

AFSA PreK-12
Work Session Agenda
High School
February 24, 2026
4:00 - 5:00 pm
AGENDA TOPICS

Board Members Present: Leslie Scherer, Kerry Schulte, Melissa Farler, Kyra Warner, Julie Cox, Dave Smith, Jenny Cook, Kate Plaisance, Sam Wakefield

Board Members Absent: Matt Vinez

Work Session Called to order at 4:05pm

A. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Vertex Brand messaging proposal

- a. Sam shared how Vertex created a brand message for AFSA to help move forward with marketing services. Vertex spent time interviewing key members of our staff to get a common understanding of who AFSA is and what we have to offer to potential new families. They used all of our answers to create a common message for our school. This document will allow our school to make sure we are all sharing a common message. AFSA's population has changed throughout the years and we need to make sure we are promoting the correct message.
- b. The board discussed the document and what we thought should be added or critiqued. We thought overall the document was a very good start and agreed that it will be a working document, but it was a great building block to moving forward. Below were some discussion points:
 - i. We needed to look at MDE pathways to make sure we were aligned with that system.
 - ii. We discussed the theme of more than Ag, this is a large part of who we are and agree that we need to explain what this means to our community. This sets us apart from other schools. We came up with Agriculture and more. AFSA needs to be able to communicate what agriculture means and how it can have a positive impact on students.
- c. Tag Line: The board viewed the different types of tag lines that Vertex came up with to use for our first marketing campaign. This will be used to Meta and google ads moving forward. We had to select the one we wanted to move forward with.
 - i. The board all agreed that "Where Learning Comes to Life" represented our school the best. We are a school that has so many different opportunities for students to achieve success. We help students find their niche in education and this was the best fit. We feel that the second option can be adapted as we move forward with our brand messaging.

2. AFSA's Financial framework plan:

- a. Kate plaisance went through the excel spreadsheet showing how we have been working on our current financial situation as a school. The school has not been ignoring the current status of school and we took time to review all the steps taken to help resolve the problem. The school has been working since last April to get a forbearance plan in place to help prevent the issues we are facing now. The

- document lays out a timeline of our attempted actions to address our ongoing financial status.
- b. Forbearance Plan: We have made huge progress with getting a forbearance plan agreed upon with our bond holders. We are expecting a proposal this Friday from the bond holders legal team. Though Mary Jane and the team have agreed to work with our school, we have not had that in writing. This is a crucial step in moving forward with our SOD plan with MDE and to show our authorizer we are making progress.
 - c. Communication to AFSA Staff: We received an email from a staff member asking that we need to be more transparent with our staff on what the current status is for the future of AFSA. This has been difficult with all of the different moving parts. We have been discussing this as a board since last year and all of those are in the minutes open to the public. Sam spoke with both buildings prior to this board meeting to discuss our current situation and the letter we received from Osprey Wilds. We want to be transparent and every decision we make is for the benefit of our students and staff. Though this was a difficult conversation to have, the staff appreciated the honesty. We will continue to communicate with our staff of our progress and make sure they are a part of the decision making process.
 - d. Email from Osprey Wilds: Sam and Kate received an email from osprey wilds informing us that they are going to their board to decide if they are going to terminate our contract based on our school not making progress on our current contract. This letter stated that three decisions were possible: To terminate the contract June 30th, 2026, to not terminate the contract, or impose lesser infractions. Osprey Wilds will inform our school no later than March 15, 2026. The board understands that this is an option and we need to be prepared to receive the letter of termination. We understand this is all around our finances and student enrollment. Kate and Sam will use this letter to hopefully show our bond holders how serious our situation is and that we need that forbearance agreement. To have AFSA move forward we need to increase enrollment and have a forbearance agreement in place. With one of those missing we will not be able to move AFSA another school year.
 - e. SOD: Sam has been working with MDE on our current SOD plan. It has been a positive experience and MDE has been very helpful. AFSA has never been in SOD and we made some mistakes that most schools do when trying to create a plan. MDE explained that do not make a plan that is not attainable. It is common for a school to go a little more in SOD before they start making progress. We updated our enrollment prediction and budget. MDE has also stated to keep them updated with the forbearance agreement as that will have a large impact on our SOD plan.
 - f. Met with North Lakes Academy: Kate Plaisance met with leaders from North Lakes Academy to discuss our common issues and how we move forward. With our locations it is hard to build a partnership but we will reconnect to see how we can best support each other.
 - g. Grants: All three grants have been submitted for next year totaling 180,000.

B. ADJOURN Meeting was adjourned at 5:04pm

Finance Committee meeting 3:30 pm High School Office conference room
Regular board meeting to begin at 5:00 pm in High School – sign in Lobby designates room

AFSA PreK-12
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
High School (room # on sign in Lobby)

February 24, 2026
5:00 - 6:30 pm
AGENDA

Board Members Present: Leslie Scherer, Kerry Schulte, Melissa Farler, Kyra Warner, Julie Cox, Dave Smith, Jenny Cook, Kate Plaisance, Sam Wakefield

Board Members Absent: Matt Vinez

A. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

1. Call to Order - Kate Plaisance called the board meeting to order at 5:04pm and 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 board members present, only Matt Vinez is absent.

3. Determination of Conflict of Interest on any agenda items: There is no conflict of interest on any agenda items.

4. Approve Agenda: Julie Cox moved to approve the agenda, Dave Smith seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

5. Approval of Minutes: The board reviewed the minutes of January minutes. Kate Plaisance entertained a motion to approve, so moved by Dave Smith, Kerry Schulte seconded the motion. passed unanimously.

6. Approval of Financial Report: Becky Meyer went through the financial report, supplemental report, payment of invoices, and payment of invoices. We are still working off the ADM of 359 and if the working budget stays on track we will have a potential positive balance this year. We are currently at 58.3% through the year. We are all up to date on all bills. AFSA still owes several months of rent payment to the bond holders. MDE has 60,000 of holdbacks, but Bridget from Creative Planning as it closer to 16,000. During he financial committee meeting it was shown that we were double charged on health insurance benefits on the

employer side. This will be caught up with not having to pay in march. Our food service budget seems to be lower than predicted but will monitor to see if we need to adjust later on. We have revised our working budget, this will need to be approved by the board once we have our forbearance plan solidified.

- i. Payment of Invoices
- ii. Acceptance of Gifts - 2961.63 in gifts.

Kate entertains to approve the financial report, payment of invoices, and acceptance of gifts, Julie Cox so moved, Kerry Schulte seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

B. SCHOOL GUEST SPEAKERS

No guest speakers at this time.

C. GUEST COMMENTS (Three minutes per presenter)

No guest comments at this time.

D. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. School Activities Reports: Liz Burkwald reported on the elementary activity reports and Sam Wakefield reported on the high school activity reports, the details are in the board packet "AFSA School Update to Board FY26 - February. See below with the updated enrollment report

Grade	Previous Year 24-25	Current Enrollment	26-27 Applications	Enrollment Goal	25-26 Open Applications
Pre-k		16	5	18	
KG		13	13	20	
1st		11	3	22	
2nd		7	1	22	1
3rd		13 (-1)	3	22	
4th		22	3	22	1
5th		14	2	30	1
6th		38	8	30	1
Total		134 (-1)	38	186	4
7th	36	28	15	35	2
8th	36	38 (+2)	4	40	3
9th	53	37 (-1)	8	60	1
10th	49	47 (+1)	1	50	2
11th	44	38	0	50	

12th	38	43	1	40	1
Total	256	231 (+2)	29	275	9
District Total		365 (+1)	67	461	13

2. **Administrative Reports** - no report at this time
3. Committee Reports
 - a. **Election team** - We are looking for a teacher board position. We as a board feel like we need an elementary school teacher to help represent that school. Sam will be sending an email to all families and teachers of the current spots to fill for the board. Up for election is a teacher, parent, and community member. Emails are sent in March with bios due in April to prepare for a May vote. The election committee is Julie Cox, Kyra Warner and Matt Vinez. Kyra will speak at the all staff meeting of the importance of a teacher representative and the benefits it has on the school.
 - b. **Donations team** - none at this time
 - c. **Finance Committee** - none at this time
 - d. **Exec Committee** - none at this time
4. **Training updates:** Matt Vinez has finished all of his required trainings. The board would like some possible training options. Sam Wakefield and Laura Nelson will give some resources to the board for some additional training options.

E. DISCUSSION ITEMS

3. **Board evaluation tool:** We are looking for something a little different this year to help evaluate our board. In the board packet are two different options to review. At this time board members looked at the two different options. What is required is that each board member email Kate Plaisance their preference on which evaluation tool they would like to use. We will complete this in the month of March to have a discussion during the April board meeting. With initial thoughts, the board thought to use both options to create our own evaluation.
4. **Insurance renewal:** Sam Wakefield spoke on the insurance reviews for our school. We are going to see an increase based on the worker compensation claims. The increased rate will go back to this year's cost next year with one of the claims coming off the books. The other bids did not qualify due to being denied. You can review this in the board packet. There is no other option to move forward with due to our worker comp claims.

F. ACTION ITEMS

1. **Insurance renewal:** Jennifer Cook moved to approve the insurance renewal for AFSA, Kerry Schulte seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.
2. **Transportation plan for FY27:** Sam Wakefield spoke about how we need to have our own transportation plan. We pull from 18-20 districts a year and if we went to utilizing the school districts to bus our students we would lose enrollment. We do need to get new buses with our current leased buses having an increase in maintenance plans. The new buses will have a 40,000 increase in budget, but if we keep the old buses we would be responsible for repairs of bus issues. It would take one bus to have a major mechanical issue to cost more

than the new bus budget. Kerry Schulte moved to approve AFSA using their own transportation, Melissa Farler seconded the motion. Passed unanimously. We will vote next board meeting on the plan of using old buses or moving to lease newer buses.

G. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Next meetings:

a. Regular meeting March 17, 2026 at 5 pm

I. ADJOURNMENT: Kerry moved to adjourn the board meeting at 6:12pm, Julie Cox seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.