

School Board Meeting Minutes

November 18, 2025

Location: Room 103, Havasupai Elementary School, and on Zoom

1. Call to Order and Agenda Review

- President Kaska called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda.
- Motion made by Tammy Grounds to approve the agenda with the following additions:
 - Discussion of Thanksgiving break.
 - Discussion of potential Christmas plans or celebrations.
 - Amendment to the student handbook.
- Motion seconded and approved.
- Roll Call – Present: D. Kaska, E. Manakaja, T. Grounds – Quorum established.

2. Principal's Report

- Enrollment: 66 students currently enrolled.
- Instructional Updates:
 - “Genius Time” continues.
 - A new nutrition class was added based on a parent recommendation from the previous year.
- Communication:
 - Weekly newsletters are distributed via email to the tribe, school board, sent home with students, and posted on Facebook.
- Upcoming Event:
 - A Community Gratefulness Potluck Lunch is scheduled for Thursday 11-19-25.
- Staffing Updates:
 - A new teacher has been hired and is expected to arrive in the Canyon on Sunday, 11-30-25.
 - Three applicants have accepted tentative job offers and are undergoing background checks.
 - One additional academic counselor is also in the background check process.
 - Ms. Townsend is teaching Kindergarten and 1st Grade.
 - Mr. Kolley is temporarily teaching 2nd and 3rd Grade.
 - Mr. Timms is teaching 4th and 5th Grade.
 - Mr. Davis (6th Grade) and Ms. Nichols (7th Grade) are in place.
 - Special Education: Ms. Bravo and Ms. Elmer.
 - Aides: Ms. Jones and Ms. Tillman.

- Counselors: Ms. Brown and Ms. Sessions.
- Other Positions:
 - Maintenance and educational aide positions are in hiring process.
 -

Library Media Handbook Presentation

Presenter: Frankie Chretien

- Purpose: To establish a clear, consistent framework for library operations, services, and instruction aligned with federal regulations (25 CFR §3640).
- Presentation Agenda:
 - Purpose and status of the handbook.
 - Community-driven development process.
 - Key themes from student, parent, and staff feedback.
 - Handbook highlights and next steps.
- Key Points:
 - The handbook supports the school's mission, vision, and HES1 plan goals.
 - Emphasizes cultural relevance, academic excellence, and student empowerment.
 - Developed collaboratively through surveys and feedback from students, staff, and parents.
 - Organized into three major sections: policies and procedures, instructional/service objectives, and online e-library access.
- Library Services & Programming:
 - Student-driven activities: Book clubs, writing workshops, educational games.
 - Family engagement: Literacy nights, take-home kits, storytelling events.
 - Instructional goals: Promote literacy, family engagement, and technology integration.
 - Aligned with AASL's "Think, Create, Share, Grow" framework, focusing on:
 - Critical thinking
 - Digital literacy
 - Cultural reflection
 - Ethical use of information
 - Collaborative learning
- Collection Development:
 - Prioritizes Indigenous-authored works, especially Havasupai content.
 - Selection criteria include quality, accessibility, cultural relevance, and community involvement.
 - Annual inventory and weeding to maintain relevance and compliance.
- Oversight & Access:

- A Library Committee will include parents, staff, students, and community members.
- Responsibilities include strategic planning, cultural engagement, and program evaluation.
- eLibrary will expand access to audiobooks, graphic novels, and interactive nonfiction.
- Clear procedures for student and family access will be outlined.
- Compliance & Requirements:
 - Staffing: At least part-time librarian (1 day/week).
 - Collection standards:
 - 15 books per K–6 student
 - 12 books per 7–8 student
 - 8–12% reference materials
 - 1 periodical per 10 students
 - 5 audio-visual materials per student or \$750 total
 - Annual inventory of all materials and equipment is required.
- Next Steps:
 - School board members were provided with printed and digital copies of the handbook.
 - Feedback, revisions, and questions should be submitted to Babette Howe by December 9, 2025.
 - Final version will be presented for approval at December 16, 2025, school board meeting.
 - Upon approval, the handbook will be formatted for ADA compliance by the BIE communications team and published on the HES website.
 - Goal: Final handbook in place by the start of the new calendar year.

4. 21st century grant activities presentation and approval from School Board

- Overview:
 - The program is designed around a 4-H model, focusing on hands-on, enrichment-based learning.
 - The presentation included:
 - The purpose and goals of the activities program.
 - Funding sources through the 21st Century grant.
 - Strategies for engaging families and the broader community.
 - A review of proposed activities and their alignment with student needs and community interests.
 - Input and approval from the school board are required to move forward with implementation.

- Discussion:
 - Ms. Sessions, school counselor, provided additional context on how the activities would support student development and well-being.
 - The board was asked to review and approve the plan to allow for timely implementation.
- Outcome:
 - The school board tabled approval of the Activities Program Plan until the next school board meeting.
 - One parent in attendance expressed concern about the delay and requested that the board consider holding a special meeting to approve the plan sooner, allowing activities to begin without further postponement.

5. Attendance and Community Engagement Update

Presenter: Niki Sandoval

- Dr. Sandoval shared a one-page handout emphasizing the role of facilitators in strengthening communication between the tribe, community, and school to support the BIE's educational commitments under the settlement agreement.
- She highlighted the importance of improving student attendance, noting that last year students missed, on average, 1 out of every 5 school days, which negatively impacts learning outcomes.
- Commended the school for diligently tracking attendance and for developing engaging programs like the 4-H-based activities and nutrition initiatives that contribute to a positive school climate and support social-emotional learning.
- Announced a monthly distribution of attendance-focused one-pagers with tips and benefits of regular school attendance. These will be shared with the school board, tribal council, and posted on the tribe's Facebook page (pending approval).
- Asked the school board and community to consider:
"What can the tribe and community do to help support student attendance and engagement?"

This question was posed for future discussion and collaboration.

Technology Needs and Connectivity Discussion

- Dr. Sandoval discussed technology and connectivity in Supai.
- Key questions being explored:
 - What are the current internet connectivity needs for K–8 education?
 - What types of access or tools (e.g., tablets, online programs, eLibraries) would help students engage more effectively in learning?
- Input is being gathered from the school board, community members, and tribal council to inform BIE support for devices, digital resources, or improved connectivity.

Discussion with the Board:

- President Kaska asked whether the school board receives written reports in addition to verbal updates.
 - Dr. Sandoval confirmed that handouts are provided at each meeting and offered to send a six-month report summarizing activities, visits, and community engagement.
 - She committed to sharing this report with President Kaska and all board members.
- President Kaska also suggested ways to increase parent and family engagement, noting:

“Maybe you could do a potluck or something with food. That kind of gathering brings the community together. I’m not asking you to donate everything—just a potluck would work.” This idea was shared as a way to make meetings and events more inviting and inclusive for families.

6. Thanksgiving Break – Update by Dr. Winder

- Students will have the entire week of November 24, 2025, off from school, as scheduled in the school calendar.
- On Monday, November 24, teachers will participate in an Administrative Day for Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) training.
- It was noted that while there had been prior concerns about this schedule, the plan proceeded as originally set, which some board members found disappointing.

7. School holiday plans – Dr. Winder

- Winter Celebration Events:
 - A Winter Celebration Potluck Dinner is scheduled for December 6, 2025, at 4:00 PM, prior to the school board meeting. The event will include student musical performances and is intended to foster community engagement. This dinner will include a Holiday Program.
 - Flyers will be distributed to inform families, and the school hopes that some families will stay afterward to attend the board meeting in support.

8. Amendment to student handbook

President Kaska requested an update regarding the student handbook amendment, specifically noting that the school board had not yet approved the amendment and asked that this be clearly indicated on the front cover of the document.

Dr. Winder responded that a statement acknowledging the pending approval was added to the signature section of the amendment. The updated version was emailed to the school board, printed, and sent home with all students.

OPEN FORUM

- Carrie S. asked for clarification on how the approval and implementation process works.
- Ms. Sessions explained that:
 - Staff members proposing activities must complete a requisition form.
 - The form is reviewed by the principal and Dr. Winder to ensure alignment with the grant's guidelines and justification requirements.
 - Approved forms are then submitted to business technician for final approval before materials or supplies can be purchased.
 - Once approved, the school can begin recruiting students and promoting the activities.
- Budget and Transparency:
 - Carrie inquired whether a budget or spending plan would be made available for review.
 - Dr. Winder asked if the grant plan could be posted on the school website. Ms. Ford advised verifying that no sensitive background information is included but supported the idea of sharing the 4-H program vision as a community-wide initiative.
- Community Engagement:
 - Carrie emphasized that sharing the plan publicly could help increase parent involvement and excitement about the program.
 - She expressed appreciation for the school's efforts in securing the grant, stating:

“We truly do appreciate that you gained this grant for our children. We appreciate you.”

- Next Steps:
 - Ms. Sessions reiterated that the funding is already secured, and the school is now working through the approval and implementation process.
 - She acknowledged the importance of expediting the timeline and mentioned that if a special meeting cannot be arranged, the program would likely begin in January 2026.

Cultural Programming and Community Involvement Discussion

Question regarding paying local community members for sponsoring activities through the grant.

Ms. Ford emphasized the importance of increasing access to Havasupai culture through community involvement and suggested exploring ways to compensate local volunteers, such as elders, similarly to how sports coaches receive stipends.

Dr. Jojola shared that other schools have successfully involved non-BIE employees, such as elders, in 21st Century programs.

- Requirements include:
 - Background clearance for anyone working with students more than three days.
 - Registration in SAM.gov as a contractor or vendor to receive payment.
- She noted the process takes time and encouraged early planning.
- Concerns About Background Checks:
 - Vice Chair Grounds (speaking as a parent) expressed concern that the background check process discourages local applicants, especially elders.
 - She emphasized that parents are the first teachers, and cultural education should begin at home, though she supports community involvement in schools.
- Parent Engagement Challenges:
 - Vice Chair Grounds noted ongoing difficulty in getting parents to attend meetings, despite outreach through newsletters, Facebook, and the school marquee.
 - She shared her personal commitment as a parent and board member, highlighting that all her children speak Havasupai language because of her efforts at home.
- Communication Efforts:
 - Dr. Winder confirmed that meeting information is shared weekly via:
 - School newsletters
 - Facebook
 - The tribal newsletter
 - The school marquee
 - It can be attended virtually through Zoom link that is at the top of the weekly newsletter sent home with students, shared with tribal council, shared with school board members, and posted on Facebook.
- Closing Remarks:
 - The meeting concluded with thanks to all participants.
 - Dr. Winder stated she would work with Dr. Sandoval to schedule a community event as suggested by President Kaska.

Motion to adjourn at 7:27pm. Motion approved.

