



Flagstaff Arts &  
Leadership Academy

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF FLAGSTAFF ARTS & LEADERSHIP  
ACADEMY, INC. (FALA)**

**FALA Mission: We are an inclusive and transformative learning community that cultivates creativity and critical inquiry. Come as you are; we'll grow together.**

**Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.02, notice is hereby given that the Board of Directors of FALA will hold the following:**

**Event:** Regular Board Meeting open to the public  
**Date:** December 12, 2022  
**Time:** 5:30 PM  
**Link:** <https://meet.google.com/xvm-jriz-rpj>  
**Phone #:** +1 475-558-0179; PIN: 428 873 057#

**Event information**

- The Board/committee may consider any item on this agenda in any order and at any time during the meeting.
- Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.04, members of the Board/committee may participate either in person or by telephone, video or internet conferencing speakerphone or other technological devices.
- The Board may vote to hold an executive session for the purpose of obtaining legal advice from the Board's attorney on any matter listed on the agenda pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03(A)(3).
- Persons with a disability may request reasonable accommodation, such as a sign language interpreter, 24-hours in advance by contacting Eli Cohen, Executive Director, 928-779-7223.
- Materials for this meeting are available at the following:
  - <http://flagarts.com/category/news/>
  - 3401 N. Fort Valley Road, Flagstaff, AZ 86001
- In the virtual meeting platform, the chat function is open to the Board and the public, but messages will not be recognized unless specifically addressed by the Board President.

## Meeting Agenda

### I. Call to Order

### II. Roll Call

- |                                     |                       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. James Yih, President             | <b><i>PRESENT</i></b> |
| 2. Dr. Kyle Winfree, Vice President | <b><i>PRESENT</i></b> |
| 3. Ron Borkan, Treasurer            | <b><i>PRESENT</i></b> |
| 4. Andy Bessler, Secretary          | <b><i>PRESENT</i></b> |
| 5. Debra Edgerton, Member           | <b><i>PRESENT</i></b> |

### III. Approval of Agenda

1. Andy motions to approve the agenda. James Seconds. James aye. Kyle aye. Ron aye. Andy aye. Debra aye. No nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carries 5-0.

### IV. Call to the Public

A. To indicate your desire to speak during the public comment period, please fill out this Google Form: <https://forms.gle/Ca31w5Xr3vDvRvaEA>.

Alternatively, members of the public may fill out a Request for Public Comment Form available at the school front office and deliver it to the Executive Director, who will then notify the Board President.

A. Members of the public must be present during the meeting to speak their comment.

B. This is the time for the public to comment. Members of the Board may not discuss items that are not specifically identified on the agenda. Therefore, pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.01(H), action taken as a result of public comment will be limited to directing staff to study the matter, responding to any criticism or scheduling the matter for further consideration and decision at a later date.

C. Each individual has up to two minutes to make a public comment.

D. For the record, please state your first name and last name before you begin.

E. Requests for public comment will be accepted up to the start of the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS were made by the following individuals:

Eli Cohen

Anna Marie Hill

Lauren Botti

Audrey Baird

Nina Porter

Christina Wolfe

Megan Wildblood-Crawford

Lindsey Epperson  
Sun Johnston  
Meagan Holcombe

*Public comments were recorded and can be found [via this link](#).*

*Several speakers sent in their comments with a request that they be posted in the minutes. Comments were pasted below:*

Eli Cohen:

Good evening. My statement is simple. I am asking the entire FALA board to resign. The reasons are as follows:

- Board actions of the last 2 months have been divisive, disrespectful, and detrimental to the functioning of FALA.
- Despite repeated requests, the Board has chosen to continue to engage in actions that are in violation of its own policies and procedures. These actions knowingly put the organization at risk for legal and financial action.
- In the last week alone 2 staff members have chosen to resign rather than work in an unhealthy and unsafe environment, and numerous others are considering the same. Despite the knowledge that their actions will continue to disenfranchise and even encourage staff attrition, the Board has chosen not to be self-reflective and determine other courses of action. At least one of these members has filed a complaint with the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools and is awaiting a response.
- At least one member of the board has engaged in unethical and potentially illegal actions such as the withholding of a mandatory report, false reporting of a crime, and the encouragement of others to do the same. This has been confirmed by a statement by someone directly contacted by the Board. These actions are now being investigated by the Flagstaff Police Dept, the State Board of Education, and the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools. If found liable, said member may face charges of his own or at a minimum, the organization will be found legally liable.
- At least one board member has chosen to slander and harass multiple staff members in the hopes they will resign. This is also confirmed by outside statements.
- The same board member continues to collude with current and former staff to harass employees. In just the last 2 hours, one employee received text messages from one current and one former employee saying that they were asked to reach out to see if they would be prepared to join the board's "team" to take back the school.
- And lastly, this is impacting the school and enrollment and actual stability. Current market research shows that close to 20% of respondents to our recent parent survey have concerns about the survival of the school and are considering pulling their children at semester. And this was before today's resignation.

In short, the actions of this Board threaten the very survival of the school. The Board needs to see their actions for what they are doing, acknowledge their failings, and step down.

Christina Wolfe:

Good Evening FALA community. My name is Christina Wolfe and I am the Director of Exceptional Student Services. It is my hope to address you tonight to share some information I feel is essential for the purpose of transparency. While there are many details I have learned over the past two months, much of which I cannot disclose, I will share some with you tonight. Board president, James Yih has told me the reasons for my consideration for the Board agenda items including formal/informal disciplinary action, reassignment, and renewal/nonrenewal of my contract for the 23-24 SY, was due to accounts from five exit interviews given after these employees voluntarily resigned their employment at FALA. Two of these people are close and personal friends with a current Board Member who has been spearheading these agenda items in emails and executive sessions. I have NOT been informed by, nor asked by the Board to share, answer questions, OR provide my own evidence...or even know the actions of my alleged misconduct from last school year. I feel it is important to note last year was my first year as an administrator, was the nationally hardest year in education to date, and FALA was understaffed all year in my department and functioned without one of the three administrators for almost half of the school year.

This community has been left in the dark, to fear, face paranoia, and imagine the worst, which has led to and perpetuated the following behaviors: spreading false truths, using fake identities, wrongfully accusing, bullying, intimidating, discriminating, and harassing both verbally and sexually. These are not only, my own experiences, but have also been committed against others who endorse me. I just wonder, when did FALA decide not to believe in innocent until proven guilty? Where is objectivity...due process...ethics? Where are the FALA Habits of Hands Heart and Mind? WHERE ARE THE STUDENTS AND CONSIDERATION FOR THEIR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING? How can we repair this destruction?

Gratefully,  
Christina Wolfe M.Ed.

Audrey Baird:

Hello FALA Board of Directors, staff, and community members. My name is Audrey Baird, I am the Curriculum & Instruction Lead for Academics and one of the HS Science teachers here at FALA for the past 6 years. This last year, I was named Coconino County's STEM Teacher of the year and am waiting on the final publications of 2 curriculum textbooks for science teachers that I have co-authored in collaboration with the National Science Teacher's Association and NAU. As a member of the Leadership Team, I have attended countless workshops and trainings to support my staff and students of our institution to help them grow and succeed.

Since October 24, I have provided public comment to the board every time I have been allowed to do so regarding major concerns I have with the Board's ability to follow

any approved process or procedure, seeing as my Leadership Team role or teaching experience is no longer a valued stakeholder of the school. No member of the Leadership Team has been directly asked, or really even allowed, to weigh in on anything. Our students look to us as leaders for guidance and support, but it would appear that we know even less than some community members. How can we provide support for students without support for ourselves?

Many people say that being a teacher is a thankless job, but I have never felt less valued and supported by a governing body claiming to do what is best for our school. Our staff, students, and community members have been dragged through countless hours of meetings with absolutely no reassurance that there is even a plan of collaboration or rebuilding of our beloved school. The level of distrust and obvious personal vendettas are destroying everything we have worked so hard to create. Looking at the agenda, I am fearful that even the continued inclusion of these types of items is only continuing to hurt our community.

I am at FALA for the students. I am here for my colleagues. I am here for supporting our community.

I don't feel support from the Board as a Leadership Team member or as an employee that has given everything.

I am crushed that there has been such little regard for people's livelihood, education, or general well-being.

I implore the board to take a different approach and work in collaboration with the people who actually work at & attend FALA.

Lindsey Epperson:

Letter Dated December 12, 2022

To the Board of Directors:

Your course of action these past few months has absolutely devastated our school. Our amazing educators and administrators are essentially struggling to breathe. It is very clear and apparent that your motives are self-serving and not about what is truly the best for us. We cannot serve our students in this capacity, and they deserve far better from us than what you are allowing us to give them. They are the ones suffering because of your agenda.

I have lost absolute respect for some present here and have gained a tremendous amount of respect for many more. I am, at this time, embarrassed to be "represented" by our current BOD. I am devastated and heartbroken. I'm at a loss for words that are polite enough to be uttered in public at this moment.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I wish I knew that it mattered to you.

## **V. Summary of Current Events**

Items to be heard only; the Board will not propose, discuss, or take legal action during the meeting unless the specific matter is properly noticed for legal action.

A. Directors: Kyle mentioned that the dance and music performances have been great this year.

A. Executive Director: Eli had no reports

B. Leadership Team: Christina mentioned that the Leadership Team (LT) met to discuss changes to the SPED Dept due to recent staff resignations. The SPED Dept. continues to provide ongoing support for FALA students throughout these changes. LT was encouraged to hear this news.

## **VI. Consent Agenda:**

A. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

. [2022-11-28 Regular Meeting Minutes](#)

James motions to approve the agenda. Debra seconds. James aye. Kyle aye. Ron aye. Andy aye. Debra aye. No nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carries 5-0.

## **VII. Action Items**

A. Presentation, discussion, and possible action to approve the ~~November~~ October financial reports

i. [Finance Committee Minutes for October Finances](#)

ii. [October Financial Reports](#)

Kyle motioned to approve with revisions listing for this item. Andy seconds. James aye. Kyle aye. Ron aye. Andy aye. Debra aye. No nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carries 5-0.

B. Presentation, discussion, and possible action regarding virtual meeting platforms, recording and transcription options, and storage solutions for recordings for the purpose of documenting meetings.

James provided a board discussion starting point for recording minutes.

The discussion can be found on the recorded meeting found at [this link](#).

Board Secretary Andy Bessler will work with FALA's Danielle Angerbauer to secure meeting transcriptions via the google meets platform before tomorrow's meeting so that a video recording and written transcript is available for the public within 72 hours after a meeting.

C. \*Discussion and possible action to approve Exceptional Student Services Case Manager and Teacher Christi Weide's resignation. \*Possible executive session per A.R.S. 38-431.03(A)(1) (personnel).

Debra motions to move into executive session. Kyle Seconds. James aye. Kyle aye. Ron aye. Andy aye. Debra aye. No nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carries 5-0.

James recognized Eli who requested to join the executive session as it involved an employee under his supervision. James indicated that Eli would be invited if needed. The board then entered into executive session at 6:09 pm.

In executive session, the board was joined by Eli Cohen and Christi Weide and discussed the approval and terms of her resignation.

James motioned to reenter public session at 7:18 pm. Ron seconded. James aye. Kyle abstains. Ron aye. Andy aye. Debra aye. No nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carries 5-0.

James motions to accept the resignation of Exceptional Student Services Case Manager and Teacher Christi Weide as a level 1 resignation as described in her contract. No liquidated damages assessed and the classroom site fund monies shall be distributed for the remaining period of her employment. Ron seconds. James aye. Kyle aye. Ron aye. Andy aye. Debra aye. No nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carries 5-0.

10 minute recess and restarted at 7:30 pm.

- D. Presentation, discussion, and possible action regarding the progress on exploring interim solutions for Exceptional Student Services Department.

Kyle provided a brief report on work so far after the board authorized Kyle to explore these solutions. Additional discussions on this agenda item can be found on the FALA recording [at this link](#).

Recess at 7:46 pm and board resumed at 8:00pm.

- E. \*Discussion and possible action to reconsider renewal or non-renewal of Exceptional Student Services Christina Wolfe's contract. \*Possible executive session per A.R.S. 38-431.03(A)(1) (personnel).

Ron motioned to rescind the board decision to remove the position of ESS Director and restore the position effective immediately. James seconded.

Additional discussions on this agenda item can be found on the FALA recording [at this link](#).

Ron retracted his motion, no action taken.

- F. \*Discussion and possible action to administratively reassign Executive Director Eli Cohen. \*Possible executive session per A.R.S. 38-431.03(A)(1) (personnel).

The board discussed how administratively reassign works and how this determination is to be made.

Ron motioned to not administratively reassign Executive Director Eli Cohen. No second. Additional discussions on this agenda item can be found on the FALA recording [at this link](#).

Andy motions to table item F until the next board meeting. Debra seconds. James aye. Kyle abstains. Ron nay. Andy aye. Debra aye. 1 nays, 1 abstentions. Motion carries 3-1-1. Motion passes.

G. Presentation, discussion, and possible action to appoint an interim Executive Director.

James indicated that due to previous tabling of item F, this item is now irrelevant and the board moved onto item H.

H. \*Discussion and possible action to review draft Performance Improvement Plan for Executive Director Eli Cohen. \*Possible executive session per A.R.S. 38-431.03(A)(1) (personnel).

Additional discussions on this agenda item can be found on the FALA recording [at this link](#).

James motioned that Ron and James draft a PIP as a continuation of the draft to present to the board for review and approval. Kyle seconds. James aye. Kyle aye. Ron aye. Andy aye. Debra aye. No nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carries 5-0.

### **Adjournment**

James motioned to adjourn the meeting. Kyle seconds. James aye. Kyle aye. Ron aye. Andy aye. Debra aye. No nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carries 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm

**Agenda Posted: 2022-12-08 2:20PM**

**Minutes Posted: 2023-01-08 7:30AM**