



ZEST Preparatory Academy Charter School

Minutes

ZEST Preparatory Academy Governance Board Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday October 28, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Location

3130 Golf Ridge Blvd. Douglasville, GA 30135

Directors Present

A. Joiner, B. Jones, C. James, H. Ridley, R. Palmer

Directors Absent

A. Olugbala, D. Randolph, E. Jackson, S. Rankin

Ex Officio Members Present

M. Carruthers

Non Voting Members Present

M. Carruthers

Guests Present

Bambo (remote), Candy Yu (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 Oct 28, 2025 at 6:39 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

R. Palmer made a motion to approve the minutes from ZEST Preparatory Academy Governance Board Meeting on 09-29-25.

H. Ridley seconded the motion.

Approved

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

D. Approve Minutes

H. Ridley made a motion to approve the minutes from ZEST Preparatory Academy Governance Board Meeting on 08-26-25.

R. Palmer seconded the motion.

Approve

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

E. Approve Minutes

H. Ridley made a motion to approve the minutes from Amended FY26 Budget Hearing #1 on 07-17-25.

R. Palmer seconded the motion.

Approved

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

F. Approve Minutes

H. Ridley made a motion to approve the minutes from ZEST Preparatory Academy Governance Board Meeting on 05-20-25.

R. Palmer seconded the motion.

Approved

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

G. Review & Approve Agenda

R. Palmer made a motion to amend the agenda to allow the finance report to present first.

H. Ridley seconded the motion.

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

H. Mission and Vision

The Board Chair read the District's Mission and Vision statements.

I.

Public Comment

There was **no public comment** during this meeting.

II. Finance Report

A. FYI: September Financials

Back Office Provider Report (as of September 30, 2025)

- The Back Office Provider shared key updates on financial performance and audit preparation.
- Financial focus remains on audit readiness and ongoing financial review.
- ZEST is performing well and continues to demonstrate financial sustainability.
- Budget and actuals are being closely monitored to ensure alignment with fiscal goals.
- Cash flow management strategies remain in place to support operational stability.
- Food and Nutrition profit revenue is expected to begin in November.
- The finance team is reviewing enrollment data to determine if a budget adjustment is needed based on the submitted FTE numbers.
- Updates were provided on streamlining the purchase requisition process to enhance efficiency.
- SCSC and CPF financial metrics are on track and approaching standards.

B. FY25 Audit

Audit Review – FY25

- The Back Office Provider, in collaboration with Bamboo, reviewed the FY25 Audit Report and Management Letter with the Board. Key sections of the audit were discussed:
- Opinion Letter – The auditor's opinion was reviewed and discussed.
- Financial Statements – Overview of the balance sheet, TRS, depreciation, notes payable, cash activity, and income statement.
- Additional balance sheet details were reviewed.
- Comprehensive overview of school-wide financial activity.
- Review of school capital.
- Ledger summary and financial breakdown.

Audit Finding:

- One finding was noted related to cash collateralization.
- The auditor shared that this is not uncommon for a second-year operational school.

- **Corrective Action:** The school will work with its banking institution to adjust account structures and ensure compliance.

Prior Year Audit (FY24):

As noted, the auditor confirmed that all findings from FY24 have been fully resolved.

Management Letter:

The FY25 Management Letter was reviewed and discussed with the Board.

Board Action:

The Board accepted the FY25 Audit Report and Management Letter as presented.

C. Action: FY25 Audit

H. Ridley made a motion to approve the FY25 Audit.

R. Palmer seconded the motion.

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

D. Facility Update

The Executive Director provided operational and facilities updates, noting the following:

- The HVAC system is scheduled to be serviced, and preparations are underway for the exterior and grounds.
- ZEST is currently at capacity and evaluating both short-term and long-term facility solutions to support continued growth.
- Discuss the meeting and portfolio tour with 22 Beacon.
 - The team engaged in facility discussions, maintenance, including the playground area and its impact on enrollment and family experience.

E. Fundraising

The PTSO provided an update on recent and upcoming family engagement and fundraising activities:

- Hosted a successful Spirit Night with over 80 students and families in attendance.
- Activated the OWLfitters Clothing Closet, providing resources and support for students in need.
- Planning an upcoming fundraiser at TopGolf to continue building community engagement and support.
- Preparing for the December Winter Ball.
- Announced a Board-led fundraiser, "The Power of 25 Spirit Week," scheduled for November 10–15.

- ZEST will also be a beneficiary of the Next Step Education Fundraiser, with proceeds from ticket sales supporting the school.

F. FYI: FY25 Financial Provider Back-office Update

ZEST has entered into an agreement with the Back Office Provider to establish a repayment plan addressing outstanding payments.

III. Executive Directors Report

A. SY2025-26

Enrollment and Attendance Update

- The ED shared current enrollment data and trends.
- The school has implemented an attendance incentive raffle, offering students the opportunity to win a bike as part of ongoing efforts to promote consistent attendance.

PTSO Update

- A PTSO (The ZEST Connection) update was shared, highlighting recent and upcoming family engagement and fundraising activities.

B. FYI: FY26 Academic Updates

Academic Update

- The ED shared ZEST Prep's Beginning-of-Year (BOY) academic data in reading and math, noting progress indicators and areas of focus for continued growth.
- An increase in the population of students receiving specialized services.
- Field experiences are being planned and implemented to extend classroom learning beyond the school setting.
- Planning is underway for the 5th Grade Culminating End-of-Year Trip.

C. FYI: Operational Update

Organizational Updates

- **SCSC Monitoring:** ZEST school-based operations are approaching the close of the State Charter Schools Commission (SCSC) monitoring cycle. Updates will be provided upon completion.

Departmental Reports

- Academic: Reviewed current academic performance and instructional updates.

- Operations: Provided updates on facilities, compliance, and student support operations.

Staffing Update

- Staffing projections were shared and reviewed for upcoming needs.
- Staff recruitment efforts include hiring a Wellness Staff Member and a Paraprofessional.

Policy Review

- The Board reviewed and discussed policy updates to ensure alignment with operational and compliance standards.
- A Banking Resolution Policy adjustment is required following audit recommendations to support account structure changes.

IV. Governance Report

A. FYI: Governance Committee Updates

Board Chair Report

- The Board Chair announced that two members, AW and TR, have resigned from the ZEST Prep Board of Directors and are no longer serving in their roles.
- ZEST will begin the board recruitment process to identify and onboard qualified candidates.
- The Board shared updates from the SCSC visit to ZEST.
- The Chair noted the SCSC training in Macon, which board representatives plan to attend for continued governance compliance.

V. Governance Policy Approvals

A. Action: Consent Vote

H. Ridley made a motion to approve the 6 consent policies.

R. Palmer seconded the motion.

Updates with the OCGA verbiage

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

B. Action: Food and Nutrition Policies

R. Palmer made a motion to Meal Charge and Collection Policy.

A. Joiner seconded the motion.

Consisted with the prices as shared

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

H. Ridley made a motion to approve the updates for the Civil Rights Policy.

R. Palmer seconded the motion.

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

H. Ridley made a motion to approve the ZEST Wellness Policy.

R. Palmer seconded the motion.

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

C. Action: Policy Votes

H. Ridley made a motion to approve the policies.

R. Palmer seconded the motion.

An update was made to the Bank Resolution Policy

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

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

H. Ridley made a motion to adjourn the 10/28/2025 board meeting.

R. Palmer seconded the motion.

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

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 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.