

**Linn Christian Education Association
Isaac Newton Christian Academy
Board Meeting Minutes
2025-08-19 6:00-7:14pm**



Attendance

Staff: ☒ Dr. Dean Ridder ☒ Beth Ngo

Board Members:

☒ Katie Warner ☒ Nick Dose ☒ Stephanie Prochaska
☒ John Garbes ☒ Pastor James Perry ☒ Gabe Rohwedder
☒ Amanda Lane ☐ Stephen Pitts (absent) ☒ Steve Howard

Guests: Dr. Barbara Perry, Jennifer Nabholz (PTF), Keri Howard (PTF)

Prayer and Reflection – Amanda. Next month: Stephanie.

John opened in prayer.

Amanda gave a devotional about starting the school year with faith. Proverbs 3:5-6.

With all the decisions we have to make as parents, as a board, it is easy to feel overwhelmed or uncertain.

This helps us remember the promise to keep our paths straight.

- a) God has a purpose for your child (Ecclesiastes 3:7). No season is wasted in God's hands.
 - b) Parent with courage and peace (Joshua 1:9). It takes courage to entrust our children to the world.
 - c) Be a light at home (Matthew 5:14-16). Our powerful influence as a parent. Nice to be able to share our faith in a school setting. Pray throughout the week.
 - d) God will give you strength (Phil 4:13). God's strength can show up in the small things.
- Look to the school year with opportunity. Wisdom, Courage, and Grace.

Professional Growth – Nick Dose

Nick gave a Professional Growth session on Embracing Complexity.

Listened to a TED Talk. A man lost his job. What makes you comfortable can ruin you.

You grow in a state of complexity.

- a) Stagnation: Negative growth.
- b) Order: predictable, safe, and comfortable. Danger in staying here too long can kill growth.
- c) Complexity: This should be the target. Uncomfortable, but can drive exponential growth!
 - a. Can be forced upon us.
 - b. Guided by others. Like the strategic plan.
 - c. Chosen by us. Like taking bold steps for the mission.
- d) Chaos: No predictability. Very little growth.

Growth can only occur in a state of complexity!

Recommendations and Decisions

Head Stewardship Committee – Katie

Dr. Christian Overman agreed to be part of this committee. Located in Seattle, WA. Can meet through Zoom. Hope to set up the first meeting before next board meeting.

ACSI sent an appreciation letter for Dr. Ridder, for his help with an accreditation visit in Shorewood, IL!

Board Stewardship Committee – Stephanie

Met this morning and came up with a Mission Statement and a plan.

- a) Would like future, incoming board members to fill roles in existing committees. Requested Committees to please pass suggestions on to the Board Stewardship Committee if you have specific needs.
- b) Have a plan for Board Professional Development that will be exciting as we move forward.

Finance Committee – Amanda

In Sept. 2024, the Board approved to remove the multi-child discount in the 25/26 school year. Unfortunately, that update did not get made in the published tuition schedule, and the discounts were applied to accounts. Made a decision to not make a change to the Multi-Child Discounts because they are already published and applied. \$50,000 anticipated cost to financial aid that we would be able to give to other families in need.

Amanda prepared a one page financial dashboard sheet to help quickly see the financial state of the school. The numbers are just an example, and do not represent our actual numbers. Board members are requested to send comments and suggestions to Amanda.

Dean, Beth, and Amanda are discussing additional services Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust can provide for the school.

Philanthropy Committee – Gabe

Meeting tomorrow at 8:00am. Lindsey and Kristen have signed a confidentiality agreement to have access to school information.

Have a list of donors.

Had first meeting with Kindsight, who have a fundraising tool which can help give good data to evaluate which donors to work with based on their giving pattern. Cost would be \$5300-6300.

Director of Development interviews are being finalized.

Capital Campaign is in the quiet phase. We want to have confidence of success before we open it up to everyone.

Building and Grounds Committee – Stephen was absent, but an update was given by John.

Bathroom partitions and tile are done.

Concrete polishing is done.

Teacher wish lists are done.

Graphic for weight room wall is being planned.

Criteria for things for sub-committees to bring to the whole Board:

Deviations from approved strategic plan.

Eg. Re-allocation of pre-approved funds for something else not planned.

Have accountability for things in the strategic plan relating to their committees.

Bring good news for things in the strategic plans as they get completed.

Administrative Items – Dean and Beth

(ie. HOS Report, Enrollment tracking, SFM projections, etc.)

Policy review – Chapter 4 in work.

2.02 Philosophy of Christian Education – no changes

2.03.02 Belief and Conduct. – no changes

Hired Diana Little for 5th Grade Teacher – Board Approval was previously done by email.

Hired Erin Appleby as Pre-K Teachers Aide: Bachelors in Early Childhood Education.

Work is being done to hire a Director of Development.

Presented results from the Board Self-Evaluation Formative to Flourishing Continuum survey.

Enrollment is currently at 422 students.

CPR and 1st aide training is planned.

Strategic Plan update:

A lot is happening at once to get ready for the school year. This is gear up for school week!

Only thing to complete on the Strategic Plan for the 25/26 School Year is hiring of a Director of Development.

Interviewed 6 candidates in total. Narrowed it down to 2.

The Board can approve things and hires via email if needed.

Per the Bylaws the Board needs to approve Faculty hires.

Please respond with hire approvals quickly!

Historically the board has never said ‘No’ to a hiring recommendation from Dr. Ridder.

People want to work for Isaac Newton Christian Academy. You are encouraged to talk about Jesus at your job!

Maggie Zirbel is a fulltime inhouse substitute teacher. She wants to get ACSI certified.

The 2 big asks are Patriot Fund & the Banquet.

The Student Experience Fee is either \$50 for Lower School or \$250 for Upper School. Yearbooks are not included in the Student Experience Fee due to low interest in the past.

Celebration – Dean

Report on something good!

Today all the staff was together for an in-service day.

Lori Adams did an Immanuel Journal – tell God what you are struggling with.

Then switch positions and write back to yourself, using Scripture.

Then share what you wrote with a partner.

Go to God, knowing the answers are not within you.

Dr. Ridder commented afterward to the staff and said he felt like something really important just happened.

Lori was edified that God had used her to do this thing.

Dr. Ridder feels this brought some heart changes and unity to the staff.

Back to school night is Thursday.

Students are applying to be Student Ambassadors to lead new families and students around.

Board encouraged to come and enjoy Back to School Night!

Pray for Thursday Back to School Night on behalf of Emalee!

Prayer and Adjournment

Dr. Ridder closed in prayer.

Follow up from July Board Meeting

The pie recipe came from Sheboygan Christian School in Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

Isaac Newton has changed the recipe over the years, so it is not the same, but Stephanie will contact Sheboygan Christian School to ask about giving away the recipe. If they are opposed, Isaac Newton will not give out the recipe.

Stephanie contacted Sheboygan Christian School, and this is their response:

"Thanks for reaching out. You can absolutely feel free to share the recipe with your parents! Thank you for asking, but everyone deserves to have those apple pies in their life :)"

Future Board Meetings

- 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm (generally no mtg in June or Dec).
 - September 16th
 - October 21st
 - November 18th
 - December 16th (if needed)