

AFSA PreK-12
Work Session Agenda
High School
March 17, 2026
4:00 - 5:00 pm
AGENDA TOPICS

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

Board Members Absent: None

A. DISCUSSION ITEMS - Called to order at 4:00

OW appeal hearing submission

- a. The board took time to review and edit the response to the OW document. This is the document that is submitted to OW prior to the hearing. This response shows the actions we are taking as a school to have them reverse the decision. Some edits are:
 - i. Add a statement from the school board in the message from administration.
 - ii. Adjust the enrollment column and label it different.
 - iii. Update the enrollment numbers on Friday to give the most realistic projections
 - iv. The board will take the next few days to make their suggestions.
 - v. Change vertex to Student Enrollment plan
- b. SOD: We sent a more realistic enrollment projection to MDE. They seem to agree and are satisfied with our submission so far.
- c. Forbearance: This forbearance plan is fair and the best we will get. They did not have this before they sent the letter informing us of potential termination. It is only 6 months, but if we meet our goals it will be extended.
- d. Special meeting: We will schedule a special meeting for Friday at 1:00pm to finalize the response to the OW document.

St. Paul Grant: We did not get accepted for the St. Paul Grant.

B. ADJOURN - Meeting adjourned at 5:10pm

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)

March 17, 2026
5:00 - 6:30 pm
AGENDA

A. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

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

Board Members Absent: None

Guest: Becky Meyer, Liz Burkwald, Laura Nelson, Kate Bald

1. Call to Order - Kate Plaisance called the meeting to order at 5:11pm 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 as all board members are present.

3. Determination of Conflict of Interest on any agenda items: We have no conflicts of interest at this time.

4. Approve Agenda: We need to add an item in the discussion items and in action items. We are adding the school audit bid. Kate entertains a motion to approve the school board agenda with the addition of the school audit, Julie so moved, Kyra seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

5. Approval of Minutes: The board reviewed last month's minutes. Kate entertains a motion to approve of February minutes, Matt so moved, Julie seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

6. Approval of Financial Report: Becky Meyer went through the executive summary of the financial report. We are on target with this year's budget. We are currently cleaning up fund 11 as we noticed some items were not getting labeled correctly. Becky went through the supplement report, this is all money going in and money going out. We are caught up in all invoices and bills. Went through the acceptance of gifts.

- i. Payment of Invoices
- ii. Acceptance of Gifts

Kerry moved to approve of the financial report, payment of invoices, and acceptance of gifts. Farler seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

B. SCHOOL GUEST SPEAKERS

We have no guest speakers at this time

C. GUEST COMMENTS (Three minutes per presenter)

We have no guest comments at this time

D. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. School Activities Reports:

- a. Laura Nelson went through the high school school update. See document in board packet for more details.
- b. Liz Burkwald went through elementary school update: See document in board packet for more details.

2. Administrative Reports: None at this time.

3. Committee Reports

- a. **Election team:** Emails and reminders have been going out to the school community on the school board election. The deadline is approaching on getting candidates and biographies. April 14, 2026 will send out the school board candidates. May 15, 2026 starts the election, and ends May 31, 2026.
- b. **Donations team:** None at this time
- c. **Finance Committee:** Open up the updated finance report. This shows the cash flow in the forbearance agreement. This allows us to see our cash on hand. The forbearance agreement states that anything over 20 days cash on hand will be used for rent payments.
- d. **Exec Committee:** Board self assessment survey is due at the end of the month. We will discuss this at the April board meeting.

4. Training updates: None at this time.

E. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Academic review: The school board went through the FY25 academic performance evaluation. We as a school have shown improvements. We agree the performance is fair.

- a. Kate Bald updated the board on the academics at the elementary school. Overall seeing growth in many indicators. We did see a little dip in math scores, which is normal. They usually rebound in the spring. This is due to the mapping and teaching of certain standards. You can see the document in board packet with specific details
- b. Laura Nelson updated the board on the academics at the high school. We are noticing positive trends and we are ahead on many of the growth indicators. You can see the document in the board packet with specific details.

Kate Plaisance asked why are we seeing gains: The team responded with:

- Math Literacy: We have a full time staff at the elementary school
- We are having more student involvement when it comes to scores of students at the high school.
- School culture has shifted and students are adjusting to higher expectations

2. Environmental review:

- a. Kate Bald went through the Environment learning plan and the goals for the elementary school. Currently we are on track for all indicators.
 - b. Laura went through the Environment learning plan and the goals for the high school. We have not seen much change from last update as some of the goals data is from trimester 3. On track on all indicators.
- 3. Outstanding Obligations review:**
- a. The board reviewed the updated checklist of outstanding obligations. Many of the financial items are not attainable at this time. O.1.2 - how should we document. List our items out in place. O.2.1 - is what we are currently doing now.
- 4. Finance firm bids:** Becky went over the finance firm bids the school went out for. One bid was out of our budget so we did not follow up. The two bids we should consider are Creative planning at around 117,000 and Ed Fin at 163,000. Ed Fin would work as our CFO and take responsibility for cashflow, payroll, grants, other tasks that Becky does. This would be the best way to move forward. AFSA's old business manager works there and has great knowledge of our school finances. If we decide to move in this direction, we would need to let Creative Planning know 90 days before the contract expires. The higher cost of Ed Fin would be offset from Becky's salary.
- 5. Bus company bids:** We are getting some bus bids as we are trying to compare costs and make the best decision for next school year. We did get one from Hogland but it is more and not close to us. We need to look at whether we keep our old buses or lease new buses. Each has its benefits and risks. If we keep the old buses, the contract is cheaper but repair costs rise. New buses have higher costs but more coverage. We need to decide if we contract out our busing services of lease and continue to hire our own drivers.
- 6. Staff salaries for FY27:** We need to see how we set our salaries for next year and if there is an increase. We know we have a tight budget and need to eliminate unnecessary spending. Typically $\frac{1}{3}$ of our salaries are sped-reimbursed at 94% and $\frac{2}{3}$ is general fund. We have already been paying our staff lower than other schools. With the costs of health insurance and other items increasing we move forward with a 2% increase, we need to retain our staff.
- 7. Revised FY26 budget:** This budget has been what we have been using this school year. This is what we submitted to our SOD plan and it is in the forbearance plan. We feel we can move forward with approving this as our working budget. We will be in a 5% variance.
- 8. ABDO School Audit:** ABDO has been great and it is hard to find a company to do audits for our school. We should make sure we keep them as our auditor, and have been really good.

F. ACTION ITEMS

Finance firm choice: Kate entertains a motion to move to Ed Fin as our finance firm, Julie so moved, Kerry seconds the motion. Passed unanimously.

Bus company choice: Kate entertains a motion to go with North Central as our bus company, Dave so moved, Matt second the motion. Passed unanimously.

Staff salaries for FY27: Kate entertains a motion to have a 2% increase in staff salaries, Matt so moved, Leslie seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

Revised FY26 budget: Jen moved to approve the FY26 working budget to the schools revised budget, Dave seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

Form 990s: Kate entertained a motion to approve the schools 990, Dave so moved, Krya second the motion. Passed unanimously.

School calendar for FY27: School board was presented two options for the calendar. One before Labor Day start date, and one after Labor Day. The board moved with the option to

start after Labor Day. Jennifer moved to approve the 26-schools calendar, Kerry seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

Forbearance agreement: Kate entertains a motion to approve the forbearance agreement, Julie so moved, Kerry second the motion. Passed unanimously.

School Audit: Kater entertains a motion to approve ABDO as the schools audit services, Dave so moved, Kyra seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

OW appeal submission - this will be moved to the special board session Friday March 20th, 2026. Julie moved to approve the special board meeting, Kerry seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

Staff Salaries FY27 - Kate entertains a motion to approve a 2% salary increase, Matt so moved, Leslie seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

G. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Next meetings:

a. Regular meeting April 21, 2026 at 5 pm

b. Special Board meeting March 20, 2026 at 1pm.

I. ADJOURNMENT- Kerry moved to adjourn the board meeting at 6:50pm. Julie seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.