

Meeting Minutes

Junior Achievement of Southeast Texas

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Attendees

Board: Lina Amador, Evelyn Angelle, Tracy Beam, Adam Drutz, Larry Franco, Tracie Griffitt, Jarin Hansen, Drew Horn, Daron Houston, Joe Kelly, Daniel Liu, Michele McNichol, Brett Mossman, Praveen Naik, Laura Parkan, Jamie Pierce, Frank Steininger, Larry Stephens, Kevin Syphard, Laura Tibodeau, Liz Townsend, Eli Warren, Nathan Wiker, Laura Whitley

Staff: Camila Aguiar, Courtney Azuiké, Joe Burke, Ne’Cole Caldwell, Jorge Cardenas, Christina Craft, Jennifer Craig, Carla Crowe, Monica Espinosa, De Jones, Patty Lalonde, Cecily Messer, Andrea Richardson, Tiffany Spates, Karen St. Fort, Kelly Vaughn, Liisa Williams

Guests: Daniel Liu, SGV International (on behalf of Roland Sauermann) and Shelly Zackrie, National Director of Curriculum Integration for 3DE National

Chairwoman Michele McNichol called the meeting to order at 11:32 a.m. She thanked the board for attending, in person and online. She opened the floor for questions or comments on the minutes of the June 19, 2025 meeting and the July 31, 2025 financials. These were sent to members in the pre-read materials. There being no questions, she asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Jarin Hansen motioned to approve. Liz Townsend seconded. Motion carried.

Michele notified members of two board member changes. Darrin Carroll, CenterPoint Energy, has left the company and taken a role out of state; therefore, he’s stepped off the board and executive committee. Deanna Young has taken on a new role. She is stepping off the executive committee but will remain on the board.

Michele requested De Jones and Karen St. Fort facilitate this year’s staff recognitions. Tiffany Spates, Senior Program Manager – Experiential Learning, celebrated 10 years. Ne’Cole Caldwell – Senior Vice President – Learning Experiences celebrated 20 years. Two other staff members were also recognized but unable to attend in person. Tania Daniels and Liisa Williams celebrated 10 years.

Ne’Cole Caldwell then presented the 2024/2025 year-end program report. Student reach and instructional contact hours were down slightly, primarily due to the declining enrollment at HISD. However, the instructional contact hours per student were slightly up. She presented the national impact data for JA’s 3DE program. Data continues to show that students participating in the program do much better than non-3DE participants. This includes fewer cases of chronic absenteeism, increased reading proficiency, an increase in graduation rates, higher rates of first-year college enrollment, and higher rates of college persistence. Additionally, she shared the student demographics. The economic and ethnic makeup of the students was:

- 56% of students were classified economically disadvantaged
- 37% Hispanic
- 22% White
- 17% Black/African American
- 11% Asian
- 7% Other & 6% Unknown

Michele invited Evelyn Angelle to provide an update on the status of construction on the Phillips 66 JA Discovery Center.

- Funds raised to date - \$23,147,656
- Pledge receivables are approximately \$3,000,000 and on track to be satisfied as agreed upon
- Expenses incurred to-date - \$13,908,443
- Minimal change orders have occurred
- There have been no draws on the loan
- The North pad site sale is pending, with proceeds anticipated at \$750,000
- Project Milestones
 - 2/3/25 – construction commenced
 - 3/27/25 groundbreaking ceremony
 - 11/20/25 – anticipated substantial completion
 - 12/1/25 – anticipated move-in date
 - 1/8/2026 – first day of operation and student attendance
 - 1/27/2026 - grand opening celebration

Michele welcomed Monica Espinosa, Senior Capstone Manager, to share updates and walk members through the Finance Park simulation redesign. The redesign will incorporate a greater focus on career exploration. Working in teams, members experienced the simulation just as the students will. Participants' interests are assessed, life scenarios are assigned based on the assessment, and a budgeting and spending activity is conducted. New this year is a career exploration exercise where students will learn about jobs available with companies across the area, including educational requirements, general responsibilities, salary potential, and advancement opportunities. Members were very impressed with the depth of the program.

Michele welcomed Jennifer Craig and Andrea Richardson to provide updates on the status of the Hall of Achievement gala and Discovery Center sponsorships. Andrea reminded members of this year's theme, "Planting the Seeds of Success," and of our Laureates. Willie Chiang, Chairman and CEO of Plains All American Pipeline, LP, Dr. Reginald DesRoches, President of Rice University, and Paula Mendoza, President and CEO of Possible Missions, Inc., will be honored at the event. Sponsorships are running a little behind last year at this time but are anticipated to meet the budget of \$650,000. She encouraged members to sponsor, purchase tickets, and invite guests. Jennifer shared that of the 33 storefronts, there are nine remaining to be sponsored – six in BizTown and three in Finance Park. Conversations are ongoing with multiple companies for sponsorships, and interest is high.

Michele reminded everyone that several board strategy sessions are scheduled for members to share their thoughts, ideas, and perspectives as JASET looks to create greater alignment with the JAUSA strategic vision.

Michele adjourned the meeting at 1:05 p.m.

Recorded by: Jennifer Craig

Respectfully submitted: William Swanstrom, Secretary