APPROVED

Believe Memphis Academy

Minutes

BMA Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday February 10, 2026 at 4:00 PM

Location
2230 Corry Rd. Memphis, TN 38106

Directors Present
A. Norman, B. Moritz, D. Reed, E. Eber, E. Stephens, F. Jones, J. Buford, J. Causey, J. Torres, M. Mason

Directors Absent
J. Turner

Guests Present
Danny Song, Greg Thompson, K. Green, M. Cowan

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

A. Norman called a meeting of the board of directors of Believe Memphis Academy to order on Tuesday Feb 10, 2026 at 4:15 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

B. Moritz made a motion to approve the minutes from BMA Board Meeting on 12-04-25.
D. Reed seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

D. Public Comment

Alicia Norman opened the floor for public comment, stating that the Board was present to listen to the community.

Ten speakers signed up to address the Board. Each speaker was allotted a maximum of three (3) minutes.

Public Speakers

1. **Rosilyn Currie**
    - Shared her deep involvement and commitment to the school.
    - Expressed disappointment that neighborhood schools are not outperforming Believe despite Believe experiencing a one-year TVAAS setback.
    - Questioned how a TVAAS level could drop significantly in one year after prior success.
2. **Randi Cuzma**
    - Voiced concern that the schools suggested by the Board for families are on the state priority list.
    - Expressed frustration regarding the lack of communication from the Board to Believe staff and families.
    - Emphasized that the school is about “more than test scores” and “more than dollar signs.”
3. **Rachel Moss**
    - Explained that 3rd grade was newly added last year, and none of the students entered performing at grade level.
    - Discussed the challenges of teacher transitions and implementing targeted interventions to accelerate student growth.
    - Stated that the focus appears to be on a single data point rather than the whole child.
    - Emphasized that “one bad year doesn’t define us.”
    - Shared that 3rd grade is currently on track to meet double AMO growth this year.
4. **Allison Hitchcock**
    - Shared her eight years of dedication since the school’s founding.
    - Invited Board members to visit classrooms and observe students firsthand.
    - Expressed that closing now would prevent the Board from seeing the positive impact of this year’s work and data progress.
5. **Gala Hayes**

- Shared that a Change.org petition in support of the school has reached 1,014 signatures.
- Invited the Board to observe her classroom.
- Expressed staff readiness to overcome current challenges.
- Questioned why the Board has chosen to give up on the school.
- Noted that Believe students are not guaranteed placement at Grizzlies Prep.

6. **Latoya Sullivan**
   - Shared that she is a proud parent of a 2nd grade student at Believe.
   - Expressed her willingness to support the school in any capacity.
   - Spoke about the strong relationships between teachers and students.
   - Asked the Board to give families the opportunity to help turn the school around.
7. **LaSaundra Gentry-Young**
   - Addressed the lack of communication to staff regarding the decision.
   - Shared the distress and erosion of trust caused by limited transparency.
   - Noted that Board and staff interactions have been minimal.
   - Expressed that the decision does not appear to be in the best interest of students.
8. **Teresha Rankin**
   - Spoke about her personal investment in the students and school community.
   - Shared how deeply she has grown to love the school.
   - Provided a personal story highlighting her dedication and commitment.
9. **Jessica Davis**
   - Introduced herself as the Kitchen Manager at Believe.
   - Shared information about the school nutrition program.
   - Highlighted the positive impact the kitchen staff has on students and school culture.
10. **Chaniah Brown**
    - Shared that she is a graduate of Memphis Teacher Residency.
    - Read selected comments from the Change.org petition supporting the school.

Board Response

Alicia Norman

- Reiterated that the Board was present to listen to the public.
- Expressed care and concern for the students.
- Invited staff to attend the family meeting on **Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 4:15 PM**.
- Requested participation in an upcoming focus group, suggesting representation of two (2) staff members and two (2) family members.

Diane Reed

- Expressed her love for the community.
- Spoke about the broader impact that closing a school has on a community.

II. Enrollment & Finance

A. Finance Update

Greg Thompson provided a financial update regarding the current status of the school.

- Reported that the school is **on track with student enrollment projections**.
- Confirmed that the school is **aligned with budgeted line items**.
- Shared that overall, the school remains **financially stable and on track with its fiscal goals**.

III. Academics

A. Academic & Culture Update

School & Data Update

Matt Cowan provided an update on school operations, enrollment, attendance, academics, and culture.

Impact of Recent Closure

- Noted that the school has been closed for the past two weeks and discussed the operational and enrollment impacts.
- Shared that following the recent announcement, the school lost **six (6) students within two days**.
- Reported that **IEP enrollment numbers are increasing daily**.
- Clarified that **277 students attended Believe last school year**.

Attendance & Enrollment Data

- **Average Daily Attendance (ADA):**
  - Current: **88.2%** (Goal: 88%)
  - Last School Year: **82.6%**
- **Chronic Absenteeism:**
  - Last Year: **69%**
  - This Year: **42.3%** (significant improvement)
- Student behavior incidents have decreased compared to last school year.

Academic Performance

- Emphasized that **Middle of Year (MOY) data serves as a checkpoint**, while **End of Year (EOY) data typically reflects the largest academic growth gains**.
- Noted that some recently implemented instructional strategies were not reflected in the data previously presented to the Board.

Academic Priorities

- Improve Tier 1 instructional consistency across classrooms.
- Accelerate learning for “cusp” students (students on the verge of proficiency).
- Utilize benchmark and interim data to drive daily instructional decisions.
- **Tutor901** has launched at the school.
- Afterschool tutoring is currently being planned for implementation.

Culture & Student Support Priorities

- **Communities In Schools** is actively working at Believe to reduce chronic absenteeism.
- Strengthening daily Social Emotional Learning (SEL) time embedded within the master schedule.
- Acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the strong staff presence at the Board meeting in support of students and the school community.

Additional Comments

Jonathan Torres expressed concerns specifically related to 4th grade performance and progress.
A. Norman made a motion to proceed with Executive Session after a short recess.
B. Moritz seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

IV. Executive Session: Priority List Action Plan Discussion

A. Executive Session

Board Reflection & Discussion

Following public comment and staff presentations, **Alicia Norman** opened the floor for Board members to share their reflections and reactions to the public meeting.

Mike Mason

- Emphasized the importance of increasing communication between the Board and staff.

- Noted that certain information shared publicly may need clarification or correction to ensure accuracy.

John Buford

- Expressed that academic performance trends should have been communicated more clearly to staff.
- Highlighted that **iReady scores have shown improvement**, indicating academic progress.

Alicia Norman

- Reinforced the importance of establishing and utilizing a community committee.
- Clarified that the purpose of the meeting was for the Board to listen to stakeholders.
- Acknowledged the strong demand from families for a high-performing school.

Matt Cowan

- Clarified that improvements in iReady scores do not always directly translate to TCAP outcomes.
- Discussed the competitive recruitment landscape among neighboring schools.

Jazmin Causey

- Spoke about the rigorous and strenuous application processes required by other charter schools, which may create barriers for families.

Danny Song

- Asked how the Board will define and measure success throughout this process.
- Requested clarity on next steps should the Board decide to move forward with any major changes.

Brad Moritz

- Encouraged the Board to carefully review all potential options for the school, including:
    - Adding additional academic and operational support
    - Reorganization
    - Partnership opportunities

Emily Eber

- Stated that any decision made must be both swift and transparent to best serve students, staff, and families.

V. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
A. Norman

Believe Memphis Academy Charter School prepares students in grades Kindergarten-8 with the academic rigor, robust supports, and leadership development necessary to excel in high school, thrive in college, and lead lives full of opportunity.