

**Painted Desert Demonstration Projects
The STAR School
School Board Meeting
July 7, 2026
4:07–5:03 pm
The STAR School
145 Leupp Road
Flagstaff, AZ 86004**

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Mark Sorensen at 4:07pm.

Present: Mark Sorensen, Evelyn McCabe, Pauline Young, and Thomas Walker (4:04 pm via telephone). Secretary Rick St. Germaine was not in attendance.

Others Present: Director Jeannie Gross, and Business Manager Forrest Valora (via zoom).

Opening words of prayer and blessings were offered by Evelyn McCabe in the Dine language.

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

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

Board Chair reviewed the board minutes of June 23, 2026.

A motion was made by Pauline Young and seconded by Evelyn McCabe to approve the minutes from the school board meeting of June 23, 2026. The motion carried 4-0-0. Voting in favor of the minutes were Pauline Young, Mark Sorensen, Thomas Walker, and Evelyn McCabe.

Reports

Academic Report/Letter Grade

Report was given by Principal Jeannie Gross. The board received an academic report showing a preliminary letter grade of B with 80.24 points, which was higher than the required 72-83.99 range needed for a B grade. Discussion followed by remarks about how we achieved the letter grade, which is a very high “B” and thanks to the SPED Students who scored higher than average which increased the score given. STAR’s enrollment is 77, which prompted the board and administration to take measures to increase enrollment and to have staff create a flyer to share the preliminary letter grade on the school’s Facebook page.

Public Comment

There were no public members present at the board meeting.

Action/Discussion

Consideration and Approval of FY 2027 Proposed Budget

Business Manager Forrest Valora suggested moving the public hearing and comment item before the budget adoption and changing its title to "public hearing and public comment." This was noted and agreed upon. Forrest began presenting the proposed budget with no changes from the previously approved version, and the board adopted it unanimously. Forrest will also finalize and submit the report to the charter board by the due date (13th or 14th).

A motion was made by Evelyn McCabe to Adopt the FY 2027 Proposed Budget as presented by Business Manager Forrest Valora, seconded by Pauline Young. The motion carried 4-0-0. Voting in favor were Pauline Young, Evelyn McCabe, Thomas Walker, and Mark Sorensen.

Review and Approval of Modifications to the STAR School Personnel Policy

Principal Jeannie Gross presented all board members with a hard copy of the updated and modified personnel policy for review with suggested changes in red. Discussion was centered on reviewing substantial modifications to the personnel policy manual, including updates to evaluation procedures, hiring processes, sick leave policies, and fraternization guidelines. The board discussed and debated specific language around fraternization policies, particularly regarding dating relationships and potential gossip concerns, ultimately agreeing to remove problematic language while maintaining appropriate workplace conduct standards. The board also addressed leave donation policies and whistleblower protection measures. Discussion followed with a focus on reviewing and discussing policy updates, particularly regarding employee eligibility verification, attestation processes, and sick leave procedures. Participants discussed specific wording for policies around harassment and discrimination. The group also addressed technical issues with screen sharing and meeting logistics, including contract updates and payment timing discussions.

A motion was made by Pauline Young to have the board review the substantial modifications to the STAR school personnel policy manual, giving the board two weeks to review the changes and give approval via email to obtain a consensus for approval. This was seconded by Evelyn McCabe. The motion carried 4-0-0. Voting in favor were Pauline Young, Evelyn McCabe, Thomas Walker, and Mark Sorensen.

Next Meeting

The next school board meeting has been scheduled for October 13, 2026, at 4:00pm here at STAR School. Future board meeting dates were selected as follows: October 13, 2026, January 17, 2027, April 13, 2027, June 22, 2027, and July 6, 2027.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Evelyn McCabe and seconded by Pauline Young that the School Board adjourn the school board meeting at 5:03 pm. The motion carried 4-0-0. Voting in favor were Pauline Young, Evelyn McCabe, Thomas Walker, and Mark Sorensen.