

Excelsior Academy Board of Trustees
Draft Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 18th, 2025, At 5:30 PM
162 E Erda Way, Erda, UT 84074



1. Call to Order

Mr. Clark called the meeting to order at 5:34 PM.

2. Roll Call

Board Members Present:

- Brandon Clark
- Caleb Fielding
- Danelle Robins
- Laura Skousen
- Emily Smith
- Cathy Hunter

Board Members Excused:

N/A

Staff Present:

- Jen Draper
- Eva Wayman
- Savanah Broadbent
- Gichin Marsden
- Matt Hymas

Public Present:

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion: Mrs. Hunter motioned to approve the June 26th, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes.

Second: Mrs. Skousen

Discussion: None

Vote: All in favor

Result: Motion carried.

4. Public Comment

Kelli Spencer

Kelli expressed concerns regarding math policies at Excelsior Academy, specifically those outlined in the student handbook and the class syllabus. Issues raised include:

- Incorrect scoring on assignments
- Lack of teacher response to parent messages
- No opportunities for assignment corrections ("fix-ups")
- Zero credit given for assignments missing a student's name, with no option for make-up work

Additionally, Kelli inquired whether there is a dress code in place for teachers.

Heather Roy

Heather shared ongoing concerns regarding 6th-grade math instruction. She stated that:

- There appears to be a systemic issue; students are spending over an hour each night on math homework
- She has sent multiple emails without receiving any response
- There is a lack of communication and support from the teacher
- Several assignments have been incorrectly scored
She noted that Mr. Marsden has reached out in an effort to help resolve the situation, but the tone of teacher's email responses has not been encouraging. Heather emphasized the importance of supporting both students and teachers and asked: *If both are struggling,*

how can we help?

Cassidy Tucker

Cassidy voiced serious concerns regarding the math homework policy and communication. Key points include:

- The Excelsior policy states no more than 60 minutes of homework total per night, yet math alone is taking that full time
 - Her child was penalized with zero credit for forgetting to write his name on an assignment, with no opportunity to correct the issue
 - When reaching out for help, the teacher's response was not supportive
Cassidy stressed that student work should not be disregarded due to minor oversights, and that communication should be more constructive.
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5. Finance Report

Presenter: Mrs. Draper

Ms. Martin reviewed the financial reports and scoreboard for August 2025.

See Attachment A

6. Administrative Report

Mr. Hymas- Third-Grade Reading Proficiency Report over the past three years, our third-grade reading levels have declined, prompting us to reach out to the State of Utah for further clarification and support. The assessment in question is a state-mandated test used to measure reading proficiency across all districts.

Currently, 69% of our third-grade students are reading at or above grade level based on our internal evaluations and benchmarks. However, the State of Utah calculates and reports proficiency using a different methodology. As a result, the official state-reported percentage appears lower than what we are observing locally, which does not accurately reflect the progress and hard work taking place in our elementary classrooms.

We are seeing meaningful success and continued improvement in our literacy efforts. Unfortunately, the state's assessment framework does not fully capture or convey the positive outcomes our educators and students are achieving.

Enrollment Update

We experienced a net loss of 35 students due to the opening of the new middle school. Despite this shift, overall enrollment numbers remain strong and stable.

Staff Retention Rates

We continue to prioritize staff satisfaction and retention across all departments. Current retention rates are as follows:

- Elementary School: 82%
- Middle School: 90%
- Special Education: 80%
- Lunch Staff: 76%
- Front Office: 100%
- Custodial Staff: 100%
- Executive Operations: 93%

Overall Retention Rate: 84%

Operations Update

- Four breakout rooms have been added to support small-group instruction and meetings.
- Mrs. Ladell's classroom, which previously experienced a strong odor during rainstorms, has had its windows repaired to eliminate the issue.
- Overflow parking has been addressed and improved to better accommodate staff and visitor needs.

Walkathon

This year's Walkathon will take place in the fall. Funds raised will go toward technology upgrades, campus improvements, and enhanced security measures. We appreciate the continued support from families and the community.

Policy & Compliance Updates

- **Blackout Dates for Staff Leave:**

Staff are expected to avoid taking leave during the following blackout periods:

- August Professional Development and the first 8 days of school
- Immediately before and after Thanksgiving Break
- Immediately before and after Winter Break
- Immediately before and after Spring Break
- The final two weeks of the school year

HB 104 – Firearm Safety in Schools Amendments:

As mandated by HB 104, firearm safety instruction will now be included in the curriculum:

- **Elementary School:** Required to provide firearm safety education in at least three grade levels.
 - **Middle School:** Required to include firearm safety education in at least one grade level.
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8. Board Business – Action Items

Vote to approve the TSSA Plan

Motion: Mrs. Smith

Second: Mrs. Robins

Discussion: None

Vote: all in favor

Result: Motion carried

See Attachment B

Vote to approve LEA-Specific Teacher Licenses and endorsements

Motion: to approve LEA-specific Licenses -

Elementary Teachers

Kelsey Terry - Teacher Intern, Tiffany Tripp - Elementary Art

Licenses AND Endorsements - Middle School Teachers

Nesha Smith - Dance/Cheer

Austin Blake - Math

Brock Camper - Digital Literacy and Spanish

Amanda Hardman - Science

Mykell Vargas - English

Motion: Mrs. Robins
Second: Mrs. Hunter
Discussion: None
Vote: all in favor
Result: Motion carried

Vote to approve School Meals Account Policy

Motion: Mrs. Skousen
Second: Mrs. Smith
Discussion: None
Vote: All in favor
Result: Motion carried
See Attachment C

Vote to approve Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, Hazing, and Retaliation Policy (3A.01.008)

Motion: Mrs. Skousen to strike the word parent from section 3A3
Second: Mr. Fields
Discussion: None
Vote: All in favor
Result: Motion carried
See Attachment D

Vote to approve Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, Hazing, and Retaliation Policy (3A.01.008) as amended

Motion: Mrs. Smith
Second: Mrs. Robins
Discussion: None
Vote: All in favor
Result: Motion carried
See Attachment D

Vote to approve the new policy "Parental Leave - Postpartum Recovery Leave Policy"

Motion: Mr. Fields
Second: Mrs. Hunter
Discussion: None
Vote: All in favor
Result: Motion carried.
See Attachment E

Vote to approve the new Policy 3A.03.13 Salary Supplement for Highly Needed Educators (SHiNE) Program Policy

Motion: Mrs. Skousen's motion to change the dates from September 14 to September 15

Second: Mrs. Hunter

Discussion: None

Vote: All in favor

Result: Motion carried

See Attachment F

Vote to approve the new Policy 3A.03.13 Salary Supplement for Highly Needed Educators (SHiNE) Program Policy as amended

Motion: Mrs. Skousen

Second: Mrs. Smith

Discussion: None

Vote: All in favor

Result: Motion carried

See Attachment F

9. Executive Session:

Mr. Clark: Is there a motion to enter executive session according to Utah Code §52-4-205, for the purpose of discussing litigation, personnel, property, and or security

Motion: Mrs. Robins

Second: Mrs. Hunter

Discussion: None

Vote: All in favor

Result: The motion carries. We will now enter executive session. At 8:04 pm

Mr. Clark: motion to enter close executive session and go back into open session

Motion: Mrs. Robins

Second: Mrs. Hunter

Discussion: None

Vote: All in favor

Result: The motion carries.

10. Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Fields

Second: Mrs. Robins

Vote: All in favor

Time: 8:49 PM – Meeting adjourned.