

APPROVED



Excel Academy Massachusetts

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time

Friday March 28, 2025 at 8:30 AM

Location

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 259 446 867 848

Passcode: FFtgZr

Meeting Notice Posted Publicly: 3/25/25

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

Trustees Present

B. Rodriguez (remote), C. Brumme (remote), D. Petersmeyer Johnson (remote), D. Sachs (remote), D. Stolorow (remote), M. Colaylat (remote), P. Klein (remote), R. Lytle (remote), T. Griffith Walker (remote)

Trustees Absent

N. Castro, S. Zrike

Guests Present

A. Kaynor (remote), F. Reyes (remote), N. Keough (remote), O. Stearns (remote), S. Patton (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 Friday Mar 28, 2025 at 8:32 AM.

C. Public Comment

N/A - no members of the public provided comments at this meeting.

D. Approve prior Board Meeting minutes

D. Sachs made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 02-07-25.

D. Petersmeyer Johnson seconded the motion.

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

II. Academic Oversight

A. Vote on proposal regarding local competency determinations and graduation requirements

N. Keough, F. Reyes, S. Patton, and members of the Academic Oversight Committee presented a proposal to update local competency determinations and add the MCAS to Excel's graduation requirements.

N. Keough presented a summary of the proposal for graduation requirements and competency determination that was provided to the Board in advance and is detailed in the Academic Update Slides and enclosed proposal document.

R. Lytle asked a clarifying question on the data, which N. Keough confirmed, that 89% of families approve of the MCAS being used as a local graduation requirement.

R. Lytle asked a clarifying question to understand the specifics of the proposal, and N. Keough confirmed that, before the November ballot initiative, MCAS was the competency determination and coursework was the graduation requirement.

C. Brumme asked a clarifying question regarding alternate structures that peers are considering, which N. Keough provided. We are aware of more complex structures that some peers are adopting (for example, with levels of diplomas based on achievement), and the team has opted to propose a more straightforward structure for Excel.

C. Brumme made a motion to approve the following: (1) the Academic Committee's recommendation to define the local competency determinations to meet 10th grade

standards; (2) the Academic Committee's recommendation to add the MCAS as a graduation requirement, with a minimum score of 469 for ELA and Math and 470 for Biology; and (3) the creation of a faculty working group to develop an alternative graduation pathway, which the Board will consider for approval in its June meeting.

R. Lytle seconded the motion.

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

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

N. Keough provided a summary of the academic update slides and latest quarterly board data dashboard report, with the following highlights:

- Our academic performance is largely on track to meet our goals, with some specific bright spots and some continued areas of concern.
 - Bright spots include HS MCAS-course performance and MS ELA proficiency.
 - Areas of concern include 5th grade Math and performance of the most struggling students.
- Our stability measures (attendance, discipline) are improved from last year and we are optimistic we will reach our goals (or get quite close).
- Staff retention is improved, and our team is aligned with the overall direction of the organization, but we need to address gaps in leader development and leading through change.
- Our top focuses for the spring are responding to our student academic data (particularly for priority courses) and leveraging the planning process for next year to engage our teams and demonstrate our learning and growth based on feedback.

C. Brumme asked for additional context regarding gaps in leader development, and N. Keough provided additional information about the robust 360 feedback process that every staff member participates in and the follow-up coaching that occurs based on 360 feedback. N. Keough added that there are sometimes gaps in communication when leaders are doing the work to follow up on feedback but not always communicating about it consistently enough.

D. Sachs thanked the team for leading so effectively through an incredibly challenging time.

R. Lytle noted appreciation of the depth of data and understanding of where we were with our discipline data and the path we have taken in growth and post-pandemic recovery.

C. Brumme noted that challenges we are seeing are common across the sector and expressed gratitude that our team is consistently doing such thoughtful work and seeing real progress.

III. Finance

A. FY26 Budget Process Update

A. Kaynor updated the Board that the Finance Committee will be meeting on April 11th, 10-11am via Microsoft Teams to review a draft budget for FY26 (School Year 25-26). Non-Committee Board members are welcome to participate each year in the school's budget planning process. Please reach out to A. Kaynor if you would like to be invited to attend the Finance Committee meeting and/or would like to meet with a member of the Finance Team to learn more about the budget. Following the Finance Committee meeting, a budget proposal memo will be circulated to Excel's three Boards in advance of their May and June meetings when each Board will vote to approve its respective budget for FY26.

O. Stearns provided an update on the impacts the schools are experiencing as a result of federal disruptions and the contingency planning that is underway to plan for possible impacts on federal funding.

D. Stolow asked a clarifying question about the fungibility of funds that could be impacted by major federal impacts, which O. Stearns provided. O Stearns and A. Kaynor noted that we will revisit this topic in the upcoming 4.11.25 Finance Committee meeting and are engaged in strategic risk management planning and welcomed non-Committee Board members to join that conversation.

IV. Governance

A. FY25 Goals Progress Update

A. Kaynor and O. Stearns presented a progress report on FY25 goals and then led a deeper discussion of specific goals related to fundraising, Board engagement, and Board recruitment.

B. Update on Board Recruitment & Succession Planning

The Governance & Nominating Committee and staff reported on efforts to vet candidates in the pipeline for known/anticipated vacancies over the next couple years and asked all Board members to provide 2-3 names to help refresh the pipeline as we continue to vet candidates.

A. Kaynor will send out a summary of recruitment needs and will also schedule end-of-year 1:1 check-ins with each Board member in advance of the annual meeting in June to confirm terms, roles, and committee assignments for next year and to check in on fundraising and engagement goals.

V. Other Business

A. Reminder about upcoming events & engagement goals

A. Kaynor provided an overview of upcoming opportunities to visit the school and encouraged Board members to attend Signing Day Ceremony and Graduation and to bring guests.

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

C. Brumme made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

D. Stolorow 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 9:32 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

C. Brumme

List of documents used in the meeting:

- Agenda
- Prior minutes
- Academic update slides
- Academic data dashboard
- Proposal re: competency determination and graduation requirements
- FY25 goals progress report

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 akaynor@excelacademy.org 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>.

Excel Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race or color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, country of ancestral origin, or veteran status in administration of its admissions or educational policies, curricular programs, other school-administered programs, or in its hiring and employment practices in accordance with applicable federal, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island laws and regulations.