

MINUTES
Excel Academy Massachusetts Board
Academic Oversight Committee Meeting
Thursday, May 18, 2023 – 9:30 am
Location: Zoom

Committee Members in Attendance: Steve Zrike, Ben Howe, Bernabe Rodriguez

Staff Attending: Owen Stearns, Nina Keough, Ferny Reyes, Arthur Kaynor

Members of the Public Attending: N/A

1. Call to Order

Zrike called the meeting to order at 9:34 am and presided over the meeting. Kaynor kept the minutes.

2. Approval of Minutes

Rodriguez motioned to approve the Academic Oversight Committee meeting minutes from 12.6.22, Howe seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

All those in favor: Ben Howe, Bernabe Rodriguez, Steve Zrike

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

3. Update on Academics

The Committee re-reviewed its structure and discussed ways to enhance the Committee's work, including better aligning the Committee's quarterly meeting schedule to key points in the year when new data becomes available. The Committee would like to meet in advance of full Board meetings to review disaggregated academic data at key points in the year and then report back to the full Board after each Committee meeting. The Committee discussed goals for an improved data dashboard for tracking of key indicators. The Committee would also like to re-review historical and current academic data at the next Board meeting. The Committee also discussed content to include in slides summarizing the Board's action plan in response to feedback in Excel's renewal report.

Keough provided updates to the Committee on academics, student and staff culture, and the work of the Network Academic Team. School and Network leaders are participating in an 18-month leadership development program called All Means All, to grow our capacity to support all students to achieve outstanding academic results, with a focus on students with disabilities and any underserved students in the school. This means that each Head of School has access to additional coaching and resources, and this is also a shared space for School and Network leadership to collaborate on shared priorities. The school is also making good progress with implementation of new curricula for middle school math, science, and social studies. From a culture and staffing perspective, the schools are in a more stable place across all campuses this year, relative to some of the challenges we were observing last year as the school returned from remote learning. We are observing higher than usual mid-year teacher attrition this year. The Committee discussed teacher retention as an important data indicator to continue to monitor over time. The Committee also discussed sector-wide challenges related to chronic absenteeism – which is a relatively new challenge for Excel post-pandemic – and would like to monitor this indicator regularly.

4. Public Comment

None

5. Adjourn

Howe moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:58 am, seconded by Rodriguez, and the meeting was adjourned.

List of Documents Presented at the Meeting:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes from 12.6.22
3. Academic Oversight Committee overview
4. Charter Renewal Letter, Summary of Review, and Commissioner's Memo