

AFSA PreK-12
Work Session Agenda
Elementary Cafeteria

December 16, 2025

4:00 - 5:00 pm

AGENDA TOPICS

Board Members Present: Julie Cox, Kyra Warner, Kerry Schulte, Leslie Scherer, Matt Vinez, David Smith, Kate Plaisance, Sam Wakefield, Melissa Farler

Board Members Absent: Jennifer Cook

A. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. **External marketing options** GrowSchools vs. Vertex
 - a. We (Sam and Becky) were at both companies' presentations.
 - b. Sam explained the differences between both companies.
 - i. Grow Schools: 75,000 - was trying to get in contact with our representative to figure out if that included marketing materials, such as printable items, ads, etc.
 - ii. Vertex: 48,000 cost, we are responsible for the materials. This is usually between 15,000-20,000. That is our decision to use. Had a better presentation in regards to knowing our school. Had better communication. They have been doing this longer.
 - iii. Both schools will most likely be able to do the same job, Vertex did a better job staying involved with us and making sure our questions were answered. Started as a service for one charter school (similar to Kipp), transitioned to taking on outside school.
 - c. We have a marketing budget already 20-25 each year.
 - i. This is why we are only seeing 4,000 a month on the draft revised budget.
 - d. How much of this is new? We do this already. - question proposed by board member.
 - i. We do a lot of the items that they purpose, but we are not seeing the correct results. With budget and bonds being worked on, it will not matter if we do not increase enrollment.
 - e. 5 Kids pay off the cost.
 - f. This is in the action item in the board meeting. This will be difficult with the new budget and not getting hold of the bond holders (written down agreement).
 - g. Sam gave his opinion on going with Vertex, both are similar. Vertex has created an easier working relationship and strong communication.
2. **Grant application**
 - a. Grant Opportunity: St. Paul & Minnesota Foundations
 - i. We fit in the community solutions programs, two total grants.
 - ii. Leslie and Kate met with a member and they did not say no to charter schools. It is possible for us to apply.
 - iii. Grants January 12, 2026 - up to 50,000
 - iv. Grant would not come until June. Kate asked for a copy of the application to see what information we needed. We have not heard back from the foundation yet.

- v. The places where we need to highlight are the students we are serving. How we partner with other community agencies that serve our students.
 - vi. We should apply to both, different people review the grant applications.
 - vii. The board would write with administration support. It will be a huge task, but it is something that could make up the 50,000 we need for the budget.
- b. Liz got confirmation from a parent's business to help with a student project. Up to 15,000. It is around the playground and its equipment. This is also a way to help our enrollment. It is visual and helps with marketing. It is in its early stage, will update.
3. Revised budget
- a. In the board folder is the draft of the revised budget - Becky shared the two. Originally at 420, and now updated with 365. Two budgets are there: One with the forbearance and one without the forbearance. We do not have it in writing yet.
 - b. Questions:
 - i. Where is the marketing expenses - in multiple places but falls in the category of marketing.
 - ii. How do we vote without a forbearance plan in place? We cannot until the plan is in place. We cannot adopt a budget with this big of a negative balance without a writing plan in place.
 - iii. Do special education students receive the same revenue? It is close to cost neutral instead of specific situations.
 - c. Notes
 - i. repairs and maintenance - probably should increase that since 75% has been used. This is because of snowplowing. Becky will have to do an investigation. Not sure why we are at 68,000 already.
 - ii. Most numbers were updated by Bridget.
 - iii. Other possibilities:
 - 1. Cut staff, busing, 10% cut in salaries in staff, 10% cut in administration, eliminate field trips
 - a. Would save a quarter to a third if you cut a salary at this point in the year.
 - 2. We can request a detailed list of all expenditures to specifically look at.
 - d. Pull detailed reports: Becky will pull for the board to review. This will show us what the specific expenditures are.
 - i. Facilities and equipment
 - ii. Supplies and Materials
 - iii. Dues, and Memberships
 - e. List of potential staff cuts. - Wakefield will get a potential list together.

B. ADJOURN - Adjourned 5:15pm

**Finance Committee meeting 3:30 pm ELEM business office
Regular board meeting to begin at 5:00 pm in ELEM Cafeteria**

AFSA PreK-12
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
Elementary Cafeteria
December 16, 2025
5:00 - 6:30 pm
AGENDA

A. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Board Members Present: Julie Cox, Kyra Warner, Kerry Schulte, Leslie Scherer, Matt Vinez, David Smith, Kate Plaisance, Sam Wakefield, Melissa Farler

Board Members Absent: Jennifer Cook

Guests: Liz Burkwald, Becky Meyer, Laura Nelson

1. Call to Order @ 5:15pm Kate read the Mission, Vision, and Honoring Native Peoples.

Mission: The Academy for Sciences and Agriculture (AFSA), a public charter school for grades PreK-12, engages learners in academically rigorous, student-centered, hands-on experiences and leadership opportunities within a science, environmental education, and agricultural context.

Vision: AFSA will develop lifelong learners who are curious, care for others and have high skill levels in applied sciences, and will be prepared for a future in a diverse, global and changing society

Honoring Native Peoples: We would like to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the Dakota People and pay our respect to elders both past and present.

2. Determination of Quorum: We have Quorum with one absent board member. Jennifer Cook is absent. All other board members present.

3. Determination of Conflict of Interest on any agenda items - No conflict of interest.

4. Approve Agenda: The board needs to add the Revised October minutes. During the November board meeting, Sam (note taker) did not put the vote on the Financial report. It was done, but missed it in transition from handwritten notes to the digital copy. Kate entertains a motion to add the Revised October Minutes to the approval of minutes and approve of the agenda, Kyra so moved, Dave seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

5. Approval of Minutes:

Revised October 2025 Board minutes: Number 7 on the agenda was revised, added the vote of approval of financial report, payment of invoices and acceptances of gifts. Kyra moved to amend the October 2025 board minutes as revised, Julie seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

November 2025 Board minutes: Kate entertains a motion to approve of the November minutes, Julie so moved, Matt seconded the motion - Passed unanimously

6. Approval of Financial Report -Before the vote board discussed below. Kate entertains a motion to accept the financial report, payments of invoices, but the acceptance of gifts is not approved, Julie, so moved, Kyra seconded the motion. Passed unanimously

- i. Payment of Invoices
- ii. Acceptance of Gifts
 - 1. 3,196 in donations in November, this is the incorrect amount. Will not be accepted in the board vote to approve. Bridget mentioned in the financial committee that this is wrong and will be updated. It was the previous month.
- iii. Becky went through the executive summary of the financial report and the supplemental report. This gives more specific line items.
 - 1. Details needed in the expenditures: Becky will put it up for the next board meeting to decide on cuts. Asked the board on which ones they wanted to look at for future budget cuts.
 - a. Julie's three mentioned in the work session.
 - b. Detailed list of contracted services.
 - 2. Questions:
 - a. What are operating fees/leases - we lease our buses for about 5,000 months
 - b. What are non-instructional items - office supplies, paper, envelopes, memberships.
 - c. Does the Food Service make money - It can but depends on how many people eat. A board member brought up that we should show what we make and how good it is to eat. Try to get more students to eat lunch. Inconsistent at the high school.

B. SCHOOL GUEST SPEAKERS

Two high school students (JT and Josiah)- Spoke on the AFSA auto business plan that was approved by the school. Planning on cleaning and detailing cars. The school agreed to help start the fund and will pay them back. They want this to be long term, and teach job skills. They read through their proposal and shared their future plans. This plan is to start cleaning/detailing cars out of the shop to fundraise money for the school, specifically the FFA and shop. The group wants to update their tools and equipment for the future. Hopefully to expand to small engine repairs. Have already fixed some snowblowers and other items donated. This was 100% student driven.

C. GUEST COMMENTS (Three minutes per presenter)

No Guest comments at this time.

D. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. School Activities Reports

	Elementary	High School	District
Academic	Trimester 1 grade reports, IEP and Intervention progress reports, and STAR test results from November went out to families on December 5th.	Trimester started Dec1. It has been a smooth start. New students for tri 2 have transitioned well into our schedule	Team has been meeting with CNA in regards to the North Start Report. We have been digging deep on how we gather data and the use of it. The data is around

	<p>Trimester 2 began on December 1 with a schedule change for specialist classes at the Elementary. 4th graders are enjoying the switch to Phy Ed class, while 5th and 6th grade have moved to Art and are having fun planning out their projects. Prek to 3rd have A/B day schedules with Ag and PE this trimester.</p>		<p>feedback data, student academic data, and teacher evaluation data. We meet around 2x month.</p>
<p>Community and Culture</p>	<p>The Fair Trade fundraiser fell short of the goal of earning \$3000. Profits will be about \$1600 and go towards the term scholarship and field trip fund. We had hoped for enough to purchase some better mats for the playground area by the gagaball pit and flag football area to increase safety.</p> <p>The highest sales among the 5th/6th grade classrooms won the opportunity to pie teachers in the face, while a top salesperson in each homeroom earned a free lunch from Culver's on December 11th, and the top overall homeroom wins a bonus field trip this year! Ms. Pasquesi's homeroom was the top selling homeroom!</p> <p>AFSA Elementary celebrates Disability Awareness in December with highlights in the curriculum as well as activities and dress up days to end the month.</p> <p>December Soar Slip rewards focus on literacy leading into winter break with the chance to purchase books to take home with their Soar slips this Friday. Books for this were purchased with proceeds from last year's book fair.</p>	<p>Sam had a potential guest speaker come visit the high school. He has made some mistakes in his life and wants to help students.</p> <p>Coming up before next board meeting: Taste of AFSA (1/21)and MN AG Night (1/15)</p> <p>NHS has started a coat drive.</p>	
<p>Mission</p>	<p>Field trips this month included MN Zoo, Spooner Park, and Wargo Nature Center. Guest speakers came to visit with Mr. Melling's class about MN History and Ms. DeMarre's class about Mental Health.</p>	<p>College Visit during Lunch and visited a classroom - Minnesota North College.</p> <p>AFSA Auto Proposal: A group of high school students presented a proposal to Mr. Wakefield. It was a business plan to help fund the FFA and shop classes. Right now they are going to detail cars. They will start with their own and then open to the public.</p> <p>We have had a couple of CDE field trips and the Metals and Welding went on a field trip as well.</p>	
<p>Enrollment</p>	<p>Elementary at 134. There are no pending applications for the</p>	<p>2 Shadow students, 6 students start the 2nd trimester.</p>	

	<p>Elementary at this time.</p> <p>Lottery has 24 applications, with the most coming in for 7th grade (8), and 11 for the Elementary grades. 1 shadow student (today!) for next year.</p> <p>Comparison: 2024 had 34 applications in December 2019 (year we made enrollment goals) had 54 applications in December</p>	<p>Possible 1 more that has been accepted but picking a start date. See enrollment report Two more are looking to start soon.</p>	
Other	<p>Special Ed/504 Plans (Tier 3): There are 34 active IEPs at the Elementary school, with an additional 4 undergoing Initial Educational Evaluation at this time. There are 3 students with 504 Plans.</p> <p>Academic Interventions: 56 students are receiving Tier 2 Academic interventions Behavior Interventions: 26 students have been identified for Tier 2 behavior interventions or responses</p>	<p>Really revamped our hallway expectations. Have seen great progress.</p>	<p>Renting out the gym to another volleyball program 2-3 times a week. Bringing in extra income of around 120-200 a week.</p> <p>Sam, Parent, and Leslie met with a company rep from Demco who transforms space. They looked at both libraries to see what it would cost to transform. This is to help guide us when asking for donations or having a fundraiser drive.</p>

December Enrollment Report

From last board meeting	2024 October	Current Students	Goal	Apps for 26-27
Prek	n/a	16	18	2
KG	n/a	13 (-1)	20	2
1	n/a	11	22	1
2	n/a	7	22	
3	n/a	14	22	2
4	n/a	22 (-1)	22	1
5	n/a	13	30	0
6	n/a	38	30	2
Total	n/a	134 (-2)	186	
7	34	29 (-1)	35	6
8	33	36(+1)	40	1
9	51	39 (+1)	60	3
10	46	45(+1)	50	1
11	43	37 (-2)	50	0

12	38	43	40	1
Total	249	229	275	
School Total		363	461	22

2. **Administrative Reports** - None at this time
3. **Committee Reports**
 - a. **Election team** - None at this time
 - b. **Donations team** - None at this time
 - c. **Finance Committee** - Kate shared that we noticed the food service budget this year was more than last year with less students. It is something the committee will look into for the revised budget. The repairs and maintenance expenditures were higher than what we thought. Becky already emailed to find out this reason and will look into the matter.
 - d. **Exec Committee** - None at this time.
4. **Training updates** - Matt will watch the last two videos from the Board Retreat. Dave will go to the high school for the Mandated reporter and get it completed. Had issues with the online training system.

E. DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. **OW feedback**
 - a. In compliance with our academic and environmental report, we discuss 4 times a year, this was just not on rotation when they reviewed.
 - b. 0.2.1 - reflect and talk about training 4 times a year. We did not have that expectation before. We will add this to the agenda and make sure we discuss our training. We have done this prior, but have not made sure it was 4 times.
 - c. 2.2 - updates on administrative updates. Wakefield will get clarification. We read this as they want our school reports in the board packet. Sam will bring an admin meeting to meet expectations.
 - d. Follow up: Board material packets were there and printed. It is recommended to have another option. Sam presented it to the board for a solution. We will continue to have the printed copy, but before the board meeting have the board packet as a pdf that can be given digitally as needed.
5. **Academic review** - Both building administrators presented the current data. It allowed the board to see the goals and what the work is being done in both buildings. Though not all of the date is present, it showed progress and what is being tracked in both schools. The board expressed how they liked seeing all of the goals and how administration was keeping records/progress through the year.
 - a. Elementary: Liz Burkwald presented
 - i. Indicator 3 Reading Growth: 26 students one or more grade levels behind based on fall STAR testing. 3rd-6th students: Median SGP 61 49/67 (73%) at expected growth. Other goals are based on MCA scores, not evaluated.
 - ii. Indicator 4 Math Growth: 31 students one or more grade levels behind based on fall STAR testing. 3rd-6th students: Median SGP 45 39/66 (60%) at expected growth. Other goals are based on MCA scores, not evaluated
 - iii. Indicator 5 and 6 Proficiency goals are based on MCA scores, but in reading 34/82 (41%) meet/exceed standards based on fall STAR. In Math, 22/83 (27%) meet/exceed standards based on fall STAR.

- iv. Note: All of the proficiency goals and STAR goals are reportable later in the year after February assessments.
 - b. High School: Laura presented on all of the Osprey Wild goals but focused on the academic goals for discussion points.
 - i. Star Reading Growth: 81/219 (37%) of students started below grade level in the November test window. We have SGPs for 47 of these students. Of those 47, 33 (70%) have an SGP of 35 or above
 - ii. Star Math Growth: 103/221 (47%) of students started below grade level in the November test window. We have SGPs for 63 of these students. Of those 63, 47 (75%) have an SGP of 35 or above.
 - iii. The other goals in regard to academic data are TBD based on MCA scores or data not available at this time.
- 6. Environmental Ed** - After the reports the board spent time asking questions and appreciated the detailed reports.
- a. Elementary: Liz Burwald presented
 - i. Indicator 1: Almost all students have completed 1 field trip, and this is where most of these activities take place.
 - ii. Indicator 2: Science fair takes place on February 26th, 2026. We have started projects in December. All classrooms have their topics/ideas.
 - iii. Indicator 3: All students have at least completed in 1.
 - iv. Indicator 4: Fair Trade lessons were part of our November Wonder Wednesday curriculum to coincide with our fall fundraiser (fair trade items). Final data is still being compiled, but this goal should be met.
 - v. Indicator 5: Kindergarten students will complete these lessons as part of the agriculture curriculum that started this trimester.
 - b. High School: Laure Nelson presented
 - i. Gave updates on the progress on all the indicators. Most of the indicators at the high school level are year long goals. We are on track for most of the EE goals.
 - ii. Those on track with the data available
 - 1. Awareness: 1.1 on track for 81.5%, 5.1 91%, 5.2 96%
 - 2. SAEs are on track, almost all of the students completing. This goal is a year long goal that cannot be finalized until the end of year. But completion rate for trimester 1 for four classes is 100%, 100%, 88% and 94%.
- 7. Outstanding obligations review:** Sam went through the report
- a. Prior to July 1, 2025 tab has all been met. The only thing was the CACR which we received extensions on. It is being voted on at this meeting. Sam will make sure to include dates on all of the items for evidence purposes.
 - b. Prior to renewal Evaluation: Most of these are on track or if not complete. The only ones that are not on track are around the financial circumstances.
 - i. 0.1.1, 0.1.2, 0.1.5 and 0.1.6 are all being met, we just need to make sure that we are documenting in the spreadsheet.
 - ii. The obligations of the Building Company are all being met, we meet once a year and it's all on the webpage.
 - iii. Our lockdowns and safety procedures are all up to date and being documented.
 - iv. Annual Report met Osprey Wilds requirements and needed no updates.
- 8. Mid-yr progress on ED goals:** Sam went through progress of his goals set by the board. Some goals have been delayed based on the enrollment concerns.

- a. Goal 1: has been working hard on enrollment. Looking to hire an outside agency. Has dedicated time to get out of the office to focus on enrollment. All applications for this year and next are being communicated with. Started a prospective student newsletter. Working with a marketing intern to help him with tasks that he cannot finish during the day. Meets on a weekly basis.
- b. Goal 2: This was pushed back a bit based on potential hire for a marketing firm. Has reached out to staff to join. Will have a team ready to go if we do hire a firm.
- c. Goal 3: Need to find where these trainings can be completed. Have not found it on Osprey Wilds resources. It is a part of the new MN statute. Sam will reach out to other areas to complete.
- d. Goal 4 and 5: Working closely with Becky to get all of her job duties. Will determine how we can reassign and what parts Sam will take over. We need to create a realistic job description. Sam will have completed by Jan. 1. Becky is retiring, and needs the best plan moving forward.
- e. Goal 6: We had plans for Sam to get in a program to help him receive support, with the immediate need of enrollment we have changed directions. Sam created a document that shows his professional development. Will keep updated and work to at least have one PD each month.

F. ACTION ITEMS

1. **CACR approval** - Sam went through the updates from last time we voted on the CACR. A new template was provided to help get a plan that met the statute. Kerry moved to approve the Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness plan, Julie Seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.
2. **Revised budget** - Due to not having the forbearance in writing Kyra moved the revised budget to lay on table and move to January Board meeting, Julie seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.
3. **External marketing hire** - Board had some further discussion in regards to budget and how we will make this work. We need to have the bond agreement in writing regardless of our budget cuts or plan to hire a marketing agency. All steps need to happen for the future of the school. The board understands that it is important that we need bond agreement and enrollment.
 - a. Matt moved to go forward with hiring an external marketing agency and approve hiring the company "Vertex", specifically in the Leadership option, Julie seconded the motion. Passed unanimously

G. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Next meetings:
 - a. Regular meeting January 27, 2026 at 5 pm
 - b. Sam asked the board to move board meetings to the high school, due to staffing the door and easier for public access. All board members said that was not an issue. Sam will communicate the next steps.

I. ADJOURNMENT Julie Moved to adjourn the board meeting, Dave seconded the motion. Passed unanimously. The board adjourned at 6:58.