



# ZEST Preparatory Academy Charter School

## Minutes

### Finance Committee Meeting

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#### Date and Time

Monday December 8, 2025 at 5:00 PM

#### Location

3130 Golf Ridge Blvd. Douglasville, GA 30135

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#### Committee Members Present

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

#### Committee Members Absent

*None*

#### Guests Present

Candy Yu, M. Carruthers, R. Davis

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### 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 Dec 8, 2025 at 5:09 PM.

#### C. Approve Minutes

C. James made a motion to approve the minutes from Finance Committee Meeting on 11-10-25.

R. Palmer seconded the motion.

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

## II. Finance

### A. Financials for FY26 November and December forecast

#### Financial Position

- The month closed in a **surplus**.
- Current budget reflects 30+ days **of cash on hand**.

#### Budget Status

- Committee reviewed financial statement snapshot and budget-to-actuals with the CFO.
- A budget amendment is planned to align with updated state funding and operational priorities.
- FY26 Staffing will remain under review in conjunction with available resources.
- Grant reimbursements are pending.

#### Facilities & Financing

- Committee is evaluating opportunities for facility cost savings where appropriate.

#### Debt Position & Long-Range Planning

- Debt metrics are being monitored against authorizer sustainability benchmarks.
- A financial projection exercise is in development to support planning for upcoming fiscal years.

#### Procurement & Vendor Review

- All vendor contracts will undergo routine evaluation to ensure alignment with financial goals and efficiency standards.

### B. FY26 Budget Amendment and Timeline

The Finance Committee discussed the FY26 budget amendment planning schedule and key milestones to ensure alignment with enrollment, funding projections, and operational priorities.

### C. FY26 Enrollment Update

The Board reviewed the 6-month FY26 enrollment report and discussed strategies to maximize enrollment in alignment with updated QBE funding.

- Ensuring the staffing model supports any anticipated FY26 funding adjustment
- Evaluating enrollment growth strategies to optimize FTE impact

Next Steps:

The Board will continue to monitor enrollment trends closely and review staffing alignment as part of the FY26 amended budget process and FY27 enrollment projections.

#### **D. FY26 Staffing & Hiring**

The Committee discussed the current staffing structure while ensuring appropriate support for student services and operational priorities.

#### **E. FY27 Staffing Projections**

The Board discussed priorities for the CFO to incorporate into the **FY27 planning framework**. Key areas of focus include:

- Academic programming.
- Mental health and counseling support.
- Expansion of exploratory and enrichment classes.
- Facility Capacity

#### **F. Administrative Leave Balances**

The Committee discussed administrative leave practices and balances.

- The Committee will consider a draft payout policy to recommend to the full board.

#### **G. TRS Balances and Reconciliation**

The CFO will complete the end-of-year review of the TRS **balance** and provide the Finance Committee with the update.

#### **H. Benefits Reconciliation**

A meeting will be scheduled with the benefits broker to review contribution structures and end-of-year review.

#### **I. Food and Nutrition Program**

- The Food & Nutrition program is currently operating at a deficit due to a higher percentage of students qualifying for free meals.
- The Finance Committee reviewed expenses vs. reimbursement levels.
  - Discussed strategies to improve participation in the paid and reduced categories.

CFO Recommendation:

- Continue monitoring monthly financial performance and cost efficiencies
- Address impacts in the FY26 budget amendment

Senior Director of Operations recommended the school move forward in the SFA approval process.

### III. Fundraising

#### A. ZEST Board of Directors and School Fundraising

The Committee will continue exploring **unrestricted grant opportunities** and external **funding networks**.

### IV. Facilities

#### A. Short-Term Facility Planning - FY26

The Finance Committee is exploring potential facility partners to discuss short partnership options.

#### B. Long-Term Facility Planning - FY27 & Beyond

The Finance Committee is exploring potential facility partners to discuss both short- and long-term partnership options.

### V. Closing Items

#### A. Adjourn Meeting

B. Jones made a motion to adjourn the 12/8/2026 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 7:27 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
R. Davis

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*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.*