Youth Leadership Academy
Board Meeting Minutes
October 19, 2026

Present: Shannon Ellenburg, Sydney Cox, Dawn Powell, Kathy Brazinski,, Kayla Knowles, Dawn Powell, Jason Holcombe, Jason Lucas, Jason Holcombe, and Betsy Anthony

Also present: Sandee Blankenship, Nathan Swords, Dr. Shasta Looper, Melissa Kennedy

Not present: Tasha Gilstrap

Called to order: The meeting was called to order at 4:00pm by Nick McClellan.

Public Input: None.

Approval of Minutes:
- September 2026 Minutes. No discussion.
- **Motion to approve** was made by Shannon Ellenburg seconded by Kathy Brazinski

Financial Statements:
- September 2026 Financial Statement: No additional discussion.
- **Motion to approve** was made by Kayla Knowles; seconded by Jason Lucas.

Old Business:
Artificial Intelligence Policy
- YLA admin wanted the board to have a look at it. No new additions to the policy, therefor no vote needed

New Business:
- **Medical Homebound**
  - Two students
    - Student 1: 4 weeks out of school due to surgery.
    - Student 2: Working through some issues. Tried some different things. If problems persist, medical homebound will apply through Nov 20.
    - Motion to approve for student 1: Kayla Knowles, second by Shannon Ellenburg
    - Motion to approve for student 2- Brandon McCurley, second by Kathy Brazinski
- **YLA Expansion Discussion**
  - State Super. Of Education- new pots of money.
  - We've never chance to have facility money. It is available at this point for rural charters who have had success. Money is not guaranteed. $68 million is first pot of money.
  - We've always said no to high school expansion due to inexperience with high school curriculum, etc. . Ansley Cudd now on staff w/ high school experience in curriculum, etc.
  - Struggling w/ Summit enrollment b/c there is not a high school option beyond 8th grade.

- YLA High School= amend lottery policy for current YLA students to get first priority, then anything left would be Summit students who get priority. This would boost enrollment for Summit now. Could expand virtually eventually as well.
- Not as much of a risk at YLA because of success and wait list and parent interest.
- Timeline= start amendment process to go through 12th grade. Add 100 students at a time. 2027- start w/ 100 9th graders, eventually 400 total over 4 years. December/January to SCPCSD board to approve, and then wait on Office of School Facilities.
- High school structure now is dual enrollment and students are not on campus as much as they were previously.
- TCTC for dual enrollment, Anderson U for dual enrollment. Virtual SC as well
- 2027- hire 4 teachers to run the 9th grade core content.
- Facility improvements
    - Engineer on the calendar to do a walk through.
    - Adult housing building is an option.
    - Voyager Building is an option.
    - Keeping middle & high school separate.
- No on site programming as have been in the past. All camps, weekend activities, etc. have moved to Camp Hannon or other CULI locations.
- Admin question
    - 9th grade- Sandee & Ansley admin, hire a HS Principal in year 2
- Future hiring would be based on enrollment.
- What would sports look like?
    - Same as now, state charter law
    - Home zone team
- Student driving
    - Plenty of room
- Guidance
    - Ansley would work as the guidance counselor to develop schedules, etc.
- YLA middle= Collaborate early w/ 9th graders, then separation
- Foreign Language
    - Part Time Spanish
- Flexible options for elective classes
- AP Classes
- Dual enrollment
    - Potential 27-30 dual enrollment credits
- Jason Lucas brought up potential issue with some dual enrollment requirements at certain high ed institutions. Important to identify what will translate to different institutions that students are interested in.
- How is Clemson with this?
    - It's good, but the key is getting the funding that's available. Clemson is good with site being used.
- Game plan if funding doesn't come through
    - Still can happen based on interest.
- Process for the application?
    - We don't know yet. Awaiting advisory committee.
- Motion to approve YLA Expansion
    - Shannon Ellenburg, second by Betsy Anthony. All in favor.

- **Summit Board Separation**

- Won’t separate this month. Will separate this cycle. New board will govern both charters for 6-8 months, then separation will happen.

Principals Report:

- 6th/7th overnight field trips were successful. 6th grade to Camp Hannon and Lake Jocassee. 7th to Camp Bob Cooper on Lake Marion.
- 8th grade has a couple local field trips this week to explore local government and career fair in Anderson.
- PSAT for 8th graders this week.
- Spirit week coming up next week

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

- Jason Holcombe commented that the 6th grade field trip was awesome. Well ran by YLA staff, CULI staff, and Jocassee Wild Child staff.
- Request from Nick McClellan
  - Comment on how great Kevin Loudermilk led the trip at Camp Bob Cooper.

Executive Session: None

Next Meeting: November 9, 2026.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn made by Dawn Powell and seconded by Sydney Cox. The meeting adjourned at 4:27pm.