

APPROVED

Desert Sands Charter High School

Minutes

Regular Board Meeting

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

Date and Time

Monday March 4, 2024 at 3:30 PM

Location

Meeting Location: 177 Holston Drive, Lancaster, CA 93535

Or Join Using the Meeting Link:

https://teams.microsoft.com/dl/launcher/launcher.html?url=%2F_%23%2F%2Fmeetup-join%2F19%3Ameeting_OWY2YzBmMWEtY2FjNC00ZjBjLTkwNDUtNjRjMTNmYmU2YjRh%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=77001153-5dbd-48c5-a886-b15448782cff&directDI=true&msLaunch=true&enableMobilePage=true&suppressPrompt=true

Or Call in for audio only:

Conference Line (657) 207-0015 Code: 843 755 016#

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. 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.

Directors Present

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

Directors Absent

None

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 4, 2024 at 3:30 PM.

B. Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum

Board President Adams performed a board member roll call and a quorum was established.

Board President Adams then 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 Member Smith led the pledge of allegiance.

D. Staff Introductions

Jeff Brown, CEO

Jeri Vincent, Corporate Secretary

Shellie Hanes, Superintendent

Victor Nardiello, Area Superintendent

Jeff Martineau, V.P. of Charter Relations

Bill Thompson, Legal Counsel

Bob Morales, Chief External Affairs Officer, LLAC

Guita Sharifi, CFO, LLAC

Michelle Lopez, Legal Counsel, LLAC

E. Approve Agenda for the March 4, 2024, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors

Dana Clark made a motion to approve Agenda for the March 4, 2024, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors.

Marvin D. Smith seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

F. Approve Minutes of the December 4, 2023, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors

James Lott made a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Board Meeting on 12-04-23.

Dana Clark seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

II. Consent Agenda

A. Consent Agenda Items

1. The School Accountability Report Card
2. The 2024-2025 Parent Student Handbook
3. The 2024-2025 School Calendar
4. The revised Employee Handbook
5. The disposal of discontinued/obsolete technology equipment

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.

Dana Clark made a motion to approve the consent agenda items.

Marvin D. Smith seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

III. Public Comment

A. Public Comment

Board President Beck 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 Beck 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. Legislative Update

Bob Morales, provided updates to the board of directors on the current status of the legislature and the ongoing efforts of the LLAC External Affairs division.

Mr. Thompson then introduced Michelle Lopez, who reviewed several noteworthy and applicable laws, including the education budget trailer bill, and changes to the school safety plan and parent-student handbook. Ms. Lopez recommended the board review the legislative summary and to reach out with any questions.

Board President Adams informed Mr. Morales that he gave AV College Mr. Morales' contact information to reach out about submitting the La Lucha film into the AV College film festival.

B. Area Superintendent Update

Shellie Hanes introduced Victor Nardiello as the new Area Superintendent. She also shared Mr. Nardiello's 19 year history with Learn4Life.

Victor Nardiello greeted the board and then discussed the school's learning period 7 data including, Average Daily Attendance (ADA), enrollment, overall credit completion, core credit completion, the one-year graduation cohort, and dual-enrollment. Next, Mr. Nardiello provided a presentation on the recent learning center events including a dedicated 9th-grade Cohort, honoring Black History Month, professional development, and a recent Pathways trip.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Nardiello for his update.

C. 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%, 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 January 31, 2024.

Finally, Ms. Sharifi informed the board they are continuing to monitor the state budget and will update the board as needed.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Sharifi for her update.

D. California Dashboard Report

Victor Nardiello greeted the board and reminded the board the school is currently certified as a Dashboard Alternative Schools Status (DASS) school and provided an accountability update for the school. Mr. Nardiello explained the California School Dashboard is one part of California's comprehensive accountability system for schools, districts, and county offices of education that reports performance and progress in six state indicators and seven local indicators. Each area reflects the priorities of California's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the metrics required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Mr. Nardiello informed the board this is the first Dashboard released since the pandemic and then reviewed the status levels for the school. Mr. Nardiello discussed the graduation rate listed on the Dashboard for the school year 2022-23 compared to the school's internal one-year graduation cohort rate. Mr. Nardiello explained this percentage includes fourth-year graduates from the Class of 2023 as well as fifth-year graduates from the Class of 2022. On July 27, 2022, the US Department of Education (ED) declined California's waiver request that would allow for the continued use of modified methods for calculating the Academic and Graduation Rate indicators. As a result of this waiver denial, the 2023 Dashboard will be the first Dashboard without any modified methods applied to state indicators and all DASS schools will be treated the same as all other schools on the Dashboard. Previously, DASS schools were able to measure their graduation rate using a one-year cohort rather than a 4-year cohort. Mr. Nardiello stated the school's internal one-year cohort rate is 84.50%. Board President Adams thanked Mr. Nardiello.

E. Current Vendor List

Victor Nardiello directed the board to the current vendor list located in their board packet. Mr. Nardiello explained this is a list of all vendors from July 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023, includes a brief description of services, and includes vendors who provide varying services including professional development, technology, health care benefits, etc. Mr. Nardiello reminded the board this information is provided bi-annually, and she reviewed the list for accuracy. Mr. Nardiello then requested the board to review the list for any potential conflicts

of interest and to reach out to Mr. Nardiello, Mr. Martineau, or legal counsel for any questions.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Nardiello.

F. Conflict of Interest Code Status

Jeff Martineau informed the board that FPPC Form 804 was completed and submitted for the new position of COO. He informed the board that the Conflict of Interest Code will be amended to reflect the COO position during the biennial review, beginning in June 2024, and will be presented to the board for their approval at a future meeting.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Martineau.

V. Action Items

A. The Board will be asked to approve the Second Interim Report and the Revised Budget for the 2023-2024 school year

Guita Sharifi directed the board to the Second Interim Report and revised budget for the 2023-2024 school year and explained that the purpose of the report is to provide a financial overview of the school after the first 7 months of operations, from July 1, 2023, through January 31, 2024 actuals, and projected budget to June 2024 year-end. The report categories include the original budget, revised budget, actuals to date, projected year-end totals, projected year-end reserves, and ADA. Ms. Sharifi reviewed the ADA, expenditures, revenue, and projected reserves, and highlighted the following areas:

- The school budgeted a P2 ADA of 1,911, and the school is currently projecting a funding P2 ADA of 1,985.
- The school is projecting total revenue of \$36.4M, which is \$1.5M higher than the school's original budget.
- LCFF projected revenue increased by \$1.1M primarily due to an increase in projected ADA.
- Projected total expenditures of \$35.7M, which is an increase of \$1.3M compared to the original budget, due to the implementation of services primarily related to the increase in projected ADA.
- Federal revenue shows a projection of \$263k, at almost the same level of the original budget. This includes a slight increase in federal SPED revenue that offsets a decrease in Title I funding, both changes due to adjustments to funding rates.
- Other State Revenue increased from \$2.3M to \$2.5M due to the Arts and Music Block Grant, Special Education, and Lottery, and an increase in projected ADA.

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

Board Member Smith asked to see the actuals at year-end as a line item. Ms. Sharifi informed the board she will provide the requested information to the board.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Sharifi for her report. Hearing no further questions or comments, Board President Adams asked for a motion.

Marvin D. Smith made a motion to approve the Second Interim Report and the Revised Budget for the 2023-2024 school year.

Dana Clark seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Ruth Escarcega Newell Abstain

Michael R Adams Aye

Marvin D. Smith Aye

James Lott Aye

Dana Clark Aye

B. The Board will be asked to approve using the auditing firm Wilkinson, Hadley & King & Co., LLP for the 2023-2024 audit

Guita Sharifi directed the board to the proposal presented by Wilkinson Hadley King & Co. to prepare the school's June 30, 2024, 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 2022 Form 990 Federal Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. Ms. Sharifi recommended the board approve the engagement letter with Wilkinson Hadley King & Co.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Sharifi for her report. Hearing no further questions or comments, Board President Adams asked for a motion.

James Lott made a motion to approve using the auditing firm Wilkinson, Hadley & King & Co., LLP for the 2023-2024 audit.

Dana Clark seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Marvin D. Smith Aye

Michael R Adams Aye

Ruth Escarcega Newell Abstain

James Lott Aye

Dana Clark Aye

C. The Board will be asked to approve the revised Committed Funds Plan for the school

Victor Nardiello directed the board to the Committed Funds Plan located in their packet and discussed the school's current reserve amount in excess of the recommended maximum 20% reserve amount. Mr. Nardiello explained the establishment and funding of financial reserves is important to the long-term health and stability of the school, the ability to manage cash flow, and protect the school from unforeseen revenue shortfalls, unexpected costs, and economic uncertainties. Financial reserves also help a charter school save for large purchases and reduce the cost of borrowing money. Mr. Nardiello then explained that in

order to demonstrate that we are good stewards of public funds, the Committed Funds Plan has been updated to reflect the school's current needs for projects, programs, and/or resources that directly benefit the students. Mr. Nardiello then reviewed the updated Committed Funds Plan for the amount of reserves in excess of the recommended 20% reserve amount. Mr. Nardiello recommended the board approve the Committed Funds Plan and for emergency or urgent spending needs, and asked the board to authorize the Area Superintendent to make and execute such decisions.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Nardiello for her report. Hearing no further questions or comments, Board President Adams asked for a motion.

Marvin D. Smith made a motion to approve the revised Committed Funds Plan for the school.

James Lott seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

D. The Board will be asked to approve the Board Resolution Authorizing Application for Grants

Guita Sharifi directed the board to the grant resolution located in their board packet and explained the purpose is to authorize Lifelong Learning Administration Corporation ("LLAC") to apply for Grants, upon the request of the CEO of the Corporation or designee, on behalf of the School; and confirming that LLAC shall administer and manage all reporting requirements associated with any such Grants on behalf of the School. Ms. Sharifi further explained that no individual Grant shall exceed \$1,500,000.00 and the annual total of combined Grants shall not to exceed \$10,000,000.00 in any fiscal year without prior Board approval. Ms. Sharifi recommended the board approve the Board Resolution Authorizing Application for Grants.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Sharifi for her report. Hearing no further questions or comments, Board President Adams asked for a motion.

Dana Clark made a motion to approve the Board Resolution Authorizing Application for Grants.

Marvin D. Smith seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

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

A. Observations and Comments

Jeff Brown congratulated Mr. Nardiello and thanked him for his presentations.

Board Member Smith welcomed Mr. Nardiello.

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

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

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

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

James Lott made a motion to adjourn closed session and reconvene to open public Board meeting.

Dana Clark seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Marvin D. Smith	Aye
Ruth Escarcega Newell	Abstain
Michael R Adams	Aye
James Lott	Aye
Dana Clark	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: April 15, 2024, 3:30pm

B. Adjourn Meeting

Dana Clark made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

James Lott seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 4:27 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ruth Escarcega Newell

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. Documents are also available for public inspection at the Meeting Location noted on this agenda.