APPROVED

Excel Academy Rhode Island

Minutes

Board of Trustees - Academic Oversight Committee Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday April 24, 2025 at 5:30 PM

Location
Excel Academy Rhode Island
622 Woonasquatucket Ave
North Providence, RI 02911

Meeting Notice Posted Publicly: 4/24/25

Please note: All items listed on the agenda are subject to a possible vote by the Board of Trustees or its subcommittees.

Committee Members Present
A. Kaynor, A. Medeiros, F. Reyes, F. Rojas, I. Blake, K. Cushing, M. Perry, O. Stearns, S. Patton

Committee Members Absent
E. Matson, K. Medina, K. Ring, P. Santiago

Guests Present
C. Chhay, C. Heng, J. Greenthal, M. Rivera

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

F. Rojas called a meeting of the Academic Oversight Committee of Excel Academy Rhode Island to order on Thursday Apr 24, 2025 at 5:31 PM.

C. Public Comment

No members of the public provided comments at this meeting.

D. Approve prior Academic Oversight Committee meeting minutes

F. Reyes made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees - Academic Oversight Committee Meeting on 01-30-25.
I. Blake seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Academic Oversight

A. Update on State of the Schools, Academic Data, and Priorities

S. Patton and F. Reyes and members of the school team provided updates to the Board on the state of the school and student and staff data, as detailed in the Board Academic Data Dashboard and Academic Update Slides that were provided to the school.

C. Chhay asked a clarifying question about the definition of "chronic absenteeism" and efforts that the school team makes to support students with attendance, which S. Patton answered. M. Perry added context about tools and processes the school team uses to support families. F. Reyes provided additional context about chronic absenteeism in MA and RI broadly, and J. Greenthal shared context about industry trends and asked a clarifying question about illness-related policies, which S. Patton answered. M. Perry and S. Patton added that transportation challenges and missing the bus are common reasons for absences.

S. Patton outlined strategies the school is undertaking to narrow gaps to meet the school's academic goals. K. Cushing provided additional context about ownership the team is observing in students of their own academic data.

C. Chhay requested clarification of the WIN acronym, which the team clarified means What I Need and includes individualized tutoring and other academic supports.

C. Chhay requested additional context about what content and skills are taught in ELA classes, which S. Patton and K. Cushing provided.

A. Medeiros provided additional information about efforts the faculty is making to help boost Math achievement score for each individual student and build skills around different types of Math problems and activities.

S. Patton emphasized that faculty are maximizing every minute of instruction time to drive results.

J. Greenthal asked about after-school opportunities, and S. Patton added that this time is difficult to utilize due to most students taking the bus, but M. Perry noted that we have homework club twice per week with additional busing available.

I. Blake asked how we assess the needs of students with disabilities (SWDs) who may need testing accommodations. K. Cushing outlined the practices the school team uses to support SWDs and to determine whether accommodations are appropriate for a student. K. Cushing also noted that the school's social worker is working to support all students with skills and tools to help with testing anxiety. S. Patton noted that student investment is very high in this work – the kids want to do well and have posters up in the hallway celebrating the work they are doing.

C. Heng asked for more information about standardized tools we use for predictive purposes. K. Cushing added that we use MAP testing, and F. Reyes added that the MAP is useful to an extent, but does not include open response questions so is not a perfect indicator. M. Perry noted the screening tools we use for students who may have gaps with literacy. We are currently using Really Great Reading to identify students who may need additional supports.

C. Heng asked for more information about what strategies we use to engage parents as stakeholders in individual student goals. K. Cushing noted that the school team has improved our practices this year from last year and that this is an area of continued focus. We are bringing parents into the conversation during parent conferences effectively but want to communicate more intentionally with students day-to-day in these academic efforts. F. Rojas noted that she and other parents receive updates every week via the parent newsletter, and S. Patton noted that parent conference attendance is over 80%. C. Chhay expressed the importance of ensuring parents are active participants in their kids' educations and thanked the school team for their efforts in this area. M. Rivera provided additional information about strategies other schools use to maximize parent conference attendance and parent engagement in general. F. Rojas added that she observes deep parent engagement and excitement in the parent event settings she attends. C. Heng and C. Chhay suggested that the school could add specific guidance to parents in reports to parents about what they can do to help improve outcomes for their kids.

S. Patton summarized staff data including the following highlights:

- 90% of staff responded positively across core staff survey questions, which is the highest among all Excel campuses and 18% higher than the average at all Excel campuses.

- Staff strongly support the current leadership team, with 100% of staff answering positively that leaders know what's happening in the classroom, 90% trusting leaders to make the right decisions, and 97% optimistic that the school will continue to improve.

S. Patton summarized the following upcoming priorities and noted that the leadership team is focused also on readiness for SY25-26, including

- 8th Grade Planning
- Facility Readiness
- Enrollment
- Academic Goals
- Hiring

S. Patton, O. Stearns, and A. Kaynor updated the school on a successful student recruitment and enrollment cycle. S. Patton also shared updates on staff recruitment and hiring.

B. Discussion & Vote to Recommend Approval of LEA Strategic Plan

A. Kaynor reminded the Board and Committee members about the structure and membership of the School Improvement Team, as detailed in the overview document provided to the Board and Committee members in advance.

F. Reyes updated the school on efforts to update the Strategic Plan and address the following identified needs:

- Continue to improve Average Daily Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism to hit 95% ADA and 15% CA goal.
- Continue to hit our growth target (60 SGP) and improve overall proficiency in Math and ELA RICAS performance
- Improve ACCESS performance for our MLL students

F. Reyes also presented updated LEA Strategic Plan goals, detailed on Slide 13 of the Academic Update Slides that were provided to the Committee, and took and answered clarifying questions from the Committee.
F. Rojas made a motion to approve recommending approval of the LEA Strategic Plan to the Board and to resubmit to RIDE by July 1, 2025, including any necessary edits based on stakeholder feedback.
S. Patton seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Update on Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP) funding

A. Kaynor presented updates on how the school has used and intends to use its resources to support the strategic plan, as captured in the SY24-25 Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP), which was provided to the Committee. One of the goals of this plan is to provide a clear, accessible, and strategically aligned plan for how Excel proposes to use funds in SY25-26 (“FY26”) to continue to advance our objectives for school improvement and student success.

The funds used in Excel's CRP are federal grants under the following programs:

- Title I-A: support districts and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards.
- Title II-A: help LEAs support effective instruction.
- Title IV: improve students’ academic achievement by increasing capacity to provide students with well rounded education, improve school conditions for student learning, improve the use of technology to improve academic achievement and digital literacy.
- IDEA Part B: fund activities that help to ensure that all children with disabilities can access a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services to meet their unique needs.

A. Kaynor noted that stakeholder feedback is gathered from sources that may include but are not limited to – the Academic Oversight Committee and School Improvement Team, a family input meeting and survey, the Family Leadership Council, a staff survey, and meetings with individual staff members. A. Kaynor asked the Academic Oversight Committee and School Improvement Team members to provide individual comments on the CRP to Aaron Stelson, Senior Director of Finance, or schedule time to discuss the CRP with Aaron 1:1 and provide feedback, by May 15, 2025.

III. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

F. Reyes made a motion to adjourn the meeting, having completed the business of the Committee.
F. Rojas seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
F. Rojas
List of documents used in the meeting:
- Agenda

- Prior Meeting Minutes
- LEA Strategic Plan & SIT Team Membership overview document
- New Teacher Observation Rubric
- Quarterly Board Academic Data Dashboard
- Academic Update Slides
- Draft Updated LEA Strategic Plan
- Draft Consolidated Resource Plan

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