



Palmetto Excel Center
Board of Directors Meeting

November 13, 2025

ROLL CALL

Board Members present: Herbert Drayton III, Chris Harvey, Brian Itzkowitz, Amy Mims, Kellye Whitaker, Dr. Fran Welch

Staff & Consultants present: Theresa Craft, Jackie Draws, Megan Friedman, Mary Ann Gilmer

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:00PM by Amy Mims to review school performance, approve financials, and finalize the Palmetto Goodwill services agreement.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND INITIATIVES

- **Enrollment:** 174 students (met 45-day count). Proactive support is in place to mitigate holiday-related drops.
- **Graduates:** 37 total graduates to date. 9 students are in progress, and 14 are in the final Senior Seminar course, putting the school on track for its 23-student annual goal.
- **Staffing:**
 - **Hired:** Zaria Clay as Special Education Coordinator.
 - **Open:** History Teacher. The role is covered by Instructional Lead Troy Barnes (30+ years experience) and Jeremy Easley.
- **EOC Test Data:**
 - **Performance:** Scores are slightly below a peer group of Charleston-area minority students in poverty.
 - **Context:** Excel students complete courses in 12 weeks, while peers have 36 weeks. This, combined with significant learning gaps from being out of school, explains the difference.
 - **Action:** The EOC presentation slide will be updated to explicitly state this context for clarity.
- **New Academic Interventions:**



- **2-Week Progress Checks:** Identify struggling students earlier.
- **Mandatory Friday Tutoring:** Required for students with failing grades or negative attendance trends.
- **Increased Data Focus:** Teachers will use formative assessment data to pinpoint skill gaps and inform instruction.
- **Proposed Initiatives:**
 - **In-House Certifications:** Offer hospitality certifications (e.g., ServSafe) in-house.
 - **Rationale:** Provides direct support for students with accommodations (e.g., 504s) who may lose services at external vendors like Trident Tech.
 - **Action:** Jeremy will investigate if Palmetto Goodwill's certified trainers can be used, as this is a GEI requirement.
 - **Pre-Algebra Course:** Add a course to bridge the gap between remedial math and the new, consolidated 12-week Algebra 1 course.
 - **Action:** Requires an "innovative course proposal" to the state, as it's not in the standard catalog.

CHARTER AUTHORIZER SEARCH

- **CCSD Meeting:** A team (Amy, Fran, Mary Ann, Jeremy) will meet with Charleston County School District (CCSD) Superintendent Anita Huggins next week to explore charter authorization.
 - **Goals:** Explore authorization, strengthen the partnership, and recruit students.
- **Voorhees College:** A Letter of Intent was submitted. Voorhees is developing a transfer process for existing schools, as they have not authorized one before.
 - **Status:** Awaiting a response from Voorhees.
- **Erskine College:** Will no longer authorize schools after next year.



- **The Citadel:** Never applied to be an authorizer, citing contradictory information from the former Limestone Charter Association and the DOE.

FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONS

- **September Financials:** Approved unanimously. No significant variances.
- **State Funding:** The school received its full \$1M state allocation in a lump sum, significantly improving cash flow.
- **Audit:** The final report is complete and will be posted to Boardable for review.
- **CCSD Notification:** The school received a notice of not meeting charter goals. Per legal counsel, no response is needed, as the partnership ends this year.
- **Act 28 Policy:** The new policy for recording and posting board meetings was approved unanimously, pending a minor amendment to ensure recordings are posted with minutes.

PALMETTO GOODWILL SERVICES AGREEMENT

- **Approval:** The draft agreement was unanimously approved.
- **Clarifications:**
 - **Compliance:** Fully aligns with the charter contract.
 - **Operational Impact:** Formalizes the existing relationship; no major operational changes.
 - **Funding:** Goodwill's contribution is acknowledged in the recitals but excluded from the contract, as the amount varies annually.
 - **Employment:** A "leased employee" model clarifies that Excel staff are Goodwill employees without making Excel a Goodwill division.
 - **GEI:** The agreement focuses on the Excel-Goodwill relationship for clarity.

NEXT STEPS

- **Jeremy:**
 - Update EOC slide with context on term length and student background.



- Research feasibility of using Palmetto Goodwill trainers for in-house certifications.
 - Draft and submit the innovative course proposal for pre-algebra.
- **Chris:**
 - Post the final audit report to Boardable.
- **Mary Ann:**
 - Email board members with legislator contact info to encourage attendance at school visits.
 - Follow up with Voorhees College on the status of their transfer process.
- **Amy:**
 - Schedule a follow-up meeting to create a roles/responsibilities flowchart for the Excel-Goodwill-GEI partnership.
 - Coordinate a pre-Christmas board meeting for Nov 25 or Dec 2.
- **Herbert:**
 - Amend the Act 28 policy to ensure recordings are posted with minutes.

ADJOURNMENT

Amy Mims adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:58PM.