

Minutes of the North Carolina Charter School Review Board

Department of Public Instruction

April 7, 2025

9 AM

Attendance – CSRБ Members	
Jeremy Wall- (nonvoting)- Absent Dr. Rita Haire Dr. John Eldridge Hilda Parlér Dr. Shelly Shope	Eric Sanchez Bruce Friend Lindalyn Kakadelis Todd Godbey Dr. Bartley Danielsен- Absent Stephen Gay- Absent
Attendance – Other	
<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Ashley Baquero, Director Joseph Letterio, Consultant (Virtual) Melanie Rackley, Consultant Jenna Cook, Consultant (Virtual) Dr. Natasha Norins, Consultant Dr. Brandi Gill, Consultant Nicky Niewinski, Asst. Director Julie Whetzel, Consultant Megan Carter, Consultant Tara Whitbread, Consultant	<i>CSRБ Attorney</i> Steven Walker - Arrive 11:30 am <i>SBE Attorney</i> Allison Schafer - Absent <i>Teacher/Principal of Year</i> Lee Haywood – TOY - Absent Sarena Fuller – POY

[Recording of April 7 CSRБ Meeting:](#)

Call To Order

Pledge of Allegiance & NC Flag Salute: Mr. Bruce Friend

Mission and Ethics Statement:

- Mission and Ethics Statement, Mr. Bruce Friend

Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

Motion: Dr. John Eldridge motioned to approve agenda for April Meeting

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

☒ Passed

☐ Failed

Motion: Dr. Rita Haire motioned to approve March 2025 minutes.

Second: Mr. Todd Godbey

Vote: Unanimous

☒ Passed

☐ Failed

April Charter Schools Review Board Meeting

School Improvement Update and CLP School Presentations: Dr. Brandi Gill, OCS Consultant

- Dr. Gill went over the purpose and role OCS has to support low-performing charter schools. She went over the statute that outlined what a low-performing charter school and continually low-performing charter school is. She presented data on the number of low-performing and CLP charter schools and noted that 33% of schools are in this category.
- Dr. Gill introduced the schools present and the guidelines they were asked to follow.

TMSA Charlotte:

- The CEO introduced himself and other members of the board. He began by discussing items they are implementing to remediate concerns; and touched on some of the programs they created to highlight and bolster accelerated students (such as the STAR League, leadership programs and more). He went over details of each program and noted the number of students that attended.
- He noted after the pandemic, TMSA re-evaluated their Charlotte campus and discussed the history of that school in particular. He stated when looking at why students came to their school parents noted the whole-child approach; and focus on STEAM as setting them apart. He also mentioned their financial situation has improved and that all covenants and bond requirements are met.
- He continued by going over trends in their school's performance grades, growth data and proposed goals for the school.
- The principal of the school was introduced and she went over the EOG scores for ELA, Math and Science over the last few years. She discussed their plan to address deficiencies, analysis of the data and how this has led them to develop new strategies to help EL and new students that come to their school.
 - She continued to discuss growth based on subgroups and noted very large amounts of progress made with hispanic, black and EDS students. She also noted how they've expanded parent engagement; after school programs.
 - She mentioned they are focused on growth and working with students to keep them aware of what they need to do to achieve that growth.
- The CEO stated that if CSRБ were to visit their schools they would see a young student with a leadership portfolio. He stated student and staff retention needs to be looked at and principal turnover led to some of these challenges. He mentioned some of the data points for turnover, and the number of students that have graduated recently, and noted some of the remedies they are implementing. He also discussed updates on their new campus and number of new applicants for the upcoming school year.
- He concluded by sharing they own their building and leased another to Honor Prep for 10 years to help out their budget.

Questions from the CSRБ

- Mr. Friend asked if the data they're referencing is just from Charlotte and the CEO said yes.
- Dr. Eldridge asked about retention rates and the CEO went over the data again. Dr. Eldridge asked what he attributes to the students leaving given their good track record. The CEO stated that it's the leadership, and when they have the right leaders in place, they'll see the performance turnaround as well.
- Ms. Kakadelis and the CEO confirmed the Honor Prep lease agreement.
- Dr. Eldridge commented they are truly trailblazers and he hopes they are getting phone calls from leaders of schools trying to figure things out.
- The CEO and Dr. Eldridge discussed future plans and the CEO stated they are willing to help out with anything.

KIPP Charlotte, Durham, Halifax

- The Head of Schools introduced herself and noted the locations of their schools. She went over their mission and the plans to educate students across the state.
- Another leader went over some of the new curriculum changes and stated they are based on the data they've gathered.
- A leader from the Charlotte school came up and went over data points for the Charlotte school specifically.
- Dr. Shepard - Middle school director for Kipp Charlotte - went over the performance grades for their Charlotte school and noted how it compares to the local LEA. She also touched on subgroup performance

Questions from the CSRБ Regarding KIPP Charlotte

- Ms. Parlér asked who teachers practice lessons in front? The leaders of the school said it's in front of other teachers and school leaders to get feedback. Ms. Parlér asked for what courses and the leader said all courses.
- Ms. Kakadelis asked what their student retention rate is between 3rd and 8th grade. Leaders said they'd look into that, and stated they have seen an attrition between elementary and middle school. She reiterated they are using DIBELS data to analyze what's going on in their schools.
 - Ms. Kakadelis asked for that data when they came for renewals and discussed why that's important.
- Dr. Fuller asked if they know why the EC population doubled and asked what they are doing to address that.
 - Dr. Shepard stated they don't have data on that available; but are adding more certified staff to their EC department and other things to address the large jump. She believes that overall, they are doing a good job to move the needle in this subgroup and reiterated again they use data to drive how they help those students.
 - Another leader said that parents learning about the love and care KIPP provides to elementary students is another factor that drove that growth.
- Dr. Haire congratulated them for their mission statement and large growth this year. She also asked if they have any data about student and staff attendance.
 - Dr. Shepard said that prior to this year there was strong student and staff attendance. This year, they are starting to see a decline in attendance due to economic circumstances.
 - Dr. Shepard added more teachers are starting to come to them as a '2nd career' as opposed to this being their sole career goal.

- Another leader stated the overall cost of living in Charlotte has impacted things as well; noting that staff sometimes have to have a 2nd job.
- Dr. Haire asked if any classes are taught by a sub and the leaders said that one elementary and one middle school have rotating teachers.

Presentation from the Durham School Leadership

- The school leader introduced herself and went over the enrollment and demographic data of the population served. She touched on how the number of multilingual students has dramatically increased and is a new reality of the neighborhood they serve. She also noted that over 10% of their population is EC.
- The middle school leader went over the comparative data for their school when looking at Durham Public Schools. He also noted he is excited about the new financial opportunities they are providing for recruiting teachers and believes the increase in high quality staff is going to help turn around the comparability data seen between their school and DPS.
 - He also went over projected growth and performance scores and noted how that is much better than last year.

Questions from the CSRБ (FOR DURHAM)

- Dr. Eldridge asked what they attribute to the decline in scores and what they've put in place to address this.
 - The school leader stated the increase in funding from the central office is an example of their intent to put higher quality instructors in front of students.
- Dr. Eldridge asked when they are up for renewal and OCS said next year. Dr. Eldridge noted that this is the data that will come up before them next year.
- Ms. Kakadelis reiterated her comments from the Charlotte campus and encouraged them to do the same here.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if they could describe where leadership was last year, this year and in the future (projected of course).
 - The school leader mentioned some of the changes made; and stated their awareness of the school's culture helped them to stabilize it and keep students and parents confident in their schools.
- Mr. Sanchez and the school leader discussed positions at each school and whether they were staying next year. Mr. Sanchez asked if the influx of money allowed for more capacity in teacher instructional support or just salary adjustments. The school leader said that it increased the level of talent they could attract as opposed to hiring more staff.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if they have any academic projections for this year. The school leaders are projecting growth and are excited about what they are seeing.

Presentation on Kipp Halifax

- A school leader introduced herself and noted the number of students and their demographics. She then went over the history of the school and the comparability data and noted that the NC Check-In data is promising. She did add however they are cautiously optimistic about this data and yielded for questions.

Questions from the CSRБ (Regarding KIPP HALIFAX)

- Ms. Kakadelis asked what is causing the change from the past performance. The school leader stated the caliber of staff they had available in the past is different from what they have now. She also added that hiring high quality staff as they've grown has been a challenge.

- Mr. Sanchez - noting the members of the regional team - asked how the team helps/benefits the school. The School leader - going through the individuals Mr. Sanchez mentioned - explained how they advise school leaders and go through the data that is given to them.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if they used 'Relay' and the school leader said yes. Mr. Sanchez asked what role the EPP plays in their schools and the school leader stated it is important to grow their own talent, especially in rural schools.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if there is anything he is missing to follow the trajectory. The school leader mentioned the consolidation of their two schools and gave an overview of attendance at all of the KIPP Schools present today.

Discussion on the Halifax/Gaston Consolidation

- A KIPP leader introduced himself and noted the past questions regarding the EPP is an attempt to rebuild the culture and ecosystem that Teach for America has vacated. He then went over some of the updates on the 'unification' of their two schools and introduced the principals that will be leading the four 'academies'.
 - He continued by noting that 75% of their families have expressed intentions to re-enroll.
- He went over the changes to their transportation plan and how it would greatly improve pick-up times; noted they are looking at a new school name; and went over partnerships with DPI and DHHS that have helped consolidate their two schools in record time. He thanked DPI and OCS staff for their efforts and collaboration.

CSRБ Questions regarding Consolidation

- Ms. Kakadelis and the school leader discussed how individual aspects of their school would work (including School Code, whether a remote academy would be opened, etc.).
- Mr. Sanchez touched on the impact that Teach for America had on KIPP schools. He and the school leader discussed how KIPP plans to address those gaps and the school leader noted they are focusing on elementary education first since that is the greatest need. He stated long-term, he believes EPP will replace TFA in Eastern North Carolina.

Classical Charter School of Whiteville:

- The Headmaster of the school introduced herself and the other leaders that were present before the board today. She went over their school's mission and goals.
 - She noted the population of their school has shifted and a majority of their students come from Robeson County. She compared performance trends for all districts in which students reside.
 - She continued by touching on subgroup percentages and noted EC and EDS students are starting to see a rebound; and the overall progress of the school has stabilized.
 - She continued by noting their school's EOG performance by LEA where students reside and discussed in detail their student focused goals for both ELA and Math for this current academic year.
 - She then shared achievements in the classical learning test rankings and noted how they are the only public, charter, and non-tuition charging school to get these rankings.
 - The model/exam they are referencing is given to 8th graders to see if they are prepared for HS.

Questions from the CSRБ

- Ms. Kakadelis asked why they are compared to Whiteville City when they are in Columbus County. The Headmaster stated they are still in Whiteville's zone.

- Ms. Kakadelis asked what their new student population is and the Headmaster gave those data points. Ms. Kakadelis followed up and asked if students are coming in at grade level and the headmaster said students are evaluated when they come in and are placed into groups based on how they are performing.
- Ms. Kakadelis thanked them for the level of analysis they do on their data.
- Mr. Friend asked if they are K-8 and the headmaster confirmed they are K-8. Mr. Friend asked if they follow-up on some of their graduates and the headmaster said they are following-up and gave some of the events they do for 8th graders to keep them engaged post-graduation.
- Mr. Friend asked about teacher turnover and other things in their improvement plan. The Headmaster went over details in their improvement plan, and shared some of the teacher pipeline plans they are working on with their sister schools.
- Ms. Parlér asked if they have buses and they said they have 11. The headmaster and Ms. Parlér discussed enrollment numbers.
- Dr. Haire asked about absenteeism and the headmaster noted they are struggling with that due to students' distance from the school.
- Dr. Fuller asked about how they plan to address absenteeism with the increased growth in Robeson County and the headmaster stated they are starting to see more growth in that county and if they were to send more buses they probably would see more students.
- Ms. Kakadelis asked if they discussed opening an extension campus in Robeson County and the headmaster said they have discussed it. Ms. Kakadelis asked about Early College and she and the headmaster discussed how Whiteville City refuses to allow their students to go to the Community College and asked them to discuss that issue with their legislators.

Ready to Open Update: Dr. Natasha Norins, OCS Consultant

- Dr. Norins thanked Dr. Eldridge and Dr. Shope for leading a network of leaders in a theme of marketing, enrollment and innovation.
- She continued by giving an overview of the RTO II cycle. She stated all schools passed and there were over 500 documents reviewed in total. She then went into an individual breakdown from each school (highlighting the number of applications, their breakeven number, and any facility updates)

Questions from the CSRБ

- Mr. Friend commented that he is looking at the break-even number and the delta with 'Go-Big' is very concerning and they really need to show progress in that. Several CSRБ members discussed that school's ADM.
- Dr. Eldridge asked if OCS can track what year schools were approved, and whether they made it out of RTO or how long it took to get out of RTO. Dr. Norins said that it is mainly facility issues.
 - Ms. Kakadelis said that the GA also needs to know that information, and they need specifics. Ms. Baquero reiterated they can track that data and they recently have been doing a better job to track this data. She stressed boards need to bring data before the CSRБ before they interview.
 - Dr. Eldridge said he's seeing this as a national trend where parents don't put kids in their school until they see the new school can open.
 - Dr. Shope stated parents are stuck because they don't want to put their kids in schools that don't have a facility yet.

- Dr. Shope asked why some of the schools withdrew and Dr. Norins went over the main reasons why.
- Dr. Eldridge stated he hopes to get the data to the coalition and Mr. Friend confirmed when these schools will be back (June meeting).

Charter Application Review and Discussion: Ms. Melanie Rackley, OCS Consultant

- Ms. Rackley introduced herself and gave an update on the sections of the 2026 application being reviewed. This meeting is to discuss sections 7-9.
 - She mentioned there was public comment and OCS has suggested changes for the sections regarding management organizations. She then went into further detail on some of those suggested changes.
 - She stated the CSRБ would have to consider what the public comment noted, and information that other states do before making their final decision on management organizations.
 - Dr. Eldridge asked if they put a question in there regarding attorneys reviewing contracts with management organizations. He and Ms. Rackley discussed this further and said that based on the way the application is currently structured, if they have an attorney it shows they are a higher quality applicant. Other board members added their feedback to this topic as well.
 - Dr. Eldridge reiterated his desire is to get schools to ask the questions that evaluate if their plan to partner with a management organization is really best for the school.
- Mr. Friend stated this section is really why they wanted to get public comment and that he will be diving further into comments submitted.
 - Mr. Friend added the challenge is can the applicant board articulate what is in the contract between them and the management organization effectively enough for the CSRБ to be content with it. Dr. Eldridge agreed as did Ms. Kakadelis.
 - Ms. Kakadelis asked if they've looked at Louisiana's application. She and several board members discussed the importance of application length.
 - Mr. Sanchez stated whether it comes in writing or in-person CSRБ will find out how the EMO/CMO structure will be. He stated the need to look at the rules of the game instead of focusing on if the presenters make the board happy.
 - Ms. Rackley mentioned what they were all discussing seems to be in line and that presenters need to do their due diligence.
 - Ms. Rackley stated there's more discussion to be had and this application will launch in January 2026.
- Mr. Friend asked about Section 8. Ms. Rackley confirmed the way he summarized it was the correct way.
 - Ms. Baquero - referencing the length of the application - said that it's difficult to pull items from the application since turnover among principals in charter schools who don't know the original application is prevalent. Renewal visits often show older schools or new leaders don't know what was in the application.
 - Mr. Friend stated he wishes the application could be made into a more collaborative and user-friendly application.
 - Ms. Baquero again reiterated OCS would appreciate board feedback on those questions - specifically Q83.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if the management company discloses the work they are doing in NC already and Ms. Rackley said yes. Mr. Sanchez asked where the recommendations given to boards come

from and Ms. Baquero said that some are in policy, some are best practice, some are in legislation. Mr. Sanchez asked if there's a conversation happening about the best practices ie EMOs so that people coming before the board can evaluate whether they are in fact following best practices. Ms. Baquero said her team does look into this. Mr. Sanchez asked if there is room for this conversation to be had while also talking about improving the application.

- Mr. Friend reiterated this is their task and said CSRБ needs to discuss this and put it all on the table.
 - Ms. Baquero and Dr. Eldridge went over the timeline for future meetings regarding the application revision process.
 - Ms. Rackley added the application doesn't launch until December so there is still plenty of time to discuss. Mr. Friend confirmed that a draft will be presented in June and they will discuss whether they vote on it or vote to spend more time reviewing over the summer.

Community School of Digital and Visual Arts (CSDVA) Renewal: Ms. Ashley Baquero, OCS Executive Director; Ms. Jenna Cook, OCS Consultant; Ms. Jennifer Bennett, Senior Director, School Business Services

- Mr. Friend went over the history of this school including votes from CSRБ and SBE.
- Ms. Baquero reiterated some of the history that Mr. Friend mentioned. She shared rationale behind the CSRБ's decision to close back in January and the recommendations that the SBE gave the CSRБ to consider at this meeting. She went over the compliance concerns for both Nov. 2024 and January 2025. She also touched on the academic performance and comparability data for the school and went over the 3-year charter school renewal guidelines.
- Ms. Baquero gave the requirements and the language they needed to follow for their renewal decision.

Presentation from School Business

- Ms. Bennett gave an overview of the CSDVA 2024 audit and noted they dropped another \$200,000 in fund balance. She went over a summary of the audit findings and other key concerns as well such as recurring deficits, student ADM declines, financial non-compliance.
- Mr. Friend asked when the office received the 2024 report and Ms. Bennett said March 31st.
- Dr. Eldridge asked for clarity on this most recent report and Ms. Bennett explained the audit was as of June 2024. She and Dr. Eldridge discussed why the school had to dip into fund balance and Ms. Bennett explained that without doing a full review from her office she can't give a reason. She reiterated that a school with a small population, their margins are really slim.
 - Dr. Eldridge asked if school districts saw that deficit would they reduce programs or staff and Ms. Bennett summarized they would look at staffing as that's the biggest fund requirement.
 - Dr. Eldridge asked if there's any policy or legislation that requires an amount of funds on hand and Ms. Bennett said nothing in legislation but that some counties require certain percentages. She recommended that it be in the black in case - for example - if federal funds dried up.
 - Dr. Eldridge asked when CSDVA had the half a million in the bank if that would have covered the 3 months guidance and Ms. Bennett said it was 53 days but that should've covered almost 3 months.

Presentation from CSDVA

- Mr. Battle - Board Chair - introduced himself, other board members and the school leaders present in the room.
 - He went over the agenda for their presentation and began by giving a history of the school, including their focus on at-risk students and students who were at a social disadvantage. He stated they are poised for academic improvement but they are focusing hard on improving their compliance as a board. He believes his school meets the criteria for a 3-year renewal.
- Mr. Crawford, CSDVA Representative, began his presentation by saying the board was not responsive enough to OCS in delivering audits. He said - regarding the fiscal issues - they saw a decline in ADM and the fact Durham Public Schools didn't pay up to a quarter of a million dollars during their fiscal crisis put an immense amount of financial pressure on CSDVA. He stated they are now back to normal on their ADM.
 - Mr. Crawford stated the audit submitted March 31st did not have any findings that charter schools should look at with concern. He stated most schools would make an adjustment mid-year and let staffers go; but his school decided to not ruin any lives and not let anyone go. He said the board looked at this intently in their decision.
 - He then went over the 3-year criteria that is in statute and said he believes they are in compliance with the last three years of audits; that their academic performance is comparable to the LEA when looking at subgroup (he went into individual demographics in more detail); and they are in compliance with state and federal law regarding open meetings. He stressed again that the issues are with the board and they are restructuring to make sure that compliance is the board's responsibility.
 - He gave credit to OCS for asking them to examine themselves in a deeper way than they have in their long history.
- Ms. Hauser introduced herself and mentioned their difficulty of hiring an auditor until October of last year. She stated most actions identified in the audit were addressed and were completed and filed. She stated the concussion form issue was addressed, and the academics and financials were in compliance. She stated the board has begun to be more transparent, including putting up minutes on the website and hiring new staff.
- She then went into an overview of the restructuring plan:
 - She first touched on the revamped organizational chart and noted the Managing Director is replaced with three cabinet officers (making the work more spread out). She gave specifics on what each role would do. She stated their plan is to make sure that the compensation and the plan is updated to make this a reality.
 - She updated CSRБ on policies to re-evaluate the board's composition and expectations and noted major tasks were to be completed by May 1, 2025 and approved at the May CSDVA board meeting.
 - She stated they are creating a new and enhanced leadership position with a completion date of August 1, 2025. She said that all of this will be updated to include the 'cabinet level' responsibilities and ensuring the compensation is updated as well. They will also look to implement professional development as well and that should be done by August 1st.
 - They will update their board policies to reflect new roles and responsibilities by June 1, 2025. She stated they are trying to make sure that everything gets done in a timely manner, and then stays complete.

- She showed an organization chart that outlined the actions that are needed, the staffer who will lead, when the action should be done, and the board liaison handling the item.
 - She concluded by noting there will be an updated communication network and contact list.
- Mr. Crawford continued by going over how they got to the 'Board Specialist' position and demonstrated there was confusion amongst the board as to who was in charge of handling those issues. He stated he feels that consolidating this into one office will keep this from ever happening again.
- Mr. Battle began his presentation on the plans to relocate their school and noted they are under contract for their current facility; and have several options they can move to - pending CSDVA renewal - they can sign and move the school to. They hope they can move over the summer but stated the contract allows them to stay in their current building until December. He stated they have people on their team handling the logistics of the move.
 - He continued by going over the financing, saying they've secured a \$500,000 line of credit to address delays. He stated he believes they will have over a million dollars to address the concerns that were raised earlier, buy new furnishings, add incentives and retention bonuses, and overall shore up their finances.
 - He concluded this section by saying they will continue outreach to staff and families about renewal and relocation; formalize the leadership team; update position descriptions and other practices mentioned earlier for compliance reasons; and handle the overall relocation. He stated with all these changes they are in line with the three-year renewal guidelines.

Discussion from the CSRБ

- Mr. Friend clarified who was here with the school.
- Dr. Eldridge asked when Durham Public Schools made a payment to the school and school business said they don't have that information. Mr. Crawford explained when the DPS payment went into effect and the amount and Ms. Bennett stated they would be able to verify that. Mr. Crawford stated they can also produce that. He and Ms. Kakadelis confirmed that any charter school receiving students from Durham County got delayed payments.
- Dr. Eldridge asked where the cash flow would come from for this new position and Mr. Crawford said they would have to re-evaluate and this would begin next year. Ms. Hauser went into detail on the leadership restructuring and that would free up funding as well.
- Mr. Friend asked what they meant by 'cabinet level' positions and Ms. Hauser stated it is meant to show they will be working as a team.
 - Mr. Friend stated he is wondering why they need to have a position to hold the board accountable when a smaller school with a long history should already be doing this. Mr. Battle stated that as they move forward, they don't want to have the same issues they currently have, and believe this position would fill that void.
- Dr. Shope asked for more clarity on the managing director position and Mr. Battle said that he was serving as the Executive Director and as an individual contractor. Mr. Crawford clarified his role and his time as the managing director.
 - Mr. Crawford reiterated this position can shift the burden enough to hold the board accountable. He stated this might not be the optimal answer, but for the time being this is what they are going to do.
- Ms. Parlér asked if this new person would be able to override decisions of the board. Mr. Crawford stated this position would fit within their current bylaws and wouldn't break anything in those bylaws.

- Mr. Friend asked how often the board is meeting and Mr. Crawford said 8 times a year. Mr. Friend stated the minutes on the website didn't reflect that and asked for clarity of when, where, and how often they are actually meeting. Mr. Crawford explained when, where, and how they meet.
- Mr. Friend asked who approves the budget and the board answered they do. Mr. Friend stated overall the minutes are sloppy and he has not seen in the minutes that the board has approved the budget.
- Dr. Fuller stated she's only seen the board go over financials 4 times in the minutes and with how important this is, they really need to look at this every month and have a budget report every month. Ms. Hauser stated the board does go over it every month and explained their hopes - citing their restructuring plan - to reflect this in the minutes in the future.
- Dr. Eldridge asked who did their back office support and Ms. Hauser stated Prestige. Dr. Eldridge shared in Prestige's contract they will come to board meetings and give presentations and that could be in their minutes.
- Mr. Sanchez stated received a summary sheet and asked for school business to clarify the findings in the 2024 audit. Mr. Sanchez stated what he's seeing - despite the sloppy minutes - there is no sign of malfeasance and Ms. Bennett concurred. He and Ms. Bennett concurred that the holding back of funding from Durham Public Schools would have drastically changed their 2024 report, but the CPA should have noted this.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if the new location was still in Durham and Mr. Battle said yes. Mr. Sanchez asked about projections the new site would give the school. Mr. Battle stated a lot of that is pending renewal and they haven't put much of that onto paper. Ms. Hauser stated this year their enrollment has grown to 218 from 170. She also added that the Durham delay was noted within the audit and the board took out a line of credit to protect them due to the delay.
- Ms. Hauser stated hiring decisions go to the board and that - pending their discussion - they won't see staff making major financial decisions (such as curriculum, etc.). She also reiterated their school is also paying for a large fleet of buses, meals, and more. She noted that a lot of that operation takes place as a result of staff making everything operate on autopilot.
- Mr. Friend - referencing the planned relocation - asked if current parents know about the proposed relocation for this fall. Mr. Battle and Mr. Friend discussed this and Mr. Battle said he wasn't aware that it would have to go through the OCS or CSRБ. Mr. Crawford stated he was aware and explained to the CSRБ that transportation wouldn't be affected since they have their own fleet of buses.
- Ms. Parlér and Mr. Crawford discussed exactly where they were located and their exact name.
- Ms. Kakadelis asked why they have to have their renewal denied to have this happen. Mr. Battle stated the board was not following standards and that overall the excuses they gave are just excuses. Ms. Kakadelis asked who the head of school was and Mr. Battle gave who that was. Ms. Kakadelis asked if the head of school saw red flags and Mr. Battle said it is the board's responsibility.
- Dr. Shope stated that of the leaders on the CSRБ, a lot of them handle communication directly from DPI and they run larger schools than CSDVA. Overall, it is the responsibility of the leader of the school since she - referencing her case - is responsible to the board. She stated with the 3 proposed positions for CSDVA, there is still not one person who is running and controlling the day-to-day operations.
- Ms. Kakadelis asked OCS about the CSDVA renewal history. Mr. Friend and Dr. Eldridge shared the history.

- Ms. Parlér asked Ms. Baquero if CSDVA was aware they could go to RTO to get free training from OCS. Mr. Battle stated they weren't aware.
- Dr. Eldridge thanked Mr. Battle for taking all the heat and responsibility and asked him what he would do if he were the Vice-Chair of the Charter Schools Review Board.
 - Mr. Battle stated if they looked at the mission they'd see CSDVA exceeded growth and would personally vote for a 3-year renewal. He stated he wouldn't punish the kids who are in their care.
 - Dr. Eldridge asked how confident he would be that the board would fix the issues that were brought up. Mr. Battle stated he was confident and cited his restructuring plan and their plans to re-organize the board.
 - Dr. Eldridge asked what he would do if the audit didn't come in on time in year 1. Mr. Battle deferred to the attorney.
 - Dr. Haire asked if they are delinquent on a copier debt and Mr. Crawford said no.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if throughout their time as a charter school they've had any noncompliance issues. Ms. Baquero stated that in preparation for the appeal she noticed there was a trend since 2016.
- Dr. Haire asked Mr. Battle if it was true that he was surprised CSRБ voted for a non-renewal. Mr. Battle stated they knew non-renewal was on the table and Dr. Haire noted that in the past only 2 CSDVA board members came, thus showing CSRБ they might not have been concerned. Mr. Battle summarized everything that happened again and stated they have gotten more funds and now believe they can turn it around and do what they need to do in both the academic and compliance areas.
- Dr. Fuller noted that at the heart of compliance and governance is compliance and governance. She mentioned audit findings - and things they submit to prove students safety - are not just checkboxes but that it makes the school safe for the students. Mr. Battle stated they had a couple of coaches leave - referencing the concussion protocol - and that as soon as the issues in Epicenter were mentioned, they were resolved. He mentioned that it was strictly a communication issue between the board.

Closing Statement from the Board

- Mr. Battle reiterated they have to be in compliance and they are committed to doing that moving forward. He stressed they are doing good work with communities that are disadvantaged and asked for CSRБ trust in giving them a three-year renewal.
- Mr. Crawford stated in a 3-year renewal the person who is the most responsible is him. He said their plan is to show to the CSRБ as well as themselves that they can do this.

Mr. Bruce Friend motioned to go into closed session pursuant to NC General Statute section 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with our attorney(s) in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney(s) and the public body.

Second: Dr. John Eldridge

Time: 2:01 pm

Mr. Bruce Friend motioned and Ms. Hilda Parlér second to re-enter regular session at 2:10 pm

Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Mr. Sanchez stated he feels CSRБ members are all in a similar boat in feeling they are torn about this decision. He stated the things CSDVA are not doing is low-hanging fruit like putting motions into minutes, etc. He said there appears to be a lack of understanding of basic things that are

concerning and they would need to hire someone to help them understand this. He stated they should've already known the things they said they didn't know.

- He continued by saying that issues aside, the student data over the last 10 years shows them meeting and exceeding growth. He stated that looking back at the data and being shown they have some academic success makes him in favor of them being given another chance. He said that he would be in favor of a shorter term or a three-year with strict stipulations.
- Mr. Friend stated he believes this isn't about the academics of the school and that it is about the governance, and believes that other board members can agree. He states he can remember schools that have been approved for lower academic results. He mentioned that in a previous meeting a comment was made that this was a difficult decision since this was an original 1998 school. But, he said, on the flip side, they should've known already since they've been around since the beginning. He stated he would like to have stipulations in place and began listing those:
 - Meet every year for an update on academics and finance
 - Send OCS minutes every month.
- Ms. Kakadelis asked if the SBE could do that upon appeal and Mr. Friend stated that is a factual statement but doesn't know if that would work.
- Dr. Haire said she would support Mr. Friend's proposed motion.
- Ms. Parlér concurred but stated she wants to see tighter stipulations (such as reporting quarterly instead of annually).
- Dr. Eldridge concurred but stated if stipulations are reported quarterly and they break it they would have to close a school in the middle of the year. He noted how he appreciates the people who are like him who submit everything in a timely manner. He stated he would be supportive of the motion just strictly due to the students and their success.
- Dr. Shope agreed and said the only way she could support this is because of the children. Dr. Shope stated based on what Ashley sent them, they haven't been off noncompliance except for 1 year in the last 9-10 and that she doesn't know if this time will be the time they fix things.
- Mr. Sanchez asked what trainings are available to CSDVA board members and Ms. Baquero gave examples of opportunities OCS has for schools and school leaders. Mr. Sanchez stated he doesn't agree with a quarterly report per say but believes they need to hear from them again since they possibly could come back before them due to the move.
- Ms. Parlér asked if they had a board legal counsel and Mr. Friend said he wasn't sure and Mr. Walker and the member of the board confirmed who it was.
- Mr. Friend summarized the stipulations:
 - Annual audits will be provided on time
 - Monthly Board meeting minutes will be provided at the conclusion of every meeting
 - At a minimum/at the request of the CSRБ there will be a financial and academic reports to the board annually.
 - Mr. Friend and Ms. Parlér noted that by next month (if they approve the minutes one month after) minutes need to be in the hands of the OCS.
 - Mr. Sanchez asked about the first CSDVA presentation and when they will be before the board; and Dr. Eldridge mentioned that the move is the monkeywrench in this whole thing. Mr. Sanchez asked what if they added monthly updates to OCS regarding the move.
 - Mr. Friend stated they should discuss requiring 2 trainings a year provided by OCS and Ms. Baquero stated the school's legal counsel could provide some governance/legal assistance. A few other members discussed more detailed training.

- Mr. Friend noted other schools had SBE stipulations.
- Dr. Fuller asked what would happen if stipulations were not met, what would happen and what would it look like if they only missed one, or half, etc. Mr. Friend stated they would have to look at that as it came. Dr. Fuller asked if the SBE could co-sign and legal counsel said no that it would be a strictly CSRБ decision.
- Ms. Kakadelis said that responsiveness to the OCS is another issue and it was confirmed that CSRБ would be notified of any miscommunication.
- Mr. Sanchez summarized the stipulations again:
 - At the request and at a minimum annually, financial and academic report to the CSRБ
 - Provide monthly board minutes to OCS.
 - Submit the annual audit on time.
 - All CSDVA board members will go through a minimum of 2 trainings a year through OCS/their counsel/choice of provider and provide documentation in their annual report to the CSRБ.
 - Provide monthly updates, starting May 1, 2025, regarding their plans to relocate.

Motion: Mr. Eric Sanchez motioned to approve CSDVA charter renewal for a 3-year renewal with the aforementioned stipulations.

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

Discussion:

- Mr. Friend commented that it was not oversight but negligence from the board. He noted that their presentation started with ‘Why are we Here?’ and said we are ‘here’ because they didn’t get their renewal. He stated the emphasis shouldn’t be on the ‘here’ but on the ‘why’. He asked again why it took this process for attention to be grabbed.
- Mr. Sanchez said that he’s supported this school twice before and stated there are basic things they have to do to earn the trust of the people around you. He stated this should be the scariest thing of their life and to spend hours after this meeting sorting everything out. He stressed they should not come back without this fixed.
- Dr. Eldridge noted he was perplexed after the SBE meeting. But, he was grateful that with this opportunity he could remember how the kids are impacted by the decisions that adults make. He said that to the schools that have the same issues, they need to clean it up and thanked the schools that were already doing things the right way.

☒ **Passed** (Unanimous) ☐ Failed

Motion to Adjourn at 2:45 pm by: Dr. John Eldridge

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér