

**THOMPSON EDUCATION FOUNDATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES OF APRIL 21, 2026**

The meeting was called to order at 4:16 p.m. The minutes were taken by Tracy Roller, secretary, because staff member Eowyn Sanders was unable to attend.

Board members in attendance were Kim Akeley-Charron, Bre Carpenter, Brian Cullins, Will Delmar, Jason Germain, Lori Hvizda Ward, Barb Kruse, Tracy Roller, Celeste Smith, Matt Thies, and Sarah Walgast. Board members unable to attend were Rick Bowles, Denise Chapman, Bret Heller, and Bob Herrmann. Staff member Lesa Biedron was also in attendance.

Upon motion duly made and seconded the Consent Agenda - consisting of the March 24 board meeting minutes, the March Investment Management Account statements, the March ED reports – was approved.

Celeste gave the board the final update on the 2026 cycle of Project Prom. There were 489 attendees, an increase of 16% from 2025. The biggest hurdle was long wait times for the dressing rooms, in spite of the presence of the pop-up dressing rooms. Orchards Ace Hardware register donations brought in \$2,288.50 to the PPC fund, and donations from the event totaled \$217.45. There were UNC/CSU student volunteers this year. A prom giveaway in Castle Rock has reached out about donating their inventory upon ending their event. Celeste shared a few success stories from the event and thanked the TEF board members that volunteered at the event. Brian thanked Celeste for her continued efforts with Project Prom.

Kim and Lesa gave the final Trailblazing Thompson update to the board. The total attendance was 652. There was positive feedback from the check-in volunteers in using BetterUnite to check guests in. The name tags were the biggest slowdown at the check-in table and will likely not be utilized next year. The sponsors in attendance shared positive feedback with Lesa. Kim thanked everyone who contributed door prizes to the event. Will suggested saying who contributed the door prizes while presenting at the event. She asked that the board consider increasing the budget for the Student Choice awards as educators hold that award in high regard. She also suggested bringing up the Student Choice recipients on stage one at a time similar to Educator of the Year. Sponsorships overall were down from last year. Kim and Lesa are considering changing the sponsor messaging for next year, including dropping to 2 sponsorship levels instead of 6. Will and Bre suggested 3 or 4 levels instead of 2. Kim asked the board their thoughts about a VIP reception before the event for sponsors. The board liked the idea, and Sarah suggested inviting the retirees to the reception as well.

Inviting financial planners and other similar providers to offer services to retirees could be helpful at the reception.

There are 253 registrants for the upcoming Earth Day 5K & 10K race. Lesa anticipates a surge of registrations as the event gets closer. So far there is \$10,000 in sponsorships.

Kim let the board know that she made the suggested updates to the Staff Special Compensation policy. The updates have been posted on the board page. There were no updates or questions. Upon motion duly made, the Staff Special Compensation policy was approved.

Kim updated the board on state and federal funding initiatives that could impact public education. Great Education Colorado State Funding, initiative 195, is a tax cut for wages under \$500,000 for money going to school districts. The bill is available to read online, and signatures are being gathered to place it on the November 2026 ballot. She also showed the potential impact that the HRI, Federal Education Freedom Tax Credit, could have. It is potentially a new funding resource for public school districts and their education foundations or other associated SGO (Scholarship Granting Organizations). Although Colorado has opted into the program, there is a lot of uncertainty about how this will play out in the state. TEF may potentially have to create an LLC to be allowed to administer the program for TSD.

Kim reminded the board members about the senior awards nights they have signed up for.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:21 p.m.