

Early Light Academy Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Wednesday, September 16, 2026

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



In Attendance: Jenn Lund, Brett Crockett, Ann Khong, Ashley Leishman, Penny Ramirez,

Others in Attendance: Stephanie Schmidt, Heidi Bauerle, Caleb Crump, 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

9:35 AM – INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

- Welcome & Roll Call – Jenn Lund explained that the meeting started late because the Board had been celebrating the 3rd grade team's achievement of having 95% of students reading on grade level (at or above the benchmark). This achievement ranked Early Light Academy first in Utah for early literacy. Utah has a statewide goal of 80% of 3rd grade students reading on grade level by July 1, 2030.

There was no PUBLIC COMMENT.

REPORTS

- **Administration**
 - ✓ Director Report – Stephanie Schmidt reported that ELA ranked #1 in the state among all charter schools and districts for the percentage of 3rd grade students reading at or above grade level. She shared the letter sent to parents informing them of this accomplishment. Director Schmidt discussed several initiatives, including the implementation of daily RISE goals focused on respect, inclusion, safety, and engagement; new student welcoming programs; and a faculty retreat where staff completed StrengthsFinder assessments. Director Schmidt also reviewed the annual RISE goals for the year, which she will report on throughout the year.
 - ★ Retention & Advancement Administrative Procedures – Stephanie Schmidt reviewed the amended Retention & Advancement Administrative Procedures which added what we *might* collect data on.
- **Board of Directors**
 - ✓ Financial Update – Caleb Crump reviewed the financials as of August 31, 2026, with the school having \$2.8 million in PTIF accounts earning 3.9% interest, and

expenditures tracking slightly above budget due to high insurance costs and upfront curriculum purchases.

SCHOOL LAND TRUST COUNCIL

- SLT Board Training Assurance – Jenn Lund stated that all members reported completing the SLT training for the year.
- Review SLT FY27 Plan Budget/Implementation – Stephanie Schmidt reviewed the SLT FY27 plan and budget implementation. There was a discussion on how the school supports grade levels that have lower scores than anticipated through mentoring, support staff and PLCs.

CONSENT ITEMS

- July 1, 2026 Electronic Board Meeting Minutes – There was no further discussion. **Jenn Lund made a motion to approve the consent items. Ashley Leishman seconded the motion. The roll call votes were as follows:**
 - Jenn Lund – Aye**
 - Brett Crockett – Aye**
 - Ann Khong – Aye**
 - Ashley Leishman – Aye**
 - Penny Ramirez – Aye****Motion passed unanimously.**

VOTING ITEMS

- LEA-Specific Educator License(s) – Stephanie Schmidt presented the LEA-Specific Educator Licenses that are issued as temporary licenses for qualified teachers who are still completing endorsement requirements or transferring credentials from another state. Examples include educators such as Shannon Stidham, who has extensive teaching experience but is awaiting Utah license transfer approval, and others who are teaching courses outside their primary degree area while working toward the necessary endorsements. The school supports these educators through a tuition reimbursement program that covers 75% of eligible educational expenses, up to a maximum of \$5,000. In exchange, participants agree to remain employed with the school for three years after receiving the reimbursement; otherwise, they are required to repay the funds if they leave before fulfilling the commitment.
- Amend Sex Education Instruction Committee – Stephanie Schmidt presented the changes to the Sex Education Instruction Committee in which we want to streamline the membership structure of the sex education committee, reducing it to the Executive Director, the health teacher, the school nurse, and three parent board members. The change was made to improve efficiency, as curriculum oversight and communication are already coordinated through existing leadership and board meetings. During the committee meeting today, members reviewed the sex education curriculum for the current school year and confirmed that no changes had been made. Because the curriculum remains the same as the version approved by the board last year, no additional approval was required, and no concerns were raised.
- Amend Teacher Student Success Act Plan Framework – Stephanie Schmidt presented the amended TSSA Framework. The framework was revised to incorporate required language

stating that if the school does not meet established literacy goals, at least 50% of TSSA grant funds must be allocated to literacy interventions. The revision was described as a compliance measure, with no concerns regarding the school's ability to meet the literacy benchmarks.

- *Amend Bullying & Hazing Policy* – Stephanie Schmidt reviewed the amended Bullying & Hazing Policy which were prompted by recent state legislative changes. While the existing policy was already aligned with the state model policy, additional provisions were incorporated to strengthen language, improve clarity, and ensure full compliance with updated state requirements. The revisions also include a new annual reporting component. Director Schmidt confirmed that all staff receive annual training on bullying, cyberbullying, hazing, retaliation, and abusive conduct, and that a formal certification is completed each year to document compliance with these training requirements.
- *Amend Electronic Resources Policy* – Stephanie Schmidt reviewed the amended Electronic Resources Policy which ensures compliance with state requirements, including a provision requiring the policy to be reviewed and approved at least every three years. Additional revisions clarified language, updated terminology, and expanded definitions of electronic devices to include emerging technologies such as AI-enabled glasses. During the discussion, Ann identified language that appeared inconsistent with the school's current bell-to-bell restriction on student use of personal electronic devices. Director Schmidt acknowledged the discrepancy and agreed to revise the policy language to align with existing practice while preserving appropriate exceptions for educational purposes and parent-approved circumstances. Director Schmidt stated that the staff acknowledgment form included at the end of the policy should be removed, as employees already sign a separate technology use and device acknowledgement document that serves the same purpose. These adjustments will help ensure the policy remains clear, accurate, and consistent with school procedures and expectations.
- *Amend Paid Parental & Postpartum Recovery Leave Policy* – Stephanie Schmidt reviewed the amended Paid Parent & Postpartum Recovery Leave Policy including the addition of three weeks of adoption leave, which may be used consecutively with paid parental leave, and four weeks of leave for foster care placements. The revisions also clarify that leave periods are intended to be used consecutively and that non-contract days, such as summer breaks, do not extend leave benefits across separate school terms. During the review, Ann identified several drafting inconsistencies, including language regarding the consecutive use of postpartum recovery leave and parental leave, as well as references to a three-week period where foster leave is intended to provide four weeks. Director Schmidt confirmed that these discrepancies were clerical errors and would be corrected in the motion to approve the policy. The discussion also clarified the distinction between postpartum recovery leave, which is calculated using contracted workdays, and parental, adoption, and foster leave, which are measured in calendar weeks. Overall, the changes expand family leave benefits while ensuring consistency and clarity in policy implementation.
- *Amend Sex Education Instruction Policy (Procedures)* – Stephanie Schmidt reviewed the amended Sex Education Instruction Policy which ensures compliance with changes enacted during the recent legislative session. The updated law revised the definition of sex education instruction, added specific instructional requirements, and identified additional topics that are prohibited from being taught, including abortion and abortive materials. As a result, the school updated its administrative procedures to reflect the new state

requirements and maintain full compliance. The amendments were presented as largely procedural updates, with no significant concerns raised during the discussion.

- CommGap Rate Card – Stephanie Schmidt presented the new CommGap Rate Card which these services are used to provide translation support for families who speak languages other than English. Although the service is utilized infrequently and costs are well below the threshold requiring extensive review, we are recommending continuing the vendor agreement due to its value in providing immediate access to interpreters for languages such as Arabic.

Jenn Lund made a motion to approve the following items:

- ✓ **Approve the request for an LEA-specific educator license for the individuals below, all for three years.**
 1. **Claire Baker – Science Core Endorsement**
 2. **Jeremy Loewen – Secondary Math Level 4 Endorsement**
 3. **Marisol Pizarro – Elementary License**
 4. **Mathew Sherwood – Intro to Computer Science Endorsement**
 5. **Shannon Stidham – Elementary License**
 6. **Marissa Tebbs – Spanish Endorsement**
 7. **Kylee Woodfield – Social Studies Composite Endorsement**
- ✓ **Approve the Amended 2026-2027 Sex Education Instruction Committee Membership with the following positions: the Executive Director, the Health Teacher, the School Nurse and (3) Parent Board Members;**
- ✓ **Approve the Amended Teacher Student Success Act Framework;**
- ✓ **Approve the Amended Bullying and Hazing Policy;**
- ✓ **Approve the Amended Electronic Resources Policy excluding on page 2 “Student in grades 7-9 may use privately owned electronic devices during lunch and free time as long as screens are kept private and not shared with or viewed by others” and remove the Staff Acceptable Use of Student Electronic Resource Acknowledgement of Receipt and Understanding form;**
- ✓ **Approve the Amended Paid Parental and Postpartum Recovery Leave Policy leaving in “runs consecutively to parental leave” on page 2 as well as changing under Foster Leave - Leave Period should be four calendar week period to four in the last sentence and changing its title to Paid Parental, Postpartum Recovery, Adoption, and Foster Leave Policy;**
- ✓ **Approve the Amended Sex Education Instruction Policy; and**
- ✓ **Approve the current CommGap rate card.**

Ann Khong seconded the motion. The roll call votes were as follows:

Jenn Lund – Aye
Brett Crockett – Aye
Ann Khong – Aye
Ashley Leishman – Aye
Penny Ramirez – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Calendaring Items – ALL

- ✓ Next PreBoard Meeting on November 4th @ 10:30 a.m.
- ✓ Next Board Meeting on November 18th

There was no CLOSED SESSION.

10:25 AM – Jenn Lund made a motion to ADJOURN. Ashley Leishman seconded the motion. The roll call votes were as follows:

Jenn Lund – Aye

Brett Crockett – Aye

Ann Khong – Aye

Ashley Leishman – Aye

Penny Ramirez – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

DRAFT