APPROVED

Excel Academy Rhode Island

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday September 2, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Location
Excel Academy Rhode Island High School
291 Westminster St., 5th Floor
Providence, RI 02903

Meeting notice posted publicly on 8/29/26.

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

Trustees Present
C. Chhay, C. Heng, F. Rojas, J. Greenthal, J. Silver, L. Giordano

Trustees Absent
B. Smiley, C. Lombardi, M. Rivera

Guests Present
A. Kaynor, A. Stelson, C. Reed, O. Stearns, Y. Dubon

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

C. Chhay called a meeting of the board of trustees of Excel Academy Rhode Island to order on Wednesday Sep 2, 2026 at 6:07 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 06-02-26.
L. Giordano seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Academic Oversight

A. Academic Update

No discussion or voting topics were scheduled under Academic Oversight. A. Kaynor encouraged all Board members to attend the Academic Oversight Committee meeting on Monday, November 9, 2026, at 5:30 PM for a comprehensive academic update.

III. CEO Report

A. CEO Report

O. Stearns reflected on the significance of convening the Board at the new Excel Academy Rhode Island High School campus, which represented the culmination of a multi-year effort.

O. Stearns reported that the high school opened on August 25, 2026, with 132 ninth-grade students and that the middle school continued to serve approximately 450 students. The school remained fully enrolled, although the ninth-grade class experienced more late-summer turnover than initially projected. The school-year launch had gone well, with substantial support from the Network Team and only routine operational issues associated with opening a new campus.

O. Stearns discussed public-safety concerns near the high school, particularly during arrival and dismissal. The school had increased staff presence outside the building, was arranging more consistent security support, and was coordinating with the City and local partners.

C. Heng asked whether students had expressed concerns. O. Stearns explained that a small number of students had witnessed concerning incidents, but the Head of School did

not believe there was widespread concern. F. Rojas noted that students understood that the school was located in a downtown environment. L. Giordano described similar conditions observed nearby, offered to help connect the school with local partners, and noted the positive visibility of Excel staff greeting students outside the building. A. Kaynor noted that relevant family communications would be shared with the Board.

O. Stearns reported that early academic indicators appeared promising, although final results had not yet been publicly released. A. Kaynor encouraged Board members to attend the November Academic Oversight Committee meeting for a fuller review.

O. Stearns provided an update on the school's facility projects. The 291 Westminster Street project was midway through the RIDE School Building Authority Stage III process, and the Building Committee had approved the Design Development submission earlier that evening. The school expected to close on the purchase on September 16, after which the Board would consider an amended budget reflecting the final purchase details. The school also planned to submit its Stage 2 application for the proposed gymnasium facility at 40 Snow Street by September 15.

O. Stearns reviewed the Rhode Island charter-renewal process and thanked F. Rojas, J. Greenthal, C. Chhay, and C. Heng for representing the Board during the application and site visit. Unofficial feedback from RIDE had been positive, and the school anticipated receiving a draft renewal report shortly. The school might ask Board members to attend a Council on Elementary and Secondary Education meeting in November and speak about Excel's work.

O. Stearns provided a fundraising update, including a recent, new $2 million grant that includes a $250,000 local matching requirement. Excel also received a $10,000 gift from the Charter School Growth Fund recognizing Excel's governance contributions.

O. Stearns and A. Kaynor asked every Excel RI and Friends Board member to make a personally meaningful campaign gift by the end of 2026 and invite prospective supporters to the high school ribbon-cutting and donor breakfast. O. Stearns noted that the campaign was also intended to build a long-term base of local support for the College Access and Post-Secondary Success program in Rhode Island.

O. Stearns concluded with a Board recruitment update. Excel aims to recruit two Rhode Island Board members and three Massachusetts Board members, with fundraising capacity, community connections, and academic expertise as priorities. A. Kaynor and Y. Dubon would schedule individual check-ins beginning in late September to discuss recruitment and campaign prospects.

IV. Real Estate

A. Approve Real Estate Resolutions

A. Kaynor presented the Resolutions Approving Gymnasium Facility Project and Submission of Stage 2 Necessity of School Construction Application. A. Kaynor explained that the resolutions would approve the proposed gymnasium project at 40 Snow Street substantially as described in the Stage 2 application and authorize submission to RIDE and the School Building Authority.

A. Kaynor noted that the final project scope, cost, State Share, Local Share, and financing plan remained under development and would be subject to any additional Board approvals required.
C. Chhay made a motion to approve the Stage 2 Necessity of School Construction Application Resolutions as presented.
J. Greenthal seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

V. Governance

A. Authorize Treasurer to submit annual report filing

A. Kaynor explained that the authorization would allow the Treasurer to complete required filings with the Rhode Island Secretary of State.
L. Giordano made a motion to re-authorize the Treasurer to submit filings with the Rhode Island Secretary of State on behalf of the organization reflecting its current information and membership, including annual report filings between February 1 and May 1 and any other mid-year filings that may be necessary.
J. Silver seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Annual Review of Executive Session Minutes

A. Kaynor explained that the Board was conducting its annual review of the executive-session minutes dated January 30, 2025 and that the student-privacy and school-safety considerations supporting nondisclosure remained applicable.
C. Chhay made a motion to determine, following review, that the executive-session minutes dated January 30, 2025 should continue to be sealed and withheld from public disclosure because the student-privacy and school-safety considerations supporting nondisclosure remain applicable, subject to future review as required by law.
C. Heng seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Ratify Annual Policies, Manuals, and Handbooks; Approve Civil Law Enforcement Policy

A. Kaynor reviewed the School’s annual policy-review process and explained that the materials had been reviewed by the appropriate staff and, where applicable, legal counsel. Most of the revisions were routine annual updates or clarifications.

Notable updates included changes to the student and family handbooks, a Personal Electronic Device Policy required by RIDE, updates reflecting the addition of the Rhode Island high school, and a new public-facing policy concerning interactions with civil law enforcement.

A. Kaynor confirmed that there were no changes to the Title IX Policy and provided the Board's annual training regarding its oversight and appeal responsibilities under the policy.

A. Kaynor explained that Excel had maintained strong confidential procedures concerning civil law-enforcement interactions for several years. The new public-facing policy reflected recently issued statewide requirements and several modest improvements but did not meaningfully change the School's approach. The same policy was being presented to each of Excel's three Boards to maintain alignment while allowing the School's detailed procedures to remain confidential.

C. Heng, O. Stearns, and J. Greenthal requested additional context regarding the public-facing policy, which A. Kaynor provided.

L. Giordano asked whether wearable technology such as Meta smart glasses would be covered by the Personal Electronic Device Policy. A. Kaynor explained that the policy was drafted broadly and that staff expected it to apply to connected wearable devices.
L. Giordano made a motion to ratify the SY26-27 policies, manuals, and handbooks listed in the annual review protocol and made available to the Board, subject to any necessary edits or corrections, and to approve the Policy and Public Procedures for Interactions with Civil Law Enforcement.
C. Heng seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Approve Updated Leadership Evaluation Protocols

A. Kaynor reviewed the updated Head of School and CEO and CMO evaluation protocols. A. Kaynor explained that the protocols clarify and align responsibilities across Excel's three Boards without making a notable change to the Excel Rhode Island Board's role.

A. Kaynor also previewed a short annual survey intended to provide more structured Board feedback on CMO performance. Board members were asked to complete the survey by September 16, 2026.
J. Silver made a motion to approve the updated Head of School and CEO and CMO Evaluation Protocols, pending any edits that may be required after reviewing with Excel's other two Boards.
F. Rojas seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

E.

Renew CMO Agreement

A. Kaynor and C. Heng reviewed the proposed renewal of the CMO Agreement and Services and Fee Addendum between Excel Academy Rhode Island and Friends of Excel Academy Charter Schools, Inc.

A. Kaynor explained that the agreement was a routine renewal and did not change the fundamental relationship between the entities. The management fee would decrease from 14 percent to 12.25 percent of Public Revenues, consistent with the Board's five-year financial model. Most other revisions consisted of technical updates and clarifications.

Each entity retained separate legal counsel, and the Treasurer of each Board participated in the review. No significant concerns were identified.

C. Heng and J. Greenthal requested additional context regarding the basis for the management fee. A. Kaynor and O. Stearns explained that the fee was incorporated into the long-term financial model, aligned with the parallel Massachusetts agreement, and reflected the scope of centralized services provided by Friends of Excel.

A. Kaynor noted that the agreement would become effective only upon charter renewal and would conform to the renewal term approved by the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education.
C. Chhay made a motion to approve the renewed CMO Agreement and Services and Fee Addendum between Excel Academy Rhode Island and Friends of Excel Academy Charter Schools, Inc., authorize the Treasurer to approve any non-substantive or authorizer-required revisions, and execute the final agreements on behalf of the Board, provided that the agreement will become effective only upon charter renewal, with the agreement's term conforming to the renewal term approved by the Rhode Island Council of Elementary & Secondary Education.
J. Greenthal seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

F. Update on Charter Renewal Process & Timeline

A. Kaynor noted that O. Stearns had provided the substantive charter-renewal update during the CEO report. The school anticipated receiving RIDE's draft renewal report shortly and would share it with the Board when received.

VI. Finance

A. Approve Banking Resolutions

A. Stelson and O. Stearns explained that the proposed resolutions would authorize additional banking and investment accounts to provide greater security, flexibility, and diversification.

The new accounts would be subject to the Treasurer's prior written approval and the school's existing investment policies and financial controls. Following approval, the Managing Director of Finance would be authorized to establish and maintain the accounts.
C. Chhay made a motion to approve the resolutions authorizing new banking and investment accounts, as presented.
L. Giordano seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. FYI - Reminder about FY26 Annual Audit

A. Kaynor reminded Board members that the Excel Academy Rhode Island audit review and approval meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, December 2, 2026, from 5:30 to 7:00 PM at the Center for Southeast Asians.

VII. Other Business

A. Community Updates

L. Giordano suggested that the School explore whether a SMART health clinic model might be relevant to future facilities projects. O. Stearns noted that staff could explore its potential applicability to the planned gymnasium facility. C. Chhay noted the potential regulatory complexity. No action was taken.

L. Giordano and C. Heng shared brief informational updates regarding opportunities for civic awareness and engagement during the fall. No action was taken.

VIII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

C. Chhay made a motion to adjourn the meeting, having completed the Board's business.
L. Giordano seconded the motion.
The board **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 7:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
C. Chhay
List of documents used at this meeting:

- Meeting agenda
- Minutes from the June 2, 2026 Board of Trustees Meeting
- SY26-27 Board Recruitment Overview
- Excel Board Member Job Description

- Resolutions Approving Gymnasium Facility Project and Submission of Stage 2 Necessity of School Construction Application
- Executive-session minutes dated January 30, 2025
- Board Policy for Annual Governing Policy and Program Reviews
- SY26-27 policies, manuals, and handbooks identified in the annual review protocol
- Policy and Public Procedures for Interactions with Civil Law Enforcement
- Title IX Policy
- Board Protocol for CEO and CMO Oversight and Evaluation
- Board Protocol for Head of School Oversight
- Summary of Updates to the 2027-32 CMO Agreement
- Services and Fee Addendum
- CMO Agreement
- Resolutions Authorizing New Banking and Investment Accounts

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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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