

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 April 21, 2026 at 3:30 PM

Location

Meeting Location: 177 Holston Drive, Lancaster, CA 93535

Microsoft Teams

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Phone conference ID: 912 407 059#

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 Adams, Ruth Escarcega Newell

Directors Absent

None

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 Adams called a meeting of the board of directors of Desert Sands Charter High School to order on Tuesday Apr 21, 2026 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 Secretary Newell led the pledge of allegiance.

D. Staff Introductions

Jeff Brown, CEO

Shellie Hanes, Superintendent

Victor Nardiello, Area Superintendent

Darin Bower, COO

Alex Morris, Federal and State Programs Coordinator

Bill Thompson, Legal Counsel

Guita Sharifi, CFO, LLAC

E. Approve Agenda for the April 21, 2026, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors

Ruth Escarcega Newell made a motion to Approve Agenda for the April 21, 2026, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors.

Marvin D. Smith seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

F. Approve Minutes of the March 3, 2026, Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Directors

Dana Clark made a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Board Meeting on 03-03-26.

Ruth Escarcega Newell seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

II. Consent Agenda

A. Consent Agenda Items

Board President Adams announced the following consent agenda items:

1. The Board will be asked to approve the 2026-2027 Employee Handbook
2. The Board will be asked to approve the 2026-2027 Parent-Student Handbook

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.

Dana Clark seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

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.

James Lott arrived.

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 7.25%, 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 enrollment, overall credit completion, and Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Mr. Nardiello then provided a presentation on recent learning center events, including an open house, the "New School Year Planning Summit", upcoming senior week, and prom.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Nardiello for his report.

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 reviewed the current funding status, the implementation plans, and next steps.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Morris for his update.

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 LCAP goals, shared a few highlights, and discussed areas needing improvement.

- Goal 1: Increase Academic Progress: This is a focus goal for increasing academic progress for all students, especially English language learners, low-income, and foster youth.
- Goal 2: Students will gain skills for College and Career-Readiness: This is a broad goal for helping students gain skills for college and career-readiness.
- Goal 3: Increase Student Retention: This is a maintenance goal designed to continue addressing student disengagement and supporting students' decisions to retransfer or graduate through this program.
- Goal 4: Increase Educational Partner Engagement: This is a maintenance goal designed to encourage parental participation in meaningful ways to promote positive school outcomes.

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

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Morris for his report.

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 – 607 students participated. Survey results reviewed included school safety, and college and career preparation.
- Parent/Guardian Survey - 477 parents participated. Survey results reviewed included staff feeling connected to the school and that the school provides a quality education.
- Staff Survey - 91 staff members participated. Survey results reviewed included parents feeling encouraged to participate and feeling heard.

Mr. Morris explained the survey data is used when developing the LCAP for the next school year. He then asked the board if they had any questions or comments.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Morris for his report.

F. CDE Notification of 2024-2025 Annual Determination Pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Selection for 2025-2026 Special Education Monitoring Activities

Memry Molina 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.

Ms. Molina then informed the board that the monitoring level assigned to the school for 2026 is Targeted Level 3, Needs Assistance. CIM processes begins again this year. Staff will continue to participate in webinars and workshops designed to support the development and implementation of the CIM process.

Board President Adams thanked Ms. Molina for her update.

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, 2025, and December 31, 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.

H. 2026-2027 Draft Board Meeting Dates

Board President Adams directed the board to the draft 2026-2027 regular board meeting calendar located in their board packet and requested the board to review the meeting dates and times.

V. Action Items

A. The Board will be asked to approve the Charter School's renewal application and re-certification for Dashboard Alternative School Status

Victor Nardiello informed the Governing Board that the California Department of Education's (CDE) Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS) division recently updated its guidance. The update indicates that the renewal application process for existing application-based DASS schools for the 2026–27 accountability year and the 2027 Dashboard is anticipated to open later this year. LEAs and schools are advised to continue monitoring the CDE DASS web page for the most current information, updates, and application timelines.

In light of this update, it was recommended that no action be taken at this time. Staff will continue to closely monitor the CDE DASS web page for official recertification procedures and timelines. Once additional information becomes available, this item will be brought back to the Governing Board for review and recommended action.

Board Secretary Newell commented on the enrollment numbers and asked Mr. Nardiello to review a potential discrepancy in the application. Mr. Nardiello informed the board he would review the application and make any necessary corrections.

Board President Adams thanked Mr. Nardiello.

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 reviewed the proposed changes, which included adjustments to the signature approval process and purchase order process. She then recommended the board approve the revised Accounting Manual.

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

Dana Clark 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

Ruth Escarcega Newell	Aye
Michael Adams	Aye
Dana Clark	Aye
Marvin D. Smith	Aye
James Lott	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 2026-2027 School Year per California Code of Regulations §80026

Victor Nardiello reminded the board that 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. He then reviewed the areas of anticipated need for fully qualified educators, limited assignment permits, and efforts to recruit certificated personnel.

Board Secretary Newell identified a potential discrepancy in the number of permits listed on the form. Mr. Nardiello noted the concern and informed the board he would review and make any necessary corrections.

The board and staff engaged in a discussion about mentoring new teachers. Mr. Nardiello and Ms. Hanes discussed the multiple programs in place to assist new teachers and administrators.

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

Marvin D. Smith 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 for the 2026-2027 School Year per California Code of Regulations §80026.

Dana Clark seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

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

A. Observations and Comments

Jeff Brown reflected on the many events and activities the school offers its students and their families. He then discussed the importance of students feeling cared for and included. Mr. Brown thanked the board for their continued support.

Shellie Hanes then informed the board she reviewed the Declaration of Need form, and will make the necessary corrections. She thanked Board Secretary Newell for her diligence.

VII. Closed Session

A. Adjourn open public Board meeting to go into closed session

1. 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.

Dana Clark seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Marvin D. Smith	Aye
Dana Clark	Aye
Michael Adams	Aye
Ruth Escarcega Newell	Aye
James Lott	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
James Lott	Aye
Ruth Escarcega Newell	Aye
Dana Clark	Aye
Michael 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. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION
(Government Code section 54957(b)(1).)
Title: Superintendent

VIII. Closing Items

A. Next Regular Board Meeting Date: June 4, 2026, 2:30pm

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	Aye
Dana Clark	Aye
Michael Adams	Aye
Ruth Escarcega Newell	Aye
James Lott	Aye

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 4:12 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.