

APPROVED



Explorations Charter School

Minutes

Governing Board Regular Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday April 22, 2025 at 5:30 PM

Location

Governing Board Meeting

Tuesday, April 22 · 5:30 – 6:30pm

Time zone: America/New_York

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/avi-njbd-zth>

Or dial: (US) +1 631-709-2117 PIN: 607 007 588#

More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/avi-njbd-zth?pin=9357244656890>

Directors Present

Bryan Raydenbow (remote), Ginni Block (remote), Greg Skinner (remote), Hilary Paden (remote), Kali Blakeslee (remote), Lori Noto (remote), Robert Peterson (remote), Sarah Annis Haynes (remote)

Directors Absent

Julie Luby

Guests Present

Jill Johnson (remote), Joe White (remote), Susan O'Rourke (remote)

I. Opening Items

A.

Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Robert Peterson called a meeting of the board of directors of Explorations Charter School to order on Tuesday Apr 22, 2025 at 5:32 PM.

C. Approve Minutes - 03/18/2025

Ginni Block made a motion to approve the minutes from Governing Board Regular Meeting on 03-18-25.

Sarah Annis Haynes seconded the motion.

Bob Peterson marked present and votes recorded erroneously - Kali to correct that.

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

II. Financial

A. March Monthly Report

- Susan O'Rourke explained the report.
- The grant section of income reflects an error (SRSA).
- Not too much to discuss on the expense items.
- Student transportation income TBD.

Robert Peterson made a motion to Accept the March report.

Lori Noto seconded the motion.

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

B. ERTC Update

- Ginni Block updated re: John Larson's office communication.
- IRS communication expected ASAP.
- Payment by check expected ASAP.

III. Action Items

A. Healthy Food Certification Participation

Ginni Block made a motion to Approve the Healthy Food Certification Participation.

Robert Peterson seconded the motion.

Motion: Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Explorations Governing Board certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias,

culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

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

B. HFC Food and Beverage Exemptions

Ginni Block made a motion to Approve the Healthy Food Certification Food and Beverage Exemptions.

Bryan Raydenbow seconded the motion.

Motion: The Explorations Governing Board will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The "regular school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. "Location" means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales.

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

IV. Committee Reports

A. Policy Committee

No updates.

B. Finance Committee

Ginni Block provided an update.

- Finances from CTSDE uncertain.
- Vote forthcoming in May.
- Grant funding unknown
- Title I and Title II are the "consolidated grant" based on poverty density in school and town of Winchester.
- SRSA grant = Small Rural School Association and includes Rural Education Assistance Program (REAP) grant.

C. CEO Support & Evaluation Committee

Lori Noto provided an update.

- Evaluations on BoardOnTrack
- Parent Survey and Parent Survey results sent.

- Last day of school, June 11 - date to send surveys TBD.

D. Personnel Committee

Sarah Haynes provided an update.

- Employee handbook posted in March.
- Board to review and provide feedback by Monday, May 5 before sending to Mark the attorney.
- Board vote in May.

V. School News

A. General Updates

Jill Johnson provided an update.

- 74 students
- 19 seniors graduating
- 38 openings for next year
- 28-29 applications submitted for 2025 -2026 school year
- Confident we will be at capacity for next year

Attendance:

- 48.6% of students are chronically absent
- Work is done daily by multiple staff members to reduce that rate.
- 74% of ECS students are considered high needs by the State data.

Charter School Renewal:

- Meeting 4/23 with State.
- Presentation from Joe, Jill, Sarah

B. School Climate Survey

Jill provided an update.

- Focus groups update and results.
- Staff focus groups forthcoming.

C. Upcoming Events & Teacher Report

Greg Skinner provided an update:

- Adventure Program update.
- Choice of activities.
- Information and communication improvements

- Collaboration/partnerships with The Wilderness School and Outside Perspectives (New Hartford).
- High student interest and engagement.
- A comprehensive policy and program manual is in the works.
- Transportation a consideration for future discussion.

Kali Blakeslee provided an update:

- Senior Fundraiser on April 3 was a big success.
- Prom May 30.
- SNAP fundraiser ongoing.
- Paid and unpaid internship program update.
- Tarringford School Grade 3/Grade 11-12 historical fiction mentor project on April 11 was a wonderful experience.
- Friday Program update.
- School lunch improvement discussion.
- Student council in the works ("Expo Advo").

Lori Noto:

- Update on communication from Eleanor Carbone's office.

D. Discussion of Student Representative to Governing Board

Confirmation of student representative to the board.

Vote May meeting.

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 6:48 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kali Blakeslee