APPROVED

Excel Academy (CA)

Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

Date and Time
Thursday May 14, 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: 996 1940 6308
One tap mobile: +13462487799,,99619406308# US
URL:https://zoom.us/j/99619406308

MISSION STATEMENT

At Excel Academy, we invest in each student by providing a personalized and engaging learning experience centered on a collaborative partnership between school and home that creates unmatched opportunities for excellence and future success.

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 May 14, 2026 at 10:25 AM.

B. Record Attendance

II. Approve/Adopt Agenda

A. Agenda

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

III. Approve Minutes

A. Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting held on March 12, 2026

S. Houle made a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors on 03-12-26.
S. Fraire seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Minutes of the Board Study Session held on April 9, 2026

S. Houle made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Directors Study Session on 04-09-26.
L. Alvarado 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.

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

V. Closed Session

A. Closed Session Agenda

1. Public Employee Performance Evaluation
Pursuant to Gov. Code 54957
a. Annual Performance Evaluation, Superintendent/CEO

VI. Reconvene Regular Meeting

A. Report out any action taken in closed session.

No action was taken.

VII. Correspondence/Proposals/Reports

A. Introduction of New Chief Business Officer - Joe Mills

B. Principals: Year in Review - Presented by April Saade, Elementary Principal, Jenn Sheehey, Virtual Education Principal and Lorrie Wood, Secondary Principal

Elementary Principal April Sade detailed the year-long **Curriculum Quest**, an initiative designed to support home educators managing multiple subjects and grade levels.

- **The Highlights:** The initiative culminated in the **Elementary Parent Power-Up** event. Under the theme *"It takes a hive for students to thrive,"* parents attended curriculum workshops and a bustling "Curriculum Walk" led by expert teachers, while students engaged in robotics, coding, and a reptile zoo.
- **The Pivot:** While the event was a massive success—with 100% of surveyed staff reporting professional growth—attendance at live "Curriculum Communities" dwindled mid-year. Pivoting to parent feedback, the department plans to replace

these with asynchronous, Facebook-style groups next year to better accommodate busy parent schedules.

Secondary Principal Lori Wood focused on how data shapes personalized learning. Three years of data revealed that while students were growing, ELA progress was outpacing math by 30%.

- **The Solution:** To close this gap while preserving curricular choice, five math Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) designed a **"Math to Mastery"** framework.
- **The Deliverables:** Launching this fall, the initiative will provide families with Summer Bridge packets, parent-friendly quarterly "power packets," new formative assessments, and video resources.
- **Other Milestones:** The secondary team also updated its academic integrity policy to address AI in writing, mandated goal-setting for incoming 9th graders, and presented their success at the CSDC conference.

Virtual Principal Jen highlighted three strategic investments aimed at expanding and refining the virtual experience.

- **Early Education:** The program successfully launched **Virtual Kindergarten**, capping rosters at 20 students (split into "Early Eagles" and "Later Gators") for targeted early intervention. Enrollment reached 340 students and is projected to hit 400 next year.
- **Teacher Development:** Over 40 educators participated in a Virtual Teaching Open House to observe peers, while monthly training expanded digital toolboxes with virtual field trips and Nearpod integration.
- **Community Building:** To combat isolation, the department hosted monthly **Fun Fridays** and regional, in-person grade-level meetups. Looking ahead, the program will introduce Virtual TK, transition to the Canvas LMS, and welcome a new virtual education coordinator.

C. Staff Appreciation

Heidi recognized the staff at Excel Academy that are celebrating their 10 year work anniversary this year.

D. Superintendent/CEO 2026-2027 Contract Review & Compensation Study

This presentation outlines the legal requirement for the board to conduct a compensation study before amending an executive’s contract, such as extending the term or increasing pay, to ensure the compensation remains within a reasonable, non-excessive range. Utilizing data from IRS Form 990s and the State Controller’s Office for comparable non-classroom-based and brick-and-mortar schools, the study applied a conservative 3%

annual adjustment to older 2024 data to estimate current market values. The findings established a benchmark average base salary of $258,000 and an average total compensation of $318,000, which the board must now use as a guideline to ensure any new or modified contract for the superintendent aligns with these market averages.

VIII. Consent

A. Consent - Business/Financial Services

B. Consent - Education Student/Services

C. Consent - Personnel Services

D. Consent Items - Policy Development

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

IX. Board Governance

A. Approval of Excel Academy Charter Schools Board of Directors Manual Revisions

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

B. Approval of Resolution No. 2026-001, Increasing Excel Academy Charter Schools Board of Directors' Stipend, Effective January 1, 2026

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

X. 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, 2025, as prepared by CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA)

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

B. Approval of Additional Chromebooks Purchase

S. Houle made a motion to Bill Hall.

S. Fraire seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Approval of Irvine Office Lease with the Irvine Company LLC (Renewal)

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

D. Approval of the Ordering Purchase System (OPS) (Renewal)

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

XI. Education Services

A. Approval of 1st Day School Supplies Boxes for 2026-2027

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

B. Approval of Bright Thinker Service Licenses (Renewal)

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

C. Approval of FlexPoint Education Cloud (Renewal)

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

D. Approval of GoGuardian (Renewal)

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

E. Approval of the Tutor.com (Renewal)

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

XII. Operations

A.

Approval of the Amended Articles of Incorporation

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

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

B. Approval of 2026-2027 Strategic Staffing Plan & Salary Schedules

S. Houle made a motion to Bill Hall.
S. Fraire seconded the motion.
Financial Overview

- **Total Staffing Budget: $13,343,781** (serves as the precursor to the interim budget).
- **Health & Welfare (~$1.7M):** Introducing a cost-effective HMO narrow network and increasing employer contributions ($1,350 to $1,600) to combat rising costs.
- **Retirement (~$1.83M):** Covers the mandated **19.1%** CalSTRS contribution and up to a **7% match** for 403(b)/457 plans.
- **Statutory & Expenses (~$534K combined):** Covers mandatory legal benefits ($403K) and professional development/virtual substitutes ($131K).

Key Structural & Role Changes

- **TOR Evolution:** Redefined the Teacher of Record (TOR) role by absorbing "additional assignments" (mentorship, live instruction, interventions) into the base position. This streamlines reporting, protects staff from burnout, and maximizes retirement benefits.
- **New Program Hires:** Expanding headcount for a CPO, payroll manager, program specialist, school counselors, and marketing staff to support growing enrollment (now past **2,000 students**).

Compensation Study & Salary Adjustments
Backed by a 25-organization peer market study and internal equity audit, the following adjustments will take effect:

- **Salary Increases:** 1.5% baseline adjustment for Gen Ed and Special Ed (ranges moving 1% to 7% overall); 1% to 3% increases for Classified and People Support staff.

- **Operational Alignment:** Synchronized department calendars, fixed range misnomers, and rounded salary schedules to the nearest dollar.

Retention & Leadership

- **The Longevity Mechanism:** Implemented a new compounding pay structure that rewards milestone anniversaries (Years 5, 10, 15, 20, etc.) to boost retention and compound CalSTRS investments.
- **New Specialized Roles:** Curriculum Coordinator, Virtual Education Coordinator, and Marketing & Event Specialist.
- **Key Promotions:**
  - **Nick Romo** to Director of Educational Services.
  - **Lauren Hansen** to Director of Communication and Board Relations.

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

C. Approval of Learning & the Brain Proposal

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

XIV. Comments

A. Board Comments

The Board members expressed deep gratitude for the immense effort, depth of research, and thorough study that went into preparing the outstanding staff and principal reports. Along with celebrating Heidi’s contract renewal and Megan’s excellent hiring practices, the Board warmly welcomed their newest member, Joe. They noted that Joe is joining at a fantastic time because the organization is currently financially solid after bouncing back from leaner years, and they look forward to leveraging his expertise alongside Heidi to set the strategic tone for the future. A major highlight of the discussion was the strong culture of collaboration happening across the organization—among virtual and elementary principals, TORs, staff, and parents. The Board emphasized that strong principal leadership sets the tone for the entire community, creating a joyful, happy school environment that directly contributes to high staff retention and the impressive 10-year milestones celebrated by several team members.

B. CEO Comments

Heidi thanked the Board for their support and highly praised Megan for the incredible depth of thought and hours of hard work poured into the strategic staffing plan. She warmly welcomed Joe, expressing great relief and gratitude for how quickly he has integrated into the organization. Turning to recent school achievements, Heidi celebrated major testing milestones, commending Jenny for her exceptional ability to minimize parent opt-outs, and praising Laura for a historic six-year first: ensuring every special education student showed up for in-person testing, which spared the staff from chasing down makeups. Following a thorough two-hour data review with Parsec, Heidi concluded that she is deeply proud and honored to represent the school and the fabulous work being accomplished by the team.

XV. 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 11:51 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
W. Hall

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