APPROVED

Excel Academy (CA)

Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

Date and Time
Tuesday October 8, 2024 at 11:35 AM

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: +1 346 248 7799
Meeting ID: 875 0519 7184
URL: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87505197184

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, M. Humphrey, S. Fraire, W. Hall

Directors Absent

S. Houle

Guests Present

L. Hansen

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 Tuesday Oct 8, 2024 at 11:35 AM.

B. Record Attendance

II. Approve/Adopt Agenda

A. Agenda

M. Humphrey made a motion to Bill Hall.
L. Alvarado seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

III. Approve Minutes

A. Approve Minutes

L. Alvarado made a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors on 09-12-24.
M. Humphrey seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

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

IV. Correspondence/Proposals/Reports

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

Heidi, addressing the Board of Directors and team, provided a comprehensive update on the school's progress and initiatives:

Enrollment Update:

- Current enrollment is strong at 1,745 students: 1,081 at Warner and 664 at Hellendale.

Program Updates:

- All three educational paths (virtual, elementary, secondary) are successfully underway, reflecting extensive prior planning.
- The intervention team is focusing on identifying and supporting students needing help in language arts and math, with detailed subgroup data analysis.

GATE Program:

- Students are actively engaging in creative and enriching activities, such as a "water rocket" project, fostering connection and enjoyment.

Parent Engagement Initiatives:

- A major focus on improving parent education and engagement includes the launch of an "EagleTalk" YouTube channel. This month's episode provided insight on resources like "Tumble Books," a digital library offering engaging materials for K-8 students.

Staff Spotlight:

- Anne Cesario was recognized for her exceptional dedication, patience, and contributions since the school's inception.

Ongoing Activities:

- Professional development remains a priority for staff growth.
- Field trips, outdoor classrooms, and community events, such as field days and a beach cleanup, are well-received and contribute to holistic student development.

Upcoming Events:

- The school will participate in the APLUS+ Conference in Anaheim and other enriching activities.

B. Student Representatives - Jolene Chan & Ryan Maddox

Jolene Chan and Ryan Maddox, two remarkable 10th-grade students at Excel Academy, shared their inspiring journeys and achievements during the recent board meeting. Both are active leaders in the high school student leadership class and exemplify the opportunities and flexibility the school provides.

Jolene, who has been with Excel since the 2nd grade, expressed her gratitude for the flexibility that allows her to excel academically while pursuing her passion for fencing, a sport in which she competes at the national level. The schedule also gives her time for concurrent enrollment at a community college and personal interests like writing. As a leader, she's currently spearheading Red Ribbon Week initiatives and enthusiastically participates in school events like community cleanups and leadership workshops. Looking ahead, Jolene aspires to compete in NCAA fencing and explore a future in law or psychology, with a long-term dream of opening her own fencing club.

Ryan, a student at Excel since 6th grade, highlighted how the school's approach enables him to focus on activities he enjoys, such as acting and IT work. Currently, he is part of a school-affiliated acting class preparing for a winter performance while also gaining practical IT experience by troubleshooting and fixing computer issues. Ryan shared his ambition to take over his grandfather's IT business and carve out a future in the field, demonstrating his passion for technology and problem-solving.

The board was deeply impressed by the students' poise, confidence, and diverse interests. They applauded Jolene's commitment to fencing and leadership and Ryan's dual pursuits of acting and IT, which reflect the breadth of opportunities Excel Academy offers. The students' testimonials underscored the school's role in fostering both personal and academic growth, preparing them for bright futures.

C.

iReady & CAASPP Data - Presented by Jenny Craig, Director of Operations & Accountability

Jenny presented an in-depth analysis of student assessment data and outlined strategic initiatives aimed at driving academic growth at Excel Academy. Below are the key highlights:

Student Performance Data

- **Fall 2024 iReady Results**:
  - 60.4% of students are at or above grade level in ELA, a 2% decrease from Fall 2023.
  - 49.3% of students are at or above grade level in math, reflecting a slight improvement.
- **Growth Projections**: Based on historical data, ELA and math scores are expected to grow by approximately 15% by Spring 2024, surpassing the LCAP growth target of 2%.
- **CAASPP Results**: Excel students significantly outperform state averages:
  - ELA: 58% at or above grade level, compared to 44% statewide.
  - Math: 51% at or above grade level, compared to 33% statewide.
- **Continuous Enrollment Impact**: Students enrolled for 3+ years consistently outperform newer students, highlighting the importance of sustained engagement.

Strategic Focus Areas

- **Interventions**: Targeting learning gaps through a focus on vocabulary, comprehension, and written expression across all subjects.
- **Data Analysis**: Partnering with Parsec Education for deeper insights into student performance by domain and subgroup.
- **Goal Setting**: Teachers are provided tools to help students set and track personalized growth goals.

Professional Development

- Teachers will participate in professional learning communities (PLCs) and upcoming training sessions to analyze trends, assess interventions, and share best practices.
- Virtual and personalized path teachers will focus on individual student growth and domain-specific trends.

Subgroup Performance and Equity

- Excel students, including English learners and special education groups, are consistently improving, with notable gains in ELA and math across grade levels.
- Efforts are underway to tailor interventions and resources to meet the diverse needs of students.

Celebrations

- Excel ranks among the top-performing charter schools:
  - Warner: 8th in ELA and 3rd in math out of 61 comparable charters.
  - Helendale: 19th in ELA and 7th in math.
- Specific grade-level improvements include a 9% increase in 7th-grade math scores and a 3-4% improvement for 11th graders in both ELA and math.

Future Plans

- A comprehensive survey will gather feedback from students, parents, and teachers to refine programs and enhance student engagement.
- The school will focus on personalized and equity-based instruction, addressing areas like teacher development, instructional strategies, and communication with families.

Jenny concluded by emphasizing the collective effort of staff, leadership, and educational partners in supporting student success. The board praised the thoroughness and actionable insights of her report, underscoring the importance of data-driven approaches to education.

D. 2022-2023 Teacher Assignment Monitoring Outcome - Presented by Charlene Pitchess, Human Resources Specialist

Charlene Pitchess, HR Specialist at Excel Academy, presented an overview of the **Teacher Assignment Monitoring Outcome (TAMO)** report, a state initiative to ensure proper teacher credentialing. The report uses CALPADS and CALSAS data and classifies teachers into seven categories, such as "Clear" (fully credentialed) and "Out of Field" (teaching outside credential area, often due to local assignment option 44865).

Excel Academy Results (2022-23):

- **Warner**: 75.4% "Clear," 22.7% "Out of Field," 1.2% "Incomplete."
- **Helendale**: 74.6% "Clear," 24.4% "Out of Field."
- Excel outperformed comparable charters, with no "Ineffective" assignments and minimal data errors.

Local Assignment Option 44865: This option allows flexibility for charter and independent study schools like Excel, enabling teachers to teach outside their credential area with consent. Commonly applied in areas like PE, art, and hard-to-staff subjects, these teachers receive targeted training and support.
Next Steps:

- Improve data accuracy in reporting systems.
- Continue robust teacher evaluation and professional development.

- Collaborate with state education boards to address charter-specific nuances in reporting.

The board praised the presentation for its thoroughness and Excel's commitment to compliance and teacher support.

V. Consent

A. Consent - Business/Financial Services

B. Consent - Educational Services

C. Consent - Personnel Services

M. Humphrey made a motion to Bill Hall.
S. Fraire seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

VI. Comments

A. Board Comments

The board expressed unanimous praise and gratitude for the presentations, highlighting the depth, detail, and thoughtfulness of the reports by Jenny and Charlene. Key comments included:

- **Acknowledgment of Effort**: The board commended the hard work and dedication of staff, emphasizing the detailed analysis and purposeful interventions presented.
- **Appreciation for Student Involvement**: Board members were delighted to hear directly from students Jolene and Ryan, noting how their presence brought the school's impact to life.
- **Focus on Data and Outcomes**: The data-driven approach in Jenny's report was highlighted as crucial for improving programs, with a particular interest in how it translates to teacher strategies and student outcomes, including support for both high and low achievers.
- **Charlene's Compliance Work**: Her thorough explanation of TAMO and teacher credentialing processes was highly praised, though the board acknowledged the complexity of the information and the need for reflection.

- **Community Engagement**: Heidi's update on school events like park days and relays received positive attention, with board members appreciating the inclusive and competitive aspects of these activities.
- **General Gratitude**: The board expressed overall satisfaction with the meeting, presentations, and the commitment of leadership and staff, thanking all contributors for their dedication to the school's success.

The board encouraged continued updates and looked forward to seeing future progress across various initiatives.

B. CEO Comments

Heidi closed the meeting with reflections on the day's presentations and updates from the school. She highlighted Ryan's quiet humility, revealing that he played the lead role of Prince Eric in a production of *The Little Mermaid*, showcasing not just his talent but also his character.

Turning to the data presentations, Heidi emphasized the ever-changing nature of data as an ongoing opportunity for growth and improvement. She shared plans to strengthen the impact of learning period meetings, leveraging them as critical touchpoints with parents and students. Heidi also reflected on feedback from Lori's recent coaching session, where Excel was praised for effectively putting data into the hands of teachers, a practice often missed at other schools.

Regarding Charlene's detailed TAMO presentation, Heidi acknowledged the complexity of the 44865 assignment option and expressed commitment to refining its application. She emphasized the importance of maintaining accuracy and accountability in the system, with plans to collaborate further with School Pathways.

Heidi also shared excitement about upcoming initiatives, including welcoming a new charter liaison for Warner and attending the A+ conference, where Excel's special education and general education teams will present workshops. She expressed pride in the school's achievements and gratitude for the team's dedication, ending on a note of optimism for the future.

VII. 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 12:47 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
W. Hall

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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