APPROVED

Excel Academy Rhode Island

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday February 4, 2026 at 6:00 PM

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

Meeting notice posted publicly on 1/30/26.

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

Trustees Present
B. Smiley, C. Chhay, C. Heng, F. Rojas, J. Greenthal

Trustees Absent
C. Lombardi, I. Blake, L. Giordano, M. Rivera

Guests Present
A. Kaynor, Abeer Khatana, C. Reed, N. Keough, Y. Dubon

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

B. Smiley called a meeting of the board of trustees of Excel Academy Rhode Island to order on Wednesday Feb 4, 2026 at 6:03 PM.

C. Public Comment

No members of the public provided comments at this meeting.

D. Approve Prior Meeting Minutes

C. Chhay made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 12-04-25.
C. Heng seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Academic Oversight

A. High School Planning Updates

O. Stearns introduced N. Keough to the Board and shared brief remarks on N. Keough's deep history and expertise at Excel.

N. Keough provided updates on high school launch planning, as detailed in slides that were provided to the Board. High School Head of School Kate Ring also provided the Board with a video Loom update in advance of the Board meeting. A. Kaynor noted that K. Ring could not be present because she is chaperoning a trip for Excel RI 8th graders to see Excel MA in East Boston.

C. Chhay requested context about the relative size of the Rhode Island team at scale compared to the Massachusetts team, which N. Keough and O. Stearns provided.

C. Chhay asked how the team is thinking about partnership with institutes of higher education, and N. Keough remarked on K. Ring's efforts to build partnerships related to college access and opportunities for collaboration with our experienced College Access & Post-Secondary Success (CAPS) Team in MA.

C. Heng asked how we think about different entry points for students, which N. Keough clarified.

F. Rojas asked about staff transportation, and C. Reed and O. Stearns clarified parking plans for the high school campus.

O. Stearns asked about staff recruitment efforts, and N. Keough updated the Board on open roles and progress so far in filling them.

A. Kaynor notified the Board about a new scholarship opportunity for Excel RI 8th graders to participate in a Brown University STEM Pre-College Program. A. Kaynor will send information about the scholarship to the Board via email.

III. Real Estate

A. Real Estate Search Updates & Votes

O. Stearns provided updates on the real estate search and reviewed current and prospective projects with the Board.

O. Stearns, C. Reed, and A. Kaynor answered clarifying questions from the Board.

A. Kaynor outlined three real estate votes before the Board, detailed in the resolution and lease documents that were provided to the Board in advance.
C. Heng made a motion to ratify the 291 Westminster Street lease as presented.
B. Smiley seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
B. Smiley made a motion to approve the SBA 2 resolutions, with any necessary edits or corrections.
C. Chhay seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
C. Chhay made a motion to approve the SBA Stage 1 resolutions, with any necessary edits or corrections.
B. Smiley seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

IV. Governance

A. Approve Update to Academic Oversight Committee & SIT Membership

A. Kaynor summarized proposed updates to the school's Academic Oversight Committee and SIT (School Improvement Team) membership to remove inactive members.
C. Chhay made a motion to approve updating the Academic Oversight Committee & SIT (School Improvement Team) membership to remove inactive members: Katie Medina and Elizabeth Matson.
J. Greenthal seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Approve CMO Agreement Process Resolutions

A. Kaynor reviewed the CMO Agreement Process resolutions with the Board.
B. Smiley made a motion to approve the CMO Agreement Process resolutions, with any necessary edits or corrections.
C. Chhay seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

V. Board Engagement & Development

A. Fundraising Update

O. Stearns provided the following updates the Board:

School & Team Recognition:

- Both the Commissioner and Secretary of Education in MA visited Excel Academy Charter High School in East Boston for a school recognition and national Milken teacher award ceremony, which Channavy Chhay attended on behalf of the Excel RI Board.
- Excel's team continues to be invited to present at conferences locally and nationally to share best practices with other schools:
    - **Owen Stearns & Nina Keough** presented to a national CSGF group on staff engagement.
    - **Darren Gray** led a best practices seminar on classroom observation rubric at the Celebrating Academic Success Conference with district and charter leaders.
    - **Estevan Puerta** was awarded a $10,000 "Proven Practices" grant in recognition of exceptional leadership in the CSGF Enrollment community and the impact he has had on charter leaders across the country - particularly with a case study he presented in the fall. The honorarium is about celebrating three things:
        - Achieving top-tier enrollment performance - the kind of strong results in part of the enrollment funnel that rank among the best in the CSGF portfolio
        - Incredible generosity of time and expertise, investing hours to create the case study
        - Stepping up time and again - through webinars, peer presentations, and countless conversations - to help others learn from his experience
    - **Ferny Reyes** presented on Excel's organizational learning triad and data tools at a District Data Leaders Network of Massachusetts seminar.
    - **Arthur Kaynor** presented for a second time this year on family engagement and advocacy at a national CSGF conference.

Student Recruitment:

- The lottery is coming up on April 1. Student recruitment efforts are underway. We continue to see strong demand from prospective families, especially at key transition grades. We encourage Board members to share information about Excel RI within their communities to help get the word out to parents before the March 18th application deadline.

Fundraising:

- The Board is on track for 90%+ participation in annual fundraising this year.
- We anticipate receiving a $2M gift to support the high school launch within the next week.
- We are holding Zoom Charter 101 info sessions with members of the community to help educate folks about charter public schools. The first event was well attended, and we encourage Board members to consider hosting their own.

B. Upcoming Events

A. Kaynor previewed upcoming events with the Board.

VI. 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 6:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
C. Chhay
List of documents used in the meeting:

- Agenda
- Prior meeting minutes
- High school planning update video and slides
- SBA Stage 2 resolutions
- SBA Stage 1 resolutions
- Lease-to-purchase documents and leaseback addendum
- CMO agreement process resolutions

The public is welcome to attend any meeting of the Board of Trustees or its subcommittees. If communication assistance (readers/ interpreters/captions) or any other accommodations are needed to ensure equal participation, please contact Arthur Kaynor at akaynor@excelacademy.org at least two (2) business days prior to the meeting. Any changes in the agenda will be posted on Excel Academy Charter School's website, Excel's principal place of business, and will be electronically filed with the Secretary of State at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting. If you would like to attend a Board meeting and provide public comment, please sign up 48 hours in advance here: https://forms.gle/7315BJ7v1bHGGh2Q9.

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