



American Dream Charter School

Minutes

ADCS Board of Trustees Monthly Meeting

SY25-26

Date and Time

Monday July 21, 2025 at 5:30 PM

Location

Zoom

Trustees Present

L. Rojas (remote), P. Simon (remote), R. Espinal (remote), Z. Martinez (remote)

Trustees Absent

A. Cabrera

Guests Present

Andy Liu, Digant Bahl, M. Melkonian (remote), N. Gallagher (remote), S. Espinal (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

R. Espinal called a meeting of the board of trustees of American Dream Charter School to order on Monday Jul 21, 2025 at 5:46 PM.

C.

Approve Minutes

R. Espinal made a motion to approve the minutes from ADCS Board of Trustees Monthly Meeting on 06-16-25.

Z. Martinez seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

D. Executive Session - The Board entered executive session, and the meeting recording was paused.

E. BENCHMARK 5: Financial Management

Approval of the 2025–2026 Budget

Representatives from Accounting Solutions New York presented the proposed budget for the 2025–2026 school year.

- The budget projected approximately **\$16.1 million in revenue** and **\$16.2 million in expenses**.
- The proposed budget included an anticipated deficit of approximately **\$140,000**.
- The Finance Committee had previously reviewed the budget in detail.
- The projected deficit reflected conservative enrollment assumptions and anticipated staffing expenses.
- Leadership noted that actual enrollment and the number of vacancies filled could materially affect the final financial results.
- Leadership anticipated revisiting the budget in September after enrollment and staffing information became clearer.

R. Espinal made a motion to motion to approve the proposed budget for the 2025–2026 school year.

L. Rojas seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

F. Executive Session - HR Matters

II. Educational Success

A. Benchmark 1: Student Performance

B. Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning

Summer Boost Update

- Approximately 85 students were enrolled in Summer Boost.
- The program began on July 7.
- Representatives associated with the Summer Boost program conducted a site visit and provided positive feedback regarding the program's implementation.

- The visitors specifically noted the school's emphasis on supporting students through their native languages and translanguaging.
- The program included test preparation for students who had not yet passed required examinations.
- Updated Regents results were expected to be available in August.
 - Sixth- and ninth-grade students demonstrated the most consistent attendance.

C. BENCHMARK 3: Culture, Climate, and Student and Family Engagement

High School Clear-Backpack Requirement

- Leadership informed the Board that high school students would be required to use clear backpacks.
- The policy was intended to reduce instructional time lost during backpack searches and discourage students from bringing prohibited items to school.
- Families were informed of the new requirement during a parent orientation, and leadership reported receiving no significant parent objections.
- Students who do not wish to transport laptops in clear backpacks will have access to devices at school.
- The Board discussed vaping among students and possible educational workshops and support groups addressing vaping and related health concerns.
- Leadership also reviewed the school's existing practice of collecting student cell phones at arrival and discussed challenges involving smartwatches and other connected devices.

III. Organizational Soundness

A. BENCHMARK 4: Financial Condition

- Leadership reported that the remaining Flagstar funds were expected to be transferred and the Flagstar accounts subsequently closed.

B. Account balances reviewed

C. BENCHMARK 6: Board Oversight and Governance:

- Board members were reminded to complete the annual board self-assessment.
- The assessment link had been sent to trustees' personal email addresses.
- Several trustees had already completed the assessment, and remaining trustees were asked to complete it when available.

D. BENCHMARK 7: Organizational Capacity

High School Leadership

- Leadership informed the Board that the former High School Director would not be returning.
- Felix Sanchez had recently been appointed Assistant Director.
- Dr. Melissa Melkonian would serve as Acting High School Director while leadership evaluated the appropriate long-term structure.

Staffing and Vacancies

- The school had approximately **13 remaining instructional vacancies**.
- Leadership intended to fill as many essential positions as possible but did not anticipate filling every vacancy.
- Staffing decisions would be made strategically based on enrollment, scheduling, student needs, and the financial effect on the approved budget.
- Leadership noted that integrated co-teaching sections might not be available in every classroom, but student programs and schedules would be arranged to provide required IEP services.

IV. Faithfulness to Charter & Law

A. BENCHMARK 8: Mission and Key Design Elements

B. BENCHMARK 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention

Sixth-Grade Enrollment

- Leadership reported approximately **50 enrolled sixth-grade students**, compared with a target of approximately 87.
- SchoolMint application data indicated that word-of-mouth referrals were the primary source of sixth-grade applicants.
- Leadership proposed offering a referral incentive to existing families when a referred sixth-grade student completed enrollment.
- The proposal had been reviewed for legal compliance.
- The specific type and value of the incentive had not yet been finalized.
- Leadership planned to announce the initiative and provide an update to the Board in August.
- The Board also discussed broader enrollment challenges affecting schools in the surrounding

C. BENCHMARK 10: Legal Compliance

V. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
R. Espinal