



## Advantage Arts Academy Board of Directors Meeting

**Date:** 01.20.2026

**In Attendance:** Suzy Mortenson, Crystal Thomas, Darren Marshall, Mechelle Mellor

**Excused:** Chris Joyce

**Others In Attendance:** Kelly Simonsen, Ken Jeppesen, Dawn Benke, Heidi Bauerle, Hannah Jones

**Location:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87630398386>

### MINUTES

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**CALL TO ORDER** Suzy Mortenson called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM.

#### AUDIT PRESENTATION & TRAINING

Eide Bailly has completed the annual independent audit of the school's financial statements and compliance for the fiscal year ending June 30. Their audit was conducted in accordance with required standards, and they found that the financial statements fairly represent the school's financial position and activity. They met with the Board to review the audit results, including the financial statements, compliance testing, and this year's required communications.

Ken Jeppesen left the meeting at 4:16 PM.

#### CONSENT ITEMS

- November 17, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes  
*Crystal Thomas made a motion to approve the November 17, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes. Darren Marshall seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows: Suzy Mortenson, Aye; Crystal Thomas, Aye; Darren Marshall, Aye, Meche Mellor, Aye.*

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

This was the first public comment period for the 2026-2027 Fee Schedule. There were no public comments.

#### REPORTS

- Director Report  
Kelly Simonsen reported on enrollment with there being 355 students enrolled and with special populations making up 44 percent of the student population. 309 students are enrolled for the 2026-2027 School Year. On March 24, 2026, the school is holding a "Kindergarten Round-Up" where families can meet the administration and staff, tour the kindergarten rooms, and complete registration. Kelly Simonsen gave the Final Report for the 2024-2025 School Land trust Plan. Overall, the School LAND Trust funded

instructional supports were effective in improving student reading outcomes. Kelly shared photos with the board of the students' performance of the Nutcracker. Upcoming events at the school include the school talent show on February 27<sup>th</sup>, family paint night on February 24<sup>th</sup> and the "Glow Run" on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

- Finance Report

Dawn Benke reported that the overall financial position of the school at midway of the fiscal year is performing in line with budget expectations. The budget reflects a strong year-to-date net income and total revenue is %50 above benchmark with expenses remaining below that threshold. In comparing 12/31/25 and 12/31/24 financial positions, there were some increases including operating cash, restricted cash, net income, and total assets.

## VOTING & DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Paradigm Articulation Agreement

Kelly Simonsen explained the benefits to students in working with Paradigm and entering the articulation agreement. Board members reviewed the agreement and would like to discuss the opportunity more and ask more questions to better understand the articulation agreement and what it will mean for the LEA. This item was tabled.

- Approve 2026-2027 School Calendar

Annually, the board approves the upcoming year's school calendar. The board reviewed the proposed calendar and had no questions or concerns about the upcoming year schedule.

*Meche Mellor made a motion to approve the 2026-2027 School Calendar. Crystal Thomas seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows: Suzy Mortenson, Aye; Crystal Thomas, Aye; Darren Marshall, Aye; Meche Mellor, Aye.*

- Amended Fee Waiver Policy

HB 344 updated school fee definitions prohibited charging for common education expenses and moved the annual fee schedule approval deadline to June 1. The Fee Waiver Policy was revised to reflect these statutory changes and recent updates to USBE Rule R277-407.

*Crystal Thomas made a motion to approve the Amended Fee Waiver Policy. Darren Marshall seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows: Suzy Mortenson, Aye; Crystal Thomas, Aye; Darren Marshall, Aye; Meche Mellor, Aye.*

- Amended Student Conduct and Discipline Policy

SB 170 (2025) and corresponding updates to USBE Rule R277-608 revised requirements for the use of emergency safety interventions, and these changes have been incorporated into the Student Conduct and Discipline Policy. Additional updates clarify and strengthen compliance with state law and USBE rules, including

provisions on due process, reinstatement and reintegration after suspension, streamlined administrative plans, corporal punishment, and required state reporting for suspensions and expulsions.

*Meche Mellor made a motion to approve the Amended Student Conduct and Discipline policy. Crystal Thomas seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows: Suzy Mortenson, Aye; Crystal Thomas, Aye; Darren Marshall, Aye; Meche Mellor, Aye.*

- Teacher and Parent Survey  
Discussion on the Teacher and Parent Survey involved making sure that the survey will be ready to go out in the Spring of every year, and that results are shared with the governing board.

## **CALENDARING**

The next board meeting is scheduled for March 23,2026 at 4:00 PM on Zoom. The new time for scheduled board meetings is 4:00 PM on Tuesday evenings.

**CLOSED SESSION** – to discuss the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual pursuant to Utah Code 52-4-205(1)(a).

*At 4:57 PM Crystal Thomas made a motion to move into a closed session to discuss the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual pursuant to Utah Code 52-4-205(1)(a) via an electronic meeting. Darren Marshall seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows: Suzy Mortenson, Aye; Darren Marshall, Aye; Crystal Thomas, Aye; Meche Mellor, Aye.*

Dawn Benke left the meeting at 5:02 PM.

*At 5:48 PM Darren Marshall made a motion to leave the closed session and enter the general meeting. Meche Mellor seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows; Suzy Mortenson, Aye; Darren Marshall, Aye; Crystal Thomas, Aye; Meche Mellor, Aye.*

## **ADJOURN**

*At 5:49 PM Crystal Thomas made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Meche Mellor seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows; Suzy Mortenson, Aye; Darren Marshall, Aye; Crystal Thomas, Aye; Meche Mellor, Aye.*



**Advantage Arts Academy  
Board of Directors  
Closed Session**

**Date:** 01.20.2026

**Location:** Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87630398386>

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**CLOSED SESSION SWORN STATEMENT:**

At a duly noticed public meeting held on the date listed above, the board of directors for Advantage Arts Academy entered a closed session for the sole purpose of discussing the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual in accordance with Utah Code Ann. 52-4-2(1)(a).

I declare under criminal penalty under the law of Utah that the foregoing is true and correct.

Signed on the 20th day of January 2026.



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Suzy Mortenson, Board President