

# EMPIRE SPRINGS CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

27740 JEFFERSON AVE • TEMECULA, CA 92590

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

September 12, 2024

**9:00 a.m.**

27740 Jefferson Ave. Temecula, CA

and

Rancho Cucamonga Student Center

8969 Archibald Ave.

Rancho Cucamonga, CA

*Our mission is to empower students by fostering their innate curiosity, engaging their parents, and promoting optimum learning by collaboratively developing a personalized learning program for each student.*

### Present:

Stephanie Vargas, Chair Marlene Darrow, Vice Chair Chuck Vela, Treasurer Jennifer Araiza, Secretary Ivo Caouette, Director Dianne Mendez, Director left at 10:15 a.m. Craig Schneider, Director	Dr. Kathleen Hermsmeyer, Superintendent Virginia Smith, Asst. Superintendent, Human Resources Tanya Rogers, Asst. Superintendent, Business Amy Podratz, Asst. Superintendent, Admin. Operations Natali South, Senior Director of Charter Relations Trevor Johnson, Senior Director of Business Denise Smith, Senior Director of Human Resources Ruth Newsome, Senior Director of Human Resources Courtney Cook, Senior Director of Special Education Monica Lopez, Principal Renee Albright, Charter Relations Coordinator
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- 1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**
  - Natali South called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 2. Oath of Office: Jennifer Araiza, Marlene Darrow, and Charles "Chuck" Vela**
  - Natali South asked Jennifer Araiza, Marlene Darrow, and Chuck Vela to take the Oath of Office. These members' first, renewable term will expire June 30, 2027.

**3. Action: Election of Officers & Appointment of Subcommittees**

- Mr. Caouette moved to elect Ms. Vargas as Board Chair.
- Ms. Mendez seconded.
- Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Mendez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
  
- Mr. Caouette moved to elect Ms. Darrow as Vice Chair.
- Ms. Vargas seconded.
- Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Mendez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
  
- Ms. Vargas moved to elect Ms. Araiza as Board Secretary.
- Mr. Caouette seconded.
- Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Mendez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
  
- Ms. Darrow moved to elect Mr. Vela as Board Treasurer.
- Mr. Caouette seconded.
- Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Mendez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
  
- Ms. Darrow moved to appoint Mr. Caouette and Ms. Mendez as representatives on the Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee.
- Ms. Vargas seconded.
- Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Mendez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
  
- Ms. Mendez moved to appoint Mr. Vela as Empire Springs' representative on the Succession Plan Subcommittee.
- Mr. Caouette seconded.
- Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Mendez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

**4. Approval of Agenda**

- Ms. Araiza moved to approve the agenda.
- Mr. Caouette seconded.
- Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Mendez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

5. **Action: Approval of Board Minutes from June 26, 2024**
  - Mr. Caouette moved to approve the Board Minutes from June 26, 2024.
  - Ms. Vargas seconded.
  - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Mendez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
  
6. **Action: Approval of Board Minutes from August 6, 2024**
  - Mr. Caouette moved to remove these minutes for correction and have them returned to a future agenda.
  - Ms. Araiza seconded.
  - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow Mendez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
  
7. **Action: Approval of Consent Agenda**
  - Mr. Vela moved to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of: Warrants, Personnel Action Report, Delayed State Data: CA School Dashboard Priority 1, and Contract Ratifications: Moore Flooring, Inc. at Preschool Bldg, Moore Flooring, Inc., AI's Quality Painting Inc., and AI's Quality Painting Inc.
  - Ms. Vargas seconded.
  - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow Mendez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
  
8. **Public Comments**
  - None
  
9. **Information: Student Spotlight - 8th Grade Summer Camp Video Presentation**
  - The board enjoyed a video created by our Education Department. Staff members from our Education Department took 8th-grade students to a week-long summer camp to bond with their peers and learn about their inner emotions.
  
10. **Information: Staff Spotlight - Board Appreciation Dinner 2024 Ignite! Video Presentation**
  - The board enjoyed a video created by Parrel 40 Productions of our Board Appreciation Dinner 2024. Our Board Appreciation Dinner was held on August 6th, 2024, at Pechanga Resort and Casino in the Grand Ballroom.
  
11. **Information: Staff Spotlight - 25th Ignite! 2024 Video Presentation**
  - The board enjoyed a video created by Parrel 40 Productions of our Staff Development 2024 (IGNITE!). Our Staff Development 2024 (IGNITE!) was held on August 7th, 2024, at Pechanga Resort and Casino in the Summit Ballroom.

- 12. Information: Superintendent's Report**
- Kathleen Hermsmeyer reviewed the Superintendent's Report and provided updates regarding the beginning of the school year. Additionally, she explained that we were able to open up new classrooms at our Rancho Cucamonga Student Center for our younger grades. This site is now fully being operated as Inland Empire Springs.
- 13. Information: Board Conference Options 2024-25**
- Natali South explained that one member per charter may attend a conference this year.
- 14. Action: Approval of Approval Unaudited Actuals**
- Ms. Mendez moved to approve the Unaudited Actuals.
  - Mr. Caouette seconded.
  - Discussion: Tanya Rogers reviewed the Unaudited Actuals for 2023-24. These will be reviewed during the upcoming audit. Tanya explained the sources of funding and reviewed expenditures.
  - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Mendez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 15. Action: Waive the First Reading and Approval of Board Policy 5036.1 - Student Parking**
- Mr. Caouette moved to waive the First Reading and approve Board Policy 5036.1 - Student Parking.
  - Ms. Darrow seconded.
  - Discussion: Tanya Rogers explained that some of the sites in the network have grown to the size that we need to implement a parking policy. While Empire Springs is not facing this issue, we try to have consistent policies across all our charters so that the policy is in place if needed.
  - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Mendez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 16. Action: Approval of Stipend Agreement Form (SAF) Schedule for 2024-25**
- Mr. Vela moved to approve the Stipend Agreement Form (SAF) Schedule for 2024-25.
  - Ms. Darrow seconded.
  - Discussion: Tanya Rogers explained that we have always offered stipends, which have been approved through the general budget process. CalSTRS has requested a separate approval for clarity regarding retirement credit reporting.
  - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Mendez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

- 17. Action: Approval of Longevity Bonuses presented at Ignite!**
- Mr. Caouette moved to approve the Longevity Bonuses presented at Ignite!
  - Ms. Araiza seconded.
  - Discussion: Tanya Rogers explained that we have always offered stipends, which have been approved through the general budget process. CalSTRS has requested a separate approval regarding clarity for retirement credit reporting.
  - Vote: 6 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 1 Absent: Mendez; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 18. Action: Waive the First Reading and Approval of Updated Board Policy 7003.1 - Conflict of Interest Code**
- Ms. Araiza moved to moved to waive the First Reading and approve Updated Board Policy 7003.1 - Conflict of Interest Code.
  - Ms. Vela seconded.
  - Discussion: Ruth Newsome explained that minor edits have been made to the COI. The approved policy will be forwarded to the County Board of Supervisors for approval.
  - Vote: 6 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 1 Absent: Mendez; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 19. Action: Approval of Superintendent's Goals 2024-25**
- Mr. Caouette moved to approve the Superintendent's Goals 2024-25.
  - Mr. Vela seconded.
  - Discussion: Kathleen Hermsmeyer reviewed her proposed goals for the upcoming year.
  - Vote: 6 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 1 Absent: Mendez; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 20. Closed Session: In Accordance with Gov Code Section 54957.1/54957.9 - Entered in at 10:15 a.m.**
- Special Education Settlement: Student ID: 6577
- 21. Open Session - Entered into at 10:30 a.m.**
- **Report of Action Taken in Closed Session**
    - Approval of Special Education Settlement - Student ID: 6577
      - The Board approved the Settlement Agreement.

**22. Board Comments**

- Ms. Araiza: Ignite! was amazing. I'm glad to be on the Empire Springs Board.
- Ms. Darrow: Ignite! was fantastic. What a testament to our 25 years! I hope everyone is doing okay with these fires. It's very stressful; we're watching closely because our house is in a potential path if it continues.
- Ms. Vargas: Welcome to the new board members. Rancho's Learning Center did a great job in light of the fires and options to attend at the campus or not. Ignite! was great, and I just want to let our staff know how much we appreciate you all.

**23. Action: Motion to Adjourn the Meeting**

- Mr. Vela moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:37 a.m.
- Ms. Darrow seconded.
- Vote: 6 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 1 Absent: Mendez; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

  
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Jennifer Araiza, Secretary

Oct. 21, 2024

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Date