

# Syracuse Arts Academy

## Electronic Annual Board Meeting Minutes

### Thursday, June 26, 2025

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81850705484?from=addon>

Meeting ID: 818 5070 5484

Mobile: (669) 900-9128



**In Attendance:** Mary Johnston, Neil Garner, Nate Schow, Rene Dreiling,

**Excused:** Jerrad Pullum,

**Others in Attendance:** Kellie Mudrow, Dawn Kawaguchi, Jon McQueary, Tracy Ressa, Jay Welk (5:53 p.m.)

#### SAA Mission Statement

The purpose of Syracuse Arts Academy is to develop respectful, confident citizens in a solid educational environment enriched by artistic expression.

## Minutes

#### 2024-2025 Board Priorities

Data Equivalent  
Development of Teachers  
Alignment of Curriculum  
Building Expansion Vision

#### **5:30 PM – INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**

- Welcome & Roll Call – Mary Johnston

#### **There was no PUBLIC COMMENT.**

- This was the second public comment period for the Amplify CKLA Curriculum. Kellie discussed the implementation of the Amplify CKLA curriculum for the South campus, which is licensed for five years and covers language art's needs, excluding annual consumables.

#### **REPORTS**

##### ➤ **Administration**

- State of the School – Kellie Mudrow
  - ✓ **Current Enrollment** – Kellie reported that enrollment is increasing, with 408 students currently at the South campus, and they are planning to hire one more 5th-grade teacher to ensure two teachers per grade level.
  - ✓ **Update on South Campus** – We are planning on getting the keys to the building on Tuesday. Final walk thru is tomorrow with the construction company. We will be represented at Syracuse Founders Day and other local

cities. Michele is planning an open house, with the aim of allowing the public to tour the facility and meet staff before the start of the school year. The bleachers may not be installed before the school opens.

## BOARD TRAINING

- Review Ethics Policy & Sign Annual Commitment to Ethical Behavior\* – Jon McQueary discussed the ethics policy, emphasizing that allegations of violations should be reported to the School's Board of Directors, who will ensure prompt investigation and appropriate action. He also covered the ethical behavior statement that board members must sign annually, attesting to their commitment to abiding by the policy
- Annual Fraud Risk Assessment\* Review – Jon McQueary reviewed the Fraud Risk Assessment, noting that the School's current score of 375 out of 395 places it in the very low risk category. He explained that the only area for improvement was the lack of a formal internal audit function, which is not required due to the school's small size. The board members agreed to sign the ethics policy and fraud risk assessment documents during their upcoming retreat on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July.

## CONSENT ITEMS

- May 8, 2025 Electronic Board Meeting Minutes – There was no further discussion.
- Ratify Amended Technology Purchase (approved 12-05-24) from not to exceed \$450,000 to not to exceed \$525,000 – Kellie Mudrow discussed the need to adjust the order of student and teacher devices for a new school due to higher-than-expected enrollment. Kellie explained that while teacher device orders were reduced from 35 to 28 (with a likely increase to 30), more student devices were needed, increasing from the initially planned 450 to potentially 500. This amendment to the bid would allow for up to 500 students, with Kellie noting they had a \$55,000 buffer in the technology budget. Mary requested clarifying the differences between whiteboards and smart boards, with Kellie explaining that smart boards are more expensive interactive devices used in classrooms, while whiteboards are cheaper and will be used in conference rooms and special education spaces. **Nate Schow made a motion to approve the consent items. Rene Dreiling seconded the motion. The roll call votes were as follows:**

**Mary Johnston – Yes**

**Nate Schow – Yes**

**Rene Dreiling – Yes**

**Neil Garner – Yes**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

## VOTING ITEMS

- 2024-2025 SAA Final Amended Budget – Jon McQueary presented a detailed budget analysis for fiscal years 2025 and 2026, highlighting actual results, original budgets, and income statements. The meeting focused on budget adjustments for the new campus, with Jon explaining that the budget includes a potential \$1.8 million draw from the PTIF fund, though actual usage may be lower. Mary noted that while the required savings withdrawal of around \$2 million was expected, it was still "painful" but not surprising. Jon detailed the significant increase in property service costs due to leasing, which includes property taxes, and explained that these expenses would decrease once the school bonds for the building.

The discussion concluded with Mary expressing hope for reaching 500 students to reduce costs, while acknowledging the current capacity of 400 students. Kellie added that Michele has worked hard to shop around to get the best prices.

- 2025-2026 SAA Annual Budget – There was no further discussion. See above for discussion.
- Amplify/CKLA Curriculum Purchase – Kellie reviewed the Amplify CKLA/ELA curriculum including components for grades K-5. Kellie highlighted the importance of having a comprehensive package with digital licenses, consumables, and professional development for teachers. Mary praised the curriculum's inclusion of grades 4-5 and its arts integration feature, which Kellie expressed excitement about. The board packet included all necessary information for pricing.
- White Boards Purchase & Installation – There was no further discussion. See “consent items” for discussion.
- Ratify Board Members & Terms – Mary Johnston reviewed the current terms of the board members with acknowledging Art Hansen as the newest board member with term of June 2029.
- Ratify Board Officers – Mary Johnston would like to move this to the July 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Ratify Lead Director – Mary Johnston stated that we are very happy with Kellie and would like to renew her for the next school year. Kellie reported that all administrative positions had been filled except for an intern position at the North campus.

**Neil Garner made a motion to approve the following items:**

- **Approve the final amended budget for the 2024-2025 school year;**
- **Approve the proposed annual operating budget for the 2025-2026 school year;**
- **Approve the Amplify CKLA/ELA curriculum purchase not to exceed \$155,000;**
- **Approve SL Contracting for the purchase and installation of white board not to exceed \$40,000;**
- **Appoint Art Hansen as a board member with a 4-year term to expire on June 2029 with a start date of July 1, 2025, approve Nate Schow with a new 4-year term to expire June 2029, and ratify Mary Johnston with a term to expire June 2028, Neil Garner with a term to expire June 2027, and Rene Dreiling with a term to expire June 2026; and**
- **Ratify Kellie Mudrow as the Lead Director for the 2025-2026 school year and her employment agreement as discussed in a previous closed session.**

**Rene Dreiling seconded the motion. The roll call votes were as follows:**

**Mary Johnston – Yes**

**Nate Schow – Yes**

**Rene Dreiling – Yes**

**Neil Garner – Yes**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- 2025-2026 Board Meeting Schedule – Mary would like to review these dates at the July meeting. She asked the board to check their calendars and bring any conflicts back to the July meeting.

➤ Calendaring Items – Mary Johnston reviewed the upcoming calendar dates.

- NCSC25 Orlando, FL June 29-July 2
- Cancel July 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting
- Retreat on July 10<sup>th</sup> @ 9:00 a.m. at AW
- Next Pre-Board Meeting – July 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Next Board Meeting – August 7<sup>th</sup> @ North Campus

**6:34 PM – Nate Schow made a motion to ADJOURN. Rene Dreiling seconded the motion.**

**The votes were as follows:**

**Mary Johnston – Yes**

**Nate Schow – Yes**

**Rene Dreiling – Yes**

**Neil Garner – Yes**

**Motion passed unanimously.**