



American Classical Education Tennessee

Board Minutes

October 16, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

Tricia Stickel called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Board members Michelle Garcia, Tricia Stickel, Jackie Archer, David Codevilla, Darrel Woodard, Bryan Lewis, and Tom Biggs were present.

Phillip Schwenk, Yvonne Adkins, Tonya Iturri, Amy Mohan and Miranda Greer were additionally present.

Head of School, Phillip Schwenk read the school mission statement.

Public comment - No individuals signed up for public comment.

Board President Report

President Tricia Stickel asked for a motion to approve the agenda for October 16, 2025. Michelle Garcia made a motion, seconded by Darrel Woodard, and the agenda was unanimously approved.

A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 16, 2025 AGENDA

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors reviewed the agenda for the October 16, 2025 meeting;

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Board of Directors does hereby approve the agenda.

With no changes to the minutes as presented, President Tricia Stickel asked for a motion to approve the September 18, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes. Michelle Garcia made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Darrel Woodard seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE MEETING MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 18, 2025

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors conducted a meeting on September 18, 2025, and it has accurately documented the business and resolutions approved at that meeting; and

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Board of Directors does hereby approve the Minutes of the board meetings and authorizes Yvonne Adkins to file the minutes in the school's permanent records.

President Stickel provided an overview of the October 6 Work Session, noting that it was a productive meeting that allowed the Board to cover a number of issues. She stated that while regular work sessions may not be necessary every month, they remain valuable for deeper discussion and understanding of school and board related issues.

The Board reviewed policies currently in development, including the new AI Board Policy, which was submitted for approval. President Stickel also noted that the next policy under development will be a Board Succession Plan, which will clarify board member terms and recruitment processes as outlined in the bylaws.

Attorney Amy Mohan provided an update regarding the facility lease. She reported that Chris Whitson, counsel for the Board, had met with some members to discuss the draft lease and that revisions are being prepared, with anticipation of sending such to the Board this upcoming week.

Board Member David Codevilla expressed concern about ensuring all legal terms and requirements are completed prior to beginning lease payments. The board discussed the option of establishing an escrow account to hold rent payments should the agreement not be finalized in time. President Stickel confirmed that the financial consultant had advised that such would be straightforward process and incur no additional cost to the school.

Michelle Garcia raised the need for a centralized system to manage board documents, policies, and key records. Yvonne Adkins confirmed that the school's BoardEffect portal includes a dedicated board library for permanent documents and noted that historical materials from Attorney Rich Haglund's previous Google Drive are being migrated into this system.

Ms. Adkins discussed the ease of use and 24x7 individual access of BoardEffect compared to Google Drive and agreed that, while BoardEffect is more secure, it would be beneficial to maintain backup access in a Google Drive. Bryan Lewis volunteered to help create a brief instructional guide to assist members unfamiliar with using Google Drive.

Ms. Adkins offered to provide an additional BoardEffect training session – tentatively during the next work session scheduled for 11/13/2025 – to ensure members can locate and access materials independently.

President Stickel reminded the group that all Board reports, including the Head of School and financial reports, should be distributed to members by the Monday before each meeting to allow time for review and questions.

Financial Report

Schwenk presented the financial update, noting that the October state installment of approximately \$27,000 had been received on schedule and that a remaining portion was expected within the next 48 hours. He also reported receipt of CSP funds totaling \$53,463, which have been applied toward outstanding obligations and the purchase of curriculum and classroom furnishings.

Mr. Schwenk confirmed that enrollment remains steady at approximately 335 students, consistent with state-recognized figures. He continues to focus on reducing outstanding debts and maintaining a balanced pace of spending aligned with the school's growth and needs.

Michelle Garcia made a motion to approve the September 2025 financial report as presented. Darrel Woodard seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER FINANCIAL REPORT

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors has heard the financial update for the school as presented for September 2025; and

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors hereby accepts the financial reports for the school, as presented by Prestige Solutions.

State of the School Report

Mr. Schwenk highlighted key updates from the Head of School Report. The school recently completed its move into the new /permanent side of the building, and both parents and students expressed excitement about the improved facilities. Parent-teacher conferences were held over the past two days, with more than 90% of families participating. Mr. Schwenk emphasized the importance of these conferences as essential conversations about both academic and moral formation, which distinguish ACAR from other schools.

He reported that staffing adjustments had occurred due to health-related resignations of one aide and one teacher. Both positions have been filled, including a new Spanish-speaking aide who has already proven valuable.

The Scholar Sprint fundraiser exceeded its goal of \$20,000, ensuring funding for playground improvements. Ms. Greer and Mr. Schwenk expressed appreciation to the PTO and families for their generosity and enthusiasm.

Regarding compliance, he reported ongoing difficulty accessing the state's E-Plan system due to technical issues. Although he can access the portal, it has not permitted him to enter the required documentation. He continues to work with district contacts and the state to resolve the problem. Ms. Adkins and Ms. Greer further reported on working toward monthly compliance with RCS. The 2025-2026 staffing plan was reaffirmed following review of recent personnel updates.

After discussion, Jackie Archer moved to accept the State of the School Report. Michelle Garcia seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE STATE OF THE SCHOOL REPORT

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors has heard the State of the School updates for the month including enrollment, marketing, student and operational performance updates, and compliance update including the annual report, and the facility updates, as presented by Phillip Schwenk; and

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors hereby accepts the State of the School Report, as presented.

APPROVAL OF THE STAFFING LEVELS AND POSITIONS

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors has reviewed the staffing as presented by Head of School, Phillip Schwenk; and

RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors approves following completion of the 2025-2026 Staffing plan and positions as presented.

The Board reviewed the AI Board Policy as presented by counsel. After discussion, Michelle Garcia moved to approve the AI Board Policy. Darrell Woodard seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE AI BOARD POLICY

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors has reviewed and considered policies as presented by counsel;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Governing Authority approves the adoption of the AI Board policy.

The next Board work session is currently scheduled for November 6, 2025, though Board Members noted that this date conflicts with a state-mandated literacy training session. Yvonne Adkins offered to schedule a BoardEffect training session the following week on November 13th. Tricia Stickel and Yvonne Adkins will confer, and the work session may be rescheduled to November 13, 2025 if such meets the needs of a majority of Members. The next regular Board meeting will take place on November 20, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

Closing Remarks

Before adjournment, Darrel Woodard offered words of gratitude to all Board Members and staff, thanking them for their dedication and prayerful commitment to the mission of the school. Jackie Archer shared that she would be presenting about Hillsdale's K-12 programs and ACAR's progress at the upcoming Tennessee Conservative Alliance conference on October 18, joined by Hillsdale representative Eric Coykendall.

Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Jackie Archer, seconded by Bryan Lewis. The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing are true and correct minutes of the Governing Authority of the School at a public Board meeting dated October 16, 2025.

American Classical Academy Rutherford

Tricia Stickel, Board President