

Minutes of the North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board

Remote

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

Monday June 26, 2023

10AM

Attendance – CSAB Members	
Dr. Terry Stoops (nonvoting)- Absent Dr. Rita Haire Dr. John Eldridge Absent Cheryl Turner Absent Hilda Parlér Dr. Shelly Shope	Eric Sanchez Absent Bruce Friend Dave Machado Todd Godbey- Present after role call Dr. Bartley Danielsen Absent Stephen Gay
Attendance – Other	
<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Ashley Baquero, Director Joseph Letterio, Consultant Nicky Niewinski, Consultant Jenna Cook, Consultant Melanie Rackley, Consultant	<i>Attorney General</i> Allison Schafer

Livestream Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=marWsdbp21g>

Call To Order

Pledge of Allegiance: Bruce Friend

Mission and Ethics Statement: Bruce Friend

- Mission and Ethics Statement

Approval of the Agenda

Motion: Hilda Parlér moved for approval of the agenda

Second: Shelly Shope

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

Special Called Item: Review and Recommendation of ZECA’s School Improvement Plan

- Those in attendance for ZECA: Irving- VP of Board, Johnson, Hayes- Board Members, School Director- Howard, Finance- Morris
- Mr. Friend reviews stipulations requirement of CSAB to approve ZECA’s improvement plan and reason for today’s meeting. Asks ZECA to go ahead and review the budgetary support for plan. Update on enrollment.
- Ms. Howard- Removed projections for IPG grant. CSI additional funding not included. Allowed to have 121 students and that is what budget is based on. Currently 100 students are enrolled.

- Ms. Morris- explains the budget as presented with 121 students. 16 EC kids included. Projections are based on this school year's enrollment of 121. Goes over PRC dollar amounts including carry over they will utilize for next school year.
- Mr. Friend- 23-24 SY built budget based on 121 students, revenue projected of 1.5 million. Is that correct? Answer: Yes.
- Mr. Friend- When is the first day of school? Answer: August 29. Mr. Friend- approximately 20 students shy is that correct? Answer: Yes. Mr. Friend- In this plan, goal 4 talks about hiring 4 new positions that this plan is contingent upon. Are they included in the personnel number of 1.2 million? Answer: Yes.
- Dr. Shope- What was the Title I carryover. What was that amount? Answer: \$67,117.88. Shope- 050 allotment total? Answer- \$ 130,000
- Ms. Parlér- Do you have your projections? Answer: No. Can you guarantee 21 students by Friday? Answer: I need them by Friday? I don't think we will get it by Friday; our estimate is by the start of the school year. July is a busy time for parents to enroll. July 6th will know if other funding will come in.
- Mr. Gay- In the past, how many students do you pick up in summer? Usually there is attrition over the summer. Do you typically pick up 20+ students? Answer: Yes. Enrollment events planned over summer to generate kids. Mr. Gay- New staff positions, have you hired for them? Answer: Not hired yet. Advertised and going through applications now. Probably would not until we close out on June 30th and start the new year on July 1. Mr. Gay- If you don't meet 121 students, where are you going to cut in budget to make this work? Answer: General ideas of where to cut. Didn't include reserves in budget.
- Mr. Friend- What do you have in the bank reserves? Answer: \$297,350.28 in charter account. Still waiting on pending reimbursements from nursing grant that total about \$30,000. Nutrition account have \$51,000 and ESSR- \$50,001 for retirement account. \$18,000 waiting on from Onslow County. Mr. Friend- Look into the future. Personnel budget from year 1 to year 2, an increase of about \$106,000, 4 new positions. Answer: Saying we're going to have 1 curriculum coach and 1 master coach, and 2 curriculum consultants move into year 2 add an additional curriculum coach, additional master coach and consultants. Year 3- leave those 2 curriculum coaches to focus on reading and math. 3 Master coaches are partnered with Univ of Charlotte, retirees. Not a lot of benefits to pay for them. We went to each action step, spread everything out over a 3-year period and estimate the amount. Year 1, making sure we had enough funds available for PD. Those numbers decrease over the years. Goal 4 was mostly part-time with no benefits attached. If we don't get the IPG grant fund will have to spread out as enrollment increases. Mentors not just for BTs.
- Mr. Friend- 23-24 you're hiring 4 additional positions and embedded in personnel. 24-25 adding 4 additional positions. The difference in personnel from year 1 and 2 is \$106,000 but adding 4 additional, 2 part-time. Presumably staff increases. How do you do all of that for \$106,000.
- Dr. Haire- Year 3, adding 30 students and the personnel budget only increases \$30,000. Address that at the same time.
- Mr. Friend- Explain how your increasing staff, presuming raises, how do you afford that for \$106,000?
- Dr. Shope- If all are full-time, how do you pay for them? Answer: They are all part-time. All 4. Because of the hypothetical of everything it was difficult to project since we just don't know what funding will be in future. We don't necessarily have to give raises since we are charter. We like to stay competitive. We will make adjustments if needed.
- Dr. Haire- Year 3 is a larger consideration. Answer: Year 3 is not as solid with projections. We knew that as we moved to higher numbers, we wouldn't be in the same financial tightness as right now. Projections were hard. Strong year 1 and 2 was our focus.

- Mr. Machado- Professional Development (PD) questions. Of these PD listed in plan, how many have you participated in previously? Are these new PD? Answer: Some are new. ASCD we've done. Newer- Went to consultants and they made suggestions for leadership PD. Leadership Development with OCS is new for us. AIMS we've done before. Mr. Machado- Which consultant was used to do plan? Answer: Univ of Charlotte, CSI team from DPI. Mr. Machado- How many teachers are returning? Answer: All are returning except for 1. 8 are coming back. Mr. Machado- 9 teachers? Answer: 9 core teachers. 2 enhancements, 1 EC. Mr. Machado- How many certified? Answer: All certified. One has a degree and is working on a residential program to get a license.
- Ms. Parlér- Master coaches. Layout in plan, why do you need them? Answer: That's where we're headed. Based on feedback from CSI report, they wanted veteran teachers to ask higher level questions, wanted to make sure they had time to improve and develop current teachers to that level. Ms. Parlér- Is there a time limit for them to perform? Answer: Yes. They will develop guidelines. Still needs to be created over the summer. Yes. There is a timeline.
- Mr. Machado- OCS leadership development, is that with Mr. Quigley in collaboration with NCACCESS? Answer: Yes. Mr. Machado- LTRS training. Have you started? Answer: We've been using Lexia. Waiting for a quote for getting LTRS. Haven't started yet. Started conversations but not the training yet. All action items in the plan will go into place July 1.
- Dr. Haire- Did you have teachers attend the June 13 training with Mr. Quigley? Answer: Stacy attended. It was an information session, and we need to say who will go into the program. We can only send 3 people. Dr. Haire- Listed as one of your 10 sessions. Stipulations say all should attend. The session is not part of 10 since not all board members attended. Training this week on June 28 and 29. Presenters aren't listed. Answer: I don't know yet. This week they haven't posted presenters yet. Dr. Haire- Who will attend? Answer: Curriculum coach. 10 are spread out. Mix some training courses with modules for those who work and can't attend. Dr. Haire- In plan, 3-year motion stipulation says for 23-24 SY each participate in 10. Answer: Can't really tell by what's listed. We are aware that all need to do 10 but some are doing modules and some in person.
- Dr. Haire- In the school improvement plan it says you use the summer to evaluate lesson plan process. Has that begun? Answer: No. Plan starts July 1 after we close out this year. Curriculum coaches pulled some lesson plans to see if any changes need to be made on the lesson plan template we used. Also waiting for CSI to come in and do bridge meeting. Right now, our focus was to get this plan approved and close out the school year.
- Mr. Friend- What is a green machine? Answer: Company that does science for everyone. Cultural relevance perspective to science. Teachers need further training to be facilitators for full implementation. Green Machine comes in and helps with that. Models for teachers, what that looks like. Mr. Friend- Conditions for 3-year renewal from SBE. As you look at stipulations, what is your perspective on this? Any area that keeps you up at night more than others? Answer: We were already working towards improvement so none of it keeps me up at night. We've already seen improvement in student achievement. It will of course be a challenge, but we will do it.
- Mr. Machado- OCS question. If we approve, they get a 3-year renewal. If they don't meet requirements, then we have the ability to evaluate and recommend revoking the charter? Is that how this will work?
- Ms. Baquero- That is my understanding. Just a reminder, these stipulations and 4 other schools who also have similar stipulations provided by the SBE. They want you to approve the school plans. That doesn't preclude the schools from not coming in for continued low performance. Our team will meet with these 5 schools this week, our team will be assigned to monitor them. Frequent site visits so we have a grasp on how they are doing, and we can bring you updates as needed.

- Mr. Machado- If we approve this plan does it go back to SBE? Answer: I don't believe it goes back to SBE.
- Ms. Schafer- That is correct. If you don't approve the plan by June 30 the charter is revoked. If you approve, it doesn't go back to SBE.
- Mr. Friend- If this plan is approved, and a year from today we find out not every board member participated or there is a single financial compliance issue, that would be grounds for revoking immediately.
- Ms. Schafer- You can revoke any charter at any time if you feel the grounds exist.
- Dr. Haire- Was it stated at the last meeting that ZECA never had financial compliance issues? Answer: Ms. Baquero- Not since 2016. Dr. Haire- Going through my notes, it mentions deficit in 2014, disciplinary in 2015 and 2016 along with EC issues. Are you aware of this document? Ms. Baquero- Renewals additional data. As of 2016 moved to probationary, to our knowledge nothing since 2016. Dr. Haire- I wanted to clarify that. If I remember, we congratulated ZECA last meeting on financial compliance but there were findings in 2014, 2015, 2016.
- Mr. Machado- How many board members do you have? Answer: 5 board members. Vetting one who will replace board chair who passed away. Takes us to 6.
- Dr. Haire- Minutes of the meetings posted? Answer: All has been taken care of. They are updated and posted.

Discussion:

- Dr. Shope- Concerns I have, academic performance hasn't been discussed right at 28% proficiency. Title I carryover was \$67,000 total allotment \$130,000, 49-50% of total allotment.
- Ms. Parlér- Concerned about enrollment. Seemingly they would have worked hard to get that by now. Cutting it close.
- Mr. Friend- Thank you for getting this information together. I know this has been a lot of work but it's an important decision and we need a lot of questions answered. Concerned with steady decrease in enrollment. We know there are reasons for that. Budget for next year is based on 20 students they don't have. I'm skeptical. Academics through the history of the school is the biggest reason we're here today. Short amount of time to turn around a decade's worth of failure. Respectfully, I would say, the leader says none of this keeps her up at night. If it were me all of this would keep me up at night.
- Mr. Machado- My concern is why this wasn't a plan before at initial renewal. Would have liked to see this rather than being forced to come up with a plan.
- Dr. Haire- In this meeting you have said what you are required to do instead of proactive sense of we want to do this. Initial renewal, Bruce, you voted to renew. What led your vote that way the first time?
- Mr. Friend- From visiting the school I saw happy, safe students. Saw engaged students. At that time, I had confidence that there was something to build upon. We need students that are demonstrating that they are learning. Need a solid plan. Second guessing that vote. I'm not sure I can look at these numbers and budget and see how it supports the plan. All contingent upon hitting numbers.
- Dr. Haire- What were factors for SBE to send back. Was there a need in the community? Were there other factors?
- Mr. Friend- They passed with these conditions. We voted not to renew the school. SBE decided to give 3-years with tight conditions that they have to meet. Some discussions were similar to what we're having today such as community need, what school will these students go to if the school closes. 10 years of really low performing. I'm struck with is there a real sense of urgency here. I don't know how you have 10 years of this, and the board is confident they have the right person on board to turn this around? If we approve plan today it does give them 3-year renewal but they have to hit these numbers. If they come in next year and they don't hit the numbers and

plan had to be gutted, then I guess I would say I'll be first to vote to revoke. You have to hit numbers. Every board member does 10 training courses. I think if we vote to renew the plan what we're really doing is reviewing every year.

- Dr. Haire- At best it's a 2-year renewal because of growth requirement. With 10 year renewals we have allowed this to happen. OCS is going to put things in place to help monitor.
- Dr. Haire- If we make a motion, could it be with a condition of annual review?
- Mr. Friend- Wouldn't that happen automatically?
- Ms. Baquero- You would see them annually because of Continuously Low Performing status. We plan to make regular presentations to CSAB especially for these stipulation schools.
- Dr. Haire- Have we seen ZECA that frequently over the last 10 years?
- Ms. Baquero- They've definitely been here a couple of times. They are part of a cohort of schools that received 10-year renewal off the bat, and we don't do that anymore.
- Mr. Friend- The year that just ended. 100 students and 100 enrolled for next year. What impact has this had on existing students? Answer: Parents were the ones who spoke up against the closing. Slightly impacted recruitment for next year with some confusion over whether closure is taking place.

Motion: Rita Haire motioned to approve ZECA's 3- year School Improvement Plan per SBE stipulations.

Second: Dave Machado

Discussion:

Mr. Friend- I'll support motion but I'm not 100% confident. Enrollment is daunting and the plan is contingent upon that. ZECA board- you have a responsibility to change the academic performance and adherence to the plan. If conditions are not met in a year from now, I will be first to revoke.

Dr. Haire- Tall order. Have to assume they haven't been as aggressive with enrollment because they haven't known if they could move forward until the plan is approved.

Vote: Hilda Parlér and Todd Godbey nay.

Passed 5:2

Failed

Motion to adjourn – Bruce Friend

Second – Hilda Parlér

Adjourned 11:15AM