APPROVED

Escuela Avancemos! Academy

Minutes

Escuela Avancemos Regular Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday May 19, 2026 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

Guests Present
J. Joubert, S. Johnson, melem@theeaacademy.org

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 May 19, 2026 at 6:45 PM.

II. Approval of Agenda

A.

Approval of Agenda

A. Bordeianu made a motion to approve the Escuela Avancemos Academy! Academy to order on Tuesday, May 19, 2026.
M. Barbour seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Barbour	Aye
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 Academy Special Board Meeting on 04-21-26.
M. Gonzalez seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

L. Chittum	Aye
C. Stamatin	Aye
M. Barbour	Aye
A. Bordeianu	Aye
M. Gonzalez	Aye

IV. New Business

A. Emergency Operations Plan For Escuela Avancemos Academy

A. Bordeianu made a motion to approve the Emergency Operations Plan for Escuela Avancemos Academy.
L. Chittum seconded the motion.
An amended Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) will be presented to the Board of Directors in August to incorporate Michigan’s statewide school cell phone legislation. The legislation requires all K–12 public school districts and public school academies to prohibit smartphone use during classroom instructional time beginning in the 2026–2027 school year.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Gonzalez	Aye
L. Chittum	Aye
A. Bordeianu	Aye
M. Barbour	Aye

Roll Call

C. Stamatin Aye

V. Reports

A. April Financials

Dr. Lorilyn Coggins was unable to attend the board meeting. Board Treasurer Linda Chittum presented an overview of the April financials and noted the potential need to apply for a bridge loan. Additional details will be shared with the Board during the upcoming budget hearing. Board President Cristina Stamatin requested that a pre-audit financial report be provided to the Board for review prior to the June budget hearing.

B. 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Elizabeth Rodriguez was unable to attend the meeting. The Board of Directors reviewed the 21st CCLC report included in the board packet.

C. Sanga Monthly Management Report

The Sanga Monthly Management Report was presented by Dr. Marquez Elem and Shan'Ta Johnson, in the absence of Ana Ulloa. Dr. Elem, the new superintendent for Escuela Avancemos Academy, introduced himself and shared his professional background, highlighting his experience and effectiveness as a turnaround school administrator. Board Vice President Andreea Bordeianu inquired about Dr. Elem's tenure at prior organizations, noting comparatively short durations. Dr. Elem explained that turnaround leadership roles are often time-bound by design, with the primary focus on revitalizing organizations, strengthening systems, and establishing sustainable financial and operational structures. Vice President Bordeianu noted that while the academy's financial standing is strong, focused work is needed in the instructional domain. Dr. Elem shared that he has entered into a two-year employment contract with Sanga and is deeply committed to the academy's growth and continuity. Over the past three weeks, his work has included comprehensive data analysis, individual meetings with staff, review of existing systems for alignment to the academy's mission, summer and Saturday school planning, engagement with more than 100 students, master schedule development, and the design of intentional, weekly professional development aimed at improving the instructional environment. He emphasized that there is significant work ahead and affirmed his commitment to leading that work. Members of the Board of Directors introduced themselves to Dr. Elem and engaged in a collaborative discussion regarding their collective vision for the academy's growth and long-term success. Board President Cristina Stamatin emphasized the importance of clearly elevating the academy's strengths and requested that the Board receive detailed, transparent data reports. Dr. Elem assured the Board that a comprehensive data report would be shared within three weeks. On Monday, May 11, 2026, Sherry Betcher, Assessment Manager for the Governor John Engler Center for Charter Schools, conducted an on-site oversight visit at the academy to review assessment administration practices. The purpose of the visit was

to evaluate the academy's implementation and fidelity of assessment protocols, specifically related to the administration of the NWEA assessment. Following her review, Ms. Betcher noted that the academy is in full compliance with established best practices for NWEA assessment administration. This determination reflects adherence to required procedures, appropriate testing conditions, and alignment with authorizer expectations for assessment integrity and accountability. As part of the academy's ongoing talent recruitment efforts, Mrs. Johnson proudly represented the school at the Michigan Department of Education Workforce Virtual Job Fair on May 13. The event generated a strong and enthusiastic response, with significant interest from highly qualified certified educators, particularly those holding ESL endorsements and expressing aspirations for future leadership roles.

Staff Appreciation Week featured a variety of events honoring the dedicated staff of Escuela Avancemos Academy, including recognition of bus drivers, food service providers, and contracted IT vendors. In addition, the academy proudly celebrated its own Ahmed Bitar, who was highlighted on the Michigan Charter Schools "Teacher Appreciation" social media platform.

From an academic standpoint, Dr. Elem and Ms. Ulloa have collaboratively launched a K–2 Early Literacy Initiative serving approximately 70 students in kindergarten through second grade. The initiative focuses on strengthening foundational literacy skills during morning instructional blocks, followed by structured social-emotional learning enrichment in the afternoon. The program is facilitated by Shannon Burns, School Social Worker, and is further supported by recruited Escuela Avancemos Academy alumni who will assist throughout the program under the Summer Discovery Program grant.

The 8th Grade Graduation Ceremony is scheduled for Thursday, June 11, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., to be held on-site at St. Anne's Parish Hall. A formal invitation will be shared with the Board of Directors, as the academy would be honored to have board members in attendance and to offer remarks in celebration of our graduating scholars.

Following student dismissal at the conclusion of the school year, two classrooms—located on the second and third floors—will require replacement of HVAC VAV boxes to ensure proper airflow and effective heating and cooling within instructional spaces. These repairs have been approved and scheduled.

VI. Extended Public Comment:

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

None 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, shared with the Board of Directors that

Dr. Elem has announced all staff will participate in this year's Annual Conference, scheduled for August 19, 2026, at Huntington Place in Detroit.
Ms. Joubert also noted that it is encouraging to see school leadership proactively working towards updating the academy's cell phone policy to ensure full compliance with state legislation.

B. Escuela Avancemos! Academy Board of Directors Updates

The Escuela Avancemos Academy Board of Directors formally welcomed Marquez Elem to Detroit and to the school community, expressing enthusiasm for his leadership and vision for the academy.
Board President Cristina Stamatin and Board Vice President Andreea Bordeianu have registered to attend the National Charter Schools Conference, scheduled for June 24–26 in New Orleans. The Board discussed the importance of professional learning and engagement, noting that each board member is encouraged to attend the conference at least once. Members expressed excitement about participating and sharing information and resources related to advocacy, governance, and best practices with the full Board.
The Board conveyed strong optimism about the future of the academy and the revitalization efforts underway to accelerate academic growth. Members also expressed sincere appreciation for the continued support from Central Michigan University, including the presence and partnership of Jennifer Joubert, as well as the dedication and collaboration of the entire school leadership team.
Congratulations to Board Member Mariva Gonzalez on the upcoming high school graduation of her son, who is also a proud graduate of Escuela Avancemos Academy.

VIII. Closing Items

A. Reconfirmation of Next Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 23, 2026, 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 7:57 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
S. Johnson

Approved by the Board of Trustees on Tuesday, June 23, 2026.