



Independence Academy
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Board Meeting Minutes
February 23, 2026
5:00 P.M-Commons Area

Brought to order: 5:06 pm

Present:

- **Brad Thompson**
- **Thomas Gibson**
- **Jane Pizem**
- **Lisa Sutherland**

Absent:

- **Burke Martin**

I. Staff and Student Celebrations:

- A. Megan Henry shared that Jacob Walden won the MLK art competition and the I voted sticker contest.
- B. Gemma Snyder also placed in the MLk art contest.
- C. We also have three students who are semi-finalists in the Palisade Peach Art Contest
- D. Megan received a scholarship for a summer residency in Gunnison for a photography PD.
- E. Megan also has a Student art show going on at the downtown library.

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.

- None at this time.

III. Approval of the January 2026 Board Minutes.

Motion: Jane Pizem

Second: Lisa Sutherland

Vote: 4-0 vote passes

IV. Approval of the January 2026 Financials.

Motion: Thomas Gibson

Second: Jane Pizem

Vote: 4-0 vote passes

V. Discussion to respond to the lease term length concern raised by Thomas Gibson.

- A. Lisa Gonsales outlined the law regarding School debt and outlined parameters for incurring debt.
- B. Long-term debt is mostly prohibited.
- C. The board can approve medium-term leases (up to 5 years) and real estate purchase contracts.
- D. Certain existing leases with a legal building corporation are fully exempt from the time limit.
- E. The corporation could also extend a 5-year lease to the IACS school board or even longer, because IACS is a legal corporation.
- F. Thomas asked for a financial boot camp for the board, so we agreed to schedule one for this summer, where I would schedule a lunch and sit down with board members and do a deep dive into financials and answer all financial questions for board members.

VI. Discussion regarding online security concerns raised by Burke Matrin

- A. Administration reported that this issue has been looked into, and though the school owns the Chromebooks, they are operated by the district.
- B. It was also noted that parents and students signed the Chromebook Use Agreement, and so parents will need to be accountable for that agreement when Chromebooks are in use at home.

VII. Review and discussion regarding FDIC coverage for school funds and accounts.

- A. Brad Thompson, the board president, contacted the bank regarding the FDIC coverage and is passing the information along to our Executive Director, Lisa Gonsalves, to follow up on.

VIII. Review and discussion regarding student safety when walking home, and the issue of parents driving up the wrong side of the road.

- A. The board discussed potential improvements to the walking path to improve safety.

IX. Executive Director's Report.

- Operations
 - We have 100% staff retention this year (we don't count the one teacher who will be moving because she doesn't want to leave) and we will see another year of growth in our student body - our 8th consecutive year - so in a world where other schools can't find teachers and are having problems with dwindling populations - we are not having issues with either - we can't complain. We also predict we will see a 9th year of growth - next year.
- Assessment -
 - CMAS is coming up in April
- Events Calendar
 - The middle school Challenge for the spring will be designing a new playground for K-2, and we would like the board to serve as judges on Expo day
 - We are sending staff and admin to the League of Charter Schools conference this week.
- Facilities-
 - IACS has to move the back fence 10 feet back to reclaim 10 feet of property because we found out from the assessor that our fence is about 10 feet off from the property line, so during landscaping of the new property, we will move the fence to reclaim that extra 10 feet.

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

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: 6:45 pm