

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

Thursday December 5, 2024 at 3:30 PM

Location

Meeting Location: 177 Holston Drive, Lancaster, CA 93535

Microsoft Teams

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 275 652 986 067

Passcode: XYWdLM

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Phone conference ID: 556 772 109#

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

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 Thursday Dec 5, 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 Jilian Rojas, 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
- Victor Nardiello, Area Superintendent
- Mary Regan, Principal
- Jenny Bonilla, Principal
- Alex Morris, Federal and State Program Coordinator
- Bill Thompson, Legal Counsel
- Claudio Wohl, Sr. VP of Finance, LLAC

E. Approve Agenda for the December 5, 2024, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to approve Agenda for the December 5, 2024, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors.

James Lott seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

James Lott	Aye
Marvin D. Smith	Aye

Roll Call

Dana Clark Aye
Ruth Escarcega Newell Aye
Michael R Adams Aye

F. Approve Minutes of the August 29, 2024, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors

Dana Clark made a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Board Meeting on 08-29-24.

Marvin D. Smith seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

II. Consent Agenda

A. Consent Agenda Items

Board President Adams announced the following consent agenda items:

1. The revised School Safety Plan
2. The E-Rate vendor selections
3. The revised Suicide Prevention Policy
4. The revised Uniform Complaint Policy and Procedures

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.

Marvin D. Smith 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

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

Claudio Wohl 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 8.25%, a decrease 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.

Mr. Wohl also provided the board with an update on the school's line of credit with LLAC, including the current interest rate of 6% and the current balance on the line of credit.

Mr. Wohl then reviewed the overall financial forecast and potential impacts on the 2025 state budget.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Wohl.

B. Area Superintendent Update

Victor Nardiello greeted the board and discussed the school's learning period 4 data, including Average Daily Attendance (ADA), enrollment, overall credit completion, core credit completion, and the one-year graduation cohort.

Mr. Nardiello then introduced Mary Regan who discussed school wide learning expectations such as focusing on academic advisement, high quality professional development, and literacy. Ms. Regan also reviewed student motivation, student engagement, and the importance of setting weekly academic goals. She then discussed NWEA growth.

Next, Ms. Regan provided a presentation on recent learning center events and opportunities, including a video of students receiving scholarships, elevate celebrations,

college and career tours and expos, Thanksgiving baskets for families in need, fall graduation, and senior week. Lastly, Ms. Regan shared a video highlighting the school's Second Annual Fall Festival.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Nardiello and Ms. Regan for their presentations.

Board Secretary Newell congratulated the staff on the increase in credit completion.

C. 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 and includes a brief description of services. 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 or legal counsel for any questions. Board President Adams thanked Mr. Nardiello.

D. Title 1 Program Evaluation for SY 2023-24

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 need additional intervention programs. The Program also supports personnel to effectively address learning gaps.

Mr. Morris then directed the board to the report located in their packet. She reviewed student participation rates in NWEA Reading and discussed the recommended intervention programs, including prioritizing credit completion, early identification for students during the onboarding process, increased EL and RFEP student monitoring, and intervention support.

Next, Mr. Morris discussed parent participation in the PAC and ELAC meetings, as well as the 2023-24 SY survey responses. Mr. Morris explained for SY 2024-25, the school will continue offering varying meeting times to accommodate parent schedules, extended meeting times to thoroughly discuss all information being shared, and utilizing a variety of methods to reach parents and guardians.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Morris for his report.

V. Action Items

A. The Board will be asked to approve the June 30, 2024, Annual Audit Report for the school

Claudio Wohl 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 2023-24 fiscal year and reviewed the school's documents, financial statements, policies, and procedures. Mr. Wohl

then introduced Brian Hadley, Partner, CPA at Wilkinson, Hadley, King & Co., to review the audit report in detail with the board.

Mr. Hadley greeted the board and directed them to the Independent Auditor's Report letter located at the end of the report, showing the school received an unmodified report with no findings for the year ending June 30, 2024.

Mr. Hadley then reviewed each of the financial statements in detail and explained the purpose of each report, highlighting specific financial data.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Hadley. Hearing no questions or comments, Mr. Adams asked for a motion.

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to approve the June 30, 2024, Annual Audit Report for the school.

James Lott seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

B. The Board will be asked to approve the 2024-2025 First Interim Report

Claudio Wohl 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, 2024 through October 31, 2024. 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. Mr. Wohl 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, highlighting the following areas:

- The school budgeted a P2 ADA of 2,046, and the school is currently projecting a funding P2 ADA of 1,839.
- The school is projecting total revenue of \$34.1M, which is \$3.4M higher than the school's original budget.
- LCFF projected revenue decreased by \$3.9M.
- Federal revenue increased from \$282K to \$315K.
- State Revenue decreased from \$3M to \$2.9M due to a decrease in special ed and lottery revenue because of a reduction in ADA, with SPED Mental Health and Arts & Music funding remaining the same.

- Other Revenue had an increase from \$165K to \$728K from E-rate reimbursements, vendor refunds, property tax refunds, and collection of State unclaimed funds.
- Projected total expenditures of \$33.7M, which is a decrease compared to the original budget due to a combination of a decrease in teacher, certificated support, and administrative salaries, as well a slight increase in classified administrative salaries and instructional school supplies.

Finally, Mr. Wohl reviewed the school's ending fund balance and restricted reserves. He then asked the board for their input and questions.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Wohl. Hearing no questions or comments, he asked for a motion.

James Lott made a motion to approve the 2024-2025 First Interim Report.

Marvin D. Smith seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

C. The Board will be asked to review and approve Wilkinson, Hadley & King & Co., LLP to prepare the school's 2023 Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax

Claudio Wohl directed the board to the engagement letter from Wilkinson, Hadley, King & Co. to prepare the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, 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. Mr. Wohl 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. Mr. Wohl then reviewed the tax preparation fee and recommended the board approve Wilkinson, Hadley, King & Co. LLP to prepare the school's 2023 tax returns.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Wohl and asked for a motion.

Marvin D. Smith made a motion to approve Wilkinson, Hadley & King & Co., LLP to prepare the school's 2023 Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax.

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
Dana Clark	Aye
Marvin D. Smith	Aye

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

A. Observations and Comments

Jeff Brown thanked the staff for their presentations and commented on the importance of core credit completion. He then thanked Mr. Hadley for his work on the audit report.

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 Superior Court Case Number: 22STCV24453

2. Confidential Student Expulsion Case # DSCHS 2024-01

3. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

(Government Code section 54957(b)(1).)

Title: Superintendent1. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL— EXISTING LITIGATION

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to adjourn open public Board meeting to go into closed session.

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	Aye
James Lott	Aye
Dana Clark	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

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

C.

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

Board President Adams reported that the board took the following action on Confidential Student Expulsion Case #DSCHS 2024-01: with a motion by Board Member Clark and a second by Board Member Smith, the board unanimously voted to expel the pupil in accordance with board policy.

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

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 Superior Court Case Number: 22STCV24453
2. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION
(Government Code section 54957(b)(1).)
Title: Superintendent1. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL— EXISTING LITIGATION

VIII. Closing Items

A. Next Regular Board Meeting Date: February 18, 2025, 3:30pm

B. Adjourn Meeting

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Marvin D. Smith 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

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 4:34 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.