

Painted Desert Demonstration Projects

The STAR School

School Board Meeting

October 14, 2025

4:00–5:23 pm

The STAR School

145 Leupp Road

Flagstaff, AZ 86004

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Mark Sorenson at 4:00 pm.

Present: Mark Sorensen, Pauline Young, Thomas Walker, and Rick St. Germaine. Evelyn McCabe had earlier telephoned that she was unable to be present.

Others Present: Director Jeannie Gross, Forrest Valora, and Loretta Eltsosie.

Opening words of encouragement were offered by Thomas Walker.

Board Chair Mark Sorensen discussed the agenda, which had been posted.

Motion was made by Thomas Walker and seconded by Pauline Young to approve the posted agenda. The motion carried 4-0-0. Voting in favor were Thomas Walker, Pauline Young, Rick St. Germaine, and Mark Sorensen.

Board Chair, Mark Sorensen briefly discussed the Board meeting minutes of July 8, 2025.

Motion was made by Pauline Young and seconded by Thomas Walker to approve the minutes from the School Board meeting of July 8, 2025. The motion carried 4-0-0. Voting in favor of the motion were Pauline Young, Thomas Walker, Mark Sorensen, and Rick St. Germaine.

Reports

Academic Report

Ms. Loretta Eltsosie, Assistant Principal, presented a report about the status of our School's attention to student academic improvement. Ms. Eltsosie's role is to emphasize our mission of quality instruction. Teachers will post learning targets that are aligned to State academic standards. Ms. Eltsosie uses three Walkthrough forms to cite evidence of instructional practice, student engagement, and classroom culture. She shared evidence of teacher

improvement in a results chart. The Project Momentum will improve student achievement in a six step process, including using formative assessments, using effective strategies, analyzing assessment data, and implementing enrichment and interventions. She reviewed the teacher PLC training schedule and topic areas. She also described the teacher observations, lesson planning, Navajo teacher curriculum scope & sequence, and teacher observation tools. Two board members (Rick St. Germaine and Thomas Walker) expressed their support for this direction.

Enrollment

Ms. Jeannine Gross, Principal/Director, reported that enrollment was at 93 students, which is quite low. Four students then moved to Flagstaff and it is now 89.

Newman's Own Grant

Ms. Jeannine Gross reported that Newman's Own awarded STAR School with a \$75,000 grant award for SY 2025-2026. School officials met with Newman's Own representatives and our prior year goals were met. A student pre-survey was completed and there will be an end of year one done in May, 2026.

HHS Grant Award

Dr Mark Sorensen reported that HHS awarded STAR School a grant for helping tribal elders with diabetes, solutions to water problems, water filtration, solar powered water bus, and helping other communities like Hopi. The grant amounts are \$200,000 for each of five years. There is progress on the well water power project that will improve solar power to operate our very deep well and store it.

Action/Discussion Items

FY 2025 Annual Financial Report

Mr. Forrest Valore presented the AFR 2025 Report using spread sheet information on a power point. He explained all the items on the financial report and all indications are that we are in a very healthy financial position.

A Motion was made by Pauline Young and seconded by Rick St. Germaine to approve the Annual Financial Report of FY 2025 as presented by Financial Director Forrest Valore. The motion carried 4-0-0. Voting in favor were Thomas Walker, Pauline Young, Rick St. Germaine, and Mark Sorensen.

Payment on Capital Loan

Forrest Valore discussed the possible capital loan payoff that was discussed in a prior Board meeting. Our lower enrollment counts with projected lower revenue from possible federal budget is a cause of concern. He urged the Board to consider enrollment trends and grants income before making a large pay-off of approximately \$450,000 balance at this time. Board members Rick St. Germaine and Thomas Walker discussed their caution also for such a huge payment at this time, even though the burden of interest rates may be a reason for pay-off.

A Motion was made by Rick St. Germaine and seconded by Thomas Walker to delay the capital loan pay-off until we have additional information from Financial Director Forrest Valore. The motion carried 4-0-0. Voting in favor were Thomas Walker, Pauline Young, Rick St. Germaine, and Mark Sorensen.

Other

Director Jeannine Gross and Mark Sorensen discussed the matter of other testing schedules as required by the State Charter Board because STAR School missed the testing date two years ago. The annual state required test calendar was shared with the Board members by Ms. Gross.

A Motion was made by Rick St. Germaine and seconded by Pauline Young to acknowledge reviewing the annual state student test dates and schedule as shared by Director Jeannie Gross. The motion carried 4-0-0. Voting in favor were Thomas Walker, Pauline Young, Rick St. Germaine, and Mark Sorensen.

Public Comment

There were no members of the public present at this meeting.

Next School Board Meeting

Discussion was held regarding the next School Board meeting, possibly in mid-January.

A Motion was made by Rick St. Germaine and seconded by Pauline Young to schedule the next School Board meeting for January 13, 2026 at 4:00 pm. The motion carried 4-0-0. Voting in favor were Thomas Walker, Pauline Young, Rick St. Germaine, and Mark Sorensen.

Adjournment

A Motion was made by Pauline Young and seconded by Thomas Walker to adjourn this Board meeting at 5:23 pm. The motion carried 4-0-0. Voting in favor were Thomas Walker, Pauline Young, Rick St. Germaine, and Mark Sorensen.