

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 April 10, 2025 at 3:30 PM

Location

Meeting Location: 177 Holston Drive, Lancaster, CA 93535

Microsoft Teams

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 262 776 296 663

Passcode: 67Ah7Tx2

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Phone conference ID: 885 526 970#

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 Apr 10, 2025 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 Jillian 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 Member Smith led the pledge of allegiance.

D. Staff Introductions

Jeri Vincent, Corporate Secretary

Shellie Hanes, Superintendent

Jenny Bonilla, Principal

Victor Nardiello, Area Superintendent

Darin Bower, COO

Alex Morris, Federal and State Programs Coordinator

Heather Stuve, Special Programs, LLAC

Bill Thompson, Legal Counsel

Guita Sharifi, CFO, LLAC

E. Approve Agenda for the April 10, 2025, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors

James Lott made a motion to approve Agenda for the April 10, 2025, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors.

Ruth Escarcega Newell seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

F. Approve Minutes of the February 18, 2025, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors

Dana Clark made a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Board Meeting on 02-18-25.

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 |

G. Approve Minutes of the March 4, 2025, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Board Meeting on 03-04-25.

James Lott seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

II. Consent Agenda

A. Consent Agenda Items

Board President announced the following consent agenda items:

1. The Board will be asked to approve the 2025-26 Parent-Student Handbook
2. The Board will be asked to approve the revised Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedure

3. The Board will be asked to approve the revised Title IX Policy Prohibiting Discrimination on the Basis of Sex
4. The Board will be asked to approve the revised Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination and Bullying Policy
5. The Board will be asked to approve the revised Service Animal Policy

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.

Marvin D. Smith made a motion to approve the consent agenda items.

James Lott seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

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 8.0%.

Ms. Sharifi 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.

Ms. Sharifi informed the board she will provide an update on the State's budget at the next board meeting after the Governor's May revisions have been submitted.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Sharifi for her update.

B. Area Superintendent Update

Victor Nardiello greeted the board and discussed the school's learning period 9 data, including Average Daily Attendance (ADA), enrollment, overall credit completion, core credit completion, and the one-year graduation cohort.

Mr. Nardiello then provided a presentation on recent learning center events, including a bingo-themed back-to-school night wherein visitors were encouraged to visit different stations to learn more about the school's wraparound services. He also shared about a recent TESOL conference attended by EL teachers and specialists. Mr. Nardiello then discussed the emotional challenges some students face and the workshops provided to students by the school's counselors and social workers. Lastly, Mr. Nardiello informed the board of upcoming events, including prom, graduation, and senior week.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Nardiello.

Board Secretary Newell asked for the graduation date. Mr. Nardiello informed the board graduation is scheduled for May 23rd at 6 p.m. at the Antelope Valley Fair and Events Center.

C. California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP) Implementation Grant Update

Alex Morris greeted the board and provided an update on the California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP) Implementation Grant. He discussed the four pillars of a community school: integrated support services, family and community engagement, collaborative leadership, and expanded learning time and opportunities. Mr. Morris then shared with the board that the school has used the funds for a community liaison, professional development, as well as books and supplies. He informed the board they are in the process of looking to hire a parent liaison.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Morris.

D. Local Control and Accountability Plan Goals and Metrics

Alex Morris greeted the board and directed them to the LCAP goals and metrics located in their board packet. Mr. Morris reviewed the steps involved in developing and finalizing the LCAP goals and metrics, including the engagement of school staff, parents, students, and community partners.

Mr. Morris then reviewed the school's four LCAP goals. He shared a few highlights and discussed areas needing improvement.

- Goal 1: Increase Academic Progress:
 - Teachers are highly qualified
 - Increase in reading Lexile and Mathematics Quantile growth
 - Increase in credit completion
 - Increase in EL annual progress on ELPI
 - Increase in DASS 1-year graduation cohort rate
- Goal 2: Students will gain skills for College and Career-Readiness:
 - Significant increase in students taking career-ready courses
 - Increase in CA Dashboard ELA and Math status
- Goal 3: Increase Student Retention:
 - Increase in success rate
 - Increase in retention rate
- Goal 4: Increase Educational Partner Engagement:
 - Increase in parent conferences, events, and celebrations
 - PAC and ELAC Participation has increased
 - Parents feel encouraged to participate

Mr. Morris thanked the board and asked if there were any questions or comments.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Morris.

E. School Survey Report

Alex Morris directed the board to the school survey report located in their board packet. Mr. Morris then discussed the three different sections of the survey and highlighted the results.

- Student Survey - 915 students participated. Survey results reviewed included school climate, connectedness and engagement, social-emotional self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, decision making, future goals/college career, and civic engagement.
- Staff Survey - 84 staff members participated. Survey results reviewed included School Climate, Culture & Vision/Mission, Academic Instruction, & Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Communication & Engagement, Leadership Perception, and Professional Development and Partnerships.
- Parent/Guardian Survey - 488 parents participated. Survey results reviewed included Safety & Connectedness, Time & Interaction, Communication & Engagement, Building Relationships, Building Relationships for Student Outcome, and Seeking Input for Decision Making.

Mr. Morris then asked the board if they had any questions or comments.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Morris.

Board Secretary Newell asked if all staff members participated in the survey. Mr. Morris informed the board that staff was allotted time during staff meetings to complete the survey. Mr. Nardiello informed the board they had a 97% staff participation rate.

F. CDE Notification of 2023-2024 Annual Determination Pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Selection for 2024-2025 Special Education Monitoring Activities

Heather Stuve greeted the board and directed them to the letter located in their board packet. She explained that in support of the implementation of IDEA, the California Department of Education (CDE) sends each school an annual determination letter indicating the school's status related to special education compliance. She explained to the board that small LEAs participate in Cyclical Monitoring activities to gather data around the implementation of IDEA and the provision of a free and appropriate education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

Ms. Stuve then informed the board the monitoring level assigned to the school for 2025 is: Targeted Level 3, Needs Assistance. She explained to the board the school had previously completed a CIM plan in 2023 and is now implementing the plan in 2025. The CIM team is comprised of school administrators, staff, special education, and general education teachers. Together they will review the current data to determine if any adjustments are needed to maximize the impact of the improvement activities. Ms. Stuve further informed the board that staff will participate in a series of webinars and workshops hosted by the CDE and the school's SELPA and designed to support the development and implementation of the CIM process.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Stuve.

G. Current Vendor List

Victor Nardiello directed the board to the current vendor list located in their board packet. He reminded the board this information is provided bi-annually and includes information about all vendors used between July 1, 2024, and December 31, 2024. Mr. Nardiello then requested the board to review the list for any potential conflicts of interest and to reach out to him or legal counsel with any questions or concerns.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Nardiello.

H. 2025-2026 Board Meeting Dates

Board President Adams directed the board to the draft 2025-2026 regular board meeting calendar located in their board packet and requested the board to review the meeting dates and times.

V. Public Hearing

A. Open Public Hearing

Board President Adams requested a motion to open the public hearing.

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to open the public hearing.

Marvin D. Smith seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Michael R Adams Aye

Dana Clark Aye

James Lott Aye

Marvin D. Smith Aye

Ruth Escarcega Newell Aye

Board President Adams announced the public hearing opened at 3:54 p.m.

B. The Board will hold a public hearing to solicit the recommendations and comments of members of the public regarding the revised Personalized Learning Policy

Victor Nardiello directed the board to the redlined copy of the revised Personalized Learning Policy in their board packet. He informed the board that student master agreements are now referred to as the “Independent Study Agreement”, and the Personalized Learning Policy has been updated throughout to reflect this change.

Mr. Nardiello then asked for questions or comments from members of the public and board members.

C. Close Public Hearing

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

Dana Clark made a motion to close the public hearing.

James Lott seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Michael R Adams Aye

Marvin D. Smith Aye

James Lott Aye

Ruth Escarcega Newell Aye

Dana Clark Aye

Board President Adams announced the public hearing closed at 3:55 p.m.

VI. Action Items

A. The Board will be asked to approve the revised Personalized Learning Policy

Victor Nardiello recommended the board approve the revised Personalized Learning Policy that was shared during the Public Hearing.

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

Dana Clark made a motion to approve the revised Personalized Learning Policy.
Marvin D. Smith 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 | Aye |
| Dana Clark | Aye |

B. 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 informed the board the only changes made were grammatical and no policy changes were made.

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

James Lott made a motion to approve the revised Charter School Accounting Manual.

Ruth Escarcega Newell 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 | Aye |
| Dana Clark | Aye |

C. The Board will be asked to approve the Declaration of Need (DON) forms as a prerequisite to the issuance of an emergency permit and/or limited assignment permit for teachers at the School for the 2025-2026 School Year per California Code of Regulations §80026

Victor Nardiello reminded the board the annual Declaration of Need (DON) forms ensure the school's eligibility to apply for emergency and/or limited assignment permits for teachers. Mr. Nardiello explained the DON will allow qualified individuals to be authorized to serve in their teaching assignment while they are working towards completing the credential requirements for the educator's assignment. Mr. Nardiello then reviewed the areas of anticipated need for fully qualified educators, limited assignment permits, and efforts to recruit certificated personnel.

Mr. Nardiello then recommended the board approve the DON form for the school for the 2025-2026 school year.

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

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to approve the Declaration of Need (DON) forms as a prerequisite to the issuance of an emergency permit and/or limited assignment permit for teachers at the School.

Marvin D. Smith seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

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

A. Observations and Comments

Jeri Vincent thanked the staff for their continued hard work and dedication.

VIII. 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

Ruth Escarcega Newell 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

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

IX. Closing Items

A. Next Regular Board Meeting Date: June 5, 2025, 3:00pm

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

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

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 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.