APPROVED

Da Vinci Schools

Minutes

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

Date and Time
Wednesday August 13, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Location
Mona Lisa, 201 N Douglas St, El Segundo, CA 90245

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://davincischools-org.zoom.us/j/98035787266 or dial (669) 444-9171 and use Meeting ID: 980 3578 7266.
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. Brown, C. McCullough, L. Jennings, S. Nellman, T. Johnstone

Trustees Absent
C. Taylor

Guests Present
E. Whalen, J. Crouch, M. Amato (remote), M. Rainey, M. Wunder, N. Lara, 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 Aug 13, 2025 at 6:02 PM.

B. Record Attendance

C. Approve the Agenda

T. Johnstone made a motion to approve the agenda.
L. Jennings seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

T. Johnstone	Aye
C. Taylor	Absent
S. Nellman	Abstain
C. McCullough	Aye

Roll Call

C. Brown	Abstain
L. Jennings	Aye

D. Public Comments

None.

II. Special Board Action

A. Accept Resignation of Board Member

C. McCullough made a motion to accept the resignation of Chris Taylor from the Da Vinci RISE Board of Directors.
T. Johnstone seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

T. Johnstone	Aye
C. Taylor	Absent
S. Nellman	Abstain
C. McCullough	Aye
L. Jennings	Aye
C. Brown	Abstain

B. Election of Dr. Stephen Nellman to Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County Board of Directors (Term Until 8/13/28)

T. Johnstone made a motion to accept the election of Stephan Nellman as a member of the Da Vinci RISE Board of Directors.
C. McCullough seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. McCullough	Aye
T. Johnstone	Aye
L. Jennings	Aye
C. Taylor	Absent

C. Election of Dr. Carroll Brown III to Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County Board of Directors (Term Until 8/13/28)

L. Jennings made a motion to accept the election of Carrol Brown as a member of the Da Vinci RISE Board of Directors.
C. McCullough seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. McCullough	Aye

Roll Call

T. Johnstone	Aye
L. Jennings	Aye
C. Taylor	Absent

D. Swearing-In of New Members

New board members, Stephen Nellman and Carroll Brown, were sworn in following the approval of the board.

E. Approve Extension of Board Terms for Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County Board Member Tom Johnstone

C. McCullough made a motion to approve the extension of board member Tom Johnstone's term through August 30, 2028.
L. Jennings seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

S. Nellman	Aye
T. Johnstone	Abstain
C. Taylor	Absent
L. Jennings	Aye
C. McCullough	Aye
C. Brown	Aye

III. Information

A. From the Board

Board Member Tom Johnstone reported on an opportunity to meet with community partner regarding their foster care program.

B. From the CEO/Superintendent

CEO/Superintendent of Schools, Matt Wunder, updated the board by noting the unique strength of the board, highlighting that five members hold doctorates, a reflection of their deep commitment to education. He expressed excitement for the new year and reflected on RISE’s recent graduation, describing it as both inspiring and heart-wrenching, with the largest graduating class to date. While celebrating this milestone, he acknowledged the challenge it creates for enrollment, emphasizing that enrollment is the lifeblood of the schools and previewing an upcoming update on efforts and progress in that area.

C. From the Assistant Superintendents

Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services, Erin Whalen, shared updates on student support services and immigration preparedness efforts. Tomorrow, all RISE and Da Vinci counselors—including behavior interventionists, interns, and psychologists—will

receive training on trauma-informed care, adverse childhood experiences, and Care Solace/Medi-Cal billing, which will allow RISE to recover funding for services already being provided. Additional training will focus on integrated referral protocols to clarify who RISE serves, and an attorney from Neighborhood Legal Services will provide immigration preparedness training for staff. Counselors will also receive guidance on special education goal-writing. Recently, security and grounds staff were trained in trauma-informed care to reduce disciplinary actions and improve de-escalation strategies. RISE's immigration preparedness plan has been shared with LACO and Wiseburn, aligning regional communication with families. Erin also announced an $80,000 grant from the Deutsch Family Foundation, which could lead to multi-year funding support.

The team has been strengthening external partnerships, including outreach to the Children's Law Center, which may generate direct student referrals, and ongoing collaboration with Wiseburn. RISE is also engaging in national education conversations through the Lone Rock Rhythm Project, with plans for RISE students to participate in discussions on AI, social-emotional learning, and advisory practices.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Michelle Rainey, outlined tomorrow's parallel work for teachers, focusing on mastery-based grading and eventually mastery-based learning, with support from Marzano's Humanized Education framework. Teachers will collaborate in content-alike groups to identify essential skills, align them with XQ competencies, and reflect on progress in grading practices. Curriculum updates include adopting Subject.com as the organization's virtual learning platform, emphasizing improvements in math instruction, and implementing the new ethnic studies graduation requirement across English courses for flexibility. Michelle also previewed a forthcoming, RISE-specific graduation policy that clarifies pathways and requirements.

Together, these initiatives reflect a broad focus on student well-being, trauma-informed practices, instructional innovation, expanded partnerships, and sustainable program development.

D. RISE High Update

Current enrollment stands at 155 students, with a goal of reaching 185. Since the end of last year, 12 new students have enrolled. The student body reflects diverse experiences and needs, with 20% identified as current or former foster youth, 8% having experienced housing instability, and another 8% with involvement in the juvenile justice system. At the Richstone site, 37% of students have IEPs, compared to 22% at the APCH site, and 19% of students are English language learners.

On the instructional side, the school is implementing a mastery-based grading and learning approach to better support student growth. The subject.com platform has been adopted to meet virtual and remote learning needs, while a strong emphasis is being placed on improving math instruction. The new ethnic studies requirement is being

integrated into English courses, and the school is developing career and technical education pathways in mental health and digital media to expand student opportunities.

E. Financial Update

The 2024–2025 school year ended with a $360,000 surplus, significantly higher than the projected $112,583. This stronger-than-expected outcome was driven by several key factors, including higher enrollment and Average Daily Attendance (72% compared to the historical low 60s), $171,500 in additional revenue—primarily from increased LCFF funding—and $74,000 in expense savings resulting from staffing gaps and reduced spending in select areas. The school also closed the year with a cash balance of $1.5 million, bolstered in part by grant funding received in advance. Looking ahead, the 2025–2026 budget is supported by several positive factors: an $80,000 unbudgeted grant from the Deutsche Foundation, a $40,000 new state discretionary block grant, and approximately $20,000 in additional state grant funding.

F. Facilities Update

No update.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. Approve Minutes of the July 3, 2025 Special Board Meeting

T. Johnstone made a motion to approve the minutes from Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County Special Board Meeting (RISE High) on 07-03-25.
L. Jennings seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Approve Minutes of the July 21, 2025 Regular Board Meeting

T. Johnstone made a motion to approve the minutes from Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County Board Meeting (RISE High) on 07-21-25.
L. Jennings seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

V. Action Items

A. Approve Facility Agreement Between RISE High and Richstone Family Center (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026)

The Richstone facility agreement was renewed at $93,000 per year, compared to the $118,000 that had been budgeted.
T. Johnstone made a motion to approve the facilities agreement between Da Vinci RISE and Richstone Family Center.
S. Nellman seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

T. Johnstone	Aye
C. Brown	Aye
L. Jennings	Aye
C. Taylor	Absent
S. Nellman	Aye
C. McCullough	Aye

B. Approve Memorandum of Understanding Between RISE High and A Place Called Home (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026)

At A Place Called Home (APCH), the facility agreement reflects a $50,000 increase from last year, along with regained access to the larger theater space. The final negotiated rate is $2.50 per square foot, down from the initial $3.18 per square foot proposal. In addition, the school continues to explore potential new facility options.

C. McCullough made a motion to approve the facilities agreement between Da Vinci RISE and A Place Called Home (APCH).

S. Nellman seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

T. Johnstone	Aye
C. Taylor	Absent
S. Nellman	Aye
C. Brown	Aye
C. McCullough	Aye
L. Jennings	Aye

C. Approve 2025-2026 Report of Alternative Authorization of Teaching Assignments

T. Johnstone made a motion to approve the 2025-2026 Report of Alternative Authorization of Teaching Assignments.

S. Nellman seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

S. Nellman	Aye
T. Johnstone	Aye
C. Taylor	Absent
L. Jennings	Aye
C. McCullough	Aye
C. Brown	Aye

D. Accept June 2025 Check and EFT Transactions Per Management

C. McCullough made a motion to accept the June 2025 Check and EFT Transactions.

L. Jennings seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

C. McCullough	Aye
C. Brown	Aye
T. Johnstone	Aye
C. Taylor	Absent
L. Jennings	Aye
S. Nellman	Aye

E. Approve 2024-25 Year End Unaudited Actuals

L. Jennings made a motion to approve the 2024-2025 Year End Unaudited Actuals.
C. Brown seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. McCullough	Aye
L. Jennings	Aye
C. Taylor	Absent
C. Brown	Aye
S. Nellman	Aye
T. Johnstone	Aye

F. Approve the Resolution for the Expenditure of Education Protection Account (EPA) Funds for Da Vinci Schools: LA County

T. Johnstone made a motion to approve the Resolution for the Expenditure of Education Protection Account (EPA) Funds for Da Vinci Schools: LA County.
L. Jennings seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Taylor	Absent
C. Brown	Aye
T. Johnstone	Aye
S. Nellman	Aye
L. Jennings	Aye
C. McCullough	Aye

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

C. McCullough made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
S. Nellman seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

S. Nellman	Aye

Roll Call

L. Jennings	Aye
C. Taylor	Absent
C. Brown	Aye
T. Johnstone	Aye
C. McCullough	Aye

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:53 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. Crouch

Next Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County Board Meeting (RISE High): September 17, 2025