APPROVED

Excel Academy Massachusetts

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Friday February 6, 2026 at 8:30 AM

Location
Microsoft Teams Need help?
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Meeting ID: 265 239 573 501
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Meeting Notice Posted Publicly by 2/3/26

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. Stolow (remote), M. Colaylat (remote), N. Castro (remote), R. Lytle (remote), T. Griffith Walker (remote)

Trustees Absent
B. Rodriguez, D. Sachs, S. Zrike

Guests Present
A. Kaynor (remote), Estevan Puerta (Excel, Director of Student Recruitment & Enrollment) (remote), Jamie Greenthal (Excel RI Board member and observer) (remote), Laura Goldworm

(Excel, Dean of CAPS) (remote), Liz Giordano (Excel RI Board member and observer) (remote), O. Stearns (remote), Y. Dubon (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 Feb 6, 2026 at 8:34 AM.
O. Stearns welcomed the following guests:

- Anne Healy, a prospective Board candidate observing the meeting
- Laura Goldworm, Excel's Dean of CAPS
- Estevan Puerta, Excel's Director of Student Recruitment & Enrollment and an Excel alum
- Excel Acadmey Rhode Island Board members Jamie Greenthal and Liz Giordano, observing the meeting

C. Brumme previewed the agenda, welcomed the guests and encouraged them to engage with discussion topics during the meeting, and shared brief reflections on the importance of the CAPS program to Excel's model.

C. Public Comment

No members of the public provided comments at this meeting.

D. Approve prior Board Meeting minutes

M. Colaylat made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 12-12-25.
C. Brumme seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Academic Oversight

A. Annual CAPS (College Access & Post-Secondary Success) Update

L. Goldworm presented updates on the College Access and Post-Secondary Success program, as detailed in the CAPS Update Slides that were provided to the Board, and then responded to clarifying questions and comments from Board members.

O. Stearns reflected on Excel's results compared to wealthy suburban districts and commended the CAPS Team for their sustained good work over many years.

R. Lytle asked a clarifying question about pathway data, which L. Goldworm answered. A. Kaynor shared a story about an Excel alum, Lorenzo Velazquez, and how CAPS supported him to make a change in his post-secondary path.

L. Giordano asked a clarifying question about types of employment included in that metric, which L. Goldworn answered. L. Goldworm also shared more context about the collaborative work the team does with military recruiters for students who are interested in that pathway.

R. Lytle agreed with the observation that Early Decision opportunities are becoming increasingly inaccessible to middle class families and that there has been a spike in Early Admission at public institutions and shifting dynamics at the most elite institutions due to federal policy and macro economic factors.

M. Colaylat asked a clarifying question about whether CAPS Team challenges are related to matriculation primarily or also persistence. L. Goldworm commented that the challenges are impacting both.

C. Brumme asked for additional context about impacts our alumni are experiencing related to Artificial Intelligence and the impact on entry level job access, which L. Goldworm provided.

C. Brumme and R. Lytle commended the CAPS Team for their excellent work and thoughtful presentation and commented that CAPS is an astoundingly awesome part of Excel's model.

A. Healy asked a clarifying question about how CAPS is funded. O. Stearns and A. Kaynor noted that about half of the program is funded on public revenue and the other half is funded via philanthropy - the post-secondary portion of the department, including scholarships.

C. Brumme noted that we have two alumni Board members and three alumni on the call today, which does not happen by accident, and O. Stearns commented that we now have over 10% alumni representation among staff at Excel. R. Lytle commented on how many Excel alumni he met at the February 3 ceremony who are now community leaders and elected officials.

B. State of the School Updates

C. Brumme provided the following updates on the state of the school:

- The MA Commissioner and Secretary of Education both visited Excel Academy on February 3 as part of a national teacher recognition award. Thank you to Rob Lytle for attending, along with representatives of each of Excel's other Boards.

- Owen Stearns attended the School of Recognition ceremony at the MA State House. Excel was among 63 schools of recognition out of about 1,500 total schools in MA.
- Excel earned AP Platinum status for the third year in a row, which places the school among the top 7% of schools nationally. Excel was awarded for both a high percentage of students taking AP exams and a high percentage of those students passing an exam – exemplifying our rigorous and inclusive academic model.
- Excel's team continues to be invited to present at various conferences locally and nationally to share best practices with other schools:
    - **Owen Stearns & Nina Keough** presented to a national CSGF group on staff engagement.
    - **Darren Gray** led a best practices seminar on classroom observation rubric at the Celebrating Academic Success Conference in MA with MA district and charter leaders.
    - **Estevan Puerta** was awarded a $10,000 "Proven Practices" grant in recognition of exceptional leadership in the CSGF Enrollment community and the impact he has had on charter leaders across the country - particularly with a case study he presented in the fall. The honorarium is about celebrating three things:
        - Achieving top-tier enrollment performance - the kind of strong results in part of the enrollment funnel that rank among the best in the CSGF portfolio
        - Incredible generosity of time and expertise, investing hours to create the case study
        - Stepping up time and again - through webinars, peer presentations, and countless conversations - to help others learn from his experience
    - **Ferny Reyes** presented on Excel's organizational learning triad and data tools at a District Data Leaders Network of Massachusetts seminar.
    - **Arthur Kaynor** presented for a second time this year on family engagement and advocacy at a national CSGF conference.

O. Stearns provided the following updates on the state of the school:

- **Student Recruitment:** Our Excel MA lottery is on March 4th. Demand for East Boston's entry-point grade continues to outperform last year and the three-year average, despite overall declines in the broader enrollment landscape.
- **Advocacy:** Thousands of charter public school community members made their voices heard at the State House, and some of the most concerning bills (or most harmful provisions) that were before the MA legislature no longer have a path forward in the current session.
- **Fundraising:** Excel secured a new $100k gift to support our MA CAPS fundraising goal. Excel's three Boards are on track for 90-100% participation in annual giving this year.

- **FYI - Rhode Island Real Estate:** Excel RI has secured a lease for the opening of its high school campus next year. Information about this project is shared with each of Excel's three Boards for the sake of transparency and inter-board collaboration.

R. Lytle commented that he sees many schools with high AP participation but low passing rates and commended the academic team for their work to achieve the AP Platinum result.

R. Lytle asked a clarifying question about broader enrollment trending, which E. Puerta answered.

A. Healy commented that some schools in MA have experienced a decline in enrollment this year as a result of federal immigration enforcement policy impacts.

III. Finance

A. Delegation Votes

A. Kaynor and D. Stolow updated the Board on efforts related to the 58 Moore Street property capital lease and debt strategy.
M. Colaylat made a motion to (1) approve delegating authority to the Treasurer to negotiate a new capital lease with the Treasurer of the Friends of Excel Academy Charter Schools Board, and (2) approve delegating authority to the Finance Committee to approve a plan for 58 Moore St. debt repayment or refinancing, in coordination with the Friends of Excel Academy Charter Schools Finance Committee.
C. Brumme seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

IV. Governance

A. Approve Updated Enrollment Policy

A. Kaynor and E. Puerta reviewed the updated enrollment policy and memo with the Board, both of which were provided to the Board in advance of the meeting.
D. Stolow made a motion to approve the updated enrollment policy as presented, with any necessary edits or corrections including any that may be required by DESE.
M. Colaylat seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

V. Board Engagement

A. Upcoming Events

A. Kaynor previewed upcoming events and encouraged Board members to sign up for one of our remaining visits before we get into spring testing season.

B. Updated Board Member Job Description

A. Kaynor shared an updated Board member JD as a tool to support Board recruitment efforts.

VI. Other Business

A. Reminder - Annual Disclosures

A. Kaynor updated the Board on a DESE training he attended related to the Board Member Management System and asked Board members to complete their annual disclosures early this year.

VII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

C. Brumme made a motion to adjourn the meeting, having completed the Board's business.
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 9:50 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
C. Brumme
List of documents used in the meeting:

- Agenda
- Prior meeting minutes
- CAPS Update Slides
- Updated Enrollment Policy
- Memo re: Enrollment Policy Updates
- Updated Board Member JD
- Alumni impact stories

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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