APPROVED

Excel Academy (CA)

Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

Date and Time
Thursday September 11, 2025 at 9:40 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:
Meeting ID: 885 1913 1765
One-Tap Dial In: +16694449171,,88519131765#
URL: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88519131765

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, S. Fraire, S. Houle, W. Hall

Directors Absent

M. Humphrey

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 Thursday Sep 11, 2025 at 9:40 AM.

B. Record Attendance

II. Approve/Adopt Agenda

A. Agenda

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

Roll Call

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

III. Approve Minutes

A. Approve Minutes

L. Alvarado made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Directors Study Session on 08-14-25.
S. Houle seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

IV. Correspondence/Proposals/Reports

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

The summer and start of the school year have been highly successful and eventful, with the school anticipating reaching the 2,000 student enrollment mark, thanks in large part to the work of the admissions team, specifically mentioning Nick Romo for his efforts in retention.

The school kicked off the year with an "invigorating" professional development (PD) day themed "Go for the Gold," emphasizing Olympic-level grit and perseverance. Staff expertise was leveraged for successful sessions, including a hands-on presentation on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and a scavenger hunt to enhance use of the Google Suite.

Academically, the school received a major boost in morale and recognition, earning a spot in the top 40% of high schools in the U.S. News & World Report rankings—a success attributed to both the secondary and elementary programs. Recent state test scores confirmed the school's focused efforts, showing significant growth in various student subgroups.

Programmatically, the Special Education team is managing a large influx of approximately 60 new students with IEPs. Meanwhile, the high school leadership team secured a grant for an all-expenses-paid trip to the Sphere Summit 2025 in Washington, D.C., to study civil discourse and curiosity in teaching.

A strong commitment to parent education and building the family-teacher-student relationship remains a core passion. This commitment was evident in the highly successful back-to-school events, which were so well-attended that the main event in Brea outgrew its facility. Finally, the presentation closed by celebrating Nick Romo,

acknowledging his historical dedication and recent pivotal role in admissions as a versatile, problem-solving leader.

B. Student Testimonials - Student Leadership

The student testimonials from Vice President Emma Espinoza (10th grade) and President Preston (12th grade) highlighted two primary benefits of Excel Academy: a strong sense of community and unparalleled flexibility/freedom.

Emma, who joined four years ago after her previous school lacked a sense of community, spoke highly of the connection and support she immediately felt.

She describes Excel not just as a school but as a "family that supports you" and has your back, cheering you on through challenges. She loves the school's flexibility regarding curricular paths and credits the Student Leadership Club for opening doors, teaching her leadership skills, and continuously preparing her for the future.

Preston, who has been with the school since 8th grade, emphasizes the freedom that the unique school model provides. He states that the freedom is "insane," allowing him to pursue extracurricular activities and even hold a job since 10th grade—things he says he couldn't have done in a traditional environment.

He highlighted his three years in the Leadership Class as the "coolest part," noting that it has fostered the deepest connection between himself, his classmates, and teachers through open discussion, significantly contributing to his personal growth and public speaking skills.

C. CliftonLarsonAllen LLP (CLA) Governance Entrance Letter - Presented by Heidi Gasca, Superintendent/CEO

This board item is a request for approval of the letter of engagement to hire an auditor for the upcoming year. The chosen firm is CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA), who will conduct both the fiscal and educational audits. The administration notes their strong working relationship with the firm.

V. Consent

A. Consent - Business/Financial Services

1. Check Register - June 2025
2. Check Register - July 2025
3. Check Register - August 2025
4. Cash Payments - June 2025
5. Cash Payments - July 2025
6. Cash Payments - August 2025

B.

Consent - Education Student/Services

1. Approval of the Pali Institute Overnight Science Camp Field Trip
2. Approval of the 2025-2026 Excel Academy Charter School English Language Development (ELD) Handbook for Families
3. Approval of the 2025-2026 Excel Academy Handbook Revisions
4. Approval of the UPK Criterion 2 Proposal Addendum
5. Ratification of the 2025-2026 Special Education Contracted Vendors List
6. Ratification of the 2025-2026 Nonpublic, Nonsectarian School/Agency Services Master Contract and Individual Service Agreement

C. Consent - Personnel Services

1. Approval of Certificated Personnel Report
2. Approval of Classified Personnel Report
3. Approval of EACS Travel Manual Revisions

VI. Board Governance

A. Approval of the Annual Board of Director's Self-Evaluation

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

Roll Call

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

VII. Business/Financial Services

A. Approval of Unaudited Actuals for the 2024-2025 School Year

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

Roll Call

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

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

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

Roll Call

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

VIII. Personnel Services

A. Approval of Superintendent/CEO Goals for 2025-2026

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

Roll Call

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

B. Ratification of ClassPass for Excel Academy Charter School Staff for 2025-2026 (Renewal)

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

Roll Call

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

IX. Board Comments

A. Comments

The board meeting was deemed highly reassuring and comforting, celebrating a successful start to the year marked by anticipated enrollment nearing 2,000 students. This growth, largely credited to the admissions team and the efforts of staff like Nick Romo, was recognized alongside a newfound academic honor: the high school's placement in the top 40% of the U.S. News & World Report rankings. Leadership,

particularly Superintendent Heidi, was praised for fostering a rare, effective partnership between the educational and business sides of the school, with the latter (led by Joe) ensuring financial clarity for the board.

The highlight of the meeting was hearing from student leaders, who universally praised the school's flexibility and strong sense of community. However, the board acknowledged the reality that "the bad news is we're growing," pointing out that the addition of 17 new staff members significantly increases the workload (emails, issues, complaints) for department managers. The board urged leadership to address this potential strain by considering whether current managers need additional support to effectively handle the increased volume that comes with expansion. The meeting concluded with gratitude for the entire staff and a vote to approve CliftonLarsonAllen for the upcoming fiscal and educational audits.

X. CEO Comments

A. Comments

Heidi began by sincerely thanking the board for their unwavering support, recognizing that their background as educators enables them to understand the school's "pain points" and celebrations alike.

She emphasized that the successful management of the school's recent growth is a testament to the "magnificent teamwork" of the staff, acknowledging that starting the school year required everyone to truly "come together."

Above all, Heidi reaffirmed her core philosophy: she will never allow the school to grow so large that they lose connection with the students. Her commitment is to ensure that every teacher maintains a meaningful, daily impact on their students and families. She concluded by expressing deep fulfillment in the fact that, despite external global issues, their school is consistently "making an impact" through hard work.

XI. 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 10:26 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
W. Hall

FOR MORE INFORMATION
For more information concerning this agenda, contact

Excel Academy Charter School.