



## Da Vinci Schools

### Minutes

#### Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County Board Meeting (RISE High)

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##### **Date and Time**

Tuesday December 7, 2021 at 6:00 PM

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Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County ("DVLAC") welcomes your participation at its Board meetings. The purpose of a public meeting of the Board of Directors ("Board") is to conduct the affairs of DVLAC in public. Your participation assures us of continuing community interest in our schools. To assist you in speaking/participating in our meetings, the following guidelines are provided:

1. Teleconferencing will be held through Zoom. Join the Zoom Meeting at <https://zoom.us/j/96061894040> Meeting ID: 960 6189 4040, or dial (669) 900-6833.
  2. Agendas are available to all audience members online at <https://dvrise.davincischools.org>.
  3. Audience members who wish may speak on any agenda items or under the general category of "Public Comments," which is time set aside for members of the audience to raise issues not specifically on the agenda. However, due to public meeting laws, the Board can only listen to your issue, not respond or take action. These presentations are limited to three (3) minutes and total time allotted to non-agenda items will not exceed fifteen (15) minutes. Non-English speakers who use a translator shall have six (6) minutes in which to address the Board.
  4. The Board may give direction to staff to respond to your concern or you may be offered the option of returning with a citizen-requested item.
  5. The chair will recognize such individuals who wish to speak on a specific agenda item at the appropriate time. When addressing the Board, speakers are requested to adhere to the time limits set forth, and to not repeat remarks made by those who preceded them.
  6. Any public records relating to an agenda item for an open session of the Board which are distributed to all, or a majority of all, of the Board members shall be available for public inspection at 201 N. Douglas Street, El Segundo, CA 90245, during Business Office operating hours. For more information call the CEO's office at 310-725-5800.
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The agenda and documents in the agenda packet will be made available, if requested, in appropriate alternative formats to any person with a disability as required by the ADA, 42 USC section 12132, and the federal rules and regulations adopted in implementation thereof. To request a disability-related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, you must contact Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County (201 N. Douglas Street, El Segundo, CA) at 310-725-5800, ext. 1351 at least 48 hours before a regular meeting, and at least 12 hours before a special meeting. (Government Code § 54954.2(a)(1).)

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#### **Trustees Present**

A. Montes-Rodriguez (remote), C. McCullough (remote), C. Taylor (remote), J. Morgan (remote), L. Jennings (remote), T. Johnstone (remote)

#### **Trustees Absent**

*None*

#### **Trustees who arrived after the meeting opened**

C. McCullough

#### **Guests Present**

Anthony Gay (remote), Anthony Pur (remote), Ary Ricardez (remote), Ashley Oku (remote), E'bow Morgan (remote), E. Funes (remote), E. Salango (remote), E. Whalen (remote), Ivonne Alarcon (remote), J. Hawn (remote), M. Amato (remote), M. Wunder (remote), Meika Nwaomah (remote), N. Lara (remote), Ravenna Smith (remote), V. Bravo (remote)

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### **I. Opening Items**

#### **A. Call the Meeting to Order**

E. Salango called a meeting of the board of trustees of Da Vinci Schools to order on Tuesday Dec 7, 2021 at 6:03 PM.

#### **B. Record Attendance and Guests**

#### **C. Approval of Agenda**

J. Morgan made a motion to Approval of Agenda.

T. Johnstone seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

#### **Roll Call**

A. Montes-Rodriguez	Aye
L. Jennings	Aye
T. Johnstone	Aye
C. McCullough	Absent
J. Morgan	Aye
C. Taylor	Aye

#### **D. Public Comments**

*None.*

C. McCullough arrived at 6:06 PM.

## II. Special Board Action

### A. Special Board Action: Approve and Adopt Board Resolution Authorizing Remote Teleconference Meetings for the Period December 1, 2021 through December 30, 2021

T. Johnstone made a motion to Special Board Action: Approve and Adopt Board Resolution Authorizing Remote Teleconference Meetings for the Period December 1, 2021 through December 30, 2021.

L. Jennings seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

#### Roll Call

L. Jennings	Aye
C. McCullough	Aye
C. Taylor	Aye
A. Montes-Rodriguez	Aye
J. Morgan	Aye
T. Johnstone	Aye

## III. Information: Board Comments and/or Administrative Reports

### A. From the Board

Dr. Jennings provided an update to the fundraising group in Mrs. Kari Croft's absence. The working group had a productive meeting and discussed fundraising strategies and ways individual Board members can contribute to the distribution of labor. The next meeting is in January. Dr. Jennings thanked the staff for their work with students at this time of the year.

Dr. Johnstone also shared his appreciation to all staff, and wished everyone a wonderful holiday season and Winter break.

Mrs. Morgan thanked the Board members in the working group for their time and efforts. She also thanked Dr. Wunder, Dr. Hawn, and Mr. Whalen for all their work to ensure the school is supported and successful.

### B. From the CEO/Superintendent

Dr. Wunder commended Mr. Whalen on his commitment to RISE and leadership. RISE staff met with Dr. Brown from LACOE. Dr. Brown was impressed by the work happening at the RISE schools.

### C. HR Update

Dr. Hawn shared staff attrition and retention rates. She reviewed labor market trends, exit rates, demographic data, RISE trends, and next steps.

Dr. Hawn provided context to 'The Great Resignation,' a lasting impact from the pandemic. Unfortunately, Da Vinci Schools are not immune to what is happening in the larger economy and workforce regarding shifts in the labor market. Dr. Hawn reviewed exit rates during 2019-2021 for all certificated staff throughout Da Vinci Schools, Da Vinci Schools certificated staff (not RISE), and RISE certificated staff. Exiting staff includes full-time certificated and classified staff over the last three years. Statistically, there is not a significant demographic group trending in exiting. Exits typically occur at the end of the school year, with the rare exception of mid-year exits.

Dr. Hawn reviewed the exit process and thanked Mr. Whalen for being a partner in the process. Before Dr. Hawn's employment with Da Vinci, exit interviews were not regularly happening because site leaders held exit interviews informally. Now, there is a standard interview process in which every exiting staff participates. The process is to support maintaining relationships due to the 'small world' nature of education and wanting staff to feel supported and happy. Reasons for attrition are due to relocation out of the country and or state, professional advancement, continuing education/graduate school, pursuing different careers, and compensation. Constructive feedback from the process includes improved communication across the organization and systems and protocols. Recent concerns are in regards to New Earth staff turnover and its impact to Da Vinci RISE staff.

Next steps include continuing the process. Dr. Hawn and Mr. Whalen work closely when talking to exiting staff, making sure to respond to constructive feedback. During this time of significant change and difficulty, Dr. Hawn reiterated the importance of ensuring staff are taken care of and supported.

Dr. Jennings thanked Dr. Hawn for the presentation and information. She shared her understanding of the trends and her excitement for the continued exiting process as it provides valuable information. She recommended consideration of positional power and equity to make sure staff can talk to someone they are comfortable giving direct feedback to.

Dr. Johnstone shared a few thoughts around factors that could be contributing to staff exits. He spoke of the average age of Da Vinci staff compared to teachers and staff across the state, the high cost of living in Los Angeles, and the desire and potential opportunities to buy a home outside of LA County.

Mrs. Morgan reiterated the significance of showing staff care to support retention. Ensuring staff are happy and comfortable is important because they are valuable to the program. She asked for staff to share feedback with the Board on assisting and showing care. She encouraged innovation during this time of uncharted territory.

Dr. McCullough agreed with Mrs. Morgan.

Mrs. Montes-Rodriguez also agreed with Mrs. Morgan. She also questioned what more could be done during the end of the year to retain staff since trends show teachers leaving at the beginning of the school year.

Mr. Whalen requested guidance and feedback for capacity management. Gaps in staffing and delays in hiring due to shortages have impacted other staff roles. Mr. Whalen asked for some strategic ways not to burn out staff that are filling gaps to ensure things are still progressing. He shared his desire to protect the team and show care during this time.

Mrs. Morgan asked to share Da Vinci Schools' idea regarding rotating substitutes. Dr. Hawn shared that she would follow up with Mr. Whalen.

#### **D. From the Principal/Executive Director**

RISE 2021-22 Priorities: Data-driven, campus culture, college, and career.

November Data and Demographics Data Update

RISE serves 208 students, 48% of whom are opportunity youth. ADA from 11/1 - 11/26 was 54.05% at Richstone, 48.37% at APCH, and 57.84% at New Earth. Schoolwide ADA is 52.13%. Mr. Whalen shared a breakdown of the number of foster youth, probationary youth, housing unstable (which changes weekly), and parenting youth across the RISE sites. He also highlighted data pertaining to student support services provided from August through December 6th from all three school sites.

#### Partnership Updates

New Earth: Students completed the Southwestern Law School certificate of study and engaged in a culminating debate to earn a certificate of completion. Students are featured in the Thanks for Giving Campaign sent out to donors on all social media platforms. The girl's group engaged in a pottery field trip, and potential graduating seniors targeted for case management conferencing.

APCH: APCH has RISE student interns this semester. CSUN Educational Opportunity Program presentations were held on-site, and 23 students attended. CSUN staff shared information on how students can receive individualized support in applying for the EOP program and attend CSUN all four years free of charge. APCH distributed 21 Thanksgiving bags to RISE students and families this Thanksgiving. Bags included turkeys and ingredients for side dishes.

Richstone: Richstone & RISE have been selected as a recipient of the Sierra Health Foundation & Elevate Youth California \$10,000 grant awarded as a collaboration to support Latinx and Black youth with histories of trauma who are navigating foster care, probation, housing instability, and/or other challenges. Grant funding will go towards creating supportive environments that promote the health and resiliency of Latinx and Black youth in South Bay and South Los Angeles communities. This will include staff training, parent and community workshops and training, group therapy including art therapy for RISE students, and the development of a Youth Action Council.

#### RISE at Richstone:

Richstone held Academic Success at RISE assemblies before Fall break to support work expectations on and off-campus and celebrate student success with RISE Tenant Awards. Richstone has two additional confirmed graduates. Richstone will be piloting a revamped schedule that maintains the current cohort structure and adds opportunities for embedded enrichment programming, SSS group therapy, and dedicated time with advisors. The schedule pilot begins December 8th, and we will take any learnings to refine a solidified schedule before the start of Quarter 3. Staff will continue to bring awareness to students on DreamSeeDo Heat Maps, academic expectations with independent workdays, and expected quarterly credit obtainment.

#### RISE at APCH

APCH has two December graduates participating in our RISE Winter Graduation Thursday, December 16th, in a special family banquet-style event hosted at Da Vinci Schools Black Box Theater. The various educational opportunities for students through the partnership with APCH include: Impact interns completed over 40 hours throughout the month in addition to meeting academic tasks with RISE, CSUN collaborative sessions provided for all students, a COVID Community Campaign initiative that includes RISE Staff, medical experts and a COVID Mobile Clinic to support vaccination efforts. Staff will continue to bring awareness to students on DreamSeeDo Heat Maps, academic expectations with independent workdays, and expected quarterly credit obtainment.

#### RISE at NE

RISE at New Earth instructors collaborated with Southwestern Law Students to engage students in Constitutional Law Studies. Students were granted certificates of completion from Southwestern Law School after a 10-week coursework period and earned World of Work credits necessary for graduation. Students are engaged in evidence-based argumentation, critical thinking and reasoning skills, and tactful collaboration with colleagues. Areas of growth for students by staff include supporting fostering intrinsic motivation, which usually needs an external force for motivation and self-care, and advocacy for emotional support when necessary.

#### LACOE Fall Visit – Dr. Brown

Dr. Brown visited the RISE team and school sites on Wednesday, December 1st. The visit consisted of classroom observations, site tours, lunch discussions, and a data and compliance presentation. Initial email feedback included positive remarks about the campuses, staff, and student engagement in instruction and one-on-one supports.

RISE December Graduation is on Thursday, December 16th, 2021, at Da Vinci Schools main campus Black Box Theater from 4-6 pm. There will be 5 RISE Graduates at the banquet-style event.

Dr. Jennings shared her appreciation for the site-based details. Mr. Whalen thanked Mrs. Naomi Lara, Ms. Edith Funes, and Mr. E'bow Morgan for their support and work in providing information.

Mrs. Montes-Rodriguez asked for more information regarding particular needs for parenting teens at RISE. She offered her assistance in introducing leadership to various organizations that can provide support and possible partnership opportunities.

### **E. Financial Update**

Mr. Amato reviewed the first interim report up for approval. He shared key areas in the profit and loss statement that detail the original approved budget and the revised first interim budget. The LCFF revenue remains the same as the FY21-22 original budget, with original budgeted enrollment at 230 and ADA at 13 and the FY21-22 revised budget adjusted with enrollment at 208 and ADA at 138. The ADA percentage increased to 66% to support the 138 ADA initially budgeted. Staff are working on scenarios to improve ADA, currently at 58%. Staff are confident they will reach 66% by the end of the year, which will allow us to acquire the state funding initially budgeted.

Mr. Amato reviewed the federal revenue section. He shared details of the 'All Other Federal Revenue' line containing ESSER II, COVID testing, and SMAA federal reimbursement revenue. It is down from the original budget due to changes in ESSER II funding. Federal nutrition has been added, but other expenses offset the revenue. While revenue is increased, expense is also increased in other areas. Mr. Amato reviewed the 'Other State Revenue' line up from the original budget because of a new SPED-related grant that supports the SPED program and expenses. He reviewed foundation grants and donations in the 'Local Revenue' line. The previous budget targeted \$427,500 as a fundraising goal which has been adjusted to \$127,500 to be more conservative in estimates based on the trends thus far. Revenue is down in total \$225,000 from the original budget.

Mr. Amato reviewed the expense categories: Salaries and Benefits. As discussed previously, three factors have affected salaries: The 3% additional COLA increase

provided to staff at the beginning of the year was not budgeted for, the Boeing grant initially budgeted at \$100,000 to support staffing was reduced to \$50,000, and the transitions with the timing of hires and unfulfilled positions and transitions positively support the budgeted expense offsetting the first two matters. Total personnel expenses are projected to come under budget by \$70,000. 'Books and Supplies' are on budget, as 'Food and Supplies' were added to offset the revenue. Money is saved in 'Equipment Areas' and 'Materials and Supplies.' Staff are awaiting news from the ECF grant, which supports technology. If the grant is awarded, it will cover the expense of Chromebooks. He also reviewed 'Professional/Consulting Services' and Operating Expenditures.' The expense includes partnership fees and potential costs for the Certificate of Occupancy fees for the New Earth and Richstone sites. Updates will be provided based on new information. 'Transportation Services' is also a central area of concern with expense due to higher than anticipated use. Staff are working on strategies to reduce this expense.

Total expenses come in \$200,000 over budget. Net income was originally planned as a deficit of \$140,000, where the deficit is now \$557,000. The deficit is supported by using \$217,840 of restricted funds previously received in prior years. The net change in the reserves will be projected to be just under (\$340,000). The year started with reserves of \$689,000, and if the deficit of (\$339,285) actualizes, \$350,000 will be left left in reserves.

Dr. Jennings thanked Mr. Amato for the information.

#### **F. Facilities Update**

Mr. Bravo shared an update regarding the Certificate of Occupancy for the Richstone location. The architect has provided the necessary documents, and now staff are awaiting feedback from the City. There is no new news for the Certificate of Occupancy at the New Earth location as staff awaits to hear input regarding private school designation.

Mr. Gutierrez, a LACOE facilities representative, visited all RISE school sites for facility checks. Documentation for asbestos was provided as requested. Staff will participate in a walk-through of the new potential New Earth site next week. LACOE representative Mr. Gutierrez will be joining the tour to provide feedback.

Mr. Bravo attended the CSBA conference last week and was able to engage with LACOE staff, including their legislative analyst, to reengage in conversation regarding interest in pursuing legislation for Community Schools funding. A meeting will be scheduled in the upcoming weeks.

### **IV. Discussion**

#### **A. Fundraising Working Group**

Dr. Jennings shared information during the Board update, and Dr. Wunder agreed that all Trustees are up-to-date on the progress. Others seeking information can request it as he is happy to share. Dr. Jennings expressed that any questions can also be directed towards herself, Dr. McCullough, and Mrs. Montes-Rodriguez.

### **V. Approval of Minutes**

#### **A. Approve Minutes of the November 16, 2021 Regular Board Meeting**

T. Johnstone made a motion to approve the minutes from Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County Board Meeting (RISE High) on 11-16-21.



L. Jennings seconded the motion.

Mrs. Montes-Rodriguez did not have time to review the minutes, thus abstains from voting.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

L. Jennings	Aye
T. Johnstone	Aye
C. McCullough	Aye
A. Montes-Rodriguez	Abstain
C. Taylor	Aye
J. Morgan	Aye

## VI. Action Items

### A. Accept November 2021 Check and EFT Transactions Per Management

J. Morgan made a motion to Accept November 2021 Check and EFT Transactions Per Management.

L. Jennings seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

L. Jennings	Aye
C. Taylor	Aye
A. Montes-Rodriguez	Aye
J. Morgan	Aye
T. Johnstone	Aye
C. McCullough	Aye

### B. Approve Educator Effectiveness Block Grant for Da Vinci RISE

A. Montes-Rodriguez made a motion to Approve Educator Effectiveness Block Grant for Da Vinci RISE.

C. McCullough seconded the motion.

Mrs. Montes-Rodriguez inquired about funding for coaching, mentoring, and professional development. Mr. Whalen shared that there are currently initiatives in place to support that, but the funding of this grant directly supports partnership services.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

A. Montes-Rodriguez	Aye
L. Jennings	Aye
C. McCullough	Aye
T. Johnstone	Aye
J. Morgan	Aye
C. Taylor	Aye

### C. Approve RISE First Interim Form 62

C. McCullough made a motion to Approve RISE First Interim Form 62.

L. Jennings seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

L. Jennings	Aye
C. McCullough	Aye
J. Morgan	Aye



**Roll Call**

A. Montes-Rodriguez	Aye
C. Taylor	Aye
T. Johnstone	Aye

**D. Approve ESSER III Safe Return to In-Person Instruction LEA Plan**

T. Johnstone made a motion to Approve ESSER III Safe Return to In-Person Instruction LEA Plan.

L. Jennings seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

C. McCullough	Aye
L. Jennings	Aye
T. Johnstone	Aye
A. Montes-Rodriguez	Aye
C. Taylor	Aye
J. Morgan	Aye

**VII. Closed Session**

**A. Conference with Legal Counsel - Real Estate Negotiations/Lease Agreements**

Closed session was entered at 7:08. Dr. Jennings will be exiting at 7:25.

**B. Reconvene for Public Session and Closed Session Reporting**

Closed session reconvened at 7:40 pm. Mrs. Morgan noted that no action was taken.

**VIII. Closing Items**

**A. Adjourn Meeting**

T. Johnstone made a motion to Adjourn Meeting.

A. Montes-Rodriguez seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

T. Johnstone	Aye
A. Montes-Rodriguez	Aye
C. Taylor	Aye
L. Jennings	Absent
J. Morgan	Aye
C. McCullough	Aye

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:41 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
E. Salango