
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A meeting of the Explore Knowledge Academy Charter School Board of Trustees was held on Jan 15 2026, at 4:00 PM, in person and virtually, at 5871 Mountain Vista Street, Las Vegas, NV 89120.

Board President Matthew Fitzgerald called the regular meeting to order at 4:01 PM.

OPENING

Call to Order and Flag Salute and Roll Call (For possible action) (Matthew Fitzgerald, Chair)

A quorum was established with the following board members present:

- Matthew Fitzgerald – President
- Michelle Alarie- Vice President
- Mario Rezai– Treasurer
- Elisabeth Nyang-Coleman– Secretary
- Calvert Webster – Trustee
- Jodie Piscioti - Trustee
- Matt Gromlich - Trustee

Matthew Fitzgerald presented a declaration of posting of the board meeting agenda. The meeting was called to order by President Matt Fitzgerald, who confirmed a quorum was present.

1 - PUBLIC COMMENTS

- No public in person and no public on the new board meeting teleconference, ekacademy.org/teleconference.
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ADMIN UPDATES

2. Financial Update

- November and December's check registers were submitted.

3. Superintendent's Update (Abbe Mattson, Superintendent) (Information, Discussion, For Possible Action)

- Enrollment is holding steady; for every student lost, one or two are gained.
- Advertising is paused for the next couple of months and will resume in May. The next big push is advertising for the upcoming Kinder Roundup to enroll more kindergarteners for the next school year.
- The preview document has been updated to include more details on special groups within the school, such as speech pathology, special ed, 504 plans, and Explore More, in addition to the usual updates on Read by Grade Three, ELL, distance learning, and dual enrollment.
- A parent is working to establish a Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). A survey has been sent to families to gauge interest in helping with the startup or participating once it is established. The parent's daughter is a senior, so she will get it started and then depart.
- The Community Council met and approved the policies and the second-quarter financials that are on the current board agenda.
- January is paper donation month. Donations have been very low.
- To increase donations, each SEL class can choose a prize (under \$100-\$200) for bringing in the most reams of paper. The competition will run next week.
- One secondary SEL group suggested a Nintendo Switch play day prize.
- The goal is to avoid requiring teachers to provide their own paper.
- SPCSA is re-evaluating grant funds. If other charter schools have closed or are not using their funds, the money is redistributed. This may result in an increase in grant money for the school.
- The grants budget will be readjusted if additional funds are received.

Guest speaker

- **Mrs. Keyer (School Counselor):** This is her 18th year at EKA. Her job includes academic, college/career, and social-emotional counseling. She is also the secondary test coordinator and the liaison for NCAA and NIAA, ensuring EKA courses meet college athletic eligibility requirements.
- **Mrs. Addison Moses (School Social Worker):** This is her fourth year at EKA. Her role is K-12 and includes crisis intervention, social-emotional check-ins, providing food for students in need, bridging gaps between home and school by providing resources to families, and conducting attendance meetings.

4. Staff/Teacher's Update (Joanne Sanders, Student Support Advocate):

Elementary Highlights:

- **Kindergarten:** Students are learning about 3D shapes, recognizing long and short vowels, comparing numbers up to 10, and learning about world climates. The humanities goal is for students to be able to count to 100.
- **First Grade:** Students are reading about uniforms and shoes, comparing folktales to other reading types, and learning about animals and their habitats. In math, they are working on place value and addition fluency.
- **Second Grade:** In humanities, students are working on money identification and value. In science, they are learning what plants need to survive.
- **Third Grade:** Students are working on multiplication and division, focusing on the numbers 6 and 7, and reviewing 3s and 4s.
- **Fourth Grade:** As a reward for mastering multiplication facts, students earned a field trip. This semester, they can earn a dance party for mastering multiplication and division. They are learning about inter-world division and the functional parts of plants.
- **Fifth Grade:** Students are writing persuasive essays, creating movie posters for their fiction novel book reports, and learning about the main idea and theme. They are studying energy, information processing in living things, and different world cultures.

Secondary Highlights:

- **Sixth Grade:** In English, students are reading about "animal allies" and using evidence to support claims. In science, they are reviewing metric measurements.
- **Seventh Grade:** History students are learning about the westward expansion in the U.S. during the 19th century. English students are reading about outer space. Science students are learning about atoms and beginning chemistry.
- **Eighth Grade:** Students are working on argumentative reading and writing. The Science Club has 14 members and is preparing for a competition.
- **College Readiness Math:** Students have started a unit on taxes to prepare for adult life.
- **Student Council:** Preparing for a dance.
- **Theater:** Planning a new play, possibly a musical.
- **Art:** Learning about physical art like cave painting and Stonehenge.
- **World Languages:** Students are learning about French history, reviewing the intro chapter in Spanish I, and starting a new unit in the heritage Spanish course.
- **Geography:** Students are learning about European geography.
- **U.S. History:** Students are studying the age of absolute monarchs through a simulation.
- **11th Grade History:** Started a World War II simulation with a League of Nations roundtable.
- **Seniors (Economics/Financial Literacy):** Launching a budgeting unit where they research careers and apply budgeting skills.
- **Junior Studies:** Students are prepping for the ACT in February.

- **Explore More:** The aftercare program collaborates with teachers to reinforce student learning in math, English, reading, and writing for K-6 students. On Fridays, students participate in arts and crafts.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 5. Adoption of November 20, 2025 Agenda (Matthew Fitzgerald, Chair) (Information, Discussion, For Possible Action)**
- 6. Approval of September 18, 2025 Board Minutes (Matthew Fitzgerald, Chair) (Information, Discussion, For Possible Action)**
- 7. Approval of Current Enrollment FY 26 as of January 7, 2026 (Abbe Mattson, Superintendent) (Information, Discussion, For Possible Action)**
- 8. Acknowledgement of Projected Enrollment FY 27 as of January 7, 2026 (Abbe Mattson, Superintendent) (Information, Discussion, For Possible Action)**
- 9. Approval of /Continuous Improvement Plans Second Quarter / School Performance Plans (Abbe Mattson, Superintendent) (Information, Discussion, for Possible Action)**

Mario Rezai moved to approve items 5 through 9 on the consent agenda as presented. Elisabeth Nyang-Coleman seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

10. FY 26 2nd Quarter Financials (Information, Discussion, For Possible Action)

- Total expenses are at 46.1% for the fiscal year, which is considered excellent as it is below the 50% mark at the halfway point of the year.
- New revenue streams from Title I and Title II funds have been added to the budget. The report shows 0% spent because these are reimbursement-based; funds are spent first, and then the school is reimbursed. The billing for January has just been submitted.

- Even with some large items not yet billed, total income is at 52% of the projection, indicating the school is bringing in more money than anticipated.
- Salaries for regular employees are under the 50% mark, which is the target.
- The line item for temporary substitute salaries (123S) may appear high, but this is often offset by a reduction in the instructional aide budget (320), as the school utilizes its own instructional aides as substitute teachers when possible, which is a cost-saving measure.
- Taxes and benefits are on track. The total benefits line is at 41% due to a health benefits refund that was passed on to employees, reducing their January premium payment.
- Line 161 (Extra Duty Teachers) is high because it includes stipends, some of which will be offset by grant reimbursements.
- Lines 344 and 344S are negative due to a refund from a prior year.
- Marketing is over budget due to a \$500/month payment to Fox 5, which will be paused until May.
- Line 441 is negative due to funds being received back on bonds from the new bond manager, ComputerShare.
- The supplies budget is high (80%), largely because textbook costs (line 653) are paid in July/August. It also includes costs for new distance learning students, which are offset by incoming DSA funds.
- Regarding the Speech Therapist who started mid-year, costs are expected to even out as she completes compensatory minutes for services missed at the beginning of the year. Costs would only go over budget if the number of students needing services significantly increased beyond what was budgeted. The therapist is close to being caught up on all minutes.

Michelle Alarie-moved to approve the FY 26 2nd Quarter Financials; Mario Rezai seconded. The vote was unanimous, motion passed.

11. Revised Attendance Policy (Information, Discussion, For Possible Action)

- The policy was updated to clarify it is the **Attendance Policy**, not the enrollment policy.
- One sentence was added: For scheduled assessments or finals, the school will not approve any pre-arranged absences. This is to prevent parents from scheduling absences to avoid state testing like the SBAC.

Michelle Alarie-moved to approve the Revised Attendance Policy as presented. Calvert Webster seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion passed.

12. Revised Grading Policy for Transfer Students (Abbe Mattson, Superintendent) (Information, Discussion, For Possible Action)

- The word "project" was removed, as the school is now public speaking-based, not project-based.
- A statement was added to reiterate the importance of finals for secondary students.
- It was noted that these changes should also be applied to the main grading policy, not just the transfer policy. An updated version of the main policy will be provided next month.

Mario Rezai moved to approve the Revised Grading Policy for Transfer Students as presented. Michelle Alarie seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion passed.

13. Revised Secondary Locker Policy (Abbe Mattson, Superintendent) (Information, Discussion, For Possible Action)

- A statement was added to the policy at the request of the community council.
- The new statement clarifies that the school reserves the right to cut a lock off a locker if administration needs to open it and the student assigned to it is unavailable. This was prompted by an incident where a locker had to be opened due to spoiled food.

Mario Rezai moved to approve the Revised Secondary Locker Policy with the changes noted. Calvert Webster seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion passed.

14. Administration notification of any gifts or donations since the last board meeting.(Abbe Mattson, Superintendent) (Information, Discussion, Acknowledgement)

- January is Paper Donation Month; low donation volume noted.
- New incentive: Each SEL class may select a prize (under \$100–\$200) for highest paper donations; aim to boost participation (example request: Nintendo Switch play session for secondary).
- The goal is to avoid teachers supplying paper from personal budgets while managing costs.
- No new gifts reported; no new grants yet.
- SPCSA re-allocation/truing-up of grants expected after Monday; potential increases to charter grants if funds are freed (e.g., closed schools or unused funds). Superintendent and Mrs. Rogers will revisit grant budgets and adjust accordingly upon notice.

CLOSING

15. Public Comment No public in person and no public on the new board meeting teleconference, ekacademy.org/teleconfere

16. Board Reflection Period

- A question was asked about enrollment being 581 with approximately 70 students with disabilities (around 12%). Ms. Mattson confirmed that the school has consistently run between 10% and 12% for its disability population.

- The next board meeting is February 26, which is the fourth Thursday of the month, due to the February break.
- Board packet materials may be delivered on the Monday before the Thursday meeting due to the break and several major items being prepared for the February agenda, including a budget and a charter amendment.

17. Upcoming Calendar Events (Abbe Mattson, Superintendent) (Information, Discussion, Acknowledgement)

- The next board meeting is February 26th.
- The second-semester events calendar is available and updated daily.
- Graduation is scheduled for May 21st. The last board meeting of the school year is May 19th.

18. Adjournment (Action)

Michelle Alarie moved to adjourn; Elisabeth Nyang-Coleman seconded. The vote was unanimous, and the meeting adjourned at 4:50PM.
