

Thomas Edison Charter Schools
Governing Board Meeting
Date: October 1, 2025

Meeting called to order at 5:31 pm by Lindsey Fowers

Board Members Present: Lindsey Fowers, Ester Israelsen, Courtney Carpenter, and Jeff Mason

Board Members Participating Electronically: none

Board Members Absent and Excused: Ryan Reeves

Conducting: Lindsey Fowers

1. Adoption of the Agenda

2. Public Comment:

Principal Brad Larsen thanked the governing board members for their service. Principal Melani Kirk seconded that sentiment.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes as distributed: Lindsey Fowers

Second: Jeff Mason

Affirmative Vote: Lindsey Fowers, Ester Israelsen, Courtney Carpenter, and Jeff Mason

Resolved: unanimous

4. Board Training - Brian Carpenter Podcast #11 All in the Family: nepotism

Brian Carpenter emphasizes the risks of nepotism in school governance. To protect the school from the negative consequences, clear rules and procedures should be in place. These include maintaining transparency between school leadership and the governing board, properly advertising open positions, and ensuring that all hiring decisions are made fairly and objectively. In addition, family members must not be placed in roles where they could improperly benefit from one another. All board members, officers, and directors should also complete and sign conflict-of-interest disclosures to provide accountability and prevent ethical violations.

Jamie Lewis stated that Utah has updated its nepotism laws since this training was released, and the schools have updated their policies to reflect the law.

5. Board Training Discussion: Policies & Procedures Manual Section 2000 (Students and Parents); Parent Handbook

Board member Ester Israelsen asked if the life skills training regarding drugs, mentioned in the Parent Handbook, is occurring in the schools. Principal Kirk said this is addressed in the 7th grade Health class and in 5th grade it's an optional google classroom link that parents can do with their students.

Board member Ester Israelsen also asked how the schools are recruiting to increase enrollment. Principal Kirk said they are going to address that topic during their principal reports.

6. Report completion of state audit training: Lindsey Fowers

Each board member is required to complete the state audit training, and the completion certificate needs to be given to Lindsey Fowers. Lindsey will send a link for the training to those who need to complete it.

7. Policy updates: #3203 Professional Standards for Licensed Educators; #3206 Code of Conduct/Appropriate Behavior; #5103 Cash Disbursement & Purchasing

In policy #3203, the word "authorized" was corrected to "unauthorized".

Motion to approve policy #3203 as presented: Lindsey Fowers

Second: Ester Israelsen

Affirmative Vote: Lindsey Fowers, Ester Israelsen, Courtney Carpenter, and Jeff Mason

Resolved: unanimous

In policy #3206, the word "prohibited" is being corrected to "protected".

Motion to approve Policy 3206 as presented: Lindsey Fowers

Second: Courtney Carpenter

Affirmative Vote: Lindsey Fowers, Ester Israelsen, Courtney Carpenter, and Jeff Mason

Resolved: unanimous

In policy #5103, financial statements will be reviewed "monthly" was changed to "quarterly".

Motion to approve Policy 5103 as presented: Lindsey Fowers

Second: Courtney Carpenter

Affirmative Vote: Lindsey Fowers, Ester Israelsen, Courtney Carpenter, and Jeff Mason

Resolved: unanimous

8. TECS Philosophy: Jim Peterson

This month's topic comes from the school's Policies and Procedures Manual, specifically the "Position Statement on Statewide Testing." The school consistently performs at a high level on state assessments, as evidenced by the data presented at last month's board meeting. These results support the school's philosophy that not teaching to the test is more beneficial for both students and teachers. The philosophy also emphasizes that each student's success reflects the success of every teacher, and that any concerns arising from test results are a shared responsibility. Finally, the success of one grade cohort should not overshadow the efforts and progress of others.

Board member Courtney Carpenter said she is very grateful for this policy because when she was a teacher she never felt that pressure for students to perform well on the state-testing, and the school's philosophy statement is greatly appreciated. Principal Kirk agreed and added that since the school hires quality teachers, they naturally teach well and do their best with a solid curriculum.

Board member Jeff Mason mentioned the policy was written in 2012, and it is still pertinent today.

9. Financial Report: Jim Peterson

Jim thanked Steve Finley for his hard work in getting the September finance report out to him. The report shows that each campus is spending less than the projected average monthly budget. It is looking like the schools will meet their cash surplus goals, this will allow the school save for unexpected expenses or put down an additional payment toward the school loan.

The October 1st enrollment count will be set soon, so Jim will lockdown the revenues for the fiscal year once enrollment numbers are finalized.

10. Student Data Report: Angela Williams

The beginning of year (BOY) Acadience Learning scores for Reading and Math are in, these scores are important because a lot of the school's state goals are based on student proficiency on these tests. Math scores are as follows: kindergarten is at 72% proficient, first grade is at 76% proficient, second grade is at 78% proficient, and third grade is at 82% proficient. Reading scores are as follows: kindergarten is at 67% proficient, first grade is at 68% proficient, second grade is at 87% proficient, and third grade is at 84% proficient.

Board member, Ester Israelsen, asked if the scores are tracked year to year as students progress through the school, and if the scores continue to stay that high. Angela explained that she does track scores year to year and she does present a year-to-year comparison from time to time to the governing board. She also explained she tracks the scores to see if there is growth from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. This growth is really what is important and what the state is looking to see in student scores.

Angela also presented a slide from a state literacy training showing that Thomas Edison Charter School–South has already met state proficiency and Reading on Grade Level (ROGL) goals in first, second, and third grades. The South campus was one of only seven schools recognized. In addition, several teachers were invited to attend a Science of Reading awards night to receive recognition for this achievement.

Board member Courtney Carpenter, asked how and if the schools advertise these recognitions. Currently, the school’s social media person is going to make a flyer to post, but they are going to make sure it is advertised. Board member Ester Israelsen, suggested sharing this information with parents since the best way to advertise is through parents already attending the school. Principal Brad Larsen agreed with this idea, because it provides concrete evidence and support for why Thomas Edison is a great school.

11. LEA Specific Licenses: Angela Williams

The school is requesting three additional LEA-specific licenses. Individuals granted an LEA-specific license must have a mentor, complete background checks, and be supported by the LEA. By granting the license, the LEA affirms that it is familiar with the individual’s qualifications, career pathway, and background, and that the school endorses their ability to teach. The school is asking for licenses for the following individuals:

Tammy King – 5th grade teacher

Holli Williams – Secondary Science

Chelsea DeVries – Secondary Math

Motion to approve the LEA Specific License for the three candidates as presented: Lindsey Fowers

Second: Ester Israelsen

Affirmative Vote: Lindsey Fowers, Ester Israelsen, Courtney Carpenter, and Jeff Mason

Resolved: unanimous

12. Public Comment:

Lynda Johnson, a parent from Thomas Edison South, shared some ideas on activities/programs that she thinks will be a great addition to the school’s programs.

The first suggestion, is a STEM night. She is going to get companies from around the valley involved in this event and it will be a free family event night.

The second suggestion is to implement a Student Safety Patrol, with an emphasis on citizenship.

This is a free program through AAA, and they would provide safety vests, badges, and parental permission forms. A teacher would need to be in charge of this, but it would provide students with a great opportunity to serve and take ownership of something that can have a positive impact during drop off and pick up times.

The third suggestion, is to have the school get involved in the Junior Achievement (JA) BizTown. This is a hands-on program in which students learn about finances, running a business, writing checks, voting for a mayor, etc., while being a part of a mock businesses part of their town. This program includes lesson plans done in school as well as a field trip to one of their centers.

Lynda strongly believes these programs will enrich the lives of students.

Board chair Lindsey Fowers thanked Lynda for her ideas and requested that she share more details via email.

Lynda said Thomas Edison is a wonderful school, and their focus on positivity has specifically benefited her kids. She positively promotes the school as a place where it helps students to take ownership of their education.

13. Strategic Outcome Goals for 25-26 School Year: Melani Kirk, Brad Larsen

The school administration would like to change Strategic Outcome goal #7. This is a financial goal and they would like to change it to:

Maintain a composite cash surplus of 5% or greater with a goal of paying off the remaining Direct Placement bond balance by June 30th, 2027.

The word “composite” refers to both the North and the South campus.

Motion to approve the Strategic Outcome Goals as presented: Lindsey Fowers

Second: Courtney Carpenter

Affirmative Vote: Lindsey Fowers, Ester Israelsen, Courtney Carpenter, and Ryan Reeves

Resolved: unanimous

14. Principal Reports: Melani Kirk and Brad Larsen

Upon reviewing the board training, specifically the *Seven Outs* book, it was clarified that the governing board is not required to vote to approve new hires. Instead, the school is responsible for notifying the governing board of any new hires.

North –

- The Directors of Instruction do a great job doing their classroom observations, they provide a report of their findings which usually includes that the teacher overwhelmingly speak lots of positive statements to students versus negative.
- The playground poll was struck by lightning, which fried switches, and damaged the newly installed security cameras. They are working with the insurance company to get things fixed.

- The school's fall family activity was well attended and it was a successful event.
- The school had 3 students participate in the Thermo Fisher Scientific Junior Innovators Challenge and all three placed in the top 300 out of 1,890 participants.

South –

- The Oct 1 enrollment count was at 694 this year.
- The Economically Disadvantage student percentage is at 23.3%
- The school's Constitution Assembly had a great presenter and one of the teachers, Jenna Oakey, put a ton of American Flags out along the front of the school. It was a very patriotic event.
- The schools are one of 14 that are Spalding accredited, and they have several teachers who are Spalding certified to teach and train parents. The Spalding program was acknowledged as an ESSA-evidenced reading program by Johns Hopkins University.
- The school is currently hosting two USU practicum students. This is a great way for the school to see how well these individuals perform with the school's curriculum and it helps with recruitment if teaching positions become available.
- Kids Empowered is going to continue to be offered to students during the school day. The school thinks this program is beneficial enough to students and they want as many students as possible to participate.

15. Vendor and Personnel Requests: Melani Kirk and Brad Larsen

Personnel Notification

North –

Shain Baldwin – 1:1 aide

Vendor Requests

North –

System Service Specialists – addition of a few more cameras to help with blind spots. The total cost is going to be \$1,575 for the cameras, installation, and licensing.

Both campuses –

Target River – The school is asking for approval to hire a marketing company to promote its programs. This company will create advertisements using their own videos and photos, serving as a “one-stop shop” for marketing needs. Target River, a state-approved vendor with excellent reviews, has proposed a contract at \$5,445.56 per month for 12 months. They guarantee delivery of 2,064,312 impressions within the community over the year. The goal is to increase enrollment, particularly in the lower grades, by raising awareness about Thomas Edison Charter Schools. Even if the marketing efforts result in the enrollment of just one student per month,

the investment would be justified.

Principal Melani Kirk noted that marketing has been a topic of discussion over the past few years. While the school has tried various approaches, they hope that partnering with a large marketing company will make a meaningful difference. Board member Ester Israelsen asked whether there will be a way to track whether new enrollments result from the vendor's advertisements. Principal Brad Larsen acknowledged that it may be difficult to directly attribute enrollment increases to the ads but expressed hope for a noticeable uptick during the 12-month campaign. The company, Target River, derives its name from its approach of "targeting" specific audiences that align with the school's needs and goals.

Lindsey Fowers asked if the school will own the videos and other media created by Target River. Principal Brad Larsen responded with an affirmative and the school will be able to use these videos after the contract ends with Target River.

Motion to approve Target River for marketing for the year contract in the amount of \$5,445.56 per month: Lindsey Fowers

Second: Courtney Carpenter

Affirmative Vote: Lindsey Fowers, Ester Israelsen, Courtney Carpenter, and Ryan Reeves

Resolved: unanimous

Motion to approve the System Services Specialists for cameras and repairs needed at North Campus in the amount of \$1,575: Lindsey Fowers

Second: Ester Israelsen

Affirmative Vote: Lindsey Fowers, Ester Israelsen, Courtney Carpenter, and Ryan Reeves

Resolved: unanimous

16. Adjourn at 6:40 pm