MINUTES

High Desert "Partnership in Academic Excellence" Foundation, Inc. dba
LEWIS CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
Regular Board Meeting Agenda
08/17/2026 - 04:30 PM

1. OPENING ITEMS

.01 Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance – Chairman Carlos called the meeting to order at 4:30pm.

.02 Roll Call - LCER Board Members Present: Chairman Yolanda Carlos, Amber Hom, Dr. Steve Levin (attending remotely), Michael Razo (arrived at: 4:35pm), Marisol Sanchez (attending remotely), Pat Schlosser, and Lucy Tello.

.03 Adoption of the Agenda - A motion to adopt the agenda as presented was made by Patrick Schlosser, seconded by Dr. Steven Levin. The motion passed by a roll call vote of 6-0. Michael Razo was not yet present to vote.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

.01 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting Held June 8, 2026 - On a motion by Marisol Sanchez, seconded by Lucy Tello, vote 6-0, the LCER Board of Directors approved agenda item 2.01 by roll call vote. Michael Razo was not yet present to vote.

3. RECOGNITIONS / SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

.01 LCER Ambassador's Student Update – AAE Student Ambassadors Landon Applegate, Nayeli Alvarado, and Marco Acuna shared with the Board Ambassador activities, including attending the Drug Prevention Coalition at the town hall, and were invited to present at the next meeting. One student recorded a radio station commercial in Spanish for Station X. Ambassadors are looking for sponsorships to fund their advocacy trip to Washington, DC, and they invited all to donate at their blood drive on September 23rd. Athletics updates included welcoming our new athletics director, Mr. Forsberg and volleyball season has started. ASB has established committees, they're busy planning for the upcoming prep rally, hosting a car wash fundraiser on Saturday, and student store is opening. ROTC will be taking a field trip to Goldstone on August 25th for the ribbon cutting of the new Deep Space Station 23 radio telescope, and their color guard will be presenting. Senior Leadership Team is holding elections and looking forward to the first senior activities, including Senior Back to School Night and Senior Sunrise. Back to school night was held last week and lots of families came out to meet teachers and visit classrooms. Upcoming events include the 9/11 Ceremony and Lewis Center Foundation Gala. They encouraged all to support the students and school by following their social media accounts. NSLA Student Ambassadors Esmeralda Gorostieta and Katelyn Remigio shared with the Board that Seniors kicked off the year with their Senior Sunrise event, and it was a huge success with games, food, and more. Club Rush takes place during high school and middle school lunch on September 4th. ASB is planning for homecoming and more information to be announced soon. Cadet Corp's color guard was invited to present colors at the LCER Foundation Gala. Ambassadors represented at the recent San Bernardino County Board Meeting for NSLA's charter renewal submission. NSLA hosted their blood drive over the summer. PTO is having a fundraiser at Raising Canes on Wednesday, August 19th and hosting a Baseball Family Night Out at the 66ers Stadium on Friday, August 28th. Poetry Out Loud has elected their Executive Board and Katelyn was elected as their treasurer. Chairman Carlos thanked the Ambassadors.

.02 AAE Principal's School Update – Principal Richards reported a strong start to the school year with phenomenal attendance and no suspensions to date. Preliminary test scores show significant gains in science and record high ELA and math scores. He introduced Dr. Robinett as the new secondary Vice Principal. Updates included the launch of the TK program and a focus on admin walkthroughs to support teachers. Approximately 300 walkthroughs have taken place and he is very excited about the school year. Grading policies were refined and Navigate360 was introduced for SEL curriculum. Rescore or retesting options are available for students to be given a second opportunity to increase their scores. A No-Go list for extra curricular activities was implemented based on tardies, attendance, dress code, grades, and behavior.

.03 NSLA Principal's School Update – Principal Agosto updated the Board on the first weeks of school and are in full swing. TK is almost at capacity, and noted the successful launch of the TK program. Admin has been participating in intensive walkthroughs focusing on AVID strategies, note taking, and critical reading. Every classroom has been visited twice, with feedback being emailed to the teachers immediately after. Efforts are underway to transition control of “Capturing Kids Hearts” strategies to students. NSLA also implemented a No-Go list for extracurriculars, defining these as non curricular events like dances and incentive field trips. The list focuses on three buckets: attendance, behavior, and academics.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS - There were no public comments.

5. CONSENT ITEMS

.01 Approve AAE ASB and Student Activities Spending Plans

.02 Approve NSLA Curriculum List for Upcoming Williams Visit

.03 Approve Overnight Field Trip to Colegio Concepcion, Chile, October 7-16, 2026

On a motion by Dr. Steven Levin, seconded by Patrick Schlosser, vote 7-0, the LCER Board of Directors approved agenda Consent Items 5.01-5.03 by roll call vote.

6. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

.01 Lewis Center Foundation Board Update – Marisol Sanchez, Foundation Board Chairman

- Annual Gala – September 12th at the Mitten Building in Redlands, Ca. – 189 seats are currently filled and Grand Raffle Tickets are still available at $100 each. You will have a chance to win a $1000 Disney gift card and themed gift basket, and do not need to be present to win. The Foundation is still seeking raffle basket donations and sponsors for their largest fundraiser, which supports scholarships and staff awards.

.02 Appoint Nominating Committee – Dr. Lamb discussed the terms for existing board members and need for recruitment of new members. The committee should consider that one current board member must also serve on the Foundation Board as President. The Board appointed Marisol Sanchez, Pat Schlosser, Yolanda Carlos, and Dr. Lamb to the nominating committee to recruit candidates for the December seating.

.03 Discuss AAE’s Moody Rating – David Gruber reported that AAE has officially achieved an entry level investment grade rating from Moody’s. This rating is a significant achievement for a charter school and will assist with future construction financing and financial stability.

.04 Discuss and Approve NSLA Charter Renewal Updates and Renewal Submission – Dr. Lamb reported that the NSLA charter petition was submitted to the County Board of Education. Norton has solidly landed in the middle performing track, meaning it no longer requires an academic improvement plan.

On a motion by Lucy Tello, seconded by Michael Razo, vote 7-0, the LCER Board of Directors approved agenda item 6.04 by roll call vote.

.05 Discuss and Approve Charter Property Solutions (CSPS) at AAE – The Board gave David Gruber permission to speak on items 6.05-6.06 collectively, but they will be voted on individually. Mr. Gruber gave details on the construction plans and included Larry Rieder, the construction project manager, who was present to answer any questions. They discussed a proposal for a new science wing at AAE, consisting of three labs, a special education space, and an additional classroom. Dr. Lamb included history on past construction projects that were nearly catastrophic to the organization and since going through this process with Mr. Rieder, it has her feeling comfortable with him and his team. The management fee is $250,000. Mr. Schlosser inquired if the selection required a formal bidding process. Mr. Gruber clarified that the fee falls within the informal threshold and they had reviewed multiple vendor proposals to ensure comparable pricing. Dr. Levin asked for clarification on how this project differs from their previous successful collaborations. Mr. Reider and Mr. Gruber confirmed the project is well within their wheelhouse, utilizing similar materials and designs used in the Norton campus build. Dr. Levin further noted that the board is hiring CSPS based on the established trust that they will manage change orders and subcontractor accountability effectively.

On a motion by Patrick Schlosser, seconded by Dr. Steven Levin, vote 7-0, the LCER Board of Directors approved agenda item 6.05 by roll call vote.

.06 Discuss and Approve Charter Property Solutions (CSPS) at NSLA – David Gruber explained that this would be a larger project than AAE’s and detailed what the project entailed. He is anticipating eight additional classrooms, additional offices, restrooms, and closets. Mrs. Tello asked if the new build would include a dedicated library space. Mr. Gruber explained that the additional classrooms would allow the school to repurpose existing spaces and that would bring the library back to use. Dr. Lamb added the importance of fiscal transparency and to lead the organization in a way that is sustainable. High school enrollment is currently twelve students below conservative projections, representing roughly a $200,000 revenue shortfall, and this is giving her pause. The team will not move forward until the enrollment can support it. There are no reservations starting AAE’s project. Recruitment and marketing strategies are in full force, including reaching out to the families who unenrolled. Dr. Levin asked for confirmation that the contract would only be valid if and when the school decides to proceed with the development. Staff confirmed the Board could grant the “green light” now, allowing the executive team to proceed once enrollment stabilizes. Mr. Razo asked about student retention and why students leave the charter. Principal Agosto shared exit survey responses. That information is being reviewed along with recruitment efforts.

On a motion by Michael Razo, seconded by Dr. Steven Levin, vote 7-0, the LCER Board of Directors approved agenda item 6.06 by roll call vote.

7. INFORMATION INCLUDED IN PACKET

.01 Grant Tracking Report

.02 LCER Financial Reports

- Checks Over $10K
- Budget Comparisons
- Lewis Center Foundation Financial Reports

.03 AAE and NSLA Cash Management Data Collection for Categorical Funds

.04 LCER Board Attendance Log

.05 LCER Board/Lewis Center Foundation Give & Get

.06 NSLA Williams Monitoring Process – Fourth Quarterly Reporting

8. BOARD POLICIES / ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

.01 Approval of Revision to Board Policy BP 5144 Discipline; Suspension/Expulsion (Second Reading) – Dr. Lamb presented the second reading, noting minor updates, including legal updates. During the discussion, the Board inquired about the composition of the administrative panel used for expulsions. Dr. Lamb explained the panel requirements. To ensure neutrality, LCER’s practice could also include staff from the opposite school site to serve on the panel, or retired administration.

On a motion by Patrick Schlosser, seconded by Marisol Sanchez, vote 7-0, the LCER Board of Directors approved Board Policies/Administrative Regulations Agenda Item 8.01.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – The primary discussion centered on the upcoming submission of the AAE Charter Petition to the Apple Valley Unified School District on September 10th. Because the Board would not meet again before the submission deadline, they gave Dr. Lamb direction and authority to proceed, with the understanding that the draft would be shared with them for review, along with the petition. Dr. Levin questioned if the public would still have an opportunity to provide feedback after the submission. The Board clarified that the authorizers host public hearings, which serve as the primary venue for stakeholder feedback and support during the renewal process. Changes could still be brought forward for revision.

10. BOARD/STAFF COMMENTS – Chairman Carlos shared that she was interviewed by CBS LA regarding boundaries for children and screen time. It was a very exciting event for her and she did not expect the taping to be live. It was a great opportunity, and it led to a podcast and article in Yahoo! News on squishies and why children use them. Dr. Levin has an interview next week at PBS on the GAVRT partnership, noting he would represent his various roles as a board member, JPL lead, and Juno project scientist. Dr. Lamb shared that Chairman Carlos’s interview was very impressive and she is very honored to have her and Dr. Levin as board members. Capturing Kids Hearts training for the Executive Team and Board is scheduled for September 18th with trainer Vern Hazard. Dr. Lamb commended Robert Mejia for redesigning the multi-purpose rooms, which included new murals and acoustic panels to reduce noise during lunches. Efforts are ongoing to partner with Space Force units. Although LCER did not receive the SciAct grant, they are moving forward with curriculum initiatives, including a hands on lesson for Nation Day of Radio.

11. ADJOURN - Chairman Carlos adjourned the meeting at 6:08pm.