



ELITE ACADEMY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

September 25, 2025

Meeting Time: 6:00 pm

Meeting Location: 1639 Ryan St. – Lake Charles, LA 70601

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Ethel Fields made a motion to call The Elite Academy School Board Meeting to order. The motion was seconded by Mundreun Blackstone. The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Dartheater Hall at 6:04 pm. Prayer was rendered by Dartheater Hall.

II. ROLL CALL:

Attendees: Dartheater Hall, Ethel Fields, Judge Cynthia Guillory, Mundreun Blackstone, and Cassandra Johnson (via Zoom)

Absent: Stephanie Segura, Cierra Johnson Lemon, and Dr. Cathy S. Banks, CEO/Executive Director

Presenting Guests: Teri Thomas, EA Operations & Finance Director (Acting Secretary)

Guests/General Public: Lillian Simon

III. DISTRIBUTION & APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING:

The minutes of the board meeting held on August 28, 2025 were distributed via email for board review (prior to the board meeting) by Teri Thomas, Acting Secretary.

Mundreun Blackstone made the motion to approve the minutes as reviewed. Judge Cynthia Guillory seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously for the minutes to be approved as distributed and read.

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

The Academic, Operational, and Finance discussion items are ongoing and have been set to be reviewed for the New Business section of this meeting's agenda.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Academic Reporting – Dartheater Hall

1. Student Recruitment Report – as of 09/25/2025:
 - The total pre-enrollment number has increased to 185 students to date. Ms. Hall emphasized enrollment goals, with our approved charter application listing 270 students for Year 1 and a maximum (provided by the LDOE Office of School Choice) of 324 for Year 1. We will need 85 more student names to equal the 270 minimum enrollment goal.
 - We would like to have approximately 500 students signed up to ensure that we have enough students on our wait list to guarantee that we meet enrollment goals.
2. Future Recruitment Plans
 - We are continuously accepting student applications. Dartheater Hall asked the following Board members to assist with Day Care Center recruitment:
 - i. Ethel Fields
 - ii. Mundreun Blackstone
 - iii. Cassandra Johnson
 - Informational Flyers for September will be emailed by the end of the month to parents who have signed their students up. Flyers will go out monthly on Elite's progress.

B. Operational/Organizational Report – Teri Thomas, Operations & Finance Director

1. There are ongoing projects to continue to update our school's website with Policies & Procedures, the full set of job descriptions, and other required information (as per LDOE school website guidelines).
2. Marketing Plans:

Cierra Lemon emailed the following Social Media Update in light of her absence. Mrs. Lemon mentioned that we are seeing traction on social media, getting new followers every day. As of 09/25/2025, we have the following social media figures:

 - Facebook = We have 4 New Followers, which brings our total number of Followers to 35.
 - We had over 143 views of our School Board Meeting Flyer posted for this month. We have had over 2,167 views on the Facebook Page.
 - Instagram = 2 Followers
 - LinkedIn = 2 Followers and 6 Searches
 - Teri Thomas encouraged all attendees to follow Elite Academy on all of our social media accounts and share our posts.
3. Facility Update: Dartheater Hall provided the following update:
 - The Fire Marshall is requiring the installation of a new sprinkler system, which is now in progress and will be covered by the facility's owner.
 - The Facility Owner will also begin construction to enlarge classrooms to accommodate students.
4. Corporate Expansion Plans - Texas Education Agency (TEA) – Dartheater Hall:
 - Ms. Hall mentioned that Dr. Cathy Banks is making inquiries about potential locations for expansion in Texas.
 - The TEA Application is in process and it is due on November 9th.

C. Financial Report – Grants & Funding Activities in Progress – by Teri Thomas

1. CSP Grant - The CSP Grant Application was submitted on September 9, 2025. The approval process for the CSP Grant requires a Capacity Interview, which is scheduled for October 6th. Therefore, the Capacity Interview Participants will be: Danielle Chretien – Principal, Dr. Cathy Banks - CEO/Executive Director, Darthester Hall – Board Chair, and Teri Thomas – Operations/Finance Director.) There will be 5 Reviewers scoring us and we must have a total score of at least 85 to be approved.
2. Charter School Growth Fund - We will apply for this grant during the next application cycle, which begins in October 2025. We have scheduled an informational session (to receive application instructions) for Tuesday, September 30th. Applications are due in December, and the awardees are selected in June 2026.

D. Governance Update – by Judge Cynthia Guillory

1. Judge Guillory reported that there were many changes made during the last legislative session. She informed the Board that they can view changes in the Louisiana legislative statutes regarding charter schools online under Title 17 of the Revised Statutes.
2. When reviewing the state funding information, remember that Elite Academy is a Type 2 Charter School. Also, be advised that the Per Pupil Allocations are based on a weighted student enrollment count. Local per pupil funding is through Ad Valorem taxes, which are managed locally.
3. There will be future changes (beginning July 1, 2026) with the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act. The funding source that we are particularly concerned about would be federal funding and the pending changes for funds given to the state. The Department of Social Services and Management have made some changes that affect children & families in our state.
4. Judge Guillory is monitoring the various changes and will continue to provide updates.

VI. REMARKS:

1. Board Chair Darthester Hall opened the floor for questions and comments.
2. Guest Lillian Simon offered to volunteer for student recruitment efforts at Daycare Centers. Mrs. Simon provided a referral for a Daycare recruitment location. It is Moriah's Christian School, located at 328 Goos St. – Lake Charles, LA 70601. Their phone number is: (337) 439-4331.
3. Darthester Hall thanked the Board for their participation.

VII. NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 23, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: Judge Cynthia Guillory made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ethel Fields seconded the motion. Ms. Hall gave the closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 pm by Dartheater Hall.

Minutes Submitted By: Teri M. Thomas
Teri M. Thomas, Acting Secretary