APPROVED

Escuela Avancemos! Academy

Minutes

Escuela Avancemos Regular Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday December 17, 2024 at 6:30 PM

Location
Escuela Avancemos Academy
2635 Howard St
Detroit, MI 48216
Room 105

MISSION STATEMENT: Prepare, educate, and inspire every child, every day to be lifelong leaders and learners in our 21st-century world.

Directors Present
A. Bordeianu, C. Stamatin, L. Chittum, M. Barbour, M. Gonzalez

Directors Absent
None

Directors who arrived after the meeting opened
M. Barbour

Guests Present
A. Ulloa, Elizabeth Rodriguez, J. Joubert, L. Coggins, Michelle-Kerry Khatib, S. Elam, S. Johnson, Wasem Younis

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

C. Stamatin called a meeting of the board of directors of Escuela Avancemos! Academy to order on Tuesday Dec 17, 2024 at 6:43 PM.

II. Approval of Agenda

A. Approval of Agenda

A. Bordeianu made a motion to approve the Escuela Avancemos Academy Regular Board Meeting agenda on December 17, 2024.
L. Chittum seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
M. Barbour	Absent
L. Chittum	Aye
A. Bordeianu	Aye
M. Gonzalez	Aye
C. Stamatin	Aye

III. Consent Agenda Item

A. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

L. Chittum made a motion to approve the minutes from Escuela Avancemos Regular Board Meeting on 11-19-24.
M. Gonzalez seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
A. Bordeianu	Aye
M. Gonzalez	Aye
C. Stamatin	Aye
M. Barbour	Absent
L. Chittum	Aye

IV. New Business

A. The Center for Charter Schools Educational Program Review (EPR) and Special Education Review (SER) Site Visit

The Board of Directors and school leadership received correspondence from the Governor John Engler Center for Charter Schools at Central Michigan University regarding the upcoming Educational Program Review (EPR) and Special Education Review (SER) on-site visit. As part of the Center’s oversight processes leading up to reauthorization, the Academic Performance and Accountability (APA) team will conduct these reviews at the academy on January 23, 2025.

Ms. Ana Ulloa highlighted that this process typically occurs every two years. She emphasized the importance of ensuring all information reported to the Center and the elements outlined in the School Improvement Plan are actively implemented and adhered to.

B. The Center for Charter Schools Escuela Avancemos! Staff Review Letter

The Board of Directors and school leadership received correspondence from the Governor John Engler Center for Charter Schools at Central Michigan University regarding a compliance review of Escuela Avancemos Academy staff. The review assessed adherence to state and federal laws, including teacher and administrator certification, criminal background checks, and unprofessional conduct disclosures. Following a thorough examination of personnel files, the review found no deficiencies, confirming that the academy is in compliance with all state and federal requirements.

The academy reported that 15 of 22 instructional positions (68%) are currently filled by individuals working under permits. This challenge reflects a broader statewide issue affecting both charter and traditional schools. Madam Vice President Andreea Bordeianu suggested contacting community leaders and exploring international recruitment opportunities, such as engaging with educators in Puerto Rico, to address staffing shortages. Ana Ulloa acknowledged the difficulty of competing with larger districts offering higher salaries and retirement benefits. She also noted that many applicants seek immediate employment but lack the long-term commitment essential for fostering student academic success.

Sanga Management reaffirmed its commitment to innovative strategies for attracting certified teachers and individuals willing to enroll in alternative teaching programs. Additionally, the academy will leverage an awarded grant from the Detroit Children’s Fund to provide selected teachers with an opportunity to travel to Central America. This initiative aims to enhance teachers' understanding of the cultural backgrounds of the academy’s student population, thereby improving support for student learning.

V. Reports

A. 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Elizabeth Rodriguez, the 21st CCLC Site Coordinator, presented the monthly programming and budget report for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, highlighting key successes:

- Student Engagement and Improvement: Parents and teachers have observed significant progress in reading skills among participating students. Students are enthusiastic about attending the program and eager to learn, particularly in reading.

- CMU Tutoring: Central Michigan University (CMU) tutors recently completed their sessions with 4th and 5th graders, commending students for their behavior and engagement. Tutoring will resume in late January.
- Seasonal Celebration: A New Year’s celebration featuring games and prizes will be held to ensure inclusivity for all students, regardless of holiday observances.

Michelle Kerry-Khatib, Program Director, commended Elizabeth Rodriguez for achieving the program's highest daily student attendance rate to date.

A new astronomy club has been launched, capturing student interest in science:

- Madam President Cristina Stamatin recommended using smartphone apps as a "magic lens" to explore stars and planets in real time.
- Madam Vice President Andreea Bordeianu suggested enriching the program with free physics and astronomy shows at Wayne State University and events at Cranbrook.

Waseem Younis was introduced to the Board of Directors and shared his goal of attending at least one board meeting at each participating 21st CCLC cohort school. He expressed interest in fostering continued partnerships with the academy to explore additional grant opportunities. These efforts aim to reduce overhead costs and provide additional support and resources to meet the academy's needs.
M. Barbour arrived at 7:14 PM.

B. November Financials

November 2024 financial reports were presented by Dr. Lorilyn Coggins highlighting cash on hand, year-to-date revenues, year-to-date expenditures, and the current fund balance in a summarized format. The financials are in order. The amended budget is tentatively scheduled to be presented to the Board of Directors at the next board meeting.

C. Sanga Monthly Management Report

The Sanga monthly management report was presented to the Board of Directors by Steven Elam, Chief Academic Officer, and Ana Ulloa, CEO.

- Winter Assessment Preparation: Efforts are underway to prepare for Winter assessments following the holiday break. A request has been made to reschedule the CMU Educational Program Review & Special Education Review, originally slated for January 23, 2025, due to potential testing scheduling conflicts.
- Middle School Behavior Management: An increase in middle school behavior issues has prompted the leadership team to collaborate with teachers, modeling effective classroom management strategies and reinforcing behavioral expectations.

- Staffing Updates: Three staff resignations were reported. Sanga Consulting is actively recruiting certified candidates with SIOP and ELL training.

On December 10, 2024, Corey Northup, Executive Director of the Center for Charter Schools, visited Escuela Avancemos Academy.
The visit included: A meeting with the entire leadership and management team; a building walk-through with academy leaders Erika Reed, Alex Weberman, and Jennifer Joubert; and a lunch meeting to discuss the school's unique culture, mission, and needs.
Madam President Cristina Stamatin expressed regret for being unable to attend.
The board emphasized the importance of community engagement and discussed creating a professionally designed one-pager to enhance the academy's branding and marketing efforts.

The academy was closed on December 12, 2024, due to severe weather conditions.

Shan'Ta Johnson shared a historic video, created by Shoot Boot Camp Detroit, highlighting the academy's rich history and dedication to serving its community.

Sanga Consulting will host a staff holiday party on December 18, 2024, as a token of appreciation for the staff's dedication throughout the year.

VI. Extended Public Comment:

A. This public comment section is reserved for all remaining comments.

No extended public comments at this time.

VII. Board Comments

A. Authorizer Comments

Jennifer Joubert, Field Operations School Lead from the Governor John Engler Center for Charter Schools at Central Michigan University, reminded the Board of Directors about the MAPSA email, which contains important legislative information. She provided an update regarding the Educational Program Review (EPR) and Special Education Review (SER), noting that an extension request for the site visit will be submitted on behalf of the academy.
Additionally, Jennifer mentioned that a video recording link of the Educational Program Review (EPR) and Special Education Review (SER) Orientation meeting, which was held on December 17, 2024, will be shared with the team to ensure everyone is informed.

B. Escuela Avancemos! Academy Board of Directors Updates

The Board of Directors of Escuela Avancemos Academy expressed their appreciation for the historic video that captures the heart and spirit of the academy. Madam Vice

President, Andreea Bordeianu, suggested that the video be posted on the school's website to further showcase the academy's mission and values.
The Board also expressed excitement over the increasing parent engagement within the academy and commended the success of the recent parent-teacher conference. The Board extended heartfelt thanks to the entire team for their dedication and contributions, acknowledging the positive impact each member brings to the academy.
A special thank you was given to the Central Michigan University (CMU) team for their continued guidance and support in the academy’s educational efforts. The Board discussed the potential for the company that produced the video to assist with the academy’s marketing needs, considering their expertise in capturing the essence of the academy.
In closing, the Board wished everyone a joyful and restful holiday season, thanking all for their hard work and commitment to the academy’s success.

VIII. Closing Items

A. Reconfirmation of Next Board Meeting

Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at 6:30 pm at Escuela Avancemos Academy.

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
S. Johnson

Approved by the Board of Trustees on Tuesday, January 28, 2025.