

EMPIRE SPRINGS CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

27740 JEFFERSON AVE • TEMECULA, CA 92590

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

September 11, 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:

Marlene Darrow, Chair Jennifer Araiza, Vice Chair Chuck Vela, Secretary Jason Rodriguez, Treasurer JP Dauber, Director	Dr. Kathleen Hermsmeyer, Superintendent Dr. Vivian Price, Asst. Superintendent, Education Virginia Smith, Asst. Superintendent, Human Resources Michelle Sapanara, Asst. Superintendent, Student Services Amy Podratz, Asst. Superintendent, Admin. Ops. Tanya Rogers, Asst. Superintendent, Business Natali South, Senior Director of Charter Relations Courtney Cook, Senior Director of Special Education Ruth Newsome, Senior Director of Human Resources Monica Lopez, Senior Director of Instructional Support Renee Albright, Charter Relations Coordinator
--	--

- 1. Establish a Quorum, Call to Order, and Pledge of Allegiance**
 - Ms. South called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The board observed a moment of silence in honor of 9/11.
- 2. Action: Oath of Office: John Paul "JP" Dauber**
 - Natali South administered the Oath of Office for JP Dauber. His first three-year term will expire on June 30, 2028.
- 3. Approval of Agenda**
 - Ms. Araiza moved to approve the agenda.

- Ms. Darrow seconded.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Vela; 2 Absent: Schneider, Vargas; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

4. Action: Election of Officers & Appointment of Subcommittees

- Mr. Vela moved to elect Marlene Darrow as Board Chair.
- Mr. Rodriguez seconded.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Vela; 2 Absent: Schneider, Vargas; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

- Mr. Vela moved to elect Jennifer Araiza as Vice Chair.
- Ms. Darrow seconded.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

- Ms. Araiza moved to elect Chuck Vela as Board Secretary.
- Ms. Darrow seconded.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

- Ms. Darrow moved to elect Jason Rodriguez as Board Treasurer.
- Mr. Vela seconded.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

- Mr. Rodriguez moved to appoint Marlene Darrow and Chuck Vela to the Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee.
- Ms. Araiza seconded.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Vela; 2 Absent: Schneider, Vargas; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

- Mr. Vela moved to appoint Jennifer Araiza as Empire and Inland Empire Springs' representative on the Succession Plan Subcommittee.
- Ms. Darrow seconded.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Vela; 2 Absent: Schneider, Vargas; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

5. Action: Approval of Board Minutes from August 1, 2025

- Ms. Araiza moved to approve the Board Minutes from August 1, 2025.
- Mr. Vela seconded.

- Vote: 4 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Rodriguez, Vela; 2 Absent: Schneider, Vargas; 1 Abstention: Dauber; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

6. Action: Approval of Board Minutes from August 5, 2025

- Mr. Vela moved to approve the Board Minutes from August 5, 2025.
- Ms. Araiza seconded.
- Vote: 4 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Rodriguez, Vela; 2 Absent: Schneider, Vargas; 1 Abstention: Dauber; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

7. Action: Approval of Consent Agenda

- Mr. Vela moved to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of Warrants, Personnel Action Report, and Contract Ratifications: Kolibrien Corp. DMA&E Inc. Rancho, Freedom Landscape Rancho, and Santa Ana United Methodist Church Rancho.
- Ms. Araiza seconded.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Vela; 2 Absent: Schneider, Vargas; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

8. Public Comments

- None

9. Information: Staff Spotlight - IGNITE! Day One

- The Board enjoyed a video presentation featuring our Springs Charter School's organization at our Annual Ignite! Conference - Day One. This was our day of professional development for all Springs' staff members.

10. Information: Superintendent's Report

- Dr. Kathleen Hermsmeyer reviewed the Superintendent's Report, and provided information related to enrollment, advocacy and network-wide updates.

11. Information: First Reading of Board Policy 6005.1 - Remote Internet Access Board Policy

- Ruth Newsome explained that this policy outlines the parameters for cell phone and/or the issuance of MiFi devices, per position. The policy will be brought back for second reading and approval at a following meeting.

- 12. Information: First Reading of Revised Board Policy 6002.1 - Cell Phones and Cell Phone Reimbursement**
- Ruth Newsome explained that this policy outlines the parameters for cell phone issuance and cell phone reimbursement. The policy will be brought back for second reading and approval at a following meeting.
- 13. Action: Approval of Unaudited Actuals**
- Ms. Araiza moved to approve the Unaudited Actuals.
 - Mr. Vela seconded.
 - Discussion: Tanya Rogers reviewed the Unaudited Actuals and provided information regarding revenue, expenditures and grants. Our auditors will perform the official audit, and the final report will be presented at the December meeting.
 - Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Vela; 2 Absent: Schneider, Vargas; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 14. Action: Approval of Longevity Bonuses**
- Ms. Araiza moved to approve the Longevity Bonuses.
 - Mr. Vela seconded.
 - Discussion: Tanya Rogers explained that bonuses are paid for 15, 20 and 25-year employee recognition.
 - Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Vela; 2 Absent: Schneider, Vargas; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 15. Action: Approval of Sublease Between Empire Springs and Orange Springs for Additional Space at the Santa Ana Location**
- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the sublease between Empire Springs and Orange Springs for additional space at the Santa Ana location.
 - Ms. Araiza seconded.
 - Discussion: Tanya Rogers explained that we will be utilizing additional space at the Santa Ana location. The lease is written in Empire Springs' name, and is subleased by Orange Springs.
 - Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Vela; 2 Absent: Schneider, Vargas; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 16. Action: Approval of i-Ready Contract**
- Ms. Araiza moved to approve the i-Ready Contract.
 - Mr. Vela seconded.
 - Discussion: Jared McLeod explained that we use i-Ready's diagnostic software for student assessments.
 - Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Vela; 2 Absent: Schneider, Vargas; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

17. **Action: Approval of Revised Position Control System (PCS) to reclassify Speech Language Pathologists**
- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the revised Position Control System (PCS) to reclassify Speech Language Pathologists' salary schedules.
 - Ms. Araiza seconded.
 - Discussion: Ruth Newsome explained that the salary scale for Speech Language Pathologists has been updated to reflect current market value.
 - Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Vela; 2 Absent: Schneider, Vargas; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
18. **Action: Approval of Superintendent Goals 2025-2026**
- Ms. Araiza moved to approve the Superintendent Goals for the 2025-2026 school year.
 - Mr. Rodriguez seconded.
 - Discussion: Dr. Kathleen Hermsmeyer discussed her Superintendent Goals for the 2025-26 school year.
 - Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Vela; 2 Absent: Schneider, Vargas; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
19. **Board Comments and Future Agenda Requests**
- None
20. **Action: Motion to Adjourn the Meeting**
- Ms. Darrow moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:33 a.m.
 - Mr. Vela seconded.
 - Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Vela; 2 Absent: Schneider, Vargas; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

Chuck Vela

Chuck Vela, Secretary

Dec. 11, 2025

Date