APPROVED

Excel Academy Massachusetts

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday June 13, 2024 at 8:30 AM

Location
Microsoft Teams
Join the meeting now
Meeting ID: 290 282 749 148
Passcode: H67VWX

Meeting Notice Posted Publicly: 6/11/24

Please note: All items listed on the agenda are subject to a possible vote by the Board of Trustees.

Trustees Present
C. Brumme (remote), D. Petersmeyer Johnson (remote), D. Sachs (remote), D. Stolow (remote), M. Colaylat (remote), P. Klein (remote), R. Lytle (remote)

Trustees Absent
B. Rodriguez, N. Castro, S. Zrike, T. Griffith Walker

Guests Present
A. Kaynor (remote), A. Solomon (remote), A. Stelson (remote), N. Keough (remote), O. Stearns (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

C. Brumme called a meeting of the board of trustees of Excel Academy Massachusetts to order on Thursday Jun 13, 2024 at 8:33 AM.

C. Public Comment

No members of the public provided public comments.

D. Approve Minutes for 5.3.24 Board Meeting

D. Sachs made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 05-03-24.
D. Stolow seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Academic Oversight

A. Approve XLEB Head of School Hiring Recommendation

D. Stolow made a motion to approve the XLEB Head of School hiring recommendation (Sarah Kantrowitz) and to authorize the Chair to notify DESE of changes in leadership at the XLC and XLEB campuses.
D. Petersmeyer Johnson seconded the motion.
N. Keough and D. Sachs provided a summary of the interview process and recommendation for the hiring of Sarah Kantrowitz as the Excel Academy East Boston Head of School (HOS).

N. Keough summarized the two HOS hiring protocols, one regular protocol and one for internal candidates who are currently serving as interim heads of school. The hiring team conducted a rigorous search. N. Keough and D. Sachs reflected that Sarah Kantrowitz is a model for excellence, humility, and self awareness, which she demonstrated consistently throughout the process. D. Sachs presented the hiring recommendation and added that, in addition to her extensive experience in education and at Excel, Kantrowitz has a stated desire to increase partnership and participation with our families and will be able to execute on this vision, with support and coaching from the Network Academic Team.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. State of the School/NAT Update & Report from Academic Oversight Committee

N. Keough provided additional context about the supports and coaching that the Heads of School and administrators have at each campus. The team feels very good about the strength of leadership at each campus for next school year and the structure for supporting them at the network level.

D. Sachs noted one clarifying question. We have a robust process for 360 feedback of internal candidates, and D. Sachs was curious how we accomplish this or something similar with external candidates. N. Keough added that we attempt to replicate a similar experience for external candidates through the interview process of being immersed in the job in as real a way as possible and receiving extensive feedback and seeing how the candidates respond to the feedback. As an example, the candidate observers teachers and then leads a coaching meeting with the teachers and then receives feedback on their coaching. We also do a structured group interview process with the same people for each candidate, and it includes a role play of something we value. Then the group provides feedback. Then they do the role play again to demonstrate how they apply the feedback.

N. Keough provided a summary of how our Academic Oversight Committee structure has worked so far this year. Our June meeting looked a bit different from other Committee meetings this year, because there is relatively little new data at this point in the year. We are also in a place of looking ahead to next year. The Committee reviewed available quarterly data and then focused primarily on looking ahead to our priorities for next school year to set up the year for success. In the fall, we will do another deep data review of all of this year's academic data once it is available.

N. Keough presented a summary update on the successes and challenges leading up to this point and our priorities for next year, which are included in a document that was provided to the Board in advance and reviewed and workshopped by the Academic Oversight Committee. Our top priority for next year is Foundational Clarity on Excel's vision for excellent teaching.

N. Keough and A. Kaynor thanked the Academic Oversight Committee for engaging in a detailed review of the priorities framework on 6/10/24 and noted that this will be an ongoing process.

C. Brumme thanked N. Keough for the excellent level of work and thoughtfulness that went into the priorities framework and asked for more context around the goal for how the document will be used and lived at the school level and the problem we're solving. N. Keough clarified that our talent circumstance has changed, as we are no longer operating in an environment where most of our new teachers are experienced as teachers. N. Keough added that we have invested deeply in strong systems to coach and support new teachers in light of this shift in talent to grow teachers more quickly by (1) being very clear about our foundation and priorities and (2) by supporting leaders with the systems and resources to coach them successfully. N. Keough also clarified that each campus is developing a tailored version of how they are living the priorities. For example, a campus

with more needs around student culture will emphasize this aspect of the priority framework more than a campus that already has a strong culture basis and instead wants to focus more on an academic performance improvement goal.

C. Vote to Authorize Chair to Approve HOS Evaluations

D. Stolow made a motion to approve authorizing the Chair to approve annual Head of School evaluations.
R. Lytle seconded the motion.
A. Kaynor summarized that the Chair is meeting with the leadership team on a biweekly basis and is best positioned to hold an end-of-year evaluation review meeting and approve the HOS evaluations each year.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

III. Finance

A. Approve FY25 Budget

A. Stelson and A. Solomon presented a summary version of the FY25 budget memo that was provided to the Board in advance and which was approved and recommended by the Finance Committee in April. A. Stelson summarized key priorities related to Staff Compensation, High Quality Curriculum, and Debt Repayment. A. Solomon added that we are also investing in leadership coaching and support this year, as described in detail in the Academic Update presentation. A. Stelson noted that our cash flow is declining modestly from FY25 to FY25 due to ESSER funds ending and a decline in Boston Above Foundation funding. We are in a strong position in terms of student enrollment with a waitlist of about 300 students. A. Stelson noted that our expenses are increasing by only 1.2% (less than inflation). We are investing in compensation and curriculum. We are expecting to spend less on Capex next year, after some large investments this year, and the school's CMO fee is reducing from 13% to 12.5% per our agreement and fee schedule.

C. Brumme noted that the presentation was very clear and well presented and thanked the Finance Team.

A. Solomon presented a summary of our operating cash flow by entity for Excel through FY34. R. Lytle asked about the risk of Boston Above Foundation funding declining and commented that a short-term impact is materializing broadly in the sector, as schools readjust to the end of ESSER funding. A. Stelson noted that the sector overall is paying close attention to potential longer-term shifts.

D. Stolow noted that the presentation today is outstanding and effective at presenting a very large amount of information in a clear and concise way. D. Stolow noted that the MA school is planning to stay stable and that there may come times in the future when we need to make tough choices if things do not go to plan, as we will be operating with a

tighter margin than we are used to doing in recent years, but that we feel this is the right choice to make critical investments in compensation and curriculum for the benefit of the schools and students and our competitiveness in the talent market. C. Brumme thanked the groups for the multi-year initiative to invest in building and strengthening inter-entity relationships at Excel among the three Boards and shared frameworks for decision-making and priorities to benefit the families we serve.
R. Lytle made a motion to approve the FY25 Budget, per the Finance Committee's recommendation on April 26, 2024.
D. Sachs seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

IV. Governance

A. Governance & Nominating Committee Update

P. Klein provided updates from the Governance & Nominating Committee. P. Klein thanked D. Sachs, M. Colaylat, and A. Kaynor for their work to revitalize our onboarding materials for new members.

P. Klein noted that we are in a strong place in terms of current membership but need to do more work to develop our future Board membership pipeline. To support this work, we will be working as a Committee to more fully implement BoardOnTrack and do a rigorous analysis of Board composition and pipeline needs. We will be asking each Board member to complete a skills survey that will inform the Committee's recommendations to the Board.

B. Approve FY25 Officers, Terms, Calendar, and Committee Assignments

D. Sachs made a motion to approve FY25 Officers, Terms, Calendar, and Committee Assignments as presented.
C. Brumme seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
A. Kaynor summarized the FY25 Officer, Term, Calendar, and Committee Assignments as provided to the Board in advance and noted only one update, that M. Colaylat is interested in participating in the Inter-Board Governance Working Group as well.

C. Approve Student Opportunity Act Plan

R. Lytle made a motion to approve the Student Opportunity Act Plan as presented.
C. Brumme seconded the motion.
A. Kaynor summarized the SOA Plan which was provided to the Board in advance for review.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Authorize Chair to approve Annual Report & Manual and Handbook updates

D. Stolow made a motion to authorize the Chair to finalize and submit the school's annual report and to approve updates to school manuals and handbooks over the summer.
D. Sachs seconded the motion.
The staff committed to sharing an update with the Board in the fall on the school's manuals and handbooks and any substantive changes.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

E. Reminder: Annual Ethics Disclosures

A. Kaynor noted that DESE informed us that there is a delay relative to the expecting timeframe for releasing disclosure paperwork to Board members, but that the paperwork would likely be distributed any day now. A. Kaynor asked the Board to complete their paperwork as quickly as possible once it is released.

V. CEO Update

A. CEO Update

O. Stearns summarized reflections on our four MA graduation ceremonies. We have our first Division 1 scholarship athlete, and our graduates have received more than $3M total in scholarship funding.

O. Stearns thanked everyone for making time for our 1:1 check-in meetings.

O. Stearns kept the Board up-to-date on our ongoing Rhode Island real estate search.

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

D. Sachs made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
R. Lytle 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 9:56 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
C. Brumme

Documents used during the meeting

- Excel Academy Head of School Core Competencies.xlsx - Google Sheets.pdf
- Interim Head of School Hiring Process.docx June 2024.pdf
- Kantrowitzresume_2023.pdf

- XLEB - HOS Hiring Recommendation - 6.8.24.pdf
- Excel Academy Consolidated FY25 Budget Package - Final.pdf
- Excel SOA Application - 6.13.24.pdf
- XLMA Board Committee Overview.pdf
- Board Protocol for HOS Oversight - SY23-24.pdf
- XLMA FY25 Board Calendar.pdf

The public is welcome to attend any meeting of the Board of Trustees or its subcommittees. If communication assistance (readers/ interpreters/captions) or any other accommodations are needed to ensure equal participation, please contact Arthur Kaynor at 781.526.6927 at least two (2) business days prior to the meeting. Any changes in the agenda will be posted on Excel Academy Charter School's website, Excel's principal place of business, and will be electronically filed with the Secretary of State at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting. If you would like to attend a Board meeting and provide public comment, please sign up 48 hours in advance here: https://forms.gle/7315BJ7v1bHGGh2Q9.

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