

# EMPIRE SPRINGS CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

27740 JEFFERSON AVE • TEMECULA, CA 92590

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

February 12, 2026

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 Craig Schneider, Director Stephanie Vargas, Director *arrived 9:11am	Dr. Kathleen Hermsmeyer, Superintendent 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 Trevor Johnson, Senior Director of Business Courtney Cook, Senior Director of Special Education Maureen Roye, Director of CITE Rosario Marquez, Asst. Director - Work-Based Programs Kenley Nakao, Asst. Director - VAPA Renee Albright, Charter Relations Coordinator
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- 1. Establish a Quorum, Call to Order, and Pledge of Allegiance**
  - Ms. Darrow called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Natali South established a quorum.
- 2. Action: Approval of Agenda**
  - Mr. Schneider moved to approve the agenda.
  - Ms. Araiza seconded.
  - Vote: 6 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vela;  
1 Absent: Vargas; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

3. **Action: Approval of Minutes from December 11, 2025**
  - Ms. Araiza moved to approve the minutes from December 11, 2025.
  - Mr. Rodriguez seconded.
  - Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Vela; 1 Absent: Vargas; 1 Abstention: Schneider; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
  
4. **Action: Approval of Consent Agenda**
  - Mr. Vela moved to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of Warrants, Personnel Action Report, and the School Accountability Report Card.
  - Mr. Schneider seconded.
  - Vote: 6 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vela; 1 Absent: Vargas; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
  
5. **Public Comments**
  - None
  
6. **Information: Student Spotlight - January Events**
  - The Board enjoyed a video presentation featuring Springs' January Events.
  
7. **Information: Superintendent's Report**
  - Michelle Sapanara presented the Superintendent's Report and provided network-wide updates.
  
8. **Information: Visual and Performing Arts Informational Presentation**
  - Kenley presented the Visual & Performing Arts (VAPA) update to the Board, highlighting the development of Empire Springs and Inland Empire Springs Charter Schools' programs, including program vision, multi-year implementation plan, staffing overview, and budget allocation.
  
9. **Information: Presentation of CITE Program**
  - Maureen Roye presented to the Board on the CITE (Career Internship Technical Education) Program, highlighting program history, pathway offerings, student outcomes, and future initiatives. A printout copy of the presentation magazine was included for Board review.
  
10. **Information: Presentation of Pre-Apprenticeship Program**
  - Rosario Marquez presented an update to the Board on the Pre-Apprenticeship Program, highlighting program goals, student participation, pathway development, employer feedback, and future expansion plans.

- 11. Information: Selection of Auditor for Fiscal Year ending 06/30/26**
  - Trevor Johnson presented an update to the Board regarding the selection of an auditor for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, including audit rotation considerations, proposal reviews, and the timeline for Board approval of the audit contract. Interviews with potential companies will take place this week.
  
- 12. Information: Completion of Statement of Conflict of Interest Form 700**
  - Natali South discussed the annually required Statement of Conflict of Interest Form 700. The Board will complete applicable financial interests in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Code.
  
- 13. Action: Approval of Purchase and Sale Agreement with Fontana Foundation of Hope and vacant lots in Fontana**
  - Ms. Araiza moved to approve the Purchase and Sale Agreement with Fontana Foundation of Hope and vacant lots in Fontana.
  - Mr. Rodriguez seconded.
  - Discussion: Leilani Weiss indicated that the purchase of these properties will allow IESCS to expand to Fontana.
  - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
  
- 14. Action: Approval of 2026 Loan (Fontana Campus)**
  - Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the 2026 Loan (Fontana Campus).
  - Ms. Vargas seconded.
  - Discussion: Karl Yoder explained that this loan is for the purchase of the Fontana location.
  - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
  
- 15. Action: Approval of Change to the 2025-26 Classified Calendar**
  - Ms. Araiza moved to approve the change to the 2025-26 Classified Calendar.
  - Mr. Rodriguez seconded.
  - Discussion: Trevor Johnson explained the revision to the 2025-26 Classified Calendar for 260-day staff.
  - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
  
- 16. Action: Second Reading and Approval of Revised Board Policy 5000 Updates**
  - Ms. Araiza moved to approve the second reading of revised Board Policy 5000 Updates.
  - Ms. Darrow seconded.

- Discussion: Michelle Sapanara reminded the board that the updates were presented at an earlier meeting for first reading, and that no additional edits were made.
- Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

**17. Action: Waive the First Reading and Approval of Revised Board Policy 5030.1 Immigrant Students and Families**

- Mr. Rodriguez moved to waive the first reading and approve the revised Board Policy 5030.1 Immigrant Students and Families.
- Ms. Araiza seconded.
- Discussion: Michelle Sapanara indicated in order to meet the legal timeline, we need to waive the first reading and approve the policy. The changed language reflects the practice that is already in place.
- Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

**18. Action: Waive the First Reading and Approval of Behavioral Health Referral Protocols Grades 7 - 12 Board Policy 5029.2**

- Ms. Araiza moved to waive the first reading and approve the Behavioral Health Referral Protocols Board Policy 5029.2.
- Ms. Darrow seconded.
- Discussion: Sarah Adams indicated that new mental health protocols are in place, and this policy codifies our practice.
- Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

**19. Action: Approval of South Coast Community Services MOU and Service Agreement**

- Ms. Darrow moved to approve the South Coast Community Services MOU and Service Agreement.
- Ms. Araiza seconded.
- Discussion: Sarah Adams explained that Empire Springs received a grant to provide mental health services, and we have entered an agreement with South Coast Community Services to provide the necessary care.
- Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

**20. Action: Approval of Increase to Special Education Contracts for Providers for 2025 - 26**

- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve an increase to the Special Education Contracts for Providers for 2025-26.

- Ms. Araiza seconded.
- Discussion: Courtney Cook explained the need to increase the budget for special education service providers.
- Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

**21. Board Comments and Future Agenda Requests**

- Ms. Darrow: This was a great meeting with a lot of great information. There are so many opportunities for our students!

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

- Ms. Darrow moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:35a.m.
- Ms. Araiza seconded.
- Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

*Chuck Vela*  
Chuck Vela, Secretary

March 12, 2026  
Date