

EMPIRE SPRINGS CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS
27740 JEFFERSON AVE • TEMECULA, CA 92590

**REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

February 6, 2025

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 Jennifer Araiza, Secretary Chuck Vela, Treasurer Ivo Caouette, Director Craig Schneider, Director	Dr. Kathleen Hermsmeyer, Superintendent Dr. Vivian Price, Asst. Superintendent, Education Amy Podratz, Asst. Superintendent, Admin. Ops Virginia Smith, Asst. Superintendent, Human Resources Tanya Rogers, Asst. Superintendent, Business Michelle Sapanara, Asst. Superintendent, Student Services Natali South, Senior Director of Charter Relations Trevor Johnson, Senior Director of Business Beverly Voechting, Director of High School Programs Kellie Seawright, Social Science Specialist Monica Lopez, Principal Renee Albright, Charter Relations Coordinator
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- 1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**
 - Ms. Vargas called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

- 2. Approval of Agenda**
 - Mr. Caouette moved to approve the agenda.
 - Ms. Darrow seconded.
 - Vote: 6 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Schneider, Vargas, Vela;
1 Absent: Mendez; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

3. Action: Approval of Board Minutes from December 12, 2024

- Ms. Darrow moved to approve the Board Minutes from December 12, 2024.
- Mr. Caouette seconded.
- Vote: 4 Ayes: Caouette, Darrow, Schneider, Vela;
1 Absent: Mendez; 2 Abstentions: Araiza, Vargas; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

4. Action: Approval of Consent Agenda

- Ms. Darrow moved to pull the Ethnic Students Graduation Requirements from the Consent Agenda and approve the remaining items consisting of: Warrants, Personnel Action Report, School Accountability Report Card, and Contract Ratifications: Marzano Resources, LLC Contract for Proficiency Scales and Assessment Guidance.
- Mr. Caouette seconded.
- Vote: 6 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Schneider, Vargas, Vela;
1 Absent: Mendez; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

- Mr. Caouette moved to approve the Ethnic Students Graduation Requirements.
- Ms. Darrow seconded.
- Discussion: Board members requested clarification about this item. Beverly Voechting, Director of High School Programs, explained to the Board that graduation requirements have changed and require a study of eight outcomes which include information to be infused into history courses. Our families will have options for how they access this information.
- Vote: 6 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Schneider, Vargas, Vela;
1 Absent: Mendez; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

5. Public Comments

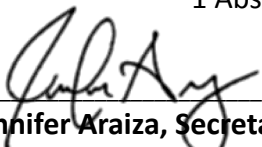
- None

6. Information: Student Spotlight - Rancho Cucamonga Learning Center - Chelsea

- Chelsea is a talented singer and a dedicated student at the Rancho Cucamonga Learning Center, where she excels academically. She is currently in the 6th grade and has been a part of the Springs community since kindergarten. Chelsea shared her beautiful voice with the Board by performing The Star Spangled Banner live via Zoom.

- 7. Information: Superintendent's Report**
- Kathleen Hermsmeyer reviewed the Superintendent's Report and provided network-wide updates including our Springs 25th Birthday Bash celebrations at every student center. Additionally, Kathleen announced that we have re-opened our OPEN Classroom (Online Public Education Now) in response to the devastating fires in our communities. This allows anyone to access free educational content on demand.
- 8. Information: Completion of Statement Conflict Interest Form 700**
- Natali South informed board members of the requirement to complete the annual conflict of interest forms. Our office will ensure compliance with this requirement.
- 9. Action: Approval of Resolution to Transfer Funds between Empire Springs and Inland Empire Springs Charters**
- Mr. Caouette moved to approve the Resolution to Transfer funds between Empire Springs and Inland Empire Springs Charters.
 - Ms. Darrow seconded.
 - Discussion: Tanya Rogers explained that we will be transferring \$3 million of fund balance from Empire Springs to Inland Empire to support the transfer of enrollment and activity that is now provided under Inland Empire.
 - Vote: 6 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Schneider, Vargas, Vela;
1 Absent: Mendez; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 10. Action: Approval of Auditor Selection for the 2024-25 School Year**
- Ms. Darrow moved to approve the Auditor Selection for the 2024-25 School Year.
 - Mr. Caouette seconded.
 - Discussion: Trevor Johnson explained that we will retain the same audit firm again this year.
 - Vote: 6 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Schneider, Vargas, Vela;
1 Absent: Mendez; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 11. Action: Approval of Springs Inc. Memorandum of Understanding**
- Ms. Araiza moved to approve the Springs Inc. Memorandum of Understanding.
 - Mr. Caouette seconded.
 - Discussion: Tanya Rogers presented the MOU and explained that this agreement establishes the per-student rate that is paid by the charter to Springs Inc. for the purpose of staff development and events such as Ignite!
 - Vote: 6 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Schneider, Vargas, Vela;
1 Absent: Mendez; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

- 12. Action: Second Reading and Approval of Revised Board Policy 5015.1 - Student Suspension and Expulsion**
- Ms. Darrow moved to approve the Second Reading of Revised Board Policy 5015.1 - Student Suspension and Expulsion.
 - Ms. Araiza seconded.
 - Discussion: Michelle Sapanara explained that this policy was previously presented for First Reading with no changes requested. In response to a member's question, Michelle explained the appeals process.
 - Vote: 6 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Schneider, Vargas, Vela;
1 Absent: Mendez; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 13. Action: Approval of Long Distance Travel - National Charter School Conference 2025**
- Mr. Caouette moved to approve the Long Distance Travel - National Charter School Conference 2025.
 - Ms. Araiza seconded.
 - Discussion: Natali South presented a request for long-distance travel for Stephanie Vargas to attend the National Charter School Conference in Orlando, FL later this year.
 - Vote: 6 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Schneider, Vargas, Vela;
1 Absent: Mendez; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 14. Board Comments**
- Ms. Araiza: Please reflect my vote on Minutes as an abstention. I just recalled that I was absent for the last meeting.
 - Ms. Vargas: I'd like to thank our staff for all of the hard work they do to ensure that our students have excellent opportunities. Principal Lopez, thank you for making Rancho such a special place. My children love going to school there!
 - Ms. Vela: I was thinking about the sizeable transfer of funds between the charters on today's agenda, and it made me think of the growth this organization has experienced. In the beginning days, those transactions would have been significantly smaller. Kathleen and team have done an outstanding job of growing this organization and should be very proud!
- 15. Action: Motion to Adjourn the Meeting**
- Ms. Darrow moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 a.m.
 - Mr. Caouette seconded.
 - Vote: 6 Ayes: Araiza, Caouette, Darrow, Schneider, Vargas, Vela;
1 Absent: Mendez; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted



Jennifer Araiza, Secretary

March 6, 2025

Date