APPROVED

ZEST Preparatory Academy Charter School

Minutes

Finance Committee Meeting

Date and Time
Monday December 8, 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
None

Ex Officio Members Present
M. Carruthers

Guests Present
Candy Yu, 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 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 Reconcilation

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

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.