

APPROVED



Excel Academy (CA)

Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

Date and Time

Thursday February 12, 2026 at 10:05 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: 822 2953 9052

One tap mobile: +17193594580,,82229539052# US

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82229539052>

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 (remote), S. Fraire, S. Houle, W. Hall

Directors Absent

None

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 Feb 12, 2026 at 10:29 AM.

L. Alvarado made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Houle seconded the motion.

Mike Humphrey is participating remotely due to recovering from cancer treatment. This qualifies as an emergency circumstance under the Brown Act, which the Board members approved.

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

Roll Call

L. Alvarado Aye

M. Humphrey Abstain

S. Houle Aye

S. Fraire Aye

W. Hall Aye

B. Record Attendance

S. Houle made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Fraire seconded the motion.

Mike Humphrey is qualified to participate remotely under emergency circumstances under the Brown Act.

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

II. Approve/Adopt Agenda

A. Agenda

L. Alvarado made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Houle seconded the motion.

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

III. Approve Minutes

A. Approve Minutes

S. Fraire made a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors on 01-08-26.

S. Houle 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.

L. Alvarado made a motion to Bill Hall.

M. Humphrey seconded the motion.

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

V. Closed Session

A. Closed Session

1. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - EXISTING LITIGATION

Case No. 30-2024-01430946

VI. Reconvene Regular Meeting

A. Report out any action taken in closed session.

No action was taken.

VII. Correspondence/Proposals/Reports

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

Heidi's January highlights presentation focused on strategic planning, community engagement, and staff recognition. Here is a concise summary of the key takeaways:

- **Strategic Planning:** Heidi expressed gratitude for the recent **Admin Summit**, noting that the team's collaborative efforts were instrumental in strategizing for the **2026-2027 school year**.
- **Parent Engagement:** A major emphasis was placed on the **"Parent Power-Up"** initiative. This program aligns with core school goals by providing workshops to educate parents on specific curriculum and instructional techniques.
- **Staff Recognition:** The presentation concluded with a special tribute to **Sarah Bobar**. Celebrating 12 years with the school, Sarah was recognized as a "pillar of strength" and a vital mentor whose dedication and transition into ELD support have significantly impacted the staff and student body.

B. Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Presentation - Presented by Tamara Murphy, Assistant Director of Special Program

Tamara Murphy's presentation highlighted the growth of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), emphasizing data-driven interventions and early support.

1. Program Reach & Impact

- **WIN ("What I Need"):** Currently serves **675 student interventions** in reading and math.
- **Focus on Literacy:** Efforts are heavily concentrated on **2nd grade** to secure foundational reading skills before 3rd grade.
- **Specialized Plans:** Supports include **35 SST plans** and **80 504 plans**, with a seamless referral process between Special Education and general intervention.
- **Vulnerable Students:** Providing targeted support for **19 unhoused students** and one foster student.

2. Key Successes

- **System Efficiency:** Improved collaboration with principals has given Tier 1 teachers more tools, resulting in a **reduction in required SST meetings**.
- **Positive Engagement:** New weekly "Proud View" emails and incentives have increased student participation and generated "super positive" parent feedback.

3. Future Initiatives

- **New ELA Essentials:** Data supports the creation of a dedicated ELA Essentials class to match current math offerings.
- **Earlier Start Dates:** By using **Spring data** for fall scheduling, the team aims to start interventions a month earlier, bypassing the traditional October delay.

C.

State Budget Overview - Presented by Joe Sorrera, Director of Business Services

Joe Sorrera's presentation on the 2026-27 State Budget balanced immediate funding gains with long-term economic caution.

Financial Growth & Risks

- **New Revenue:** The Governor's proposed **2.41% COLA** translates to approximately **\$600,000 in "new money"** for the school.
- **Deficit Concerns:** A **\$22 billion state deficit** is projected for 2027-28. Because California relies heavily on volatile stock market taxes, Joe advised a "conservative budgeting" approach to protect reserves.

Pension Stability (CalSTRS)

- **Stabilized Rates:** Employer contribution rates have leveled off at **19.10%**, allowing for more predictable multi-year planning.
- **Funding Health:** The CalSTRS pension fund is now **77% funded**, a significant improvement from 66% a decade ago.
- **Market Reliance:** Investment returns account for **60% of every dollar** in the pension fund, highlighting the school's indirect sensitivity to the stock market.

Enrollment Trends

- **Statewide Decline:** California is projected to lose **1 million students** by 2035 due to lower birth rates and immigration shifts.
- **Strategic Impact:** For Excel, this means increased competition. Maintaining **enrollment stability** and aggressive growth strategies are now essential for long-term fiscal health.

D. LCAP Mid-Year Report - Presented by Jenny Craig, Director of Operations & Accountability

Jenny Craig's Mid-year LCAP update confirmed that all four primary school goals are **fully implemented**, with student outcomes consistently exceeding state averages:

LCAP Goal Performance

- **Academic Growth (Goal 1):** Students continue to outperform state averages in ELA and Math (CAASPP). Data-driven instruction and "deep dives" into results ensure targeted academic support.
- **Engagement & Climate (Goal 2):** High ADA (Average Daily Attendance) is driven by effective interventions for English Learners (ELs) and students with disabilities.
- **Safety & Inclusion (Goal 3):** The school maintains a personalized learning environment with vetted providers and consistent translation services for all families.

- **College/Career Readiness (Goal 4):** Expansion of **A-G courses, CTE pathways, and community college partnerships** ensures high schoolers are on track for graduation.

Budget & Enrollment

- **Fiscal Oversight:** Expenditures align with budgeted allocations, monitored by the CBO and Director of Operations to ensure responsibility.
- **Growth Trends:** The **2025-26 budget reflects an increase** specifically due to **rising student enrollment**, requiring additional staff to maintain instructional quality.

VIII. Consent

A. Consent - Business/Financial Services

1. Check Register - January 2026
2. Cash Payments - January 2026
3. Approval of Document Tracking Services (DTS) Licensing Agreement Renewal
4. Approval of SurveyMonkey Agreement

B. Consent - Education Student/Services

1. Approval of the 2026-2027 Excel Academy Academic School Calendar
2. Approval of the 2026-2027 Master Agreement
3. Approval of the 2026-2027 Acknowledgement of Responsibilities
4. Approval of the Overnight Field Trip to Catalina
1. Approval of the 2026-2027 Excel Academy Academic School Calendar
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C. Consent - Personnel Services

1. Approval of Certificated Personnel Report
2. Approval of Classified Personnel Report
3. Approval of Excel Academy Charter School Comprehensive Safety Plan Revisions

D. Consent - Policy Development

- M. Humphrey made a motion to Bill Hall.
L. Alvarado seconded the motion.

Board Policies: Revised

The following are current policies that have been revised to provide clarity or alignment with changes in law or procedures:

3000 Series - Business Services

3000 - EA Fiscal Control Policy

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

IX. Business Services

A. Approval of Authorization to Establish JPMorgan Chase Sweep Account

S. Fraire made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Houle seconded the motion.

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

B. Approval of the Imagine Edgenuity Licenses

S. Fraire made a motion to Bill Hall.

L. Alvarado seconded the motion.

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

X. Organizational Structure - Annual Meeting of the Board

A. Approval of the Excel Academy 2026-2027 Board Meeting Calendar

S. Houle made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Fraire seconded the motion.

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

B. Election of the Excel Academy Charter Schools Board Officer: President

S. Fraire made a motion to Bill Hall.

M. Humphrey seconded the motion.

Bill Hall was nominated and elected as Board President.

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

C. Election of the Excel Academy Charter Schools Board Officer: Vice President

W. Hall made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Houle seconded the motion.

Mike Humphrey was nominated and elected as Board Vice President.

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

D. Election of the Excel Academy Charter Schools Board Officer: Clerk

M. Humphrey made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Houle seconded the motion.

Steve Fraire was nominated and elected as Board Clerk.

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

XI. Board Comments

A. Comments

The board concluded the session with a strong, unified message of gratitude and commendation for the entire Excel Academy team.

Susan opened the comments with a personal reflection on her commitment to the school's mission, expressing profound gratitude for the opportunity to continue witnessing the "great work" being done.

This sentiment of appreciation was echoed by Mike and Steve, who both specifically lauded Heidi's leadership and emphasized that the school's success is a result of a "wonderful group" and a "unity of purpose."

Larry characterized the presentations as "great information" provided by a "stellar staff," while Steve made a point to recognize not only the leaders present but also the many staff members working behind the scenes.

Overall, the board's remarks painted a picture of a highly cohesive organization where the leadership and staff are deeply aligned in their efforts to support students.

XII. CEO Comments

A. Comments

Heidi concluded with a heartfelt acknowledgment of the board's leadership, specifically thanking President Hall, Vice President Mike, and Clerk Steve for their commitment, while sharing her joy at seeing Susan in attendance. She also highlighted Larry's recent contribution, noting that his expertise added significant value during the team's Admin Summit.

Turning to a major strategic update, Heidi revealed that the school has officially submitted a charter petition to Irvine Unified School District. While she anticipates that "legislative tension" and current moratoriums may lead to a denial at the district level—requiring an eventual appeal to the county—she emphasized the importance of following the proper legal sequence.

The team is currently preparing a 20-minute presentation for a public hearing on March 10th. Heidi noted that they have been studying the Irvine board's culture to ensure their pitch is as effective as possible, framing the move as a vital step toward securing the school's long-term stability and longevity.

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 11:23 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
W. Hall

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