

**LANGUAGE & LITERACY ACADEMY FOR LEARNING, INC.**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

50 2nd St SE Winter Haven, FL 33880

Monday, September 22, 2025 5:30 p.m.

**Draft Board Minutes**

**Time: September 22, 5:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

**MISSION**

Accelerate growth in language, literacy, and social skills for students with special needs while engaging parents as lifelong partners in education.

**VISION**

To create a nationally known infant, toddler, Pre-K, K-12 educational institution for students with disabilities that is noted for providing supports that address the child's health conditions (physical body functions & structures, hearing, vision, language, communication & speech, fine motor, visual perceptual, sensory), environmental factors (physical, social, and attitudinal environment in which children live and conduct their lives.

- Call to Order (Board Chair): **5:40 PM**
- Roll Call of Board Members (Dr. Callins): **Abram, Crockett, Smith, Napper, Persaud**
- Public Comment Period (Board Chair) (30 minutes maximum) **N/A**
  - The Board of Directors welcomes public comments. Each speaker shall sign -up to speak on the sign-in sheet at the entrance to the room. Speakers will be called in order as listed on the sign-in sheet. Speakers shall have no more than 3 minutes to speak. The public comment period will last up to 30 minutes. If the public comment period has ended and there are still individuals wishing to address the Board, there will be an additional public comment period at the end of the meeting to accommodate those individuals.
  - Process for public comments given the limitations of the time available and the purpose of this meeting, the Board will hear your comments but will not engage in any back and forth with speakers. If questions are asked about specific school operations, School staff will be happy to research your question and get back to you.
- Consideration of the Board Minutes. (Board Chair): **Approved 5/5**
- Agenda Items:
  - Unfinished business item: **Grace Lutheran is refusing to return the \$30,000.**  
**When I obtained legal counsel, they came up with this idea that we somehow owe \$100,000. After changing attorneys, they then went down and said I owe \$70,000. Essentially, they are saying that we left \$100,000 worth of damage in the school which is absurd. If we drop it, we don't get the \$30,000 back and that's the end of the situation. If we pursue it, they are essentially countersuing for the \$70,000. The attorney is explaining that if we pursue the lawsuit and we lose, we'll be out of more money than the \$30,000. He also**

mentioned the optics of suing as well. We don't have to pay anything at this point, if we just drop it. If any of you want to speak to the school's attorney, you can. I'm seeking your guidance on this matter.

- New business:

- Financials- [George Miarecki](#)

- George states that we are doing okay financially, but we do have a decrease in enrollment. There is \$975k in the bank. We have spent \$542k on the new facility. We made 90k- our loss is \$455k. We have to be prudent that we get our FTE in and maximize our revenue. We are in savings mode right now.
    - Zelda asks if the improvements are expenses? George states yes because it is government funds. George is taking a fraction of revenue to ensure it is smoothed out. All the way through December there is a decline in revenue. We will need to eat into our reserves. We will not run out of reserves. We are coming off of Covid funding as well.
    - Zelda asks if we could technically absorb the 70k from the Grace Lutheran case? And George said yes.
    - We have the capacity for more students and we have a wait list, but we do not want to accept more students and overburden our staff.
    - 354 enrollment currently and we were hoping for 400. We are down 46 spots. We based our budget off of a 400 student enrollment.

- 4 week letters

- 4 week letters to be sent out to parents- motion set. Approved 5/5. List will be added to the website.

(Pre-K 1 & 2) Nahir Cassanova	Non Certified	In Process
(Pre-K 3 & 4) Yajaira Pichardo	Non Certified	
(K) Crystal Williams	Non Certified	
(1st) Dekiera Townes	Non Certified	
(1st/2nd) Naisha Neal	Non Certified	
(2nd) Heather Morgon	Certified- No Endorsements	
(3rd) Patricia Butler	Certified- No Endorsements	
(4th) Alexander Berrios	Certified-Reading, Certified- ESE	In Process
(5th) Khadijah Smith	Non Certified	In Process
(6th) Tiffany Gipson	Non Certified	

(7th) Arlene Gordon	Non Certified	
(8th) <b>Hennessy Olivera</b>	Non Certified	
(9th) Reiko Gilchrist	Non Certified	
(10th) Willie Williams	Certified- No Endorsements	
(11th & 12th) Lakeasha Davis	Non Certified	In Process
(Supportive 1A) Jennifer Rowker	Non Certified	
(Supportive 1B) Kenya Hodge	Non Certified	In Process
(Supportive 2A) <b>James Cranford</b>	Certified- ESE	
(B-Group 1) Audra Leonard	Non Certified	In Process
(B-Group 2) Stephanie Williams	Certified- No Endorsements	
(ESOL) Madeline Garcia	Certified ESOL/ESE	
(PE) Deonte Fielder	Non Certified	
(PE) Dorian Ervin	Non Certified	
(Art) Yolanda Barnett	Non Certified	
(Trap/Theatre/Music) Destini Williford	Non Certified	

- **We are working with a company to help provide us with certified teachers.**
- **Arnold Law Firm, Updated policies- Approved 5/5**
  - **Policy on school safety drafted by Arnold Firm. New Policy will be reviewed with staff and added to the Employee Handbook.**
- **Letter of Wrongful Termination-**
  - **Guideone responded to the letter and indicated that her claim was null and void due to the fact that she was a 1099 employee during the initial cancer diagnosis. The employee switched to W-2 in August 2024 and went on leave in November 2024. The employee didn't qualify for FMLA because she had not been employed for 12 months as a W-2 employee. The employer declined the employee's request to work from home two years prior to the cancer diagnosis, therefore claims for discrimination and retaliation were invalid. Although she had been employed with the company since 2021, the employer provided ample time for the employee to become fully credentialed. The employer's**

**decision to retain the newly hired employee over the returning employee was based on the fact that the employee was not a fully licensed employee and only held the status of an intern.**

- **Propose Quarterly Meetings- Approved 5/5.**
    - **If meetings are needed between quarterly meetings, Dr. Callins will schedule accordingly.**
  - **Start of School Year Overview/Enrollment**
    - **45 students are on the waiting list. We had to condense our classes in the early childhood center. The goal is to push in where we can- middle & high school class & 1st and 2nd grade classes. We are not pushing in anymore for our supportive classes.**
    - **The exergaming room has been completed today.**
    - **October 30th is the fall festival and it would be great for the board members to join.**
  - **Phoenix Life Skills Institute/Polk County Sheriff's Office**
    - **15k from Polk County Sheriff's Office donated to LLAL to get our transition home started. Our students that leave the school will have a place to be able to transition smoothly into adulthood. The transitional house is titled, Phoenix Life Skills Institute. Thank you to the Polk County Sheriff's Office.**
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- **Additional Public Comment period for those who signed up at the start of the meeting but the 30 minutes for the public comments had expired (Board Chair). N/A**
  - **Next board meeting date: TBD**
  - **Adjournment: 6:26 pm**