



Independence Academy
675 29 Rd Grand Junction, CO 81504
Phone: (970) 254-6850 Fax: (970) 241-2064

Board Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2025
5:00 P.M-Commons Area

Brought to order: 5:03 pm

Present:

- **Brad Thompson**
- **Thomas Gibson**
- **Jane Pizem**
- **Burke Martin**

Absent:

- **Lisa Sutherland**

I. Staff and Student Celebrations:

- A. Latasha Harris shared the success of the Veteran's Day breakfast celebration and presented a book about the project.**
- B. Megan Henry shared about a collaboration project involving 8th-grade students and 2nd-grade students that created a "Guess Who" game for staff members, where they created LEGO portraits for the staff**
- C. Ellen Balzer's fiber arts class made blankets to donate to the Children's Hospital in Denver.**

II. Public Comment: Time-limited TBA – individuals may make public comments, limited to items on the agenda and two (2) minutes. The Governing Board asks that each member complete a public comment card, available in the front office, prior to the commencement of the meeting. Public comment cards should be given to the Executive Director, who will then deliver them to the Governing Board President.

- A. None at this time

III. Approval of the October 27, 2025, Board Minutes.

Motion: Thomas Gibson

Second: Jane Pizem

Vote: 4-0 vote passes

IV. Approved resolution of the board of directors of Independence Academy to authorize of property transfer by deed and bond documents.

Motion: Thomas Gibson

Second: Burke Martin

Vote: 4-0 vote passes

V. Elementary Principal Report

A. Culture

1. Kati Bennett informed the board that there has been an increase in elementary school suspensions this school year, primarily due to students who repeatedly engage in physical aggression with their peers. She clarified that it is the same 5 students who continue to fight, hit, and kick and school. The administration has exhausted its restorative resources and is now moving into punitive consequences, implementing MTSS for behavior plans for each student.

VI. Middle School Principal Report

A. Instruction

1. Core teachers are working to align the curriculum and standards. Teachers are increasingly working together and collaborating more closely.
2. With the district moving up its cut-off dates for school of choice, IACS has also moved up its dates for school of choice for middle school programs.
3. Teachers are working on better defining each program on the website.

VII. Executive Director's Report.

A. Operations

1. Lisa Gonsalves met with Jennifer Marsh to discuss the future of the high school, and she expressed her interest in attending an IACS board meeting.
2. Lisa and Audrey will be attending another meeting with her tomorrow to discuss the High School application further.
3. Jane asked when the high school application is due. Audrey's answer was in February 2026. The decision will be made in May 2026, and then once approved, you can open within 18 months.

B. Community Outreach

1. The build day for middle school was amazing, and the Sheriff's department did a great job working with the kids. All will return to serve as judges on competition day. Megan Henry shared that, from a teacher's perspective, she loved the workshops and found them very engaging for both teachers and students.

C. Events Calendar

1. The Staff Christmas Party will be on December 11th at the Bookcliff Country Club.

D. Facilities Report -

Moved into executive session at 6:08 pm

VII. Executive Session CRS Section 24-6-402 (4)(f)

A. Personnel Changes

C.R.S. 24-6-402 (4) The members of a local public body subject to this part 4, upon the announcement by the local public body to the public of the topic for discussion in the executive session, including specific citation to the provision of this subsection (4) authorizing the body to meet in an executive session and identification of the particular matter to be discussed in as much detail as possible without compromising the purpose for which the executive session is authorized, and the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the quorum present, after such announcement, may hold an executive session only at a regular or special meeting and for the sole purpose of considering any of the following matters; except that no adoption of any proposed policy, position, resolution, rule, regulation, or formal action, except the review, approval, and amendment of the minutes of an executive session recorded pursuant to subparagraph (II) of paragraph (d.5) of subsection (2) of this section, shall occur at any executive session that is not open to the public.

Adjourned: 6:27 pm