



ADVANTAGE ARTS
ACADEMY

Advantage Arts Academy Board of Directors Meeting

Date: 06.23.2026

In Attendance: Suzy Mortenson, Crystal Thomas, Darren Marshall, Chris Joyce, Meche Mellor

Others In Attendance: Kelly Simonsen, Dawn Benke, Hannah Jones

Teleconference: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85443172487>

MINUTES

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

CONSENT ITEMS

- April 28, 2026, Board Meeting Minutes
Crystal Thomas made a motion to approve the April 28, 2026, Board Meeting Minutes. Meche Mellor seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows: Suzy Mortenson, Aye; Crystal Thomas, Aye; Darren Marshall, Aye; Chris Joyce, Aye; Mechelle Mellor, Aye.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

REPORTS

- Director Report
Kelly Simonsen presented the directors report. Enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year is at 359 students. Schoolwide reading proficiency increased from thirty five percent to forty four percent. The strongest gains occurred in third grade. Average ELA scores have steadily increased over the past three years, closing the gap with the state average. Math remains a priority area/ While average scores increased, proficiency has not yet matched that growth, indicating many students are approaching proficiency but have not crossed the threshold. Advantage Arts Academy was nominated for School of the Year, Teacher of the Year, Employee of the Year and Special Education Director of the Year at the Utah Association of Public Charter Schools Conference. Jennifer Parks won the UAPCS Employee of the Year.
- Finance Report
Dawn Benke presented the Annual Commitment to Ethical Behavior and the Fraud Risk Assessment. Advantage Arts Academy scored “very low” on the assessment for risk level. Dawn Benke presented the budgets for approval in the voting items below.

VOTING & DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 2025-2026 Amended Budget

- 2026-2027 Proposed Budget

Variances from the originally approved budget are primarily due to changes in enrollment, program costs, staffing adjustments, and unanticipated expenses and/or savings realized throughout the year. Board approval of this amendment is requested to formally adopt the revised figures and close out the prior fiscal year in accordance with standard financial governance practices. The board is asked to approve the proposed budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. This budget is balanced and designed to support the organization's mission while ensuring compliance with all financial policies and regulations. Board review and approval are requested to authorize implementation for the upcoming fiscal year.

Chris Joyce made a motion to approve the 2025-2026 Amended Budget and the 2026-2027 proposed Budget. Darren Marshall seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows: Suzy Mortenson, Aye; Crystal Thomas, Aye; Darren Marshall, Aye; Chris Joyce, Aye; Mechelle Mellor, Aye.

- Insurance Contract

The Board is asked to review and approve the school's property and liability insurance coverage for the upcoming policy year.

Meche Mellor made a motion to approve the Insurance Contract. Crystal Thomas seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows: Suzy Mortenson, Aye; Crystal Thomas, Aye; Darren Marshall, Aye; Chris Joyce, Aye; Mechelle Mellor, Aye.

- Board Member Terms, Roles, & Elected Officers

The Board regularly reviews member terms to ensure continuity, effective governance, and compliance with bylaws. Currently, no board member terms are up for renewal and there are no vacancies.

Chris Joyce made a motion to approve the Board Member Terms, Roles, & Elected Officers as discussed. Darren Marshall seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows: Suzy Mortenson, Aye; Crystal Thomas, Aye; Darren Marshall, Aye; Chris Joyce, Aye; Mechelle Mellor, Aye.

- Policies

- Amended Salary Supplement for Highly Needed Educators Policy

By law, the school must update or re-approve its SHiNE Policy annually. There are no changes recommended with respect to the school's designated high-needs areas. However, in consultation with accounting and legal, some proposed provisions have been added to the policy regarding payment of the salary supplement in certain circumstances, including: (a) if an eligible teacher's employment with the school ends before the salary supplement is paid (e.g., a teacher quits or is fired mid-year), the teacher will receive only a prorated portion of the salary supplement based on the portion of the school year the teacher worked at the school; and (b) if an eligible teacher begins employment with the school after the certified list of salary supplement recipients is finalized,

the teacher is not automatically entitled to a salary supplement, but the administrator may, in their discretion and subject to SHiNE funding, award the teacher a prorated salary supplement. A couple of other minor revisions to the policy are recommended as well.

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

CALENDARING

The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 28, 2026, at 4:30 PM.

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 4:44 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; Chris Joyce, Aye.

At 4:54 PM Chris Joyce 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; Chris Joyce, Aye.

VOTING & DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 2026-2027 Director Employment Agreement

This item was discussed in closed session.

Meche Mellor made a motion to approve the 2026-2027 Director Employment Agreement as discussed in closed session. Darren Marshall seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows: Suzy Mortenson, Aye; Crystal Thomas, Aye; Darren Marshall, Aye; Chris Joyce, Aye; Mechelle Mellor, Aye.

ADJOURN

At 4:56 PM Meche Mellor made a motion to adjourn the 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; Chris Joyce, Aye.

Advantage Arts Academy

Board of Directors Closed Session

Date: 06.23.2026

Location: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85443172487>

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 23rd day of June 2026.



Suzy Mortenson, Board President