

APPROVED



# Explorations Charter School

## Minutes

### Board Retreat

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#### Date and Time

Saturday January 24, 2026 at 9:00 AM

#### Location

LARC Building  
314 Main Street  
Torrington, CT 06790

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#### Directors Present

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

#### Directors Absent

Bryan Raydenbow, Greg Skinner, Julie Luby

#### Guests Present

Jill Johnson, Joe White, Marc Pruchnicki, Marc Pruchnicki

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### I. Opening Items

#### A. Record Attendance

#### B. Call the Meeting to Order

Sarah Annis Haynes called a meeting of the board of directors of Explorations Charter School to order on Saturday Jan 24, 2026 at 9:10 AM.

### C. Greetings / personal news / Breakfast

9:10 - 9:30

Bob, Jill, Kali, Joe, Ginny, Hilary, Sarah, Lori shared greetings and personal and professional updates and expressed gratitude for support this year.

Goals for the day:

- Be productive
- Stay on task
- Brainstorming
- Future planning

## II. Appointment of New Board Member

### A. Marc Pruchnicki, Torrington/Winsted Youth Service Bureau

Introduction of potential board member

Procedural review

Explanation of board meeting calendar, etcetera

Questions? (none)

Current board member introductions

Ginni Block made a motion to Appoint Marc Pruchnicki as voting member of the ECS Board of Directors.

Hilary Paden seconded the motion.

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

## III. Discussion

### A. Climate Survey

Climate Survey Summary (June 2025, Student data review):

- Generally, positive results.
- Points to consider.
- School choices versus student behavior choices.
- "Healthy Fridays"
- Google Classroom add-on.

Survey results debriefing (discussions, circles):

- Define terms.
- Write or speak ideas.
- Perception...define terms.

Climate Survey Summary (June 2025, Parent data review):

- Generally positive.

Staff:

- Student discipline.
- Feedback channels.
- Student decision-making processes.

Considerations:

- Sample size.
- Individuals' perceptions of situations.
- SEL curriculum opportunities for metacognition.

15 minutes allotted (9:21 - 9:52)

## **B. Discussion of 2024-2025 & Preliminary 2025-2026 Data**

Chronic Absenteeism data:

- 48.6% (as of 12/31)
- Trending downward from 2023, 2024
- Data is statistically insignificant
- Hospitalized students (7)

Discipline:

- Table until February meeting.

Academic:

- Table until February meeting.

Current enrollment & next year projections:

- 77 students
- 3 new students started this week
- 1 new student starting next week

Next year projections:

- Current: 64 students

30 minutes allotted (9:52 - 10:26)

## **C.**

## **Marketing**

### Discussion

- Inviting TPS student services director to a meeting to discuss the strength of our program
- Connecting with Special Ed directors from sending districts
- Region 10 relationship
- Getting to capacity
- Referral incentive, commission per pupil
- How to meet enrollment criteria for next year?
- Reputation re-haul?
- Messaging aligned
- Marketing strategy

15 minutes allotted (10:27 - 10:48)

## **D. General School**

### Discussion

- Portrait of a Graduate
- Program re-invigoration
- Satellite office - Youth Service Bureau
- Freshman Academy
- Portrait of a Student
- Strengths
- Traditions
- Alternative Schedules
- Online Pilot Program
- Flow Charts
- "Explorations: Find your path."
- Where is there a gap that our students can fill?
- How can we build community relationships?

30 minutes allotted (10:48 - 11:22)

5 minute break (11:24 - 11:29)

## **E. Site Visit Report**

Tabled.

## **IV. Committee Updates**

### **A.**

## **Policy**

### Discussion

- Cell phone discussion.
- Staff conversations.
- Discipline.
- What works well, what do we appreciate.

## **B. Finance**

### Finance Committee

- Discussion of recent Finance Committee Meeting & Budget
- Discussion of Grant Opportunities
- Brainstorm funding opportunities
- Long term plan
- CD?
- Cutting back staff
- Furlough days
- ERTC?
- Fundraiser?
- Open House in March
- Strengthen CCA program
- Letters of recommendation
- Grant writing
- Fundraising
- Long term financial picture
- Strategic planning
- Alumni network
- Signature fundraiser - Art Show
- Revenue streams
- Energy efficiency audit
- Re-negotiate contracts

## **C. CEO Support & Evaluation**

### Discussion

- Succession Plan: Jill started a draft, she will continue working on it. Emergency plan, contingency plan, retirement plan.
- Executive Director Evaluation Plan: See attached.
- Executive Director Job Description: Working draft from 2015

## **D. Personnel**

## Discussion

- Employee Handbook finalized, send to lawyer for review on Tuesday. 1/28
- Staff Review/Evaluation
- Updating contract to be more specific

## V. Closing Items

### A. Adjourn Meeting

Sarah Annis Haynes made a motion to Adjourn meeting.

Lori Noto seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously 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 2:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kali Blakeslee

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## Documents used during the meeting

*None*

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## To do list:

1. Joe sent out the Thought Exchange surveys (check emails, it is available via Google Drive).
2. Kali - Google calendar task lists.
3. Board members' emails and phone numbers.
4. Make a list of questions about education laws, legislative intent and meet with CT legislators to let them know the issues (parochial schools)
5. Investigate avenues to make logical changes and save the government money
6. Jill: email board attorney re: legality of targeted marketing
7. Send information on connections to Joe and Kali.
8. Lisa Frances - connection to Hilary
9. Script - phone calls
10. Kali - Thank you note to LARC
11. Jill - Employee Handbook to attorney on Tuesday