

APPROVED

# Desert Sands Charter High School

## Minutes

Operated by Desert Sands Public Charter, Inc.

A California Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation

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### Date and Time

Monday March 1, 2021 at 4:00 PM

### Location

Conference Line: (661) 249-6805 Code:525676

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### MEETING LOGISTICS

On March 17, 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-29-20 related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Executive Order allows state bodies covered by the Brown Act to hold public meetings via teleconferencing. The public is encouraged to participate in the meeting telephonically by dialing the conference line listed above and may submit written comments for prior consideration to the board members. Comments can be submitted to [vmendoza@dschs.org](mailto:vmendoza@dschs.org). Public comment on the day of the meeting can also be given during the "Public Comment" section of the meeting agenda.

### REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION WILL BE PROVIDED FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY

Please see the "Accommodations" notice below.

### REMINDER

As required by state law (SB 126), this meeting will be audio recorded and posted on the charter school's website.

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### Directors Present

Dana Clark (remote), James Lott (remote), Marvin D. Smith (remote), Michael R Adams (remote), Ruth Escarcega Newell (remote)

### Directors Absent

None

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## I. Opening Items

### A. Call the Meeting to Order

Board President Adams read aloud the notices regarding meeting logistics, accommodations, and audio recording.

Michael R Adams called a meeting of the board of directors of Desert Sands Charter High School to order on Monday Mar 1, 2021 at 4:11 PM.

### B. Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum

**C. Pledge of Allegiance**

Board Member Smith led the pledge of allegiance.

**D. Staff Introductions**

Jeff Brown, CEO  
Taera Childers, Area Superintendent  
Tinisha Hamberlin, Regional Director of Education  
Jeff Martineau, V.P. of Charter Relations  
Bill Thompson, Legal Counsel  
Guita Sharifi, CFO, LLAC  
Michele Simi, Director of Business Services, LLAC

**E. Approve Agenda for the March 1, 2021, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors**

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to approve the agenda for the March 1, 2021, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors.

James Lott seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Michael R Adams	Aye
Dana Clark	Aye
Ruth Escarcega Newell	Aye
James Lott	Aye
Marvin D. Smith	Aye

**F. Approve Minutes of the November 30, 2020, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors**

Marvin D. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 30, 2020, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors. Operated by Desert Sands Public Charter, Inc. on 11-30-20.

Ruth Escarcega Newell seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Ruth Escarcega Newell	Aye
Michael R Adams	Aye
Marvin D. Smith	Aye
Dana Clark	Aye
James Lott	Aye

**G. Approve Minutes of the December 15, 2020, Special Public Meeting of the Board of Directors**

James Lott made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 15, 2020, Special Public Meeting of the Board of Directors. Operated by Desert Sands Public Charter, Inc. Special Board Meeting on 12-15-20.

Marvin D. Smith seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Michael R Adams	Aye
Ruth Escarcega Newell	Aye
Marvin D. Smith	Aye
Dana Clark	Aye
James Lott	Aye

**II. Consent Agenda**

**A. Consent Agenda Items**

Board President Adams announced the consent agenda items and asked if any member would like to discuss any of the agenda items for action separately.

Board Member Smith requested the revised COVID-19 Plan for Resuming In-Person Instruction be pulled from the consent agenda and discussed and voted on separately.

Board President Adams then asked for a motion to approve consent agenda items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Dana Clark made a motion to approve consent agenda items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Marvin D. Smith seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Marvin D. Smith	Aye
Dana Clark	Aye
Michael R Adams	Aye
James Lott	Aye
Ruth Escarcega Newell	Aye

Board Member Smith requested additional information on the process noted in the revised COVID-19 Plan for Resuming In-Person Instruction for the 2020-2021 School Year regarding staff clearance for returning to work and the 90-day CDC guideline. Taera Childers explained the school has not encountered an individual staff member needing to utilize the full 90 days. Board Member Smith requested this item be presented to the board for further discussion at the April regular board meeting.

James Lott made a motion to approve consent agenda item No. 2 the revised COVID-19 Plan for Resuming In-Person Instruction for the 2020-2021 School Year, an addendum to the school's Health and Safety Plan.

Dana Clark seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Marvin D. Smith	No
James Lott	Aye
Michael R Adams	Aye
Dana Clark	Aye
Ruth Escarcega Newell	Aye

**III. Public Comment**

**A. Public Comment**

Board President Adams read the following announcement for members of the public:

At this time, members of the public may address the Board on any item within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board, whether or not the item is on the agenda. If you would like to participate in public comment, you must have signed in before the commencement of the meeting. Also, our teleconference line is open to members of the public who wish to participate in public comment. The time allotted per presentation will not exceed three (3) minutes, except in the case where a member of the public utilizes a translator, in which case the time allotted will not exceed six (6) minutes. The total time allotted for public comments will not exceed eighteen (18) minutes per agenda item, or ten (10) minutes for non-agenda items. In accordance with the Brown Act, no action may occur at this time but it is the

Board's prerogative to hold a brief discussion, provide information to the public, provide direction to staff, or schedule the matter for a future meeting.

Board President Adams asked if there were any members of the public who wished to offer public comment. There were no members of the public who offered public comment or submitted written comment.

#### **IV. School Reports and Information**

##### **A. Area Superintendent Update**

Taera Childers reported on the following:

- School staff participated in a variety of Professional Development activities since December 2020 that included: A Trauma Informed School Review, Diversity and Equity Training, Emotional Intelligence seminar, a two part Grief and Crisis Response training, and last Friday a Race in Schools training.
- Staff are also preparing for the upcoming State testing in the Fall.
- English Learners team attended the EL Summit for information on how to help our English Learners progress.
- Teams also attended a three day Small Group Instruction Symposium geared towards best practices for reaching students during distance learning.
- All administration and up and coming leaders attended a two day training with Leadership expert Ernie Mendes on Dynamic Coaching and Emotional Intelligence for Leaders.
- Academics - Our service provider LLAC recently hosted a Black History Month Challenge for February where students from all Learn4Life network schools were encouraged to participate in several events in honor of Black History Month. We are very excited to announce that Desert Sands students won the following:
  - "We Are Black History" Spoken Word Challenge: Third Place
  - Book Review Challenge: First Place
  - Art Challenge: Second and Third Place
  - Knowledge Bowl: First Place
- Staff is still focusing on student engagement noting a recent decline from 85 percent to the high 70 percent ranges due to the holiday break and ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- An update was given on the recent information obtained on the COVID-19 pandemic, teacher vaccinations, and the beginning stages of planning for July on-site operations.
- Upcoming Events:
  - March 10: Student Awards Night at 6pm
  - April 22: Regional Family Movie Night
  - May 28: Graduation

Ms. Childers explained the Desert Sands Care Team, which consists of School Counselors, Psychologist, Social Workers, Retention Department, and Julee Dudley, Jobs for American Graduates Specialist. Each team member deals not only with general education students but also students of homelessness, foster, parenting, probation, special education, seniors, freshmen, and students struggling with credit completion. The Team meets monthly to assess current student needs that have been observed and plan workshops to address those needs.

Ms. Childers introduced Ms. Dudley who shared a current Desert Sands Charter High School student personal story and the positive influence the school has provided her and support she has been receiving to help reach her goal of graduating.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Childers for her update.

**B. Finance Update**

Guita Sharifi informed the board that a detailed presentation of the school's annual audit report and Second Interim Report will be provided later during the board meeting. Ms. Sharifi provided an update on the school's Paycheck Protection Program loan forgiveness application process and will continue to update the board on the application status.

**C. Current Vendor List**

Taera Childers directed the board to the vendor list, which is a listing of all of the school's vendors with a brief description of services. Ms. Childers asked the board to review the list of vendors and also informed the board this will be a bi-annual informational report.

**D. 2021-2022 Board Meeting Dates**

Board President Adams directed the board to the schedule located in their package and then reviewed the upcoming regular board meeting schedule for the 2021-2022 school year.

**V. Action Items**

**A. The Board will be asked to approve the June 30, 2020, Annual Audit Report for the school.**

Taera Childers directed the board to the annual audit report and explained financial audits are required annually and must be submitted to the school's authorizer, County Office of Education, State Controller's Office, and the California Department of Education. The audit report is required to be submitted by December 15th each year; however, for the 2019-20 fiscal year, the deadline was extended to March 31, 2021. Wilkinson Hadley King & Co. performed the audit for the 2019-20 fiscal year and reviewed the school's documents, financial statements, policies, and procedures. Ms. Childers introduced Kevin Sproul, Accountant at Wilkinson Hadley King & Co., who reviewed the audit report in detail with the board.

Mr. Sproul directed the board to the Independent Auditor's Report letter located in the beginning of the report and explained the school had an unmodified financial opinion, which is positive, and no adjustments or reclassifications were needed. The attendance reports for P-2 and P-Annual are reviewed in accordance with state requirements where no adjustments were needed, and there were no findings for year end June 30, 2020. Mr. Sproul informed the board the audit report was delayed due to the late release of the audit guidelines and checklist from the State Controller's Office.

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to approve the June 30, 2020, Annual Audit Report for the school.

Marvin D. Smith seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Michael R Adams      Aye

Ruth Escarcega Newell Aye

**Roll Call**

James Lott	Aye
Dana Clark	Aye
Marvin D. Smith	Aye

**B. The Board will be asked to approve the Second Interim Report and the Revised Budget for the 2020-2021 school year.**

Guita Sharifi directed the board to the Second Interim Report and revised budget for the 2020-21 school year and explained the purpose of the report is provide a financial overview of the school with January 2021 actuals and projected June 2021 year-end. The report categories includes the prior board approved budget, actuals YTD and projected totals. Ms. Sharifi discussed the ADA Hold Harmless for 2019-20 and 2020-21, expenditures and revenue, the ending fund balance stated on the Second Interim Report, noticeable changes and the difference between the original budget. Ms. Sharifi updated the board on the state’s cash payment deferrals and that the finance team and Area Superintendent continue to monitor the school’s cash and instructional spending very closely to ensure the school remains fiscally sound.

James Lott made a motion to approve the Second Interim Report and the Revised Budget for the 2020-2021 school year.

Dana Clark seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

James Lott	Aye
Michael R Adams	Aye
Ruth Escarcega Newell	Aye
Marvin D. Smith	Aye
Dana Clark	Aye

**C. The Board will be asked to approve using the auditing firm Wilkinson, Hadley & King for the 2021 audit.**

Guita Sharifi directed the board to the proposal presented by Wilkinson Hadley King & Co. to prepare the school's June 30, 2021 annual audit. Ms. Sharifi reminded the board that the Wilkinson Hadley King & Co. CPA firm is on the State's approved auditor list and is currently preparing the 2019 Form 990 Federal Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. Ms. Sharifi recommended the board approve the engagement letter with Wilkinson Hadley King & Co.

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to approve using the auditing firm Wilkinson, Hadley & King for the 2021 audit.

Marvin D. Smith seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Michael R Adams	Aye
Ruth Escarcega Newell	Aye
Dana Clark	Aye
Marvin D. Smith	Aye
James Lott	Aye

**D. The Board will be asked to approve the E-Rate vendor selections.**

Michelle Simi directed board members to the report in their board packets regarding approval to award E-rate services for the 2021-2022 school year. Ms. Simi reviewed the E-rate competitive bidding process for the provision of networking equipment and cabling services to the school and the scoring process, and provided a summary of the bids. Ms. Simi then presented a recommendation to the board to select the identified vendor as the school’s preferred service provider for the 2021-2022 E-Rate funding year.

James Lott made a motion to approve the E-Rate vendor selections.  
Dana Clark seconded the motion.  
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

Michael R Adams     Aye  
Ruth Escarcega Newell Aye  
James Lott            Aye  
Dana Clark            Aye  
Marvin D. Smith     Aye

**E. The Board will be asked to approve the Charter Hardship Waiver Policy for students who are over-age, credit deficient and at risk for not graduating due to circumstances related to**

**COVID-19. The Charter Hardship Waiver Policy will be applied to eligible seniors graduating in the 2020-2021 school year.**

Taera Childers directed the board to the Charter Hardship Waiver Policy and explained the school is seeking approval from the board to re-approve the Charter Hardship Waiver that was previously board approved during the June 2020 board meeting to extend the waiver through June 30, 2021. Ms. Childers explained as the effects of the pandemic continue, staff have noticed students in their senior year continue to face surmounting challenges especially in the areas of housing and financial security. Ms. Childers recommended the board approve the Charter Hardship Waiver Policy to allow students who are 40 credits deficient or less and at least 18 years of age, and who were significantly impacted by COVID-19, to continue to apply for the waiver through June 30, 2021.

Board Secretary Newell and Ms. Childers discussed the definition of senior students.

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to approve the Charter Hardship Waiver Policy for students who are over-age, credit deficient and at risk for not graduating due to circumstances related to COVID-19. The Charter Hardship Waiver Policy will be applied to eligible seniors graduating in the 2020-2021 school year.

James Lott seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Ruth Escarcega Newell Aye  
Marvin D. Smith        Aye  
Dana Clark            Aye  
James Lott            Aye  
Michael R Adams     Aye

**VI. Closed Session**

**A. Adjourn open public Board meeting to go into closed session.**

CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - EXISTING LITIGATION (Government Code section §54956.9(d)(1).) Name of Case: Milton vs. Desert Sands Public Charter, et al., San Bernardino Superior Court Case Number CIVDS1821125.

James Lott made a motion to adjourn open public Board meeting to go into closed session.

Marvin D. Smith seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Dana Clark            Aye  
Michael R Adams     Aye  
Marvin D. Smith     Aye  
James Lott            Aye

**Roll Call**

Ruth Escarcega Newell Aye

**B. Adjourn closed session and reconvene to open Board meeting.**

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to adjourn closed session and reconvene to open Board meeting.

James Lott seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Ruth Escarcega Newell Aye

Michael R Adams Aye

James Lott Aye

Marvin D. Smith Aye

Dana Clark Aye

**C. Report of actions taken or any recommendations made in closed session, if any.**

Board President Adams reported that no action was taken in closed session.

**VII. Additional Corporate Officers and Board Members' Observations and Comments.**

**A. Observations and Comments**

Jeff Brown expressed his gratitude for the staff trauma training and congratulated the school staff on their accomplishments.

Board Member Smith looks forward to receiving a year end financial report comparing budget to actuals.

Board Member Clark requested information on the number of students who were granted the COVID-19 Hardship Waiver. Ms. Childers explained the school currently has ten possible students eligible for this waiver.

**VIII. Closing Items**

**A. Adjourn Meeting**

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Dana Clark seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Dana Clark Aye

James Lott Aye

Michael R Adams Aye

Marvin D. Smith Aye

Ruth Escarcega Newell Aye

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 5:23 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ruth Escarcega Newell

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**Accommodations.** Requests for disability-related modifications or accommodations, or translation services, in order to enable all individuals to participate in the Charter School's



open and public meetings shall be made by contacting Soliman Villapando at (661) 272-1225 at least twenty four (24) hours before the scheduled meeting.

**Non-Discrimination.** The Charter School prohibits discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying based on the actual or perceived characteristics of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, national origin, ancestry, race or ethnicity, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, immigration status, potential or actual parental, family or marital status, age, or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics, or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law.

**Public Documents.** To request documents provided to a majority of the governing board regarding an open session item on this agenda, please send an email request to [vmendoza@dschs.org](mailto:vmendoza@dschs.org).