



September 10, 2026

Section	Purpose	Time
1. Welcome & Framing	Reconnect to mission, name outcomes for the meeting	5 min
2. EP Progress Report	Samantha shares updates on goals, data, and priorities	25 min
3. Committee Reports	Each committee chair gives a concise update - Exec/ governance - Finance	15 min
4. Deep Dive	Board Composition Update High level AI priority update	20 min
5. Closing & Next Steps	Confirm follow-ups, appreciation, and next meeting cadence	5 min

Promise Academy Board Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: September 10, 2026

Meeting Duration: 39 minutes, 31 seconds

Facilitator: Andre Warren, Roland T. Woodson Jr., Amy Galloway (joined later)

Attendees: Charles Gerber, Samantha Buford, Anthony T. Branch, Diana Burton

Location: Virtual Meeting **Recorded by:** Andre Warren

1. Call to Order & Welcome

2. Promise Board Meeting Summary

The Board convened to discuss school operations, academic priorities, governance activities, board recruitment efforts, and updates on the AI Innovation Pilot. The meeting opened with members sharing moments of joy and positive experiences from both their personal lives and observations at Promise Academy. Participants highlighted the positive school culture, student engagement, and encouraging signs of progress throughout the organization.



The Board reviewed the Principal's report, discussed the school's strategic priorities for the 2026-2027 school year, heard updates from the Executive Governance Committee, examined board recruitment opportunities, and received a progress report on the AI Innovation Fund initiative.

3. Mission and Vision Reflection

Board members reflected on several examples that demonstrate Promise Academy's mission and vision in action:

- Students continue to experience a joyful and supportive learning environment through initiatives such as Fun Fridays, Shine Time celebrations, and school-wide recognition programs.
- Staff members are creating a culture that balances high expectations with student support and accountability through the SOAR framework.
- Board members observed strong student engagement during visits to the school and noted positive interactions between students and staff.
- The Heart Room was highlighted as an example of restorative practices in action, helping students reflect on decisions and develop positive behaviors.
- The AI Pilot Program continues to generate excitement among students despite technical challenges, demonstrating Promise Academy's commitment to innovation and future-ready learning experiences.

4. Executive Principal Progress Report (Samantha Buford)

Schoolwide Priorities

- Continued focus on establishing strong systems, consistency, and predictability across instruction, culture, attendance, and operations.
- Staff and family feedback identified consistency as a primary area of focus for the school year.

Academic Achievement

- Instructional leadership team members are providing intensive coaching and classroom support to teachers.
- Teachers are receiving increased support around lesson planning, data collection, and instructional practices.
- A key instructional focus moving forward is increasing student ownership of learning and student discourse within classrooms.



- Students completed the August i-Ready diagnostic assessment and have been placed into intervention groups based upon skill needs.

School Culture

- SOAR expectations continue to be reinforced throughout the building.
- Fun Fridays have become a successful incentive system connected to student attendance and behavior.
- The first Shine Time celebration and Teacher of the Month recognition were successfully implemented.

Attendance

- School attendance goal remains 95% daily attendance.
- Attendance concerns were noted following a recent long weekend, with proactive family outreach taking place through the Communities in Schools representative.
- Attendance incentives and family communication remain ongoing priorities.

Family Engagement

- Parent Academy launched with approximately 20 families participating in both morning and afternoon sessions.
- A Grandparents Luncheon was scheduled to strengthen community engagement and showcase the school.

Community Open House

- Board members were invited to attend a school showcase and community open house scheduled for **October 22, 2026**.

5. Committee Reports

Executive Governance Committee Report

Presented by: Anthony T. Branch

Key updates included:

- Development of a comprehensive annual evaluation calendar.
- Establishment of timelines for:
 - Teacher surveys



- Family surveys
 - Student surveys
 - Executive walkthroughs
 - Self-reflection activities
 - Executive Governance Committee meetings
- Governance Committee members will conduct executive walkthroughs by shadowing the school leader and gathering evidence to support the annual evaluation process.
 - Evaluation metrics and evidence collection processes are being finalized to ensure compliance with state requirements and establish a fair, evidence-based evaluation structure.

6. AI Innovation Pilot Update

- The Board reviewed progress on the AI Innovation Pilot:
- **Successes**
 - Promise Academy received a \$50,000 SCORE AI Innovation Fund award.
 - Students demonstrate high engagement with AI-supported learning tools.
 - Teachers remain enthusiastic and flexible despite implementation challenges.
- **Challenges**
 - Network bandwidth and technology infrastructure continue to restrict student access.
 - Device fluency and keyboarding skills among students require additional support.
- **Current Actions**
 - Exploration of technology solutions and vendor support.
 - Creation of a steering team to guide project implementation and sustainability.
 - Daily keyboarding practice and adjusted student access schedules.

7. Board Development and Recruitment

The Board reviewed progress toward filling identified skill gaps in finance, legal expertise, marketing, and educational leadership.

Potential Board Candidates



Candidate 1

- Memphis EDGE professional.
- Experience in economic development, grants, legal studies, and finance-related work.
- Expressed strong interest in serving.

Candidate 2

- Content creator and communications professional with the MCC.
- Expertise in marketing, communications, social media, and public engagement.
- Expressed strong interest in serving.

Candidate 3

- Auditor with E&Y.
- Strong accounting and finance background.
- Continuing conversations regarding board service and finance-related responsibilities.

Candidate 4

- Former Promise Academy Assistant Principal and instructional leader.
- Extensive institutional knowledge and commitment to Promise Academy's mission.
- Recruitment discussion pending.

Next steps include collecting candidate biographies and resumes for board review and continuing candidate conversations.

8. Next Meetings

Upcoming Dates

- Community Open House and School Visit: October 22, 2026.
- Full Board Meeting: September 24
- Executive Governance Committee: October 8

Promise Academy enters the 2026–27 school year with strong momentum, a fully staffed leadership team, and clear systems designed to elevate academic excellence, strengthen culture, and advance innovation for students.