



ACES GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES
THURSDAY, February 12, 2026
SDA Building, 205 Skiff Street, Hamden, CT

Governing Board: Shawn Tiernan, Branford; Ann Marie Cullinan, Cheshire; Nancy Hill, Hamden; (left meeting at 12:39) Nickimmy Hayes, Meriden; Nicole Wilhelm, Milford; James Scully, Naugatuck; Susan Riccio, Orange; Robert Moore, RSD#13; Michael J. Votto, Wallingford; Thomas Van Stone, Waterbury; Roberta Lenoard, Wolcott

ACES: Thomas Danehy, Timothy Howes, William Rice, Rebecca Cuevas, Michelle Coogan, Dee Colson

Not Present: Ansonia, Bethany, Derby, East Haven, Middletown, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Oxford, RSD#5, RSD #16, Seymour, West Haven, Woodbridge

Guests: Dr. Frank LaBanca, ACES at CHASE

I. Welcome/Call to Order

Ms. Susan Riccio called the ACES governing Board meeting to order at 12:02 pm after determining a quorum was present.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Susan Riccio led the pledge.

III. Public Participation

Ms. Susan Riccio mentioned that their district is currently going through the budget planning process.

IV. Approval of Minutes

- a. Approval of minutes of the regular board meeting held on January 8, 2026.

Mr. Robert Moore motioned to approve the Regular Board Meeting minutes held on January 8, 2026.

Mr. Shawn Tiernan seconded.

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All in favor: Motion passed unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: None

b. Approval of minutes of the Special Board Meeting held on January 26, 2026.

Mr. Robert Moore motioned to approve the Regular Board Meeting minutes held on January 26, 2026.
Mr. Shawn Tiernan seconded.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: Mr. Michael J. Votto, Ms. Nancy Hill

V. **Executive Director’s Report** - Dr. Thomas M. Danehy

- a. Recognition of Dr. Frank LaBanca, Principal ACES at CHASE, on the Magnet School of America Award and book authorship.
- b. Instructional Rounds at Schools – Ms. Michelle Coogan and Dr. Frank LaBanca.
- c. ACES Education Foundation Annual Gala.

VI. **Filing of the Fiscal Report (subject to audit)** – Thomas Van Stone

Mr. Thomas Van Stone moved to approve the February 12, 2026, financial report as presented, subject to audit. The report reflects a projected operating surplus of \$5.2 million. While the magnet schools are currently operating at a deficit and face a proposed \$12 million reduction in state funding in the next biennium budget, partially offset by the proposed removal of the 58% local tuition cap. ACES will continue active student recruitment efforts already underway. Special education enrollments and service contracts remain strong, and expenses are being closely managed to maintain an overall surplus position.

Mr. Robert Moore seconded.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: None

VII. **Approval of Human Capital Development Report** – Ms. Rebecca Cuevas

Ms. Rebecca Cuevas presented the HCD report, which showed 24 new hires across various positions, 12 resignations, 2 terminations, 3 transfers/position changes, 27 leaves, and 1 retirement. She also shared that Human Capital Development recognized 26



employees across ACES for the Shining Star Recognition Coin. The ACES Career Fair will be held on Saturday, March 12, 2026, from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm at our Staff Development Administration building in Hamden, CT.

Mr. Shawn Tiernan motioned to approve the Human Capital Report.
Ms. Nancy Hill seconded.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: None

VIII. Operations and Early Head Start Report - Dr. William Rice

Dr. William Rice presented updates on ACES construction projects at CHASE Academy, 670 Wintergreen Avenue, and 88 Bassett Road. He also provided comprehensive updates on Capital Improvement Projects, Operations, Facilities, Maintenance, Internal Transportation, Security, Data Privacy, ACCESS, Magnet School Lottery, Open Choice Program, Community Engagement initiatives, Nutrition Services, Network Services, and the Early Head Start 2025 Self-Assessment and Early Head Start Waitlist Management Policy.

Dr. William Rice requests approval for the Early Head Start monthly reports, contracts, and summaries.

Mr. James Scully motioned to accept the Early Head Start Monthly Report.
Mr. Robert Moore seconded.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: None

IX. Schools and Programs Report – Ms. Michelle Coogan

Ms. Michelle Coogan highlighted Leadership Engagement and Collaboration, Curriculum and Assessment, Professional Learning Opportunities, and Community and Schools Connections.

X. Possible Executive Session for the purpose of Real Estate Negotiations and regarding the Executive Director search.

Ms. Susan Riccio moved to enter Executive Session with the Governing Board, Dr. Thomas Danehy, Dr. William Rice, and Timothy Howes at 12:54 p.m.

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All in favor: Motion passed unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: None

Mr. Robert Moore moved to reconvene into Regular Session at 12:41 p.m.
Mr. James Scully seconded.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: None

XI. New Business

a. Action to approve the Early Head Start 2025 Self-Assessment.

Mr. Robert Moore motioned to approve the Early Head Start 2025 Self-Assessment.
Mr. James Scully seconded.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: None

b. Possible action to approve the Early Head Start Waitlist Management Policy and Procedures.

Mr. Shawn Tiernan motioned to approve the Early Head Start Waitlist Management Policy and Procedures.
Mr. Robert Moore seconded.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: None

c. Possible action to approve real estate matters.

Mr. James Scully motioned to proceed forward with the real estate matters discussed in executive session.
Mr. Shawn Tiernan seconded.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: None

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d. Action to approve the Healthy Food Certification.

Mr. Robert Moore motioned to approve the Healthy Food Certification.
Ms. Roberta Leonard seconded.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: None

XII. Other

- a. Finance Committee Meeting: March 12, 2026
- b. Regular Board Meeting: March 12, 2026

XIII. Adjournment

Mr. Robert Moore motioned to adjourn at 1:06 pm
Mr. Shawn Tiernan seconded.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: None