THE EXCEL CENTER, LLC
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
NOVEMBER 3, 2025

MINUTES

The Board of Directors of The Excel Center, LLC met at 9:00 a.m. November 3, 2025, at The Excel Center – Southeast location. Present were:

Gita Baker, present
Kofi Barko, not present
Patricia Castaneda, present/virtual
Garland Graves, not present
Perry Griffith, present
Kent Kramer, present
Jay Oliver, present
Don Palmer, present
Laura Pickett, present
Josh Shelton, present/virtual

Staff/Other:

Shelley Ashley
Brandy Bridgeforth
Katie Bustamante
James Capps
Twyla Carlson
Josh Cooper
Ivan Cropper
Betsy Delgado
Steve Dillon
Rachel Eble
Corey Emery
Matt Fortney
Emily Fritsch
Mike Gallo
Jenny Grant
Lynn Greggs
Amanda Grube
Elysse Hamlin
Miriam Henry
Johnny Manson
Brandon Marks
Kim Myers
Mike Myers
Andrea Newman
Lakia Osborne
Khalilah Palmer
LaMeca Perkins
Kari Podany
Shonda Russell
Eric Schlegel
Dan Scott
Todd Strong
Tami Tebbe
Sarah Thomas
Danielle White
Guest: Bre Petty, OEI/Mayor's Office

Board Vice-Chair Laura Pickett presided and called the meeting to order.

There was no public comment.

On a motion by Jay Oliver, duly seconded, the meeting minutes of August 4, 2025, meeting were approved as previously distributed. Roll call by individual members' present were all in agreement of approval.

Matt Fortney and Josh Cooper gave the Treasurer's report for the period through September 30, 2025. Revenue for the first quarter is $9.1 million, $182,000 ahead of budget. There was an operating loss of $353,000, $269,000 below budget, largely due to timing differences in payroll and vendor payments. There was a $1.9 million decrease in cash flow, mainly due to large liabilities that were accrued from June, but noted the cash balance remained healthy at $1.2 million.

Board Chair Gita Baker began presiding.

On a motion by Patricia Castaneda, duly seconded, the financial statements for September and accounts payable for July, August and September were approved unanimously. Roll call by individual members' present were all in agreement of approval.

Jay Oliver commented on the GEI Finance & Audit Committee, noting their recent meeting to review and approve the clean audit by Blue & Company.

On a motion by Don Palmer, duly seconded, the Blue & Company's financial audit was approved unanimously. Roll call by individual members' present were all in agreement of approval.

Katie Bustamante reported that the organization reached its highest enrollment ever with 5,024 students in October, exceeding the budgeted target by 50 students, and she thanked school directors, the marketing team, and the data team for their contributions.

Corey Emery and Lakia Osborne presented the academic dashboard, noting that the age demographic percentages remain consistent at 16% for 16–18-year-olds, 31% for 19–22-year-olds, and 53% for 23 and older over the past three dashboards.

Corey discussed the decline in student numbers and the focus on ensuring schools are safe and receive necessary support. He highlighted the high IEP percentage, which was attributed to including 504's inadvertently, and emphasized the need to provide education beyond IEPs. The team plans to work with schools that are short of count over the next three months and eight months. They also discussed demographic shifts, particularly in Noblesville, and the impact of immigration on student populations. Corey noted the highest credit earnings in Term 1 and the success of a professional development focused on testing students for better placement and outcomes.

There was discussion on demographics, economics involved and any noted concerns.

The focus is on the Excel Center's current enrollment and graduation trends, with Corey highlighting a significant increase in credit earners and graduates, reaching 3,006 credit earners in Term 1 and maintaining a 100% graduation rate with certifications or dual credits for the seventh or eighth term in a row. The discussion emphasized the importance of addressing the needs of multilingual learner students (MLL), with recent training and evaluation methods aimed at improving their outcomes.

Corey and Lakia also discussed the impact of military enlistment on graduation rates and the benefits of dual credits and certifications for students pursuing military careers.

Lakia explained the five-phase certification framework, which ensures consistency and rigor across all Excel Centers. She highlighted the importance of aligning certifications with workforce needs and student interests. The framework includes phases for feasibility and discovery, community engagement, implementation, and evaluation. Lakia discussed employment outcomes for various certifications, noting high employment rates for certain programs like CNA and CDL. She addressed questions about the cost of certifications and reimbursement, mentioning that Excel spends around $732,000 annually on certifications.

There was discussion on the value of industry-recognized certifications and the need for continued support and funding to provide these opportunities to students.

Brandon Marks introduced Andrea Newman, Muncie Director and LaMeca Perkins, Meadows Director to share updates about their locations.

Andrea Newman introduced Corey Shannon, a student who is set to graduate in April and plans to continue her education through the Muncie Scholar House program.

LaMeca Perkins discussed their three-tiered model of community building, highlighting their focus on relationships, self-development, and celebrations. The Meadows Center has various initiatives, including wellness groups, student council projects, and school-wide celebrations that reflect their diverse student body.

Bre Petty from the Mayor's Office attended and gave a "hello" to Directors. There were no further updates/comments from her office.

The meeting was adjourned.