



Anser Charter School

## Anser Charter School Board of Directors

### Minutes

#### September Board Meeting - Special Meeting

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##### **Date and Time**

Monday September 8, 2025 at 9:30 AM

##### **Location**

202 E. 42nd. St  
Garden City, ID 83714

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*Anser's Mission is to educate the whole child in a collaborative learning community where individuals are inspired to be self-motivated and to feel a sense of connection and responsibility to the world.*

*Anser's vision is to foster learning that imagines a better world and works toward realizing it; set high academic standards; promote creativity, discovery, reflection and balance; embrace diversity; and use developmentally appropriate practices and real-world experiences to educate within a climate of collaboration, community, character, and compassion.*

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##### **Directors Present**

Brian Whitney, Erik Moncada, Haley Bethune, Hannah Read Newbill (remote), Katie Hanson, Lynne Funke (remote), Roger Stewart, Sarah Butler (remote), Sasha Rojas Zaragoza (remote), Suzanne Gregg, Victor McCraw (remote)

##### **Directors Absent**

Jessica Budzianowski (she/her), Leon Samuels

##### **Ex Officio Members Present**

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Destin Tonkin, Renee Bade

### **Non Voting Members Present**

Destin Tonkin, Renee Bade

### **Guests Present**

Annie Edwards (remote)

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## **I. Opening Items**

### **A. Record Attendance**

### **B. Call the Meeting to Order**

Brian Whitney called a meeting of the board of directors of Anser Charter School Board of Directors to order on Monday Sep 8, 2025 at 9:30 AM.

### **C. Welcome New Board Members**

### **D. Approve September 8, 2025 Meeting Agenda (Action Item)**

Suzanne Gregg made a motion to approve September 8, 2025 Meeting Agenda.

Erik Moncada seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

## **II. Organization Integrity**

### **A. Enrollment Update**

Renee Bade provided an enrollment update. As of 9/4 there were 594 students enrolled at Anser. The target for this year was 617. As of 9/2, the enrollment shortfall had caused a budget deficit of \$225,000. The deficit is probably a little higher than that at this point because one third grade student left the school after 9/2.

Up to 7 additional students might yet enroll if all outstanding offers are accepted. But once these final students have either accepted or refused, the waiting lists will have been depleted.

Erik Moncada asked what the state revenue per student is. Annie Edwards of Bluum said that it depended on grade level. For kindergarteners roughly \$4000 per student per year is the state allocation. For 7th and 8th grade students the allocation is roughly \$14,000 to \$15,000 per student per year. She said that the rough average overall for all students is \$10,000 to \$12,000 per student per year.

Haley Bethune asked about how and when the state determines the number of students for which they will reimburse. Annie Edwards used a bucket analogy to respond. She said there are several buckets of funds that are used during the course of the academic

year. For example, one bucket is tapped after the November enrollment count is submitted to the state. Another bucket is used towards the end of the school year and is based on the best 28 weeks of attendance.

Renee Bade reported that 1st, 2nd, and 7th grades are the grades where the most openings currently exist.

## **B. Enrollment Task Force (Action)**

At the August Board meeting, the Board discussed the need for an enrollment task force. At that meeting it was decided to put this action item on the next Board meeting agenda. Roger Stewart asked for a clarification of the purpose of the task force. Specifically, he asked if the task force would address both immediate and long term enrollment challenges that Anser is experiencing. Discussion ensued and it was clarified that the task force would do both. They would work on addressing both the immediate enrollment needs of the school while also looking for solutions for the 2026-2027 school year and beyond.

Erik Moncada made a motion to to approve the formation of the Enrollment Task Force. Victor McCraw seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

## **C. Former Executive Director Succession Contract (Action)**

The employment contract between Anser and the former executive director, Heather Dennis, was discussed. The contract runs from July 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025.

Bluum will reimburse Anser for the salary portion of the contract while Anser will pay for benefits. A copy of the contract between Bluum and Heather Dennis is on file showing the amount of the salary and describing how it will be paid. In return, Heather will provide consulting services to Anser as the school transitions from her leadership to that of Renee Bade, the new executive director. Additionally, Heather will produce materials for Bluum providing information about how such transitions are best launched and supported so that other charter schools can learn and benefit from Anser's experience when they undergo significant changes in leadership. The reason this agenda item was needed is that the contract between Heather Dennis and Anser had never been finalized by the Board and it needed final authorization in order for Heather to be paid and receive benefits during this contractual transitional period. Two issues have come to light as a result of this work. They follow. First, Anser does not currently have a clear policy on cashing out vacation days. In the past, according to Renee, unused vacation was paid to some employees upon their leaving Anser while for other employees they did not receive this benefit. This difference appears to be the consequence of whether the employee left voluntarily from Anser or the employee was separated from Anser as a result of some problem with their performance. Renee Bade recommended that Anser develop a clear policy concerning how unused vacation will be handled when future employment separations occur at Anser. Second, although Bluum is paying Heather's salary, Anser is remains responsible to pay for Heather's benefit package during the contract term. The Board was not aware of this until just recently so the budget for the 2025-2026 school

year was constructed and approved without these funds being taken into consideration.

Although the total amount Anser is responsible for is not large, the lack of Board awareness of this expense underscored the importance that all contracts come to the Board in a timely fashion and that it is of paramount importance that the Board be a part of all contract negotiations from their inception so such oversights as this one can be avoided in the future.

Annie Edwards added at the conclusion of this discussion that she believes an invoice is currently needed from Anser to Bluum for the first portion of Heather's salary so Anser can be compensated for the salary portion of Heather's contract.

Erik Moncada made a motion to approve the former executive director succession contract.

Victor McCraw seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

### III. Finance

#### A. Special Education Billing Update

Destin Tonkin provided a detailed report about special education Medicaid billing procedures that have been established at Anser with important help from Bluum staff.

She showed an Excel spreadsheet she constructed that tracks billable hours by staff member and student served. The spreadsheet also calculates how many staff are needed to cover the hours of services provided special education students. The Board thanked Destin for her work on this important matter. Providing special education services at Anser is both important and costly so having an accurate and thorough system like that which Destin and her staff have developed over the past two years is critically important to Anser's future.

Another important take away from Destin's presentation was her projection of staff needs for special education for the 2025-2026 school year. Based on her calculations, Anser will need 9-12 additional special education staff this school year. But her models also show that Anser should be able to capture most of the costs of these staff increases through continued billing for Medicaid supported services and other efficiencies.

This was not an action item at this time, but will probably become one in the future as special education needs for the current school year become better defined.

#### B. 2025 -2026 Budget Update (Action)

Renee Bade presented a list of items to be immediately cut from the current budget that will begin to address the 2025-2026 budget deficit. The deficit was caused by Anser missing enrollment goals established last year during 2025-2026 budget development.

The cuts will immediately reduce the deficit by a little more than half. The Board will

revisit the budget deficit again at its October meeting. Waiting until October allows enrollments to stabilize so that a better estimate for the deficit can be calculated. At the October meeting, additional actions will taken to adjust the budget so that the deficit is eliminated.

Brian Whitney made a motion to approve proposed budget reductions as presented.

Sarah Butler seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

#### **IV. 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 11:12 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Roger Stewart