APPROVED

Da Vinci Schools

Minutes

Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County Board Meeting (RISE High)

Date and Time
Wednesday April 23, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Location
201 N. Douglas Street El Segundo, CA

Da Vinci Schools ("DV") welcomes your participation at its Board meetings. The purpose of a public meeting of
the Board of Trustees ("Board") is to conduct the affairs of DV in public. Your participation assures us of
continuing community interest in our schools. To assist you in speaking/participating in our meetings, the
following guidelines are provided:

1. The meeting is accessible online at https://zoom.us/j/97035654400, or dial (669) 900-6833 and use
   Meeting ID: 970 3565 4400.
2. Agendas are available to all audience members on the Da Vinci Schools website www.davincischools.org.
3. Audience members who wish may speak on any agenda items or under the general category of "Public
   Comments," which is time set aside for members of the audience to raise issues not specifically on the
   agenda. However, due to public meeting laws, the Board can only listen to your issue, not respond or take
   action. These presentations are limited to three (3) minutes each and total time allotted to non-agenda

items will not exceed twenty (20) minutes. Non-English speakers who use a translator shall have six (6)
minutes in which to address the Board.

4. The Board may give direction to staff to respond to your concern or you may be offered the option of
returning with a citizen-requested item.
5. The chair will recognize such individuals who wish to speak on a specific agenda item at the appropriate
time. When addressing the Board, speakers are requested to adhere to the time limits set forth, and to not
repeat remarks made by those who preceded them.
6. Any public records relating to an agenda item for an open session of the Board which are distributed to all,
or a majority of all, of the Board members shall be available for public inspection at 201 N. Douglas Street,
El Segundo, CA 90245, during Business Office operating hours. Please contact the CEO's office at 310-
725-5800.

The agenda and documents in the agenda packet will be made available, if requested, in appropriate alternative
formats to any person with a disability as required by the ADA, 42 USC section 12132, and the federal rules and
regulations adopted in implementation thereof. To request a disability-related modification or accommodation,
including auxiliary aids or services, you must contact the CEO's office at 310-725-5800 at least 48 hours before
a regular meeting, and at least 12 hours before a special meeting. (Government Code § 54954.2(a)(1).)

Trustees Present
C. McCullough, C. Taylor, L. Jennings, T. Johnstone

Trustees Absent
None

Guests Present
E. Whalen, M. Amato (remote), M. Wunder, N. Lara, S. Ehuan-Avila, V. Bravo, V. Rodriguez (remote)

I. Opening Items

A.

Call the Meeting to Order

L. Jennings called a meeting of the board of trustees of Da Vinci Schools to order on Wednesday Apr 23, 2025 at 6:06 PM.

B. Record Attendance and Guests

C. Approval of Agenda

T. Johnstone made a motion to Approve the Agenda.
C. McCullough seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

D. Public Comments

II. Information: Board Comments and/or Administrative Reports

A. From the Board

Board members shared a spirit of encouragement and collegiality at the beginning of the meeting. Remarks focused on the excitement surrounding student academic and personal growth, creating a lighthearted and welcoming atmosphere for all attendees.

Board Chair Lida Jennings provided an update on the ongoing Board of Trustees candidate outreach process:
Outreach was conducted to a pool of potential new Board of Trustees candidates specifically for Da Vinci RISE High.

Five candidates have confirmed interest in joining the Board; however, one promising candidate from Kinecta Credit Union ultimately declined participation following initial conversations.

Three 30-minute interview blocks have been scheduled with the interested candidates to learn more about their backgrounds and alignment with RISE’s mission.

A standardized set of interview questions was collaboratively developed by leadership to ensure consistency and fairness throughout the interview process.

Following the interviews, Erin Whalen and Naomi Lara will present a shortlist of top candidates to the full board for discussion and consideration.

No final decisions will be made without full board input, preserving transparency and collaboration throughout the selection process.

B. From the CEO/Superintendent

Erin highlighted several strategic and operational updates:

CYBHI Funding Opportunity: Through California's Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI), Da Vinci is now positioned to receive reimbursement for behavioral and mental health services. This development has the potential to make these services financially sustainable, especially at RISE.

Reimbursements will be processed via Care Solace, a platform that integrates service documentation and billing.

Staff including counselors and case managers will log sessions in Care Solace in addition to PowerSchool, ensuring alignment and maximizing funding recovery.

Services eligible for reimbursement may include college counseling, socioemotional support, and case management—all common at RISE.

Professional Development for Mental Health Teams:
Erin is developing a counseling scope and sequence across all Da Vinci campuses.
PD will include Mental Health First Aid, Crisis Response, PMRT protocols, and data-informed decision-making.

Two full-day summer trainings are planned, representing a new commitment to deep-dive training for counselors, psychologists, and case managers.

Erin meets biweekly with a mental health leadership cohort of about 30 professionals across all Da Vinci schools. The group shares best practices, discusses case trends (e.g., eating disorders), and aligns on data collection protocols.

C. From the Assistant Superintendents

Michelle commended the RISE team on several fronts:
Celebrated the successful submission of the P2 report, which reflected significantly improved attendance (ADA).

Acknowledged how different the data and conversations are compared to a year ago, signaling strong organizational improvement.

Reaffirmed that mastery-based grading is being refocused across the network. A return to this foundational practice is underway to ensure:
Consistent understanding of what mastery means,
How it is assessed, and
Why it is critical to equitable student outcomes.

Michelle praised Naomi and the RISE team for their leadership in competency-based education:

Emphasized “chunking” content for students who enter at various stages in life or academic pathways.

Noted that Naomi’s team is engaging in differentiated assistance (DA) work thoughtfully and transparently.

Highlighted RISE’s inclusion of all staff—not just instructors—in DA professional development to foster collective ownership.

D. RISE High Update

Naomi Lara presented a comprehensive update on RISE High’s operations, performance data, and upcoming events.

Enrollment & Demographics:
As of the meeting, RISE High enrollment totaled 193 students across both the APCH and Richstone sites.

37% of enrolled students identify as foster youth, probation-involved, or experiencing housing instability.

The number of English Learner (EL) students has increased to 25, prompting targeted support and ELPAC testing coordination.

There has been a noticeable rise in the number of pregnant and parenting students.

Leadership is exploring the possibility of instituting an enrollment cap or lottery waitlist to ensure new enrollments this late in the year are positioned for success—though immediate enrollment will always be prioritized for foster and high-needs students.

Attendance (ADA):
RISE achieved an Average Daily Attendance (ADA) rate of 73.5% for Month 8, the highest Month 8 ADA in RISE’s history.

Continuous improvement efforts, led by Jonathan, include streamlining attendance tracking systems and building outreach structures to reconnect with students who have withdrawn or become disengaged.

Differentiated Assistance (DA):
RISE is currently in the DA process due to flagged performance indicators for socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

The school received “red” status on the California Dashboard for Graduation Rate, ELA, and Math.

Naomi detailed the 5-phase DA improvement process, which includes:
A SWOT analysis of dashboard indicators,
A root cause review (e.g., 2024 test participation rates of 36% for ELA, 34% for Math),
Analysis of local data (with disaggregated dashboards developed by Chris Miller),
Identifying a problem of practice,
Creating an action plan supported by evidence-based interventions.

Naomi emphasized that every staff member—not just instructors—is involved in the professional development cycle to ensure data literacy and collective responsibility for improvement.

Testing & Student Incentives:
CASP participation has significantly increased, with a 60% completion rate, up from 36% in 2024.
ELPAC testing completion currently stands at 74.5%, with a goal of reaching 100% by the May 30 state deadline.
Student participation is being encouraged through creative incentives including:
Topgolf packages secured through external partnerships,
Gift card raffles, bikes, and movie passes.
Naomi shared that framing test participation as a civic duty (comparing it to voting) has been a powerful motivator for student engagement.

Upcoming Events:
Leadership Manhattan Beach Makerspace Launch at the APCH site on April 24, featuring a student-designed mobile innovation lab.
Student Exhibitions are scheduled for:
June 2–3 at the Richstone site,
June 5–6 at the APCH site.
Exhibitions will follow a “science fair” format with open walk-throughs.
Graduation Ceremony: Scheduled for Friday, June 13 at 4:00 PM.

E. Financial Update

Michael Amato delivered an update on RISE High’s financial performance, focusing on the school’s strong fiscal position and recent positive developments in funding.

Balance Sheet Highlights (as of February 2025):
Cash: $1.2 million – temporarily elevated due to recent grant disbursements; expected to be spent down according to program plans.
Accounts Receivable: Approximately $410,000, reflecting regular monthly cycles.
Deferred Revenue: High, due to unspent prepaid grant funds that are earmarked for future use.

Net Asset Increase: A current surplus of $77,000, aligned with second interim projections for a year-end net positive balance.

Profit & Loss (Year-to-Date through February):
Revenue is tracking $1,500 ahead of projections, primarily due to adjusted allocations from prior-year state funding.
Expenditures remain in line with budget forecasts, showing tight financial management across departments.

P2 Submission and ADA Impact:
RISE submitted the Second Principal Apportionment (P2) to LACOE with strong results:
ADA: 126, outperforming the projected 118.6 ADA.
ADA Rate: 73.4%, a significant improvement and milestone for the school.
The higher ADA resulted in approximately $130,000 in additional LCFF revenue, above earlier conservative estimates.

Michael noted that surplus funding may be used to:
Enhance student programming in the short term, or
Offset future grant needs by deferring spending and preserving resources for future academic years.

F. Facilities Update

During the April 23rd Board Meeting, facilities-related updates focused on key initiatives around safety improvements, space planning, and site readiness to support student engagement and program needs.

Key Highlights:
Safety Improvements:
Ongoing enhancements were discussed to ensure physical safety and well-being of students and staff at both APCH and Richstone sites. This includes maintaining secure entries, emergency preparedness resources, and ensuring compliance with fire and safety regulations.

Space Planning and Optimization:
With enrollment growing toward capacity, discussions included strategic planning to maximize classroom space and ensure appropriate room configurations to accommodate instructional, counseling, and wraparound service needs.

This includes optimizing shared use of multipurpose rooms and exploring mobile or modular options to support small group interventions, special education services, and case management meetings.

Makerspace Launch at APCH (April 24):

Naomi Lara shared excitement for the Leadership Manhattan Beach Makerspace unveiling, made possible through a collaboration with Teach For America fellow Justin Hong and his leadership cohort.

The mobile makerspace cart was recently assembled and will serve as a hands-on creative and STEM learning hub for students.

Students at APCH, including Adrienne and Angel, expressed strong enthusiasm for the space, noting that it filled a gap in experiential learning tools and resources.

The grand opening event was scheduled for April 24 from 11 AM to 12 PM, with board and community leaders attending.

Student-Driven Design Feedback:
Students were directly involved in the visioning and feedback process for the Makerspace setup, offering insight into their learning needs and preferred resources.
These facilities developments reflect RISE High's ongoing commitment to building safe, innovative, and responsive learning environments that align with the school's mission of serving high-need youth through personalized, project-based learning.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. Approve Minutes of the March 19, 2025 Regular Board Meeting

L. Jennings made a motion to approve the minutes from Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County Board Meeting (RISE High) on 03-19-25.
C. Taylor seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

IV. Action Items

A. Accept February 2025 Check and EFT Transactions Per Management

L. Jennings made a motion to Approve the February 2025 Check and EFT Transactions Per Management.
C. McCullough seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Approve 2024-2025 LACOE Annual Report

L. Jennings made a motion to Approve the 2024-2025 LACOE Annual Report.
C. Taylor seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

C.

Approve 2025-26 DVLAC RISE High Academic Calendar

T. Johnstone made a motion to Approve the 2025-26 DVLAC RISE High Academic Calendar.
L. Jennings seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

V. Closed Session

A. Conference with Legal Counsel

The Board reconvened for public session at 8:14 PM. Lida Jennings shared that there is nothing to report.

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

T. Johnstone made a motion to Adjourn Meeting.
C. Taylor seconded the motion.
There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.
The board **VOTED** 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 8:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
S. Ehuan-Avila

Next Regular Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County Board meeting: Wednesday, May 21, 2025.