

APPROVED



## Excel Academy (CA)

# Minutes

### Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

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**Date and Time**

Thursday May 9, 2024 at 12:00 PM

**Location**

Excel Academy Charter School  
1 Technology Drive, Ste I-811  
Irvine, CA 92618

Regus- Gateway Chula Vista  
333 H Street, Suite 5000  
Chula Vista, CA 91910

**Zoom Meeting Information:**

**Dial In: +1 669 444 9171 US**

**Meeting ID: 865 4142 3299**

**URL: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86541423299>**

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**MISSION STATEMENT**

Excel Academy will provide flexible, personalized learning through a customized course of study that will educate, motivate, and instill a love of learning in each individual student. Teachers and parents will join together to maintain high expectations and promote academic excellence for all students creating the next generation of leaders.

**THE ORDER OF BUSINESS MAY BE CHANGED WITHOUT NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given that the order of consideration of matters on this agenda may be changed without prior notice.

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### **REASONABLE LIMITATIONS MAY BE PLACED ON PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

The Governing Board's presiding officer reserves the right to impose reasonable time limits on public testimony to ensure that the agenda is completed.

### **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION WILL BE PROVIDED FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY**

Pursuant to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, any individual with a disability who requires reasonable accommodation to attend or participate in this meeting of the Governing Board may request assistance by contacting Excel Academy Charter Schools.

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#### **Directors Present**

L. Alvarado, M. Humphrey, S. Fraire, S. Houle, W. Hall

#### **Directors Absent**

*None*

#### **Guests Present**

L. Hansen

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## **I. Opening Items**

### **A. Call the Meeting to Order**

W. Hall called a meeting of the board of directors of Excel Academy (CA) to order on Thursday May 9, 2024 at 12:23 PM.

### **B. Record Attendance**

## **II. Approve/Adopt Agenda**

### **A. Agenda**

S. Houle made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Fraire seconded the motion.

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

## **III. Approve Minutes**

### **A. Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting held on March 14, 2024**

S. Houle made a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors on 03-14-24.

L. Alvarado seconded the motion.

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

**B. Minutes of the Board Study Session held on April 11, 2024**

S. Houle made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Directors Study Session on 04-11-24.

S. Fraire seconded the motion.

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

**IV. Adjourn to Closed Session**

**A. The Board will consider and may act on any of the Closed Session matters.**

S. Fraire made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Houle seconded the motion.

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

**V. Reconvene Regular Meeting**

**A. Report out any action taken in closed session.**

The Board approved the positive evaluation of the Executive Director, Heidi Gasca.

**VI. Correspondence/Proposals/Reports**

**A. School Highlights - Presented by Heidi Gasca, Executive Director/CEO**

- Heidi updated on various school activities and developments:
  - The registration of 230 new students for the upcoming school year, with ongoing efforts to ensure they are well integrated and informed over the summer.
  - The implementation of the Lexia literacy program for first and second graders in April.
  - The successful introduction of GATE testing, with a waitlist of students eager to participate.
  - State testing preparation sessions have been effective in enhancing student performance.
  - The celebration of the school's second annual prom, highlighted by a balloon arch and a joyous atmosphere.
  - Continued success of Outdoor Classrooms organized by community liaisons across nine regions, which are well-received by students.
  - A notable community event where students sold handmade items, which Heidi personally supported by purchasing bracelets.
  - Ongoing professional development across various areas, with mention of the recent CCFA conference and a successful theater arts performance.

- The upcoming staff celebration on June 12 and a spring celebration for students on May 24.

These highlights reflect a strong focus on community engagement, educational innovation, and recognition of staff and student achievements.

**B. Principals: Year in Review - Presented by April Saade, Elementary Principal and Lorrie Wood, Secondary Principal**

The principals detailed their collaborative efforts and achievements across elementary and secondary education for the year. A key initiative, the Parent PowerUp conference, successfully engaged parents with educational strategies and mental well-being support while simultaneously providing enriching activities for students, such as a visit from a fire marshal and a dance session led by a professional.

Community building was emphasized, with successful monthly events like a bowling and ice cream social, and regular in-person meetings for staff which included team-building exercises. These efforts were aimed at strengthening the sense of community within the school.

Academically, the principals focused on enriching learning experiences through the GATE program, a curated curriculum collage for hands-on learning, and intensive reading programs that include a new reading class and a dyslexia screener process, which is ahead of state requirements. They have also focused on aligning educational support between different tiers of student needs, improving overall academic support.

For the upcoming year, new initiatives include the introduction of elementary grade-level homerooms to further community feeling among students and a focus on enhancing writing skills. Additionally, they welcomed two new counselors who have contributed significantly, developing resources like the Counselor Corner website for college and career preparation.

Overall, the review highlighted a year of building community, enhancing academic programs, and focusing on professional development, setting a positive trajectory for future growth and development in the school.

**VII. Consent**

- A. Consent - Business/Financial Services**
- B. Consent - Education Student/Services**
- C. Consent - Personnel Services**
- D. Consent Items - Policy Development**

**E. Approve Consent Agenda**

M. Humphrey made a motion to Bill Hall.

L. Alvarado seconded the motion.

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

**VIII. Business/Financial Services**

**A. Approval of Excel Academy Charter Schools Tax Form 990 Return and California Tax Form 199 Return (Draft) - Year Ended June 30, 2023, as prepared by CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA)**

S. Houle made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Fraire seconded the motion.

This board item involves a recommendation for the board to approve and receive the federal and California tax returns for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. These tax returns were prepared by the independent audit firm CLA and are part of the annual compliance obligations to the IRS and the Franchise Tax Board for the organization, which operates as a nonprofit.

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

**B. Approval of California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) Membership for 2024-25 (Renewal)**

S. Houle made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Fraire seconded the motion.

This board item requests approval for continued affiliation with CCSA, a statewide advocacy network that offers substantial support including professional development, legal assistance, and renewal guidance and training to the team. The item highlights the significant value of this investment in professional development, despite its considerable cost. During the board discussion, there were no questions from most members, except for Steve who inquired whether the cost is based on enrollment, to which the answer was affirmative.

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

**C. Approval of the EACS Ordering Purchase System (OPS) (Renewal)**

S. Fraire made a motion to Bill Hall.

M. Humphrey seconded the motion.

This board item presents a proposal for the board to approve the renewal of a purchasing software service by OPS, at a cost of \$24,947.19. The software aids teachers, staff, and parents in managing and placing orders using instructional funds and other school resources. The proposed agreement covers a one-year period, from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

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

**D.**

### **Approval of Sage Intacct Accounting Service Contract (Renewal)**

S. Houle made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Fraire seconded the motion.

This board item is a request for the renewal of the Sage Intacct Accounting Software Service, a digital tool that supports various accounting tasks including general ledger management, bank reconciliation, budgeting, and accounts receivable. It also acts as a central repository for financial transactions. The proposed renewal for the fiscal year 2024-2025 is for an amount of \$48,643.20.

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

### **E. Approval of the Stampli Contract (Renewal)**

S. Houle made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Fraire seconded the motion.

This board item involves a proposal to renew an agreement with Stampli, a cloud-based tool that employs AI and machine learning to streamline invoicing processes by automating processing, coding, and approvals, thus reducing manual work. The annual fee for using Stampli is projected to be approximately \$40,000.

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

### **F. Approval of Irvine Office Lease with the Irvine Company LLC (Renewal)**

M. Humphrey made a motion to Bill Hall.

L. Alvarado seconded the motion.

This board item discusses the upcoming expiration of a five-year lease on November 30, 2024, for the organization's current office space. Following negotiations with the real estate agent and the Irvine company, a three-year lease renewal has been agreed upon, instead of a five-year term, due to the changing dynamics in commercial real estate influenced by COVID-19. This shorter term will allow for reevaluation after three years.

The negotiation also secured a rent reduction for three months (December 1st to February 28th), resulting in a savings of approximately \$44,000, with an additional \$5,000 savings during the rent abatement period. The organization is satisfied with the outcomes of the negotiation and the functionality of the office space, with plans to reassess the situation after the three-year period.

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

## **IX. Education Services**

### **A. Approval of Curriculum Associates Agreement for i-Ready Assessment for 2024-25 (Renewal)**

S. Houle made a motion to Bill Hall.

M. Humphrey seconded the motion.

This board item pertains to the renewal of iReady, an internal assessment tool used for establishing local benchmarks in math and reading for students in grades K through 11.

The tool not only aids in assessing students but also offers professional development for staff. Diagnostic score reports generated by iReady are utilized throughout the academic year to inform curriculum decisions, shape intervention classes, and support various student needs. The total fiscal impact of renewing iReady is \$34,420.

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

#### **B. Approval of Bright Thinker Service Licenses (Renewal)**

S. Fraire made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Houle seconded the motion.

This board item discusses the renewal of the Bright Thinker curriculum, an A-G and NCAA-approved asynchronous virtual online platform for students. The curriculum is actively updated with the latest offerings by attending various conferences to ensure students have access to the best resources. The fiscal impact of this renewal is \$81,500. The approach for licensing is initially conservative, with adjustments made as necessary based on demand.

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

#### **C. Approval of Bright Thinker Services Licenses True Up**

M. Humphrey made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Fraire seconded the motion.

This board item addresses the need to purchase an additional 102 licenses for the Bright Thinker curriculum, supplementing the 300 licenses originally approved last year. This increase is necessary to meet the needs of the student body. The fiscal impact of adding these licenses is \$20,400.

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

#### **D. Approval of the Tutor.com (Renewal)**

S. Fraire made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Houle seconded the motion.

This board item presents a proposal to continue using Tutor.com, a 24-hour on-demand tutoring service praised for its effectiveness in supporting both intervention and general education students. The service provides one-on-one tutoring sessions, which are recorded, allowing students to revisit the sessions as needed. The rigorous selection process ensures that the service is among the best available, offering both asynchronous and synchronous support. The total fiscal impact for maintaining this service is \$23,975.

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

### **X. Personnel Services**

#### **A. Approval of the Declaration of Need (DON) for Fully Qualified Educators**

S. Houle made a motion to Bill Hall.

L. Alvarado seconded the motion.

This board item involves the submission of the annual declaration of need form for the 2024-2025 school year to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. This form is submitted each year to ensure compliance with regulations pertaining to staff credentialing. It is particularly important for addressing new or changing needs as they arise during the school year. The updates in this year's declaration include compliance with AB 1505 and are based on estimated needs for potential credentialing changes throughout the year. The form facilitates the school's ability to adapt and enhance staff qualifications as necessary, ensuring continued compliance and effectiveness in staffing. The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

## **XI. Policy Development**

### **A. Approval of New Board Policies**

S. Houle made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Fraire seconded the motion.

This new board policy at Excel Academy Charter School establishes procedures to ensure consistent banking activities in the event that the executive director or CEO is unavailable due to unforeseen circumstances. It designates the Director of Business Services as the primary authorized individual to handle banking activities during such events. The policy also emphasizes the importance of succession planning by setting up training and procedures for potential successors to the Director of Business Services. Compliance with relevant laws and regulations, as well as the organizational objectives of the school, is mandated. The policy will take effect upon approval by the board of directors.

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

## **XII. Comments**

### **A. Board Comments**

The board comments reflect strong appreciation and praise for the work and dedication of principals, teachers, and staff at the board meeting. Board members expressed gratitude for the insights provided by principals and the positive impact of their leadership on children. They also commended the quality of reports presented, congratulated Heidi on her positive evaluation, and acknowledged the continuous efforts and smooth presentations of the team. Additionally, they recognized the board members themselves, wishing a Happy Mother's Day to those who are parents. The comments highlighted the importance of hiring competent staff, which contributes to the organization's success and prevents future issues. Overall, the board conveyed deep appreciation for the educational and supportive activities provided to the students, emphasizing the relevance and significance of the school's teaching efforts.

### **B.**



### **CEO Comments**

Heidi expressed her gratitude to the board members for their support during her evaluation process, emphasizing her belief in continuous learning and the strength of her team. She highlighted recent efforts regarding the Helendale petition, praising the board's experience and contributions, particularly noting Bill's involvement. Heidi shared her excitement about the potential for a similar 7-year renewal in Warner, indicating the honor and recognition it represents for the team. She specifically acknowledged Lauren for her significant role in preparing the petition, a substantial effort involving a 100-page document. Heidi closed by thanking her entire team for their exceptional dedication and responsiveness under tight deadlines, expressing great honor in working with such a committed group.

### **XIII. Closing Items**

#### **A. Adjourn Meeting**

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 1:22 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
W. Hall

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#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For more information concerning this agenda, contact  
Excel Academy Charter School.