



## ZEST Preparatory Academy Charter School

### Minutes

#### ZEST Preparatory Academy Governance Board Meeting

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**Date and Time**

Monday September 29, 2025 at 6:30 PM

**Location**

3130 Golf Ridge Blvd. Douglasville, GA 30135

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**Directors Present**

A. Joiner, A. Olugbala, E. Jackson, H. Ridley, R. Palmer, S. Rankin

**Directors Absent**

A. Williams, B. Jones, D. Randolph

**Ex Officio Members Present**

M. Carruthers

**Non Voting Members Present**

M. Carruthers

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**I. Opening Items****A. Record Attendance****B. Call the Meeting to Order**

R. Palmer called a meeting of the board of directors of ZEST Preparatory Academy Charter School to order on Monday Sep 29, 2025 at 6:40 PM.

**C. Approve Minutes**

E. Jackson made a motion to approve the minutes from 9/23/2025 ZEST Preparatory Academy Governance Board Meeting on 09-23-25.

H. Ridley seconded the motion.

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

**D. Review & Approve Agenda**

E. Agenda approved. Motion made by H. Ridley. Seconded by S.Ranking

**E. Mission and Vision**

Mission and Vision read by R.Palmer

**F. Public Comment**

No public comment

**II. Executive Directors Report**

**A. SY2025-26**

Enrollment total 247. Decrease from the BOY, but programming will support FTE count. ZEST is enrolling students from the waitlist.

The staff has heard concerns with a few areas inclusive of the lack of a playground, a request for additional programmatic features including more extra curriculars, and families wanted their 4th and 5th graders to remain in the same school through 8th grade.

**Staff Attendance :**

- August- Staff attendance was strong in August with more than 95% of staff reporting daily.

**Student Attendance**

- August 96% attendance rate
- September attendance rate saw an increase in absences and tardies.

- Implementing incentives for classes and individual students to address attendance and tardiness.

**PSTO-** established and began planning for the year.

## **B. FYI: FY26 Academic Updates**

### **Updates on BOY Assessments**

- The school saw academic gains in Math & ELA based upon the NWEA MAP Assessment. Students in Kindergarten-3rd grade demonstrated a strong start to the academic year. There is room for improvement for 4th and 5th grade.
- Data dive into Matriculated and Legacy students' scores.
- Consideration for students who have special accommodations.
- Increase in serving students with special education needs

### **Specialized Service Update**

- Gifted students
- Other exceptional programs

### **Field Experiences**

- The school request permission to establish an annual 5th grade class trip to culminate the school year. The admin will work with families and the PTSO to plan a trip and present it to the Board for final approval.

## **C. FYI: Operational Update**

### **SCCS Monitoring**

- Opened 9/16/2025, Closes 10/31/2025
- Need to have in the portal by 10/24/2025
  - Required Academic, Operations, and Financial tasks
- The Executive Director and Senior Director of Operations have started compiling documents to upload into the monitoring portal.

### **Staffing Projections**

- The school is preparing to hire additional academic and operational roles to support the school's needs. Roles include special education para professionals, a business manager, additional custodial staff, and a school social worker. The admin team is working with the CFO regarding timing to align with cash flow projections.

### **Policy Updates**

**The school will begin to charge for meals following the adoption of updated policies.**

- Nutrition Policies
  - Meal Charge Policy
  - Civil Rights Policy
  - Wellness Policy
- The administrative team is updating policies per the monitoring handbook.
- LUA Policies
  - Title IX Policy
  - Update the FMLA Policy
  - Insurance Policy
  - Monitoring

### **III. Governance Report**

#### **A. FYI: Governance Committee Updates**

State Charter visit October 1, 2025-October 2, 2025

- 10/1 ZEST will host SCSC Commissioners and Staff
- 10/2 Facility walk-through monitoring visit with SCSC staff

Board candidate CJAMES shared her background with the Board and answered questions based upon her experiences as a finance professional.

#### **B. Action: Board Recruitment**

E. Jackson made a motion to Accept Ms. James as a new member of the ZEST Preparatory Academy Governance Board.

H. Ridley seconded the motion.

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

#### **C. Action: Food and Nutrition Policies**

E. Jackson made a motion to Approve the Meal Charge Policy.

H. Ridley seconded the motion.

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

E. Jackson made a motion to Approve the Civil Rights policy.

S. Rankin seconded the motion.

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

E. Jackson made a motion to Approve the wellness policy.

H. Ridley seconded the motion.

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

#### **D. Vote — School-based Field Experience**

E. Jackson made a motion to Approve the planning for a 5th grade class trip.  
H. Ridley seconded the motion.  
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

#### **IV. Finance Report**

##### **A. FYI: August & September Financials**

Reported by M. Carruthers in lieu of H. Ridley due to illness.

August Financials & September/October Forecast. The Executive Director shared the finance report as prepared by the CFO, Candy Yu. The report included, days cash on hand, budget to actuals, CPF Reporting, the General Ledger, and the aging report.

The Board discussed timing the aging report against cash on hand.

The board discussed fundraising opportunities and the SCSC give-back grant.

##### **B. FY25 Audit**

###### **FY25 Audit Update**

- FY25 audit is currently on track for an on time submission. The administrative team is working with the auditing firm to finalize any additional items requested to include cash collateralization, monthly statements and invoices from 22Beacon, and additional invoices from EdTec services.
- The administrative team will meet with the auditor on 9/30/2025.

##### **C. Facility Update**

**Building Maintenance:** The school is actively working on ensuring the HVAC system is updated.

**Facility:** The Board has met with Douglas County Economic Development to explore additional facility options to support the school's growth over time. The school is also exploring options for renovations to add additional classrooms for the 2026-2027 school year.

ZEST is current on all facility payments to 22Beacon.

##### **D. Fundraising**

The Board of Directors is actively planning fundraisers to support the school to include ZEST Week: 11/11/2025-11/14/2025. This week will include a concerted effort to raise funds in partnership with ZEST Prep families and stakeholders. The week will culminate

with the Next Step Education Scholarship Gala on 11/15/2025. ZEST Prep is a beneficiary of the Gala and will receive donations based upon the tickets sold.

**The PSTO is actively fundraising to support student experiences and a playground.**

- Top Golf Fundraiser (Midtown, Atlanta) 11/2
- Spirit Nights
- Double Good & Similar Fundraisers

## **V. 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 8:33 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
R. Palmer

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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.*