

EMPIRE SPRINGS CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

27740 JEFFERSON AVE • TEMECULA, CA 92590

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

May 14, 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	Dr. Kathleen Hermsmeyer, Superintendent Virginia Smith, Asst. Superintendent, Human Resources Tanya Rogers, Asst. Superintendent, Business Michelle Sapanara, Asst. Superintendent, Student Services Amy Podratz, Asst. Superintendent, Admin. Ops Natali South, Senior Director of Charter Relations Trevor Johnson, Senior Director of Business Ruth Newsome, Senior Director of HR Courtne Beers, Director of Special Education Amanda Deniston, Principal Jackie Dee, Principal Mary McDaniel, Community Outreach Coordinator 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 9:05 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 2. Action: Approval of Agenda**
 - Mr. Vela moved to approve the agenda.
 - Ms. Araiza seconded.
 - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

3. **Action: Approval of Minutes from March 12, 2026**
 - Ms. Araiza moved to approve the minutes from March 12, 2026.
 - Mr. Vela seconded.
 - Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 2 Abstentions: Darrow, Rodriguez; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

4. **Action: Approval of Minutes from April 28, 2026**
 - Mr. Vela moved to approve the minutes from April 28, 2026.
 - Ms. Araiza seconded.
 - Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vela; 0 Absent; 2 Abstentions: Rodriguez, Vargas; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

5. **Action: Approval of Consent Agenda**
 - Mr. Vela moved to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of Warrants, Personnel Action Report, and Contract Ratifications as Posted: Liminex, Inc. dba GoGuardian, Al's Quality Painting Inc at Rancho Cucamonga Student Center, Casala Group, Inc. at 9460, 9432, and 9420 Sierra Avenue Fontana, Diamond Air Services at Rancho Cucamonga Student Center, Freedom Landscape at Rancho Cucamonga Student Center, South Pacific at Rancho Cucamonga Student Center, Partner Engineering and Science, Inc. at 9432 Sierra Avenue Fontana, and Bertrand's Music Purchase Order for GamePlan Music Curriculum.
 - Ms. Vargas seconded.
 - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

6. **Public Comments**
 - None

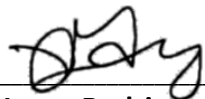
7. **Information: Student Spotlight - Goldberg Silblings**
 - Renee Albright shared a video presentation of the Goldberg siblings. They attend our Venture program. They chose Venture because of their passion for music and travel.

8. **Information: Superintendent's Report**
 - Dr. Kathleen Hermsmeyer reviewed the Superintendent's Report and provided charter and network-wide updates.

- 9. Presentation of McKinney-Vento Data & Resources 2025-26**
- Mary McDaniel, Community Outreach Coordinator, provided the board with a presentation regarding the McKinney-Vento Act and the services Empire Springs provides to our special populations and homeless students in need of additional support.
- 10. Information: Public Comment for Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)**
- Natali South opened the Public Comment window at 9:37 a.m. Katherine Van Leeuwen reviewed the LCAP report for Empire Springs. Board members asked questions and provided feedback. The window was closed at 9:53 a.m.
- 11. Action: Approval to table the First Reading of Revised Board Policy 4015.1 - Retirement Health Benefits.**
- Ms. Darrow moved to table the First Reading of Revised Board Policy 4015.1 - Retirement Health Benefits.
 - Mr. Rodriguez seconded.
 - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 12. Action: Approval of 2026-27 Consolidated Application for Funding**
- Mr. Vela moved to approve the 2026-27 Consolidated Application for Funding.
 - Mr. Rodriguez seconded.
 - Discussion: Tanya Rogers explained that the consolidated application allows the school to apply for various forms of funding through one application process.
 - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 13. Action: Second Reading and Approval of Revised Board Policy 8001.1 - 8001.3 Hiring: Recruitment and Selection, Nondiscrimination in Employment, Nepotism**
- Mr. Vela moved to approve the revised Board Policy 8001.1 - 8001.3 Hiring: Recruitment and Selection, Nondiscrimination in Employment, Nepotism.
 - Ms. Araiza seconded.
 - Discussion: Virginia Smith explained that this policy was brought for First Reading at a previous meeting and no changes were requested.
 - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted

- 14. Action: Second Reading and Approval of Revised Board Policy 8003.1-8003.3 Termination: At-Will Employment, Discipline, Resignation, Dismissal**
- Mr. Vela moved to approve the revised Board Policy 8003.1-8003.3 Termination: At-Will Employment, Discipline, Resignation, Dismissal.
 - Ms. Vargas seconded.
 - Discussion: Virginia Smith explained that this policy was brought for First Reading at a previous meeting, and no changes were requested.
 - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 15. Action: Approval of CL-500 Declaration of Need for Fully Qualified Educators**
- Ms. Darrow moved to approve the CL-500 Declaration of Need for fully qualified Educators.
 - Ms. Vargas seconded.
 - Discussion: Erin Chafin explained that this document is submitted annually to project the number of emergency permits that may be required for teachers who have not yet obtained their credentials.
 - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 16. Action: Approval of Long Distance Travel - Annual Ignite! Conference and Venture August PD**
- Ms. Araiza moved to approve the long-distance travel - Annual Ignite! conference and Venture August professional development.
 - Ms.Darrow seconded.
 - Discussion: Erin Chafin explained that this document is submitted annually to project the number of emergency permits that may be required for teachers who have not yet obtained their credentials.
 - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted
- 17. Action: Approval of Board Calendar 2026/27**
- Ms. Darrow moved to approve the Board calendar 2026/27.
 - Ms. Vargas seconded.
 - Discussion: Natali South discussed the proposed 2026–2027 Board meeting calendar, which reflected a potential meeting time adjustment. Upon discussion, the Board communicated a preference to keep their meetings at 9am.
 - Vote: 7 Noes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Ayes; Motion did not pass.

18. **Closed Session: GOV Code 54954.5/54957, Entered Closed Session at: a.m.**
- 54957: Public Employee Performance Evaluation (Government Code § 54957(b)(1))
19. **Open Session: Report of Action Taken in Closed Session**
- 54957: Public Employee Performance Evaluation (Government Code § 54957(b)(1))
 - No Action to Report
20. **Board Comments and Future Agenda Requests**
- None.
21. **Action: Motion to Adjourn the Meeting**
- Mr. Vela moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:12 a.m.
 - Ms. Darrow seconded.
 - Vote: 7 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider, Vargas, Vela; 0 Absent; 0 Noes; Motion Adopted



Jason Rodriguez, Secretary

June 11, 2026

Date