APPROVED

# Excel Academy Massachusetts

# Minutes

## Board of Trustees - Academic Oversight Committee Meeting

**Date and Time**
Monday September 29, 2025 at 1:30 PM

**Location**
**Microsoft Teams** Need help?
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Meeting ID: 266 382 352 221 9
Passcode: JG2xT2sZ

Meeting Notice Posted Publicly on 9/17/25.

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

**Committee Members Present**
B. Rodriguez (remote), S. Zrike (remote), T. Griffith Walker (remote)

**Committee Members Absent**
*None*

**Guests Present**
A. Kaynor (remote), F. Reyes (remote), N. Keough (remote), O. Stearns (remote), S. Patton (remote), Shirley Verónica Cardona (Friends of Excel Board representative) (remote), Tim Weller (Friends of Excel Board representative) (remote)

## I. Opening Items

### A. Record Attendance

### B. Call the Meeting to Order

S. Zrike called a meeting of the Academic Oversight Committee of Excel Academy Massachusetts to order on Monday Sep 29, 2025 at 1:32 PM.

### C. Public Comment

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

### D. Approve Minutes for prior Academic Oversight Committee Meeting

S. Zrike made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees - Academic Oversight Committee Meeting on 06-09-25.
T. Griffith Walker seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

## II. Academic Oversight

### A. Update on State of the Schools, Academic Data, and Priorities

N. Keough welcomed the Committee and reminded the Committee that this meeting is the most data-centric as we will be reviewing SY24-25 results that were unembargoed earlier this morning. The detailed SY24-25 academic data was provided to the Committee via the Quarterly Board Data Dashboard and is summarized in the Academic Update Slides.

The Academic Team shared a summary of results including the following highlights:

- **Achievement:** Excel was one of only 13 districts whose students last year met or exceeded pre-COVID results in both ELA and Math.
- **Growth:** Excel's middle school program was #1 in ELA growth and #5 in Math growth in the state and the high school program was in the Top 10% in the state in Math and ELA growth.

S. Zrike congratulated the team for truly outstanding work. T. Weller asked for guidance on how to promote Excel in external settings, which O. Stearns provided and added that we will share talking points for Board members.

T. Weller asked for context about why peer charters like Brooke are seeing higher achievement levels. N. Keough noted that Brooke has a K-12 program. At Excel, our program starts in 5th grade, and we cannot control where students come in with us, so

our middle school program is heavily focused on driving high levels of growth year over year so that students are ready to get the most out of high school.

N. Keough noted that our chronic absenteeism at the high school was reported as 27.5% due to an error in the way that graduating students were coded. The true number is 18.7%.

S. Zrike echoed that it is an important point that we will want to be prepared to speak to what we have done to achieve these results, as well as to dispel myths about how charter public schools do not play by the same rules.

S. Zrike noted that we could talk more about the fact that 99% of our students are taking and passing advanced coursework and that we should come out more strongly with the positive outcomes we are driving with MLL populations. F. Reyes noted that MLLs currently represent 17% of the student population at Excel.

T. Griffith Walker congratulated the team and echoed the importance of having the right story and elevator pitch and that we are celebrating with the students.

N. Keough previewed priorities for this year including:
- Going deeper on: Excellent Teacing (rubric, Arc of the Year strategy), School Culture through Common Systems, Purposeful use of data and assessment, MTSS systems
- Adding focus to: Leader Development using our new framework, Excellence in Instructional Coaching, joyful and productive adult culture

N. Keough notified the Committee that one of our Heads of School (XLGW) is on maternity leave and another (XLC) is out on medical leave, and Bobby Bridges our Leadership Coach and Stephanie Patton our Deputy Chief Schools Officer are stepping in to support those campuses.

S. Zrike thanked the Academic Team for an excellent presentation and congratulated the schools again on such phenomenal results.

## III. Closing Items

### A. Adjourn Meeting

S. Zrike made a motion to adjourn the meeting having conducted the business of the Committee.
T. Griffith Walker seconded the motion.
The committee **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 2:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

S. Zrike
List of documents used at this meeting:

- Agenda
- Prior meeting minutes
- Quarterly Board academic data dashboard
- Academic Update Slides

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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.

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