APPROVED

ZEST Preparatory Academy Charter School

Minutes

Finance Committee Meeting

Date and Time
Monday November 10, 2025 at 5:00 PM

Location
3130 Golf Ridge Blvd. Douglasville, GA 30135

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

Committee Members Absent
E. Jackson, R. Palmer

Ex Officio Members Present
M. Carruthers

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

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 Nov 10, 2025 at 5:28 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

B. Jones made a motion to approve the minutes from Finance Committee Meeting on 10-20-25.
C. James seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

II. Finance

A. FYI: FY25 Audit

- The FY25 audit was submitted to the school's authorizer via the monitoring portal prior to the 10/31 deadline and was also shared directly via email.
- The audit noted one finding related to the collateralization of funds. This matter has since been ratified, and the ZEST team is awaiting confirmation.
    - Documentation confirming the ratification will be provided either through an updated audit submission or via email correspondence as supporting evidence.

All other components of the FY25 audit are in compliance and require no further action at this time.

B. Financials for FY26 October and November forecast

- The Finance Committee is conducting an ongoing review of the CFO's weekly report and cash flow projection (as of 11/10/2025).
- ZEST continues to monitor cash flow and cash on hand to support financial planning and stability.
- The committee also reviewed the invoice identification process and chart of accounts to ensure clarity and consistency.
- Bill payment procedures are under review, along with the Bill.com payment process, which is being evaluated for efficiency and accuracy.
- The school team has incorporated COA on requisitions to strengthen internal controls.
- The committee discussed long-term creditworthiness, ongoing collaboration and alignment between both entities to ensure financial objectives and sustainability.

C. FY26 Enrollment Update

- The FTE numbers submitted were shared with the Finance Committee and the CFO to determine whether a budget amendment may be necessary. In addition, the committee reviewed projected enrollment compared to actual enrollment to date to assess current trends and potential financial impact.
- The committee also discussed student withdrawals.

D.

FY26 Staffing & Hiring

- Staffing remains lean and strategic. The school is working to permanently place all remaining vacancies.
- Additional cleaning support will be added through a contractor effective Wednesday.
- Positions remain on hold pending cash flow projections. Hiring will continue for budgeted or grant-funded roles.
    - An SRO is being considered to assist with traffic and building support.
- The FY27 hiring season begins in December. Contracts will be issued early in the second semester, and hiring finalized by April.
- The specialized services contract is being finalized this week. The school team continues to fill service gaps.
- Awaiting responses from the school's authorizer on the SPED CAP and from GaDOE.

E. Food and Nutrition Program

- Payments from Reduced and Paid families began on November 3, 2025, as expected.
    - The program currently remains in deficit, with ZEST covering Free and Reduced meal costs. However, we have begun receiving ACH payments.
- The transition for families started November 3, and the school team continues to identify and contact families with outstanding balances.
- Meal production is ongoing and being closely managed.
- The Senior Director of Operations recommended the school begin the process to become a School Food Authority (SFA), which will require facility and infrastructure review.

F. Administrative Leave Balances

- School administrators are encouraged to use available leave prior to the policy deadline to avoid loss of accrued time.
    - Scheduling leave during upcoming break periods while balancing workload demands.
- The Finance Committee discussed leave payout procedures and will begin reviewing calculation methods for eligible employees.

III. Fundraising

A. ZEST Board of Directors Annual Fundraiser

- Kicked off the week with our Power of 25 fundraisers, asking different stakeholders to donate throughout the week. The goal is to raise $25,000 to support a playground.

- Next Step Education fundraiser Saturday to bring additional funds back to the school based on ticket sales.

IV. PTSO Fundraising 2025-2026

A. FY-Update

- The PTSO continues to engage families through initiatives such as the OWLfitters Closet, encouraging donations of gently used items, and participation in the recent flash coat sale.
- The Top Golf fundraiser drew over 60 participants and over 1K raised funds.
- Planning and additional marketing efforts are underway for the upcoming Winter SneakerBall on December 13.

V. Facilities

A. Short-Term Facility Planning - FY26

- As planning begins for the FY27 school year, the school is assessing the need for 3–4 additional classroom spaces to accommodate growth and program expansion.

B. Long-Term Facility Planning - FY27 & Beyond

- The committee discussed the re-engagement with economic development partners to explore future opportunities and collaborations and a broker.

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

B. Jones made a motion to adjourn the 11/10/2025 finance meeting.
C. James seconded the motion.
The committee **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 7:21 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
H. Ridley

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.