

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

Thursday August 29, 2024 at 3:30 PM

#### Location

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

#### Microsoft Teams

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 293 128 639 107

Passcode: iaQdH6

#### Dial in by phone

[+1 657-207-0015,,965293563#](#)

Phone conference ID: 965 293 563#

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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

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Dana Clark, 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 Thursday Aug 29, 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
- Darin Bower, COO
- Victor Nardiello, Area Superintendent
- Bill Thompson, Legal Counsel
- Guita Sharifi, CFO, LLAC

**E. Approve Agenda for the August 29, 2024, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors**

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to approve Agenda for the August 29, 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
Dana Clark	Aye

**Roll Call**

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

**F. Approve Minutes of the May 30, 2024, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors**

James Lott made a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Board Meeting on 05-30-24.

Dana Clark seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

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

**II. Consent Agenda**

**A. Consent Agenda Items**

Board President announced the following consent agenda items:

1. The revised Master Plan for Multilingual Learners.
2. The revised Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedure.
3. The new Title IX Policy Prohibiting Discrimination on the Basis of Sex.
4. The revised Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination and Bullying Policy.
5. Repeal the Board Policy on Non-Discrimination (duplicative of the revised Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination and Bullying Policy).
6. The disposal of discontinued/obsolete technology equipment.

President Adams then asked if any member would like to discuss any of the agenda items for action separately. Hearing none, Mr. Adams asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda items.

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

James Lott 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

### **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. There were no members of the public who offered public comment or submitted written comment.

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

#### **A. Finance Update and Financial Reporting for the 2024-2025 School Year**

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.

Ms. Sharifi also provided the board with an update on the school's line of credit with LLAC.

Ms. Sharifi then directed the board to the financial reporting calendar and discussed each of the required financial reports, their purpose, and the approval process with the board of directors at a board meeting prior to submission to the school's authorizer.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Sharifi for her report.

#### **B. Area Superintendent Update**

Victor Nardiello greeted the board and discussed the school's learning period 1 data, including Average Daily Attendance (ADA), enrollment, overall credit completion, core credit completion, and the one-year graduation cohort.

Next, Mr. Nardiello provided a presentation on recent learning center events and opportunities, including a regional kick off event for goal planning, testing initiatives, EL goal setting, and professional development. Mr. Nardiello then informed the board the school recently held a Student Awards Night recognizing student achievements and highlighted a

recent college tour students participated in at USC. He also shared a story about students who were able to participate in a comprehensive yoga session led by a staff member. Additionally, Mr. Nardiello discussed the school's goal to enhance customer service and the professional development training staff participated in to help reach those goals.

Lastly, Mr. Nardiello shared with the board the many local community events staff will be actively involved in, such as the AV Fair, Latino College Expo at La Verne College, dual enrollment courses, Winter Ball, and back to school night.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Nardiello for his presentation.

### **C. Technology Information Update**

Darin Bower informed the board that LLAC recently worked with third-party CIO firm, Fortium Partners, to conduct a comprehensive assessment of their technology services department. This assessment affirmed the effectiveness of their strategic initiatives and steadfast commitment to excellence and security in serving Desert Sands Charter High School. Mr. Bower then provided the board with an overview of the current systems in place, how they were tested, and opportunities for improvement. Lastly, he reported to the board that LLAC's proactive cybersecurity measures have successfully protected the school from data breaches and ransomware attacks, including the recent CrowdStrike outage.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Bower for his update.

### **D. Annual Board Training Announcement**

Victor Nardiello provided an update on the annual training for charter school board members and leaders on the Brown Act and conflict of interest laws. The upcoming annual Fall 2024 training will be presented by Young, Minney & Corr, LLP, and board members will have the option of attending a virtual session on Tuesday, October 1st at 5:00pm or Wednesday, October 2nd at 11:00am.

Topics to be covered include:

- Extensive Brown Act training (complies with chartering authority's requirement for annual training).
- Compliance with SB 126 (Education Code Section 47604.1).
- Conflict of interest laws: Political Reform Act, Corporations Code, Government Code Section 1090, and the appearance of impropriety.
- Form 700 filing information and requirements.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Nardiello for the information.

### **E. 2024-25 Board Meeting Dates**

Board President Adams directed the board to the draft 2024-2025 regular board meeting calendar located in their board packet and requested the board to review the dates and times.

Board President Adams informed the board the next board meeting has been changed to October 16, 2024.

## V. Action Items

### A. The Board will be asked to approve the revised Charter School Accounting Manual

Guita Sharifi directed the board to the summary page overview of the recommended changes to the Charter School Accounting Manual included in the board packet. She reviewed the recommended revision on page 60, which adds a Periodic Certification Sample to the Payroll Accounting Section. Ms. Sharifi then recommended the board approve the recommended changes to the Accounting Manual.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Sharifi and asked for a motion.

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to approve the revised Charter School Accounting Manual.

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
Ruth Escarcega Newell	Aye
James Lott	Aye

### B. The Board will be asked to approve the Unaudited Actuals for the 2023-2024 school year

Guita Sharifi directed the board to the unaudited actuals report for the 2023-2024 school year. She explained that the report is the last financial report of the year and provides a summary of how the school performed financially for the year. The report includes a summary of the statement of revenue and expenditures, the net position of the school, information about the school's assets and liabilities, the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) that was the base for funding in 2023-2024, and the estimated ADA projections for 2024-2025, which were used as a baseline for developing the current school year budget.

Ms. Sharifi reported that the school had a funding P-2 ADA of 1,997 for a total revenue of \$36.1M, which was \$177K higher than the previously projected revenue.

Ms. Sharifi reported that the school ended the year with total expenditures of \$35.6M, which was \$350K higher than prior projections. This increase was due to increases in certificated and classified salaries, training and communication spending, as well as a small decrease in equipment, supplies, and professional services.

Ms. Sharifi then discussed the school’s excess revenue, balance sheet assets and liabilities, and the change in reporting of outstanding assets and amortization due to a new reporting regulation.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Sharifi and asked for a motion.

Marvin D. Smith made a motion to approve the Unaudited Actuals for the 2023-2024 school year.

James Lott seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

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

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

**A. Observations and Comments**

Jeff Brown thanked the board members and staff for their continued support.

**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

Dana Clark made a motion to adjourn open public Board meeting to go into closed session.

Ruth Escarcega Newell seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

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

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

Dana Clark made a motion to adjourn closed session and reconvene to open public Board meeting.

Marvin D. Smith seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Marvin D. Smith	Aye
Dana Clark	Aye
James Lott	Aye
Ruth Escarcega Newell	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: October 15, 2024, 3:30pm**

Board President Adams informed the board the next board meeting has been changed to October 16, 2024.

**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**

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

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 4:13 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.