

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

Tuesday December 9, 2025 at 3:30 PM

Location

Meeting Location: 177 Holston Drive, Lancaster, CA 93535

Microsoft Teams

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 214 929 667 045 6

Passcode: Gx6D4iK2

Dial in by phone

[+1 657-207-0015,,911598689#](#)

Phone conference ID: 911 598 689#

MEETING LOGISITICS

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, Michael R Adams, Ruth Escarcega Newell

Directors Absent

Marvin D. Smith

Directors who arrived after the meeting opened

James Lott

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 Tuesday Dec 9, 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 Newall 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

Jenny Bonilla, Principal

Alex Morris, State and Federal Programs Coordinator

Karen Aguirre, Assistant Principal

Bill Thompson, Legal Counsel

Guita Sharifi, CFO, LLAC

E. Approve Agenda for the December 9, 2025, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors

Dana Clark made a motion to approve Agenda for the December 9, 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
James Lott	Absent
Marvin D. Smith	Absent
Dana Clark	Aye
Ruth Escarcega Newell	Aye

F. Approve Minutes of the September 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 09-04-25.

Dana Clark 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	Absent
Marvin D. Smith	Absent

II. Consent Agenda

A. Consent Agenda Items

Board President Adams announced the following consent agenda items:

1. The revised Board Policies on Protections for Students relating to Immigration and Citizenship Status
2. The revised School Safety Plan
3. The E-Rate vendor selections
4. The Policy on Referral Protocols for Addressing Student Behavioral Health Concerns

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.

Ruth Escarcega Newell seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Marvin D. Smith	Absent
Ruth Escarcega Newell	Aye
Dana Clark	Aye
James Lott	Absent
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. 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 7.5%, which is lower than 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, including the current interest rate of 6% and the current balance.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Sharifi for her update.

B. Area Superintendent Update

Victor Nardiello greeted the board and discussed the school's Average Daily Attendance (ADA), enrollment, overall credit completion, and core credit completion.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Nardiello for his update.

C.

Principal Update

Jenny Bonilla greeted the board and discussed the various methods the school uses to help students improve their math scores. She then provided a presentation on recent learning center events, including back-to-school night, spooky fun week, various workshops, including financial literacy. She informed the board that graduation is scheduled for December 12, 2025, and that they are holding intervention parent-teacher conferences, a HBCU college tour, an open house, and a WASC accreditation visit.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Bonilla for her update.

James Lott arrived at 3:44 PM.

D. Mid-Year 2025-26 LCAP Monitoring Report with Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant Action Update

Alex Morris greeted the board and directed them to the 2025-2026 Mid-Year Local Control Accountability Plan (“LCAP”) report located in the board packet. Mr. Morris reminded the board this mid-year LCAP report is required to ensure continual monitoring and evaluation of the school’s progress towards its LCAP goals. Mr. Morris then provided a presentation on the school’s mid-year LCAP, which included the implementation of actions, expenditures to date, progress on metrics and the budget overview for parents.

Next, Mr. Morris reviewed the data and information for the following goals. He reviewed the successes in each area, as well as areas needing improvement.

- Goal #1 Increase Academic Progress. 5 goals have been met and 3 are still in progress. Mr. Morris reviewed a new action item for the Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant. He also reviewed budgeted items in Goal 1 and reviewed which items have been fully and partially implemented, with one action item still being planned.
- Goal #2 Students Will Gain Skills for College and Career Readiness. Highlighted the increase in math and CTE course completion. All budget items have been fully implemented.
- Goal #3 Increase Student Retention. Non-completer rate is very low. All budget items have been fully implemented.
- Goal #4 Increase Educational Partners’ Engagement. Great turnout at ELPAC meetings and event participation has increased. All budget items have been fully implemented.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Morris for his presentations.

Board Secretary Newell asked a few clarifying questions regarding some budget items. Mr. Morris discussed her questions and provided additional information on the LCAP procedure.

E.

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 January 1, 2025, and June 30, 2025. 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.

V. Action Items

A. The Board will be asked to approve the June 30, 2025, Annual Audit Report for the school

Guita Sharifi directed the board to the annual audit report and introduced Aubrey Mann, Partner, CPA at Wilkinson, Hadley, King & Co., to review the 2024-25 fiscal year audit report in detail with the board.

Ms. Mann greeted the board and reviewed each of the financial statements in detail and explained the purpose of each report, highlighting specific financial data.

Ms. Mann then directed the board 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, 2025.

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

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to approve the June 30, 2025, Annual Audit Report for the school.

Dana Clark seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

B. 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 over the recommended maximum 20%. Mr. Nardiello explained that 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 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. Lastly, Mr. Nardiello reviewed the updated Committed Funds Plan and asked the board if they had any comments or questions.

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

James Lott made a motion to approve the revised Committed Funds Plan for the school.

Dana Clark seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

C. The Board will be asked to approve the 2025-2026 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, 2025, through October 31, 2025. 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, highlighting the following areas:

- The school budgeted a P2 ADA of 1,833, and the school is currently projecting a funding P2 ADA of 1,728.
- The school is projecting total revenue of \$33.5M, which is \$918K lower than the school's original budget.
- LCFF projected revenue is \$29.4M.
- Federal projected revenue is \$105K.
- State Revenue increased from \$2.9M to 3.7M due to a combination of an increase in Arts and Music funding, the addition of the Learning Recovery Block Grant, and the Student Support and Professional Development Discretionary Block Grant.
- Other Revenue is projected at \$203K, and includes refunds, wellness credits, and 403b forfeitures.
- Projected total expenditures of \$33.2M, show a spending reduction of \$1M compared to the original budget.

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

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

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to approve the 2025-2026 First Interim Report.

James Lott seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

D. The Board will be asked to review and approve Wilkinson, Hadley & King & Co., LLP to prepare the school's 2024 Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax and any other related tax forms

Guita Sharifi directed the board to the engagement letter from Wilkinson, Hadley, King & Co. to prepare the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, 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 2024 tax returns.

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

Dana Clark made a motion to approve Wilkinson, Hadley & King & Co., LLP to prepare the school's 2024 Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax and any other related tax forms.

James Lott seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

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

A. Observations and Comments

Jeff Brown discussed the LCAP and shared his excitement for the hard-working staff, the growth of the school, and the new year. He praised the staff for providing social opportunities for the students.

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: OAH Case Number: 2025080834

2. 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

3. 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.

Ruth Escarcega Newell seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

James Lott seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Michael R Adams	Aye
Marvin D. Smith	Absent
Dana Clark	Aye
James Lott	Aye
Ruth Escarcega Newell	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: OAH Case Number: 2025080834

2. 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

3. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

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

Title: Superintendent

VIII. Closing Items

A. Next Regular Board Meeting Date: March 3, 2026, 3:30pm

B. Adjourn Meeting

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Dana Clark seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Marvin D. Smith Absent

Dana Clark Aye

Ruth Escarcega Newell Aye

Michael R Adams Aye

James Lott Aye

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Dana Clark 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 Absent

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 4:24 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.