

APPROVED

# Desert Sands Charter High School

## Minutes

### Regular Board Meeting

Operated by Desert Sands Public Charter, Inc., A California NonProfit Public Benefit Corporation

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#### **Date and Time**

Monday December 4, 2023 at 3:30 PM

#### **Location**

**Meeting Location:** 177 Holston Drive, Lancaster, CA 93535

**Satellite Location:** 1233 W. Ave J-8, Room #11, Lancaster, CA 93534

#### **Or Join Using the Meeting Link:**

[https://teams.microsoft.com/dl/launcher/launcher.html?url=%2F\\_%23%2F%2Fmeetup-join%2F19%3Ameeting\\_YWI5NDk4ZDgtODU4Yy00OTFjLWE3NTMtZWU2YWNmNGZhYmYz%40thread.v2%2F0%3Fcontext%3D%257b%2522Tid%2522%253a%2522c33f6d28-3425-42a7-8827-d21f10bb2e83%2522%252c%2522Oid%2522%253a%25224e4cd601-0d23-44be-8261-73cdf2e9f610%2522%257d%26anon%3Dtrue&type=meetup-join&deeplinkId=cc0305e2-aa1b-48e6-a8dd-e83b1a9e49fe&directDI=true&msLaunch=true&enableMobilePage=true&suppressPrompt=true](https://teams.microsoft.com/dl/launcher/launcher.html?url=%2F_%23%2F%2Fmeetup-join%2F19%3Ameeting_YWI5NDk4ZDgtODU4Yy00OTFjLWE3NTMtZWU2YWNmNGZhYmYz%40thread.v2%2F0%3Fcontext%3D%257b%2522Tid%2522%253a%2522c33f6d28-3425-42a7-8827-d21f10bb2e83%2522%252c%2522Oid%2522%253a%25224e4cd601-0d23-44be-8261-73cdf2e9f610%2522%257d%26anon%3Dtrue&type=meetup-join&deeplinkId=cc0305e2-aa1b-48e6-a8dd-e83b1a9e49fe&directDI=true&msLaunch=true&enableMobilePage=true&suppressPrompt=true)

#### **Or Call in for audio only:**

Conference Line (657) 207-0015 Code: 958 366 976#

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#### **MEETING LOGISTICS**

The public is encouraged to participate in the meeting in person, or by dialing the conference line or clicking the weblink listed on the posted agenda. The public may submit written comments to the Board by emailing [publiccomments@dschs.org](mailto:publiccomments@dschs.org). The public may also provide comments 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, Marvin D. Smith, Michael R Adams, Ruth Escarcega Newell

### **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 Dec 4, 2023 at 3:30 PM.

### **B. Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum**

Board President Adams introduced Vanessa Mendoza, who performed a roll call of the learning center locations that joined the meeting via a two-way teleconference line.

### **C. Pledge of Allegiance**

Board Secretary Newell led the pledge of allegiance.

### **D. Staff Introductions**

Jeff Brown, CEO

Jeri Vincent, Corporate Secretary

Shellie Hanes, Superintendent

Darin Bower, COO

Taera Childers, Area Superintendent

Mary Reagan, Principal

Jenny Bonilla, Principal

Alex Morris, Federal and State Programs Coordinator

Jeff Martineau, V.P. of Charter Relations

Bill Thompson, Legal Counsel

Guita Sharifi, CFO, LLAC

Michelle Lopez, Legal Counsel, LLAC

### **E. Approve Agenda for the December 4, 2023, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors**

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to approve Agenda for the December 4, 2023, 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
James Lott	Aye
Ruth Escarcega Newell	Aye
Dana Clark	Aye
Marvin D. Smith	Aye

**F. Approve Minutes of the October 26, 2023, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors**

Marvin D. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Board Meeting on 10-26-23.  
Ruth Escarcega Newell seconded the motion.  
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

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

**II. Consent Agenda**

**A. Consent Agenda Items**

1. Revised School Safety Plan.
2. Revised COVID-19 Plan for Resuming In-Person Instruction, an addendum to the school's Health and Safety Plan.
3. E-Rate vendor selections.
4. Updated Sequoia Administrative Resources agreement.
5. Updated Scholastic Educational Resources agreement.

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. Hearing none, Board President Adams asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda items.  
Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to approve the consent agenda items.  
James Lott seconded the motion.  
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

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

**Roll Call**

Michael R Adams      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. The time allotted per presentation will not exceed three (3) minutes, unless a member of the public utilizes a translator, in which case the time allotted will not exceed six (6) minutes. 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.

One member of the public spoke about her experience working for L4L. She then informed the board that a current teacher, wishing to remain anonymous, asked her to share some comments with the board about recent changes to the role of supervising teachers.

**IV. School Reports and Information**

**A. Area Superintendent Update**

Taera Childers greeted the board and then discussed the ADA, Enrollment, Overall Credit Completion, Core Credit Completion, and 1-year graduation cohort rate. She then shared a video of the third annual Trunk or Treat event and photos of the recent winter graduation with over 100 graduates participating in the ceremony, and the dual enrollment program with West Hills College. Ms. Childers then updated the board on the upcoming recognition luncheon to celebrate staff anniversaries with the school.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Childers for her update.

**B. Finance Update**

Guita Sharifi directed the board to the Hanmi Bank Revolving Line of Credit (RLOC) financial update included in the board packet and reviewed the school's credit amount, including the current interest rate of 9.0%, which is unchanged from the previous RLOC update provided to the board. Ms. Sharifi then reviewed the expiration date, the current RLOC withdrawal amount, and the RLOC covenants ratios as of September 30, 2023.

Finally, Ms. Sharifi informed the board the school does not anticipate any state budget cuts for this school year and will continue to monitor and update the board as needed.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Sharifi for her update.

### **C. Title 1 Program Evaluation for SY 2022-2023**

Alex Morris greeted the board and explained that the Title I Schoolwide Program supports the school's Literacy Program for students who struggle with academic performance and who need additional intervention programs. Mr. Morris then directed the board to the report located in their packet and reviewed student participation rates in NWEA Reading and Math. He also discussed the recommended intervention programs, prioritizing credit completion, early identification for students during the onboarding process, and increased EL and RFEP student monitoring and intervention support.

Next Mr. Morris discussed parent participation in the PAC and ELAC meetings, as well as survey responses for SY 2022-23. Mr. Morris explained for SY 2023-24, the school will continue offering varying meeting times to accommodate parent schedules, extended meeting times to thoroughly discuss all information being shared and using a variety of methods to reach parents and guardians.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Morris.

### **V. Action Items**

#### **A. The Board will be asked to approve the June 30, 2023, Annual Audit Report for the school**

Guita Sharifi directed the board to the annual audit report and explained that financial audits are required annually and must be submitted to the school's authorizer, State Controller's Office, and the California Department of Education by December 15th each year. Wilkinson, Hadley, King & Co. performed the audit for the 2021-22 fiscal year and reviewed the school's documents, financial statements, policies, and procedures. Ms. Sharifi then introduced Brian Hadley, Partner, CPA at Wilkinson, Hadley, King & Co., to review the audit report in detail with the board.

Mr. Hadley directed the board to the Executive Summary and explained this section was prepared by the school. Mr. Hadley then directed the board to 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. Mr. Hadley next reviewed each of the financial statements and explained the purpose of each report, and highlighted specific financial data.

Mr. Hadley then reviewed the last three pages of the report showing the school received an unmodified report with no findings for year end June 30, 2023 and no findings in the prior year audit.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Hadley and requested a motion.

James Lott made a motion to approve the June 30, 2023, Annual Audit Report for the school.

Marvin D. Smith seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

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

**B. The Board will be asked to approve the 2023-2024 First Interim Report**

Guita Sharifi directed the board to the first interim report and explained the report is the first financial report of the fiscal year and shows the financial condition of the school after the first four months of operations, from July 1, 2023 through October 31, 2023. The report is comprised of a financial section that includes the original budget approved by the board in June, actuals to date, projected totals for this year based on this year's actual operations, projected school reserves at year end, and the school's projected P2 ADA for the year. Ms. Sharifi reviewed each section of the first interim report in detail including the LCFF base grant amount, special education base rate, Title I funding, and grant funds. Ms. Sharifi highlighted the following areas:

- The school budgeted a P2 ADA of 1,911, and the school is currently projecting a funding P2 ADA of 1,976.
- The school is projecting total revenue of \$36.3M, which is \$1.3M higher than the school's original budget.
- LCFF projected revenue increased by \$908K.
- Federal revenue decreased slightly from \$265K to \$258K.
- State Revenue increased from \$2.3M to \$2.6M due to a combination of the Proposition 28 Arts and Music School program, and a decrease in Special Education and Lottery revenue.
- Other Revenue had a slight increase of \$179K from refunds.
- Projected total expenditures of \$35.5M, which is an increase of \$1M compared to the original budget due to a combination of a slight increase salaries and benefits, instructional supplies and a decrease in equipment spending. Operating expenses had an increase due to increase in training, utilities, insurance, facilities and professional services.

Finally, Ms. Sharifi reviewed the school's ending fund balance and restricted reserves and asked the board for input and questions.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Sharifi and requested a motion.

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to approve the 2023-2024 First Interim Report.

James Lott seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

James Lott	Aye
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**Roll Call**

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

**C. The Board will be asked to review and approve Wilkinson, Hadley & King & Co., LLP to prepare the school's 2022 Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax**

Guita Sharifi directed the board to the engagement letter from Wilkinson, Hadley, King & Co. to prepare the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023 federal return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax Form 990, related federal statements and schedules, and the California Exempt Organization Annual Information Return Form 199 with related statements and schedules. Ms. Sharifi reminded the board the firm is listed on the California Department of Education website as an approved auditor and all information from the school's annual audit report can be downloaded into the 990 form, which reduces human errors and expedites the process. Ms. Sharifi then reviewed the tax preparation fee and recommended the board approve Wilkinson, Hadley, King & Co. LLP to prepare the school's 2022 tax returns.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Sharifi and requested a motion.

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to approve Wilkinson, Hadley & King & Co., LLP to prepare the school's 2022 Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. Marvin D. Smith seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

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

**D. The Board will be asked to approve the Proposition 28 – Arts and Music in Schools Plan**

Taera Childers directed the board to the Arts and Music School Plan located in their board packet. Ms. Childers explained on November 8, 2022, California voters approved Proposition 28: The Arts and Music in Schools Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act and the school's allocation of \$131,318. Ms. Childers explained the expenditure timeline for school years 2023-2024 through 2025-2026. She then stated the school is focused on providing Arts Education Program for instruction in dance, media arts, music, theatre, visual arts and more.

Ms. Childers informed the board that the school shall also ensure that at least 80 percent of funds to be expended will be used to employ certificated or classified employees to provide

arts education program instruction and that the remaining funds will be used for training, supplies and materials, as well as arts educational partnership programs.

Ms. Childers then asked the board for any feedback or questions and recommended the board approved the Arts and Music in Schools.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Childers and requested a motion.

James Lott made a motion to approve the Proposition 28 – Arts and Music in Schools Plan.

Ruth Escarcega Newell seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Ruth Escarcega Newell Aye

James Lott Aye

Dana Clark Aye

Marvin D. Smith Aye

Michael R Adams Aye

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

**A. Observations and Comments**

Jeff Brown thanked Ms. Childers for her presentation and thanked her for the many programs and events available to the students. He also thanked the board for their continued oversight.

Jeri Vincent agreed with Mr. Brown and thanked the board members for their commitment to their students. She shared her excitement for the new year.

Darin Bower commented on the graduation he recently attended.

**VII. Closed Session**

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

1. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL— EXISTING LITIGATION (Government Code section 54956.9(d)(1).) Name of Case: Selena Villegas vs. Desert Sands Public Charter, Inc. et al., Los Angeles County Superior Court Case No. 22STCV24453
2. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION, (Government Code section 54957(b)(1).) Title: Superintendent

Marvin D. Smith made a motion to adjourn open public Board meeting to go into closed session.

James Lott seconded the motion.

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



**Roll Call**

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

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

Marvin D. Smith made a motion to adjourn closed session and reconvene to open public Board meeting.

James Lott seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

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

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

Board President Adams stated no action was taken in closed session for the following:

1. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL— EXISTING LITIGATION (Government Code section 54956.9(d)(1).) Name of Case: Selena Villegas vs. Desert Sands Public Charter, Inc. et al., Los Angeles County Superior Court Case No. 22STCV24453
2. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION, (Government Code section 54957(b)(1).) Title: Superintendent

**VIII. Closing Items**

**A. Next Regular Board Meeting Date: February 20, 3:30pm followed by March 4, 2024, 3:30pm**

**B. Adjourn Meeting**

James Lott made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Ruth Escarcega Newell seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Ruth Escarcega Newell	Aye
James Lott	Aye
Marvin D. Smith	Aye

**Roll Call**

Michael R Adams      Aye  
Dana Clark            Aye

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 4:32 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ruth Escarcega Newell

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**Accommodations.** All meetings of the Board of Directors are held in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. 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 [publiccomments@dschs.org](mailto:publiccomments@dschs.org). Documents are also available for public inspection at the Meeting Location noted on this agenda.