

Scholar Academy Board of Directors Meeting

Date: September 24, 2026

Location: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83870898930>

In Attendance: Dusty Griffith, Sandy Shepard, Colin Post, Johanna Leonelli, Jacob Howarth

Excused: Traelle Gailey

Others in Attendance: Jeff Hall, Brandon Fairbanks, Priscilla Stringfellow, Hannah Jones, Jon McQueary

Scholar Academy is committed to creating a learning environment that fosters in students the development of divergent thinking and problem-solving skills, providing opportunities which enable all students to develop a sense of civic responsibility and achieve their highest potential.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Dusty Griffith called the meeting to order at 5:08 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

Jacob Howarth joined the meeting at 5:10 PM.

REPORTS

- **Director's Report**
Jeff Hall reported that student academic growth improved noticeably this year. Scholar Academy's average growth score rose from 43.5 to 52.8, with gains in English, math, and science. Math and science growth are now above the state average, and Scholar showed the largest one-year improvement of the five nearby schools it compared itself with. Test scores (proficiency) are still below where the school wants them, but the stronger growth shows students are learning and the school's teaching efforts are working. Supporting students with disabilities and the lowest-performing students remains a top priority as part of the school's state improvement plan. Teachers began the year with Kagan training, which teaches strategies that get students working together and taking part in class, and these strategies are already being used from kindergarten through 8th grade. Teachers asked for more help with classroom behavior, so a full day of behavior and classroom management training is coming up. The school is getting ready for a special education review on September 30 and is improving how it finds struggling students early, gives them extra help, and checks whether that help is working. Enrollment is currently 659 students, below the goal of about 685. About 129 families are on the

waitlist, mostly for kindergarten and 1st grade. To bring in more families, the school is updating its website and planning ads on Facebook, YouTube, and at the local movie theater, with a focus on families of kindergarten-age children. The school is also trimming some expenses while enrollment stays below target. Other highlights include the Scholar Veterans Project, where junior high students interview local veterans and write their life stories for the school website, and continued lessons on the Seven Habits and citizenship. Overall, the year has started well, with a strong staff and a positive feel throughout the building.

- **Budget Report**

The Board reviewed the monthly financial reports through August 31, 2026, two months into the school year's budget. The school has received about \$1.5 million in revenue so far, or 17% of the \$8.85 million expected for the year, which is on track. Spending so far is about \$509,000, or 6% of the yearly budget. Spending is usually low this early because most staff costs don't start until school is back in session. Federal funds have not been received yet. The school's financial position remains strong. It has about \$6.5 million in operating cash, up from \$5.5 million this time last year, and long-term debt went down slightly, from \$10.2 million to just under \$10 million.

- **Satellite Feasibility Report**

Brandon Fairbanks gave a report on the feasibility of a satellite location for Scholar Academy. The report included details of the process for applying for a satellite location, timeline, and potential location. Board members discussed their thoughts surrounding the application process, and ideas for expanding with a satellite location.

CONSENT ITEMS

- **July 22, 2026, Board Meeting & Closed Session Minutes**

Sandy Shepard made a motion to approve the July 22, 2026, Board Meeting and Closed Session Minutes. Collin Post seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows: Dusty Griffith, Aye; Colin Post, Aye; Jacob Howarth, Aye; Sandy Shepard, Aye; Johannah Leonelli, Aye.

VOTING & DISCUSSION ITEMS

- **Amended TSSA Framework**

The TSSA framework is required to be updated to include a Literacy Achievement in accordance with SB 241 (2026) and State Rule R277-927. The Plan has been updated to address the school's progress toward statewide literacy proficiency goals and if the school fails to meet statewide literacy goals, the school must dedicate at least 50% of TSSA funds toward evidence-based literacy interventions and practices as described in 53G-7-921304(2)(e).

Collin Post made a motion to approve the Amended TSSA Framework. Jacob Howarth seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows: Dusty Griffith, Aye; Colin Post, Aye; Jacob Howarth, Aye; Sandy Shepard, Aye; Johannah Leonelli, Aye.

- 2026-2027 Lea-Specific Licenses

Administration is requesting that (6) LEA-Specific Licenses be approved. The license areas, and endorsements shall be valid for three (3) academic years as indicated on the attached spreadsheet which contains the associated educator information and rationale for the request. All LEA-Specific licenses will expire on June 30th of the final academic year approved. The Scholar Academy Board of Directors additionally acknowledges that LEA-Specific educator licenses, license areas, or endorsements may be renewed by the Utah State Board of Education (USBE).

Sandy Shepard made a motion to approve the LEA-Specific Licenses for 6 individuals.

Jacob Howarth seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows:

Dusty Griffith, Aye; Colin Post, Aye; Jacob Howarth, Aye; Sandy Shepard, Aye; Johannah Leonelli, Aye.

- Policies

- Amended Attendance Policy
- Amended Bullying and Hazing Policy
- Amended Capitalization and Expense Policy
- Amended Electronic Resources Policy
- Amended Fee Waiver Policy
- Amended Financial Reporting Policy
- Amended Lottery and Enrollment Policy
- Amended Paid Parental and Postpartum Recovery Leave Policy
- Amended Procurement Policy
- Amended Sex Education Instruction Policy sandy wants follow-up
- Amended Student Conduct and Discipline Policy

Priscilla Stringfellow reviewed the amendments to each of the policies. Board members clarified their questions and concerns with the policy changes and updates and discussed follow-up for the Sex Education Instruction Policy at the next board meeting.

Jacob Howarth made a motion to approve the amended policies listed above. Collin Post seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows: Dusty Griffith, Aye; Colin Post, Aye; Jacob Howarth, Aye; Sandy Shepard, Aye; Johannah Leonelli, Aye.

CALENDARING

The next board meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2026, at 5:00 PM via Zoom.

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).

Item tabled.

ADJOURN

At 5:48 PM Jacob Howarth made a motion to approve the July 22, 2026, Board Meeting and Closed Session Minutes. Collin Post seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The votes were as follows: Dusty Griffith, Aye; Collin Post, Aye; Jacob Howarth, Aye; Sandy Shepard, Aye; Johannah Leonelli, Aye.

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