APPROVED

ZEST Preparatory Academy Charter School

Minutes

Finance Committee Meeting

Date and Time
Monday October 20, 2025 at 5:00 PM

Location
3130 Golf Ridge Blvd. Douglasville, GA 30135

Committee Members Present
B. Jones, C. James, H. Ridley, R. Palmer

Committee Members Absent
E. Jackson

Ex Officio Members Present
M. Carruthers

Guests Present
Candy Yu, L. McDonald (remote), R. Davis

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

H. Ridley called a meeting of the Finance Committee of ZEST Preparatory Academy Charter School to order on Monday Oct 20, 2025 at 5:10 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

B. Jones made a motion to approve the minutes from Finance Committee Meeting on 09-15-25.
R. Palmer seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

II. Finance

A. Partnerships

Amendment to Agenda
At 5:15 p.m., the agenda was amended to include a discussion with representatives from the Douglas County Chamber regarding membership renewal and funding levels.

Finance Committee Discussion
The Finance Committee reviewed the current tier levels and options for maintaining the existing partnership with the Douglas County Chamber.

Next Steps
The Committee will survey the full Board to gather input and will develop a strategic partnership plan to guide future engagement with the Chamber.

B. FYI: FY25 Audit

Audit Report

The FY25 Audit Report was presented by Avolon Accounting and reviewed by the Finance Committee.

The Committee confirmed that the FY25 audit has been completed and submitted. All financial statements were agreed upon, and there were no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies identified. Additionally, all FY24 findings have been fully resolved and ratified.

Next Steps

ZEST will provide the auditors with a formal response.

The Finance Committee will recommend full approval of the FY25 Audit Report at the next Governance Board meeting and review of the Controls Policy.

C. Financials for FY26 September and October forecast

Financial Review

The Committee reviewed and discussed the FY26 September and October forecast, actuals, and budget performance.

- ZEST will continue to maintain a minimum cash reserve of 30 days to ensure financial stability.

Enrollment and Reporting
Final FTE numbers will be confirmed and provided to the Accounting and Finance Committee for review and reporting purposes.

Performance and Alignment
The Committee reviewed current standings in relation to the SCSC financial performance metrics and discussed operational and financial alignment priorities to support continued compliance and growth.

Program and Contractor Review
The Finance Committee also discussed academic programming and contractor services to ensure alignment with budget priorities and instructional goals.

Expense Review
The Avolon Accounting Team will conduct a detailed expense analysis of the following programs:

- After-School Program
- Field Trips

D. FY26 Enrollment Update

Enrollment and Reporting

Final FTE headcount numbers are being finalized, along with all school programs and allocations. These figures will be provided to the Accounting and Finance Committee for review and inclusion in the financial records.

E. FY26 Staffing & Hiring

FY26 Staffing & Hiring

ZEST Prep discussed Special Education staffing, including the potential contracting of services and filling any remaining open positions for FY26.

F. Food and Nutrition Program

Food and Nutrition Program

The Food and Nutrition Program remains an operational priority and is progressing as planned. The Senior Director of Operations met with the vendor, and the full program rollout is scheduled for November 3.

- Families have received the Eligibility and Determination forms and now have access to the website to complete the eligibility application.

G. Meal Plan Policies

The Meal Plan Policies have been reviewed by the Finance Committee, which will provide feedback and make recommendations to the full Board. This review includes the Wellness Policy, Meal Prices, and the Meal Collection Policy.

H. Administrative Leave Balances

The Committee discussed PTO, vacation, and sick leave balances and is examining current leave policies to ensure clarity, consistency, and compliance with organizational standards.

- Buy-out Balances

I. Financial Obligations

ZEST is in renewal discussions with the health care broker and exploring additional carrier options to ensure benefits remain competitive and support employee retention. ZEST is also considering adjustments to medical benefit contributions and will share updates on dental, vision, and life insurance plans, along with the implementation timeline, once finalized.

ZEST currently contributes across three established tiers:

- Executive Tier
- Management Tier
- Standard Tier

Reviewed and discussed the correspondence regarding the FY25 back office provider.

III. Fundraising

A. ZEST Board of Directors Annual Fundraiser

ZEST Prep will launch Spirit Week, scheduled for November 11–14, as a five-day fundraising initiative encouraging student participation donations.

- The Finance Committee proposed several potential campaign names.
- The goal is to engage 200 participants, with discussions underway to incentivize student participation to boost engagement and contributions.
- Communication will be shared with ZEST stakeholders regarding the fundraiser.

B. Playground Grant

The PTSO is preparing to submit a proposed playground grant, which has been drafted on behalf of the school. The committee was reminded that all grant submissions must be completed in partnership with the school and the Finance Committee. The Executive Director (ED) will collaborate with the PTSO to review and share the proposal for alignment and support.

IV. PTSO Fundraising 2025-2026

A. Meeting

The PTSO is fully active and operational.

- Top Golf fundraising event ticket sales are underway and being promoted to maximize participation.
- Spirit Nights are coming up.
- Winter Ball Dance fundraiser in December
- OWLfitters closet, which is our uniform resell.

V. Facilities

A. Short-Term Facility Planning - FY26

The ZEST external facility team will be visiting ZEST next week to tour the facility.

B. Long-Term Facility Planning - FY27 & Beyond

General information was shared regarding additional funding sources and opportunities related to the school's long-term facility options.

VI. 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 8:17 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.