

Board Meeting Minutes
Submitted by Tasha Gilstrap, Secretary
January 12, 2026
YLA Classroom C

Present: Betsy Anthony, Tasha Gilstrap, Kayla Knowles, Kathy Brazinski, Jason Holcombe, Brandon McCurley, Sydney Cox; via phone: Shannon Ellenburg
Also Present: Sandee Blankenship, Melissa Kennedy, and Nathan Swords
Not Present: Nick McClellan, Jason Lucas

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:04pm by Betsy.

Public Input: None.

Approval of Minutes

- November: Motion to Approve made by Sydney; seconded by Kathy.

Financial Statements

October 2025, November 2025, December 2025

- October Financial Statements: Motion to Approve made by Brandon; seconded by Jason.
- November Financial Statements: Motion to Approve made by Sydney; seconded by Brandon.
- December Financial Statements: Motion to Approve made by Jason; seconded by Kayla.

Old Business

Meeting Virtual Link Procedures (Presented via email in Dec. 2025)

Melissa provided the physical copy of the Live-streaming in the meeting.

No questions.

- Motion to approve Meeting Virtual Link Procedures made by Jason; seconded by Brandon.

New Business

Vacant Appointed Educator Position

- Dawn Powell's resume was provided by Nick in November of 2025; emailed by Nathan.
- Tasha spoke to Dawn's character and educational experience with SDPC as a guidance counselor and her positive influence with children in her role with Brushy Creek Baptist Church. The board discussed her being highly qualified.
- No other submissions were provided.
- Motion to approve Dawn Powell as the Appointed Educator Role was made by Kayla; seconded by Kathy.

2026-2027 School Calendar Presentation

- Melissa provided the physical copy for a first look. Notes on the back, similar to Pickens County with a few exceptions. The vote will take place at the next board meeting.

YLA Alumni Scholarship

- Sandee provided an overview of the YLA Alumni Scholarship, noting this is the third year the scholarship has been offered and emphasizing continued support of YLA alumni. The Patsy Smith Scholarship will focus on alignment with YLA values rather than solely academic performance.
- A Fundraising Committee was formed: Kayla, Tasha, Kathy, and Shannon. Sydney and Betsy offered assistance with interviews.
- The Board discussed and agreed that students will not be excluded from participation based on their relationship to staff members.
- The fundraising goal was set at \$3,000.

Hot Pursuit

- An update was provided on the upcoming fundraiser scheduled for April 18 at the Pickens Airport. Planning is underway in coordination with Dr. Shriver. This event will serve as the primary fundraiser for the wheelchair swing project and represents the next planned location for a wheelchair-accessible swing.
- A question was raised regarding the total cost of the project. It was clarified that the total project cost is approximately \$26,000 and that this funding goal was met in 2025.
- Nathan will distribute information related to race registration, sponsorship opportunities, and promotional materials. A larger gap between the 5K and the Catch-a-Cop event is planned. To date, \$6,300 has been secured through sponsorships and contributions from the All In Dabo Foundation. There is a donation specific link for Hot Pursuit.
- Board members were encouraged to participate by forming a team of four or securing a sponsorship.
- Kathy Brazinski suggested exploring potential grant opportunities through Upcountry Fiber and Blue Ridge Electric, which offer grants of up to \$5,000. Sandee will investigate these opportunities for future projects.

Student Need

- An update was provided regarding an eighth-grade female student currently receiving medical homebound services. A Section 504 plan has been implemented. The Board discussed approval of medical homebound services, if needed.

- A motion to approve medical homebound services was made by Brandon and seconded by Kathy. The motion was approved.

Principal's Report

- Melissa Kennedy provided an update on recent teacher surveys completed by students. Overall feedback was positive, and follow-up meetings will be held to review and address the feedback. Students also received a refresher on the “discipline equals freedom” concept.
- Board members were reminded to submit completed board training certifications to Nathan as they are completed in order to meet compliance requirements.

Questions, Comments, Concerns

- Kathy mentioned there would be an optional board training at the end of January.

Executive Session:

- A motion to enter executive session was made by Sydney and seconded by Kayla.
- A motion to adjourn the executive session was made by Brandon and seconded by Jason.

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Sydney and seconded by Kathy. The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Next meeting: February 9th at 4pm.