

Thomas Edison Charter Schools
Governing Board Meeting
Date: April 8, 2026

Meeting called to order at 5:32 pm by Lindsey Fowers

Board Members Present: Lindsey Fowers, Courtney Carpenter, Ester Israelsen, and Ryan Reeves

Board Members Attending Electronically: Mikelshan Bartschi

Board Members Absent and Excused: Jeff Mason

Conducting: Lindsey Fowers

1. Adoption of the Agenda

2. Public Comment:

None. There was a member of the public, Joseph Dunlap with ESS, that joined the meeting electronically.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes as distributed: Lindsey Fowers

Second: Ryan Reeves

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

Resolved: unanimous

4. TECS Philosophy: Jim Peterson

This month's philosophy discussion is from page 10 in the updated charter. The discussion centered on reinforcing a core philosophy of the Thomas Edison Charter School: creating and maintaining a positive learning environment. Key points include the school emphasizes that students learn best in a structured, safe, and supportive atmosphere built on respect, acceptance, and joy in learning. A major component of this environment is the use of the Glenn Latham classroom management approach, which encourages a high ratio (about 8:1) of positive to negative feedback. This philosophy is a defining feature that distinguishes the school from other schools.

Principal Kirk said the schools survey parents and the feedback from parents this year highlights the noticeably positive school climate.

Board Chair Lindsey Fowers said the Glenn Latham method also influenced her own parenting practices and changed how she approaches certain situations.

Board member Ester Israelsen, agreed saying she could apply this method to all of her children.

Jamie Lewis also agreed, pointing out that she has heard many different times from teachers that the Glenn Latham method has made them better parents.

5. Financial Report: Jim Peterson

Jim Peterson reviewed the school's financial report as of March 31, noting that expenses for March were significantly below the monthly budget average. The graph shows the school's actual spending (red line) remains well under the projected budget line (blue), indicating the school is operating with a surplus and is financially ahead of expectations. While acknowledging that larger expenses often occur toward the end of the year and may bring totals closer to budget, the current outlook suggests the school is in strong financial condition.

6. Salary Scale Budget: Jim Peterson

The speaker outlines preliminary work on next year's budget, which is based on projected enrollment, expected revenues tied to average daily membership, and input on anticipated expenses. A key update is a projected 7.2% increase in medical insurance costs—significantly lower than the previous year's sharp rise—which has been incorporated into the budget. The plan aims to maintain a healthy cash surplus while setting target payroll amounts for staff across both campuses. Additionally, the school expects to continue covering full insurance costs without employee cost-sharing, a rare and valuable benefit that supports staff recruitment and retention. The presented salary figures cover salaried employees (excluding aides), with a planned overall increase of about 3.6% compared to the current year. Although aides are not included in the displayed figures, the preliminary budget does account for a similar 3.6% increase for them as well. Additional budget categories, such as supplies and services, are based on administrator input for one campus and current spending estimates for the other.

Board member Ryan Reeves explained when he was talking to Jim, these budget numbers are a total amount, and it's up to the administrators to decide how to allocate it—who should receive raises, who recently got one, and similar considerations. The numbers presented in the handout is an overall figure the administration should work within.

Principal Brad Larsen expressed appreciation as well explained the school's compensation philosophy is to both support all teachers and reward excellence. They provide a base salary increase to help offset inflation so staff don't effectively take a pay cut, while also incorporating merit-based pay to recognize and retain high-performing teachers by ensuring they feel valued and well-compensated.

Motion to approve the FY 27 payroll target budget for both North and South teacher salaries as presented for the categories listed: Lindsey Fowers

Second: Courtney Carpenter

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

Resolved: unanimous

Jim Peterson explained the four pages after the school's expenditures summary, present simplified, high-level budget overviews for both the north and south campuses, designed to make financial information more accessible than traditional accounting reports. These summaries outline where funds come from and how they are spent, with payroll—covering administrators, teachers, aides, and other staff—making up over half of total expenses. The budgets also break down other expenses such as facilities, utilities, supplies, equipment, and special projects. A highlighted “cash surplus” figure shows the remaining contingency based on fluctuations in revenue and expenses. Revenue is largely driven by student enrollment and state funding formulas, with detailed line items provided.

Board member Mikelshan Bartschi asked if the schools do a salary study to stay competitive. Principal Melani Kirk explained that the school regularly compares its teacher salaries with those in nearby districts, specifically Cache and Logan, to remain competitive. Their goal is to stay within a similar range, currently placing them slightly below Logan but at or slightly above Cache, ensuring teachers are fairly compensated.

7. MOY Acadience Reading & Math Scores: Angela Williams

Angela was unable to attend the governing board meeting, so the score information was presented by Jamie Lewis. Jamie explained Acadience reading and math reports, clarifying that the charts measure student progress (growth) rather than overall proficiency, with color-coded bands indicating levels of progress from well below to well above typical. In kindergarten reading, most students showed strong growth, with overall proficiency increasing significantly, though a few students need attention. First and second grades also demonstrated generally positive progress, with only small groups of students raising concern. Third grade showed good overall performance but highlighted a subset of students not progressing as expected. In math, results were especially strong across grades, with many students achieving high growth and minimal areas of concern. Overall, the data indicates solid academic progress school-wide, while also helping identify specific students who may need additional support.

8. Board Training: Brian Carpenter Podcast #1: Where the Heck are We: orienting new board members

Brian Carpenter emphasizes that many charter school board members are underprepared for their roles due to a lack of orientation, training, and familiarity with key documents, responsibilities, and legal obligations. Based on extensive surveys, the speaker highlights common gaps, including

limited understanding of governance versus management, financial oversight, and compliance requirements—factors that can contribute to school failure. To address this, Brian Carpenter stresses the importance of a structured board orientation process that equips new members with essential knowledge. It recommends providing and reviewing 15 key documents—such as the school’s charter, bylaws, financial reports, contracts, policies, and performance data—within the first few months of service, helping board members better understand their duties, reduce risk, and effectively guide the school.

Board member Courtney Carpenter said she read most of these documents before she started on the board, but feels like she could have benefited from being able to talk to other board members about these documents to get a better understanding. Board Chair Lindsey Fowers agreed and feels the same way. When she first joined the board, she could understand most of the documents but she still felt unsure of what her role as a board member was. Board member Ester Israelsen said she initially had little understanding of their role as a board member and felt unprepared despite reading materials. She suggested to improve the onboarding process, they can provide clearer expectations before meetings and offering orientation sessions for new members. She also recommends follow-up support after joining, such as meeting with experienced board members who can explain how meetings and responsibilities typically work.

Board member Mikelshan Bartschi shared he had a very positive impression at his first board meeting, noting that the school’s practices closely align with the principles and readings provided beforehand, including Dr. Glenn’s work and the “seven outs.” He emphasized that the school appears highly values-driven, with clear alignment between stated goals, data collection, and actual practice. Overall, he felt the school effectively lives out its mission and objectives, making the experience feel authentic and well-aligned.

Board member Courtney Carpenter suggested that new board members should be expected to read foundational materials from the beginning to better understand the school’s context. She also recommends providing a brief review or refresher during meetings to reinforce the core concepts and ensure consistent understanding among all board members.

9. Board Training Discussion: Policies & Procedures Section 6000 (Technology); FERPA

No comments or discussion.

10. Policy Updates #1203, #1307, #3102, #7108: Jamie Lewis

- Policy #1203, Conflict of Interest Policy, needs an update because when the policy was created Utah did not have nepotism laws. Now, Utah does have Nepotism laws and so they would like to add the following to the policy:

Thomas Edison Charter School acts in accordance with Utah's nepotism laws.

Policy #1307, Grievance Policy, needs to be updated to meet the state law requirements for a complaint hotline managed through the USBE website. The school has listed this hotline and instructions on its website, and the addition ensures they are meeting that legal requirement.

Policy #3102, Personnel Benefits Policy, needs to update the distribution timing for perfect attendance rewards from January to February, since the first semester often doesn't end until early January, making the current timeline impractical.

Policy #7108, Safety and Security Staff Policy, the policy was originally written when hiring Phil Johnson as an SRO, but the language will be changed from "will" to "may" so the school isn't required to contract with local law enforcement and can keep other options open.

Motion to approve policies 1203, 1307, 3102, and 7108 as presented: Lindsey Fowers

Second: Courtney Carpenter

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

Resolved: unanimous

11. Principal Reports: Melani Kirk & Brad Larsen

North –

- Current enrollment: 459 of 504 seats filled (91% capacity), not including waitlisted students
 - Waitlists exist for full grade levels, which would increase overall numbers if included
- Ongoing aide meetings to review performance, gather feedback, and plan for next year
- Students performed well at the Regional Science & Engineering Fair:
 - 2 students qualified for an all-expenses-paid trip to Phoenix
 - 2 legacy grand prize winners (additional cash awards)
 - 6 first-place, 4 second-place, 5 third-place, and 7 "excellent" projects
 - Additional awards earned; Mrs. Singh named Teacher of the Year
- Geography Bowl continues as a school tradition with participation from north and south campuses
- Successful events: College Week, Battle of the Books (repeat champions), talent show, and other student activities
- Staffing updates:
 - Secretary Lindsay Blanchard leaving for a district office position (replacement to be hired)
 - Stacey Esty hired as new third-grade teacher
 - Bev Weed transitioning into a SPED role (with training)
 - Kristen Wynne leaving to focus on family business
 - Multiple aide positions opening; updates to come

South –

- Current enrollment is 687 and has remained steady; efforts ongoing to increase numbers, especially in kindergarten (currently only enough for two sections)
 - There is still some interest in enrollment because they are still having parents come in for school observations and parent meetings
- Net Promoter Score (parent survey at conferences):
 - 397 responses out of 401 families (very high participation)
 - 280 promoters (9–10), 88 neutral (7–8), 29 detractors (1–6)
 - Overall score: 63 (considered “world-class,” though lower than last year)
 - Feedback was largely positive (teachers, aides, curriculum), with common concern about homework load
 - Some lower ratings reflect school rigor and structure not fitting every family, despite positive comments
 - North Campus scored slightly higher on the same survey
- Successful events and programs: Geography Bowl, Science Fair, and Treasurer Time celebration (though labor-intensive)
- “Biggest Writer” program: 133 participants, 75 winners, over 1.8 million words written
- School musical (*The Lion King Jr.*): very successful, large participation, students loved the play and multiple performances allowed for dual casts
 - Minor behavior concerns from middle school audience during performance; the principal wants to address their conduct rather than not allowing middle schoolers to watch the performance.
- Staffing update: no teacher turnover expected; all current teachers returning next year

Board member Ryan Reeves asked how the “Bring your Friend to School” day went. Principal Melani Kirk explained they surveyed parents and teachers about repeating the event and received mixed responses, with about 60% of teachers in favor and 40% feeling it was too overwhelming and time-intensive. The event resulted in minimal new enrollments (around 1–3 students), though it may help generate future interest. A scheduling conflict with the Geography Bowl occurred on that day and would be avoided in the future. Given the limited short-term impact but potential long-term benefits, the school is considering holding the event less frequently—perhaps every few years—while continuing to rely on ongoing family visits and observations to support enrollment growth. Principal Brad Larsen spoke on how the event went at North Campus explaining the event did not include middle school, which helped reduce behavioral challenges, and feedback was largely positive, though the unusual Friday schedule made it feel different. While there is some interest in continuing, it may not be ideal to hold it every year; instead, focusing just on kindergarten could be more effective in attracting new families. The event provides a low-pressure way for families to experience the school, particularly for younger grades, but expanding it too broadly could overwhelm teachers.

12. Vendor Requests: Melani Kirk & Brad Larsen

An independent vendor confirmed the school’s roof needs significant repairs and initially estimated costs at over \$1 million, but after a competitive bidding process, three proposals came in much lower. The lowest bid was withdrawn due to an error, leaving two close options, with Mountain

Peak Roofing recommended based on experience, detailed planning, and added features like improved drainage (“cricketing”). Their bid is about \$297,633 for a 60-mil roof with a 20-year warranty, but an additional \$30,000 is recommended to upgrade to an 80-mil roof, extending the warranty to 30 years and improving durability. The project also includes upgrading materials to PVC and redoing a newer section for consistency under one warranty, while leaving one area untouched because it is still in good condition.

Board member Ryan Reeves recommended to do the 80 mil roofing because of the weather conditions in the county and that is an industry standard.

Motion to approve the 80 mil roof with Mountain Peak Roofing in the amount of \$327,633: Lindsey Fowers

Second: Courtney Carpenter

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

Resolved: unanimous

13. Adjourned at 6:56 pm