



ZEST Preparatory Academy Charter School

Minutes

ZEST Preparatory Academy Governance Board Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday May 20, 2025 at 7:00 PM

Location

3130 Golf Ridge Blvd. Douglasville, GA 30135

Directors Present

A. Joiner (remote), B. Jones, E. Jackson, H. Ridley, T. Stevens (remote)

Directors Absent

None

Ex Officio Members Present

M. Carruthers

Non Voting Members Present

M. Carruthers

Guests Present

Christine Yang (Ed Tech) (remote), R. Davis

I. Opening Items**A. Record Attendance****B.**

Call the Meeting to Order

B. Jones called a meeting of the board of directors of ZEST Preparatory Academy Charter School to order on Tuesday May 20, 2025 at 7:12 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

H. Ridley made a motion to approve the minutes from ZEST Preparatory Academy Governance Board Meeting on 04-15-25.

E. Jackson seconded the motion.

April minutes were approved at 7:14 pm.

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

D. Review & Approve Agenda

Motion to Approve the agenda as written.

H. Ridley seconded the motion.

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

E. Mission and Vision

The board Chair, BJ, read the schools' mission and vision.

F. Public Comment

There is no public comment.

II. Executive Directors Report

A. Attendance & Enrollment Dashboard

ED, MC presented:

SY23-24 - Chronic Absenteeism rate of 6.4%

- Student Illness
- Attendance letters

SY24-25 - Chronic Absenteeism rate of 7.2%

- Increased student illness contributed to the increase in chronic absenteeism and may have contributed to the increase of CA.

School-related Attendance Interventions:

- Attendance Letters
- Auto calls from Infinite Campus
- Electronic submission available for families to submit excuse notes
- Attendance committee for SY25-26

Enrollment Projections:

269 families fully registered out of the 275 projected

B. Academic Updates & End of Year Close Out

ED, MC presented:

- All internal academic testing is completed.
- 100% of our students were tested in NWEA Map and GMAS
- ED and Mr. Parks will meet with the academic board committee on Friday.
- 11-point gain in GMAS.
- 85% staff retention for SY25-26.
- ZEST will add staff due to natural student growth.
- ZEST will close for one week from June 16th - 20th.

District LEA close-out:

- FY25-26 CLIP
- Financial close-out and transitions
- Data Collections close-out
- ZEST will have a summer tutorial for compensatory services approved by GaDOE.

C. 2024-2025 Academic Data Review

Mr. Parks, ZEST Associate Director of Academics, presented the NWEA MAP data overview:

- ZEST is identified as "High Achievement" school in Math and sits in the 55th percentile nationally according to NWEA MAP.
- ZEST is identified as "High Achievement" school in Reading and sits in the 56th percentile nationally according to NWEA MAP.

ZEST Academic Next Steps:

- ZEST will move to a content departmentalization for grades 2-5.
- Standards-based instruction for teachers.
- Enhance admin-led PLC.
- Strengthening school-wide MTTS systems.
- Strengthening data-driven instruction.

D. Update on Cross Functional Monitoring

ED, MC presented:

- Completed on March 5, 2025

- The school had three findings.

Corrective Action next steps based on the finalized CFM update:

- Professional Development for staff members
- Parent Engagement and Feedback
- Offering Parent Workshops and partnering community partners

III. Governance Report

A. Board Recruitment

Board Member, Elizabeth Jackson, presented and spearheaded the recruitment process.

- ZEST board recruitment commenced in March 2025.

B. Candidate Presentations

- Four potential board members are in attendance to present to the board.
 - Palmer - Public Service - Serves on the Executive Leadership Team for a local school district.
 - Olugbala - Education Non-Profit - Serves
 - Dr. Randolph - Provost - Morris Brown College
 - Williams - Behavioral Health Non-Profit
 - Rankin - Attorney/ Fundraising
- ZEST Prep is still looking for a finance background and submitted it to GCSA for their pool of potential candidates.

C. Vote - Board Candidates

H. Ridley made a motion to select R. Palmer as a new board member.

E. Jackson seconded the motion.

Accepted at 8:04.

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

E. Jackson made a motion to select/consider Abena Olugbala as a new board member.

H. Ridley seconded the motion.

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

H. Ridley made a motion to select/consider Dr. Taneyece Randolph as a new board member.

E. Jackson seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

T. Stevens Abstain

B. Jones Aye

E. Jackson Aye

H. Ridley Aye

Roll Call

A. Joiner Abstain

E. Jackson made a motion to select/consider A. Williams as a new board member.

H. Ridley seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

E. Jackson Aye

H. Ridley Aye

B. Jones Aye

T. Stevens Abstain

A. Joiner Abstain

E. Jackson made a motion to select/consider S. Rankin as a new board member.

H. Ridley seconded the motion.

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

D. Item for Information: FY26 Meeting Calendar Adoption

Board Chair, ED, is sharing that the ZEST Board will meet for the FY26 calendar.

- General Board Meeting: Third Tuesday of each month.
- The Finance Committee meets on the fourth Monday of each month.
- The Academic Committee currently meets on the fourth Friday of each month.

The ZEST Prep board will vote on the FY26 calendar at the next board meeting.

IV. Finance Report

A. April Financials & Forecast

Christine from EdTech presented:

- ZEST will end the FY25 fiscal year with a positive cash balance.
- ZEST will have an approaching status based on the SCSC Financial Performance Indicators.

B. Emergency Grant Update

ZEST did not receive the SCSC hardship grant.

C. Facility Update

ZEST is still partnering with 22Beacon for potential facility renovations.

D. 2025-2026 Finance RFP Recommendation

The Finance Committee has received and met two proposals for back office providers:

1. Purpose Capital Group
2. Avolon Accounting & CFO Services

V. Action Items

A. 2025-2026 Finance RFP Recommendation

H. Ridley made a motion to vote for ZEST prep back-office provider. Board members have identified by vendor name their vote.

E. Jackson seconded the motion.

Avolon was voted as ZEST Prep's new back office provider.

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

VI. FY26 Budget Hearing

A. FY26 Budget Review

Christine from Ed Tech presented:

- ZEST's projected budget is 3.6 million minus the local 5 mil share. Based on an FTE of 275.
- ZEST has secured funding from the Charter School Growth Fund of \$175K.

Monique, ED reported:

Personnel:

- There are personnel increases in instructional staff and schools will make adjustments to other operational departments.

ZEST is projected to be lower in cash flow and must be fiscally conservative at the beginning of the first semester. ZEST Prep will end FY26 with a positive cash flow with over 31 days' cash on hand.

B. Budget Feedback and Public Comment on the Budget

There is no public comment on the FY26 budget.

VII. Executive Session

A. Vote to Enter Executive Session

H. Ridley made a motion to enter an Executive Session to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal or periodic evaluation or rating of a public officer or employee.

E. Jackson seconded the motion.

The Executive Director left the Executive Session at 8:50 pm.

The Senior Director of Operations left the Executive Session at 8:56 pm.

The board left the Executive Session at 9:03.

There was no vote that came out of the executive session.

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

The Affidavit was provided.

VIII. 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 9:06 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

B. Jones

ZEST Preparatory Academy Charter School is a K-5 elementary school community that provides an academically rigorous, supportive, and joyful learning environment to develop the leader inside every student for lifelong educational achievement and impactful community service.