APPROVED

Excel Academy (CA)

Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

Date and Time
Thursday September 12, 2024 at 11:20 AM

Location

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

Teleconference Locations
39251 Camino Las Hoyas, Indio, CA 92203
16222 Quail Rock Road, Ramona, CA 92065
1545 Apache Drive, Chula Vista, CA 91910

Zoom
Meeting ID: 824 3732 7237
Dial In: +1 669 444 9171
URL: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82437327237

MISSION STATEMENT

Excel Academy will provide a flexible, personalized learning experience where teachers and parents collaborate to provide academic excellence and social and emotional foundations to instill a love for learning in each individual student.

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.

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.

Directors Present

L. Alvarado (remote), M. Humphrey, S. Fraire (remote), S. Houle (remote)

Directors Absent

W. Hall

Guests Present

L. Hansen (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

S. Fraire called a meeting of the board of directors of Excel Academy (CA) to order on Thursday Sep 12, 2024 at 11:22 AM.

B. Record Attendance

II. Approve/Adopt Agenda

A. Agenda

L. Alvarado made a motion to Steve Fraire.
S. Houle seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Humphrey	Absent
S. Houle	Aye
L. Alvarado	Aye
W. Hall	Absent
S. Fraire	Aye

III. Approve Minutes

A. Approve Minutes

S. Houle made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Directors Study Session on 08-08-24.
L. Alvarado seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

S. Fraire	Aye
S. Houle	Aye
M. Humphrey	Absent
W. Hall	Absent
L. Alvarado	Aye

IV. Adjourn to Closed Session

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

L. Alvarado made a motion to Steve Fraire.
S. Houle seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

W. Hall	Absent
S. Fraire	Aye
M. Humphrey	Absent
S. Houle	Aye
L. Alvarado	Aye

V. Reconvene Regular Meeting

A. Report out any action taken in closed session.

The Board Clerk reported that the Board members agreed to the release of liability agreement for A038.

VI. Correspondence/Proposals/Reports

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

Heidi presented to the Board of Directors, expressing excitement for the 2024-2025 school year. She shared that the school has 1,745 students enrolled—1,077 in Warner and 688 in Helendale—and highlighted the importance of staff development with a theme inspired by "Toy Story," emphasizing teamwork and each department's role in student success.

She introduced new staff onboarded successfully, thanks to the HR team, and mentioned ongoing initiatives across various paths within the school. Notably, there's a focus on preparing high school students for college and careers through an ACE program and enhanced special education support. Additionally, the school is utilizing Prop 28 funding to enrich art and music offerings.

Heidi also highlighted the new elementary homeroom structure aimed at better supporting grade-level education and shared details about a parent online academy designed to improve family engagement. The presentation concluded with excitement about recent back-to-school events, showcasing a strong community spirit with over 800 attendees at one event.

B. Teacher Testimonials - Karen Ottoson & Forest Muther

Karen Ottoson and Forest Muther shared their experiences as teachers at Excel Academy.

Karen expressed her gratitude for her role as a kindergarten homeroom teacher, highlighting the joy of working with young students on foundational skills like sight words and shapes. She reflected on her experience with a special education student, noting his significant growth and the positive impact of the SPED team. Karen also enjoyed reconnecting with students at a back-to-school event, reinforcing her sense of community.

Forest discussed the rewarding nature of his role as a secondary teacher, particularly the satisfaction of seeing students achieve their goals. He shared a success story about a student named Cynthia, who, after struggling initially, found her passion for reading through tailored interventions. This led her to excel academically, take dual enrollment courses, and ultimately prepare for a career in the medical field. Forest conveyed his excitement and emotional investment in his students' journeys, particularly as they approach graduation.

VII. Consent

A. Consent - Business/Financial Services

1. Check Register - June 2024
2. Check Register - July 2024
3. Check Register - August 2024
4. Cash Payments - July 2024
5. Cash Payments - August 2024
6. Approval of APLUS+ Network Conference 2024

B. Consent - Education Student/Services

1. Approval of the Pali Institute Overnight Science Camp Field Trip
2. Approval of the Excel Academy Charter School English Language Development (ELD) Handbook for Families 2024-2025
3. Approval of the Excel Academy Handbook Revisions for 2024-2025
4. Approval of the Excel Academy Special Education Handbook Revisions for 2024-2025
5. Ratification of the Special Education Master Contract for External Vendors

C. Consent - Personnel Services

1. Approval of Certificated Personnel Report
2. Approval of Classified Personnel Report

S. Houle made a motion to Steve Fraire.
L. Alvarado seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Humphrey	Absent
S. Fraire	Aye
W. Hall	Absent
S. Houle	Aye
L. Alvarado	Aye

VIII. Board Governance

A. Approval of the Annual Board Evaluation

L. Alvarado made a motion to Steve Fraire.
S. Houle seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

W. Hall	Absent
S. Fraire	Aye
S. Houle	Aye
L. Alvarado	Aye
M. Humphrey	Absent

IX. Business/Financial Services

A. Approval of Unaudited Actuals for the 2023-2024 School Year

L. Alvarado made a motion to Steve Fraire.
S. Houle seconded the motion.
Joe presented the unaudited actuals for the 2023-2024 fiscal year to the Board of Directors, recommending their approval. He emphasized that these figures reflect actual results with no estimates involved, as the audit process is currently underway.

He outlined key financial details, noting total income of approximately $22 million, primarily from LCFF revenues, and expenses of about $19.9 million, with a significant portion allocated to salaries and benefits. The ending balance for the year is $9.7 million, representing a healthy reserve of 48.61%, which is notably higher than the average 24% across school districts in the state.

Joe highlighted the importance of financial diligence, as Excel Academy operates as a nonprofit without the same protections as public school districts. He provided insights into the organization's cash flow management, reporting a cash balance of $10.2 million, sufficient to cover six months of expenses.

The presentation concluded with an assurance that the audit report will be finalized by December 15, 2024.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

L. Alvarado	Aye
S. Houle	Aye
W. Hall	Absent
M. Humphrey	Absent
S. Fraire	Aye

B. Approval of 2024-25 Consolidated Application and Reporting System (CARS)

S. Houle made a motion to Steve Fraire.
L. Alvarado seconded the motion.
Excel Academy Charter School (EACS) submits the Consolidated Application to the California Department of Education (CDE) under the Consolidated Reporting System (CARS). There are two data collections for Consolidated Application each year (winter and spring). The Consolidated Application Spring Data collection is from May 15 through June 30.

Data collected in this report includes EACS 2024-25 Application for Funding for Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV, Certification of Assurances, Protected Prayer Certification, and LCAP Federal Addendum Certification.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

S. Fraire	Aye
W. Hall	Absent
M. Humphrey	Absent
S. Houle	Aye
L. Alvarado	Aye

C. Approval of the Proposition 28 Arts & Music Grant Annual Report

L. Alvarado made a motion to Steve Fraire.

S. Houle seconded the motion.
Proposition 28, which established the Arts and Music in Schools—Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act, included an annual reporting requirement for local educational agencies (LEAs). As a condition of receiving funds, an LEA must submit a report approved by its local governing board to the California Department of Education (CDE), and the report must be posted on the LEA's website. Per Education Code Section 8820 (g)(4), the report must detail the following:

- The type of arts education programs funded
- The number of full-time equivalent teachers, classified personnel, and teaching aides
- The number of pupils served
- The number of school sites providing arts education programs with Proposition 28 funds

At its March 24, 2024, meeting, the Board of Directors approved implementing the Proposition 28 Art and Music in Schools program for the 2024-25 school year. As a result, no funds were utilized in the fiscal year 2023-24.

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

Roll Call	
W. Hall	Absent
S. Houle	Aye
S. Fraire	Aye
M. Humphrey	Absent
L. Alvarado	Aye

D. Approval of Proposal to Open a Checking Account for Associated Student Body (ASB)

L. Alvarado made a motion to Steve Fraire.
S. Houle seconded the motion.
Excel Academy Charter Schools currently needs an Associated Student Body account. This item proposes establishing a checking account dedicated to the Associated Student Body (ASB) at our school. This initiative aims to enhance the financial management of student-led fundraising activities and ensure that the funds raised are effectively utilized to support our students' co-curricular endeavors.

Financial Oversight: The ASB advisor will work closely with the Director of Business Services Director or his or her designee to ensure that all transactions are recorded accurately. Monthly financial statements will be reviewed and presented to the school administration, providing complete transparency and accountability.

Fundraising and Expenditure Guidelines: We will develop clear guidelines for fundraising activities and the appropriate use of funds. These guidelines will be aligned with the school's policies and the Board's expectations, ensuring that all activities support the educational and co-curricular goals of the school.

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

Roll Call

S. Fraire	Aye
S. Houle	Aye
L. Alvarado	Aye
M. Humphrey	Absent
W. Hall	Absent

X. Personnel Services

A. Approval of Executive Director/CEO Strategic Plan for 2024-2025

S. Houle made a motion to Steve Fraire.
L. Alvarado seconded the motion.
This item was discussed at the August Study Session.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

W. Hall	Absent
L. Alvarado	Aye
M. Humphrey	Absent
S. Fraire	Aye
S. Houle	Aye

B. Approval of ClassPass for Excel Academy Charter School Staff

L. Alvarado made a motion to Steve Fraire.
S. Houle seconded the motion.
Megan presented the ClassPass program for approval, highlighting it as an extension of Excel Academy Charter School's health and wellness offerings for staff. ClassPass provides access to a wide range of resources, including yoga, strength training, Pilates, meditation, and saunas, with over a thousand participating facilities available.

The program is flexible and accessible via a mobile app, allowing employees to utilize health and wellness facilities both locally and while traveling. Megan emphasized that this initiative aims to enhance staff well-being and encourage a healthy lifestyle.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Humphrey	Absent
W. Hall	Absent

Roll Call

S. Fraire	Aye
L. Alvarado	Aye
S. Houle	Aye

XI. Board Comments

A. Board Comments

The Board members expressed their appreciation for a successful meeting, highlighting key positive aspects.

Susan praised the uplifting video and mentioned her love for seeing the children, along with the easy access to global resources like ClassPass.

Larry acknowledged the addition of special education staff and stressed the importance of staff development. He also noted the school's strong financial standing, suggesting discussions on how to allocate surplus funds.

Further, the Board congratulated the team on a strong start, emphasizing the effective handling of challenges and the collective commitment of the staff. The Board members thanked the team for their hard work, appreciated the logistical support behind the scenes, and expressed their personal joy in attending and learning from these meetings. They particularly enjoyed the video and humorously referenced a desire to interact with the animals featured.

Overall, the comments reflected a strong sense of pride in the school's achievements and optimism for the future.

XII. CEO Comments

A. CEO Comments

Heidi expressed gratitude for the school's strong financial position, contrasting it with the challenges faced three years ago. She highlighted the importance of being able to focus on supporting staff rather than repaying loans. Heidi acknowledged the diligence and care that goes into financial discussions, crediting the Executive Team's weekly meetings for ensuring thoughtful decision-making. She emphasized the value of adding Jenny and Lara to these meetings, which has helped in planning for fiscal spending and staff incentives, like ClassPass.

Heidi also noted the school's growth and acknowledged the natural process of learning from both gains and losses each year. She conveyed optimism for a successful school year and expressed appreciation for the ongoing support from the board.

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 12:51 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
S. Fraire

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