into additional committees under the Vision umbrella including a Fundraising committee, Finance committee, Facilities committee, etc.

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Unfinished Business

The board won't meet again until January 20, 2026. Nick Sellars moved to give the Executive Committee full decision-making authority from now until the next board meeting. Steve Earley seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

New Business

None

The meeting adjourned at 6:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Sulzona

Chief Financial Officer