

Early Light Academy Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Wednesday, January 21, 2026

Location: 11709 S. Vadiana Drive, South Jordan, Utah 84009



EARLY LIGHT
ACADEMY

In Attendance: Jenn Lund, Brett Crockett, Candice Mitchell (via Zoom), Ann Khong, Ashley Leishman (via Zoom), Penny Rameriez,

Others in Attendance: Stephanie Schmidt, Erin Winterton, Heidi Bauerle, Ken Jeppesen, Dawn Kawaguchi

SCHOOL MISSION: THE MISSION OF THE EARLY LIGHT ACADEMY IS TO DELIVER A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION WITH A DEEP, RICH AND ENGAGING CURRICULUM UTILIZING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES AND EMPHASIZING HISTORY, TAKING OUR STUDENTS FROM THE STONE AGE TO THE SPACE AGE, THE INFORMATION AGE AND BEYOND.

SCHOOL VISION: EARLY LIGHT ACADEMY WILL EMPOWER STUDENTS TO BECOME LIFELONG LEARNERS AND INSPIRING LEADERS WHO KNOW THEIR ACTIONS TODAY IMPACT OUR TOMORROW.

WE ARE WHAT HISTORY BOOKS ARE MADE OF!

MINUTES

8:33 AM – INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

- Welcome & Roll Call – Jenn Lund

There was no PUBLIC COMMENT.

Celebrating Board Appreciation Month, the 6th grade student council members visited the board meeting to express their appreciation for the board's efforts and support. They presented the board members with a signed banner of all students at ELA, buckets of treats and an ELA mug for each board member, acknowledging their contributions to the school. The kindergarteners from Ms. Groendyke's class also shared a morning routine that emphasizes respect, inclusivity, safety, and engagement among students. The board members, and others in attendance, were surprised and touched by the gesture, and the presentation ended with a birthday celebration for a student council member.

REPORTS

- **Eide Bailly**
 - ✓ *Review FY25 Financial Statement* – Ken Jeppesen reviewed the standard letter and highlighted corrected and uncorrected statement which there wasn't any and also reiterating their independence. Ken moved on to the School's financial audit, noting that the year was "boring" in a positive sense, with no new accounting standards and clean financials. He highlighted the School's strong financial position, with current and other assets up by \$600,000 and unrestricted net position increased by almost \$700,000. Ken also reviewed the school's revenue and expenses, noting an increase of over \$12 million, and discussed the state's different accounting methods for reporting financial information. Ken reviewed the financial notes, discussing

the PTIF investment and depreciation of buildings and land. He explained the bond payments and debt covenants, noting that the school met its requirements. Ken reviewed the budget schedule, praising the school's accurate initial budgeting. He then discussed the internal control report, highlighting the importance of board reviews and noting no significant issues were found. Ken also explained various state-mandated tests and reviews, including procurement and contract testing, and mentioned a finding related to surface bonds that needed discussion with Erin. The meeting focused on addressing a slightly deficient audit issue, which has been remediated, and Ken explained that the state auditor typically responds with a form letter requesting information on actions taken. The Board appreciated the financial oversight provided by Erin, who ensures monthly financial statements are delivered, and Ken emphasized the importance of regular financial monitoring, noting that the School typically exceeds its financial covenants. *Ken Jeppesen was excused at 9:10 a.m.*

- **Administration**

- ✓ Director Report – Stephanie Schmidt shared updates on recent and upcoming events. Science Fair winners are advancing to regionals, Hearts of Gold raised \$11,026.67, and our girls' basketball team won the state championship for the first time. The lottery pull begins today as returning student registration opens, and nearly half of next year's 9th-grade class will be legacy students who have attended ELA K–9. We also celebrated Utah Mammoth Day, which students loved, and they now have a chance to earn a "Tusky Day" field day. Director Schmidt encouraged board members to vote and noted that the 9th-grade musical recently closed, inviting all board members to attend future productions.
- ✓ Early Learning Reporting – Director Schmidt presented the Early Learning Plans for FY25 and FY26, noting that the mathematics and literacy goals remain consistent across both years.
- ✓ Amended Student Conduct & Discipline Administrative Procedures – Director Schmidt reviewed the amended Student Conduct and Discipline Administrative Procedures changes reflected in the 2025 legislative session which include emergency safety interventions for physical restraint and seclusion, reintegration plans, discipline plans, corporal punishment, and state reporting requirements for suspension and expulsions.

- **Board of Directors**

- ✓ Financial Update – Erin Winterton provided an update on the School's financial status, noting that cash reserves were just under \$3.9 million, which is about \$600,000 more than the previous year. She explained the school's strategy of balancing reserve funds with necessary spending to maintain facilities and staff benefits while working towards improving the bond rating from BBB to BBB-.

SCHOOL LAND TRUST COUNCIL

- Review SLT FY25 Final Report – Stephanie Schmidt reviewed the SLT FY25 final report which were spent on various educational resources including technology, curriculum, and classroom supplies, with the goal of improving student outcomes in language arts and math. Director Schmidt reported on the allocation and spending of land trust money, highlighting

its use for various educational programs including literacy support for ELL students, who are showing promising growth.

CONSENT ITEMS

- November 19, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes – There was no further discussion. **Jenn Lund made a motion to approve the consent items. Ann Khong seconded the motion. The roll call votes were as follows:**
 - Jenn Lund – Aye**
 - Brett Crockett – Aye**
 - Candice Mitchell – Aye**
 - Ann Khong – Aye**
 - Ashley Leishman – Aye**
 - Penny Ramirez – Aye****Motion passed unanimously.**

VOTING ITEMS

- 2026-2027 School Calendar – Stephanie Schmidt reviewed the 2026-2027 school calendar, with the first day of school set for August 18 and the last day on May 28, aligning with Jordan School District's breaks.
- Gym Sound Panels Purchase – Stephanie Schmidt presented the purchase of sound panels for the gym due to the noise level of the gym. This will help to reduce noise levels, particularly during sports events and classes.
- Building A Roof Replacement – Stephanie Schmidt reported on the roofing project, noting that membrane resealing is complete for Building B and halfway finished for Building A. The proposed funding of \$78k would cover the remainder of Building A. She requested board approval as we are close to selecting a contractor—Red Peaks or M2—pending clarification on a few product-related questions.

Jenn Lund made a motion to approve the following items:

- ✓ **Approve the 2026-2027 School Calendar;**
- ✓ **Approve the Gym Sound Panels Purchase not to exceed \$45,000; and**
- ✓ **Approve the Roof Membrane Replacement Purchase for Building A not to exceed \$78,000**

Penny Ramirez seconded the motion. The roll call votes were as follows:

- Jenn Lund – Aye**
- Brett Crockett – Aye**
- Candice Mitchell – Aye**
- Ann Khong – Aye**
- Ashley Leishman – Aye**
- Penny Ramirez – Aye**

Motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Calendar Items – ALL
 - ✓ Next PreBoard Meeting – March 4th @ 10:30 a.m.
 - ✓ Next Board Meeting – March 18th

- ✓ NCSC26 New Orleans, LA June 24-26 (Wed-Fri) – Early Registration deadline is February 17th

There was no CLOSED SESSION.

10:13 AM – Jenn Lund made a motion to ADJOURN. Brett Crockett seconded the motion.

The roll call votes were as follows:

Jenn Lund – Aye

Brett Crockett – Aye

Candice Mitchell – Aye

Ann Khong – Aye

Ashley Leishman – Aye

Penny Ramirez – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.