EMPIRE SPRINGS CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

27740 JEFFERSON AVE • TEMECULA, CA 92590

R E G U L A R M E E T I N G
M I N U T E S

June 11, 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 Jason Rodriguez, Treasurer (left at 11:14 a.m.) JP Dauber, Director Craig Schneider, Director	Dr. Kathleen Hermsmeyer, Superintendent Virginia Smith, Asst. Superintendent, Human Resources Amy Podratz, Asst. Superintendent, Admin. Ops Vivian Price, Asst. Superintendent, Education Michelle Sheane, Asst. Superintendent, Student Services Trevor Johnson, Senior Director of Business Natali South, Senior Director of Charter Relations Katherine VanLeeuwen, Senior Director of Admin. Ops. Holly Hungerford, Senior Director of Nutrition Services Scott Lloyd, Senior Director of Facilities Jonathan Green, Senior Director of Middle & HS Programs Ruth Newsome, Senior Director of HR Mariajose Borja, Director of Hiring and Recruitment Laura Banda, Director of Assessment & Accountability Leilani Weiss, Director of Special Projects - Facilities Renee Albright, Charter Relations Coordinator

1. **Establish a Quorum, Call to Order, and Pledge of Allegiance**

- Ms. Darrow called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **Action: Approval of Agenda**

- Mr. Schneider moved to approve the Agenda.
- Ms. Darrow seconded.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider; 0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

3. **Action: Approval of Minutes from May 12, 2026**

- Mr. Schneider moved to approve the Minutes from May 14, 2026.
- Ms. Araiza seconded.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider; 0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

4. **Action: Approval of Consent Agenda**

- Ms. Araiza moved to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of: Warrants, Personnel Action Report, Review the Independent Auditor's Communication to the Board and Management for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2026, and Contract Ratifications As Posted: Frontline Education 2026-2027 Annual Fee, Write Score Contract, Instructure Contract for Canvas and Learn Platform, and Stewart Electric at Rancho Cucamonga Student Center.
- Mr. Rodriguez seconded.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider; 0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

5. **Public Comments**

- None

6. **Springs Nation - Twilight in Wonderland: Springs Charter Schools Prom 2026 Highlight Reel**

- Renee Albright shared a video highlighting the magic and memories of Springs Charter Schools’ 2026 Prom, Twilight in Wonderland. Set against the beautiful backdrop of Hawk Ranch, the evening brought students together for a night of celebration, connection, dancing, and unforgettable moments. Watching our students enjoy this milestone event and create lasting memories with their friends was truly special.

7. **Springs Nation - Commencement Ceremony 2026 Highlight Reel**

- Renee Albright shared a video celebrating the incredible accomplishments of the Springs Charter Schools Class of 2026 during this year's Commencement Ceremony. Held at the Pechanga Resort Summit Ballroom, the ceremony honored the hard work, perseverance, and achievements of our graduates as they crossed the stage and began their next chapter. It was an inspiring afternoon filled with pride, reflection, and excitement as families, friends, staff, and the entire Springs community came together to recognize this important milestone.

8. **Superintendent's Report**

- Dr. Kathleen Hermsmeyer reviewed the Superintendent's Report and provided network-wide updates.

9. **Reporting of State Priority Local Indicators to CDE Dashboard**

- Katherine Van Leeuwen reviewed the local indicators for the CDE dashboard. These indicators are self-reported data points regarding specific measures.

10. **Action: Approval of 2026-27 Budget**

- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the 2026-27 Budget.
- Mr. Schneider seconded.
- Discussion: Trevor Johnson reviewed the 2026-27 budget. He explained that the Governor's May Revise added additional funding to the budget. Portions of the money are one-time funding streams, and the school will ensure that those funds are not utilized for ongoing expenses.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider;
0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

11. **Action: Approval of the Temporary Lending to Liberty Springs Charter School**

- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve Temporary Lending to Liberty Springs Charter School.
- Mr. Schneider seconded.
- Discussion: Trevor Johnson explained that Liberty Springs is a new online school in the Springs network. This school offers an online Connections program in Northern CA. As a new school, Liberty Springs will need start-up

funding assistance. This item identifies the lending and borrowing agreement between Empire Springs and Liberty Springs.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider;
  0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

12. **Action: Approval of the Temporary Lending to Shasta Springs Charter School**
- Mr. Schneider moved to approve the Temporary Lending to Shasta Springs Charter School.
- Ms. Araiza seconded.
- Discussion: Trevor Johnson explained that Shasta Springs is a new online school in the Springs network. This school offers an online Connections program in Northern CA. As a new school, Shasta Springs will need start-up funding assistance. This item identifies the lending and borrowing agreement between Empire Springs and Shasta Springs.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider;
  0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

13. **Action: Approval of EPA Education Protection Account Actuals as of 6/30/26 Current Estimates**
- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the EPA Education Protection Account Actuals as of 6/30/26 current estimates.
- Mr. Schneider seconded.
- Discussion: Trevor Johnson explained that EPA funds covered 4.70 teacher salaries for the 2025-26 school year.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider;
  0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

14. **Action: Approval of 2026-27 EPA Multi-Year Plan**
- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the 2026-27 EPA Multi-Year Plan.
- Ms. Darrow seconded.
- Discussion: Trevor Johnson explained the projection that EPA funds will cover 5.43 teachers' salaries.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider;
  0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

15. Action: Approval of Longevity Payments to 15, 20, and 25-year Employees

- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the Longevity Payments to 15, 20, and 25-year Employees.
- Mr. Schneider seconded.
- Discussion: Trevor Johnson reminded the Board that, during the annual Ignite! event, employees celebrating 15, 20, and 25 years of service with the organization are recognized and honored with longevity bonuses.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider; 0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

16. Action: Approval of Superintendent's Contract 2026-27

- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the Superintendent's Contract 2026-27.
- Mr. Schneider seconded.
- Discussion: Trevor Johnson presented the Superintendent's contract and indicated that Dr. Hermsmeyer's salary will be split among the Springs charters, based on enrollment percentages.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider; 0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

17. Action: Approval of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Employee and Personnel Services Sharing: Addition of Three Schools

- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Employee and Personnel Services Sharing: Addition of Three Schools.
- Ms. Darrow seconded.
- Discussion: Amy Podratz explained that this MOU allows staff to conduct work on behalf of any of the charters within the network, regardless of which charter(s) they are employed by.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider; 0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

18. Action: Approval of Pearson Contract with Amendment through June 30, 2029

- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the Pearson Contract with Amendment through June 30, 2029.
- Mr. Schneider seconded.

- Discussion: Amy Podratz explained that Pearson provides curriculum and services for our Connections program.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider;
  0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

19. Action: Approval of the 2026-27 Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)

- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the 2026-27 Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).
- Ms. Darrow seconded.
- Discussion: Katherine Van Leeuwen reviewed the LCAP for Empire Springs. She explained that the plan follows the state's template, and indicates the school's progress on goals and actions.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider;
  0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

20. Action: Approval of Position Control System (PCS) and Salary Schedules 2026-27

- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the Position Control System (PCS) and Salary Schedules for 2026-27.
- Ms. Darrow seconded.
- Discussion: Ruth Newsome explained that a few changes were made to the upcoming salary schedules, based on compensation studies and the newly released budget estimations.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider;
  0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

21. Action: Waive First Reading and Approval of Board Policy 5038.1 Mobile Communication Devices

- Mr. Rodriguez moved to waive the first reading and approve Board Policy 5038.1 Mobile Communication Devices.
- Ms. Darrow seconded.
- Discussion: Jonathan Green explained that waiving the first reading is being requested in order to implement the policy in time for the upcoming school year. He indicated that state law requires the restriction of mobile devices on campuses. Springs has crafted a policy that aligns with state requirements

and has been vetted by site leadership.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider; 0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

22. **Action: Approval of Title I, Part A School-Parent Compact 2027**
- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the Title I, Part A School-Parent Compact 2027.
- Mr. Schneider seconded.
- Discussion: Laura Banda reviewed the school-parent compact and indicated that legal counsel reviewed and provided the updated document for approval.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider; 0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

23. **Action: Approval of Wenger Co. Project Order for Rancho Cucamonga Student Center**
- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the Wenger Co. Project Order for Rancho Cucamonga Student Center.
- Mr. Schneider seconded.
- Discussion: Kenly Nakao explained that the project order will provide equipment and materials, paid from Virtual and Performing Arts funds.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider; 0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

24. **Action: Approval of Contract with TopNCatering LLC 2026-27**
- Mr. Schneider moved to approve the Contract with TopNCatering LLC 2026-27.
- Mr. Rodriguez seconded.
- Discussion: Holly Hungerford explained that TopNCatering provides food services for our students.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider; 0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

25. **Action: Approval of Long Distance Travel to Leadership Bootcamp**
- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the long-distance travel to Leadership

Bootcamp.
- Mr. Schneider seconded.
- Discussion: Jacki York explained that this approval will allow an out-of-state employee to attend a staff development event.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider; 0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

26. **Action: Approval of Special Education Contracts for Providers for 2026-27**
- Mr. Schneider moved to approve the Special Education contracts for providers for 2026-27.
- Mr. Rodriguez seconded.
- Discussion: Courtney Cook reviewed the estimates for special education contracted services for the 2026/27 school year.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider; 0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

27. **Action: Approval of the contract with City Wide Facility Solutions LLC at 9460 Sierra Avenue, Fontana**
- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the contract with City Wide Facility Solutions LLC at 9460 Sierra Avenue, Fontana.
- Mr. Schneider seconded.
- Discussion: Tony Santistevan explained that this contract provides custodial services at the Fontana building.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider; 0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

28. **Action: Approval of Revised Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws**
- Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the revised Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.
- Ms. Darrow seconded.
- Discussion: Natali South explained that the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation were updated by legal counsel to align with current laws and practices.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Rodriguez, Schneider;

0 Noes; 2 Absent: Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

29. Action: Election of Officers & Appointment of Subcommittees

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

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

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

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

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

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

30. Closed Session: GOV Code 54954.5/54956.9/54957, Entered into at: 11:14 a.m.

- 54956.9: Approval of Special Education Settlement - Student ID: 1428
- ESCS/IESCS: Public Employee Discipline/Dismissal/Release (GC 54957)

31. **Open Session -** Report of Action Taken in Closed Session **Entered into at: 11:48 a.m.**

- 54956.9: Approval of Special Education Settlement - Student ID: 1428
  - The Board approved the Special Education Settlement.

- Public Employee Discipline/Dismissal/Release (GC 54957)
  - No Action to Report

32. **Board Comments and Future Agenda Items**

- Ms. Darrow: Wishing everyone a great summer. I’m looking forward to seeing you all soon.

33. **Motion to Adjourn the Meeting**

- Mr. Schneider moved to approve the motion at 11:53 a.m.
- Ms. Darrow seconded.
- Vote: 5 Ayes: Araiza, Darrow, Dauber, Schneider;
  0 Noes; 3 Absent: Rodriguez, Vargas, Vela; Motion Adopted.

______________________________ June 23, 2026

Jason Rodriguez, Secretary **Date**