

Minutes of the North Carolina Charter Schools Review Board

State Board Room 755, Department of Public Instruction

December 8, 2025

9 AM

Attendance – CSRB Members	
Jeremy Wall- (nonvoting) - Remote Dr. Rita Haire Dr. John Eldridge Eric Guckian Hilda Parlér Dr. Shelly Shope – Present after Lunch	Eric Sanchez - Remote Bruce Friend Lindalyn Kakadelis - Absent Todd Godbey Gerald McNair - Absent Stephen Gay
Attendance – Other	
<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Ashley Baquero, Director Joseph Letterio, Consultant - Remote Melanie Rackley, Consultant Jenna Cook, Consultant Dr. Natasha Norins, Consultant Dr. Brandi Gill, Consultant Nicky Niewinski, Asst. Director Megan Carter, Consultant Julie Whetzel, Consultant	<i>CSRB Attorney</i> Steven Walker <i>SBE Attorney</i> Allison Schafer - Absent <i>Teacher/Principal of Year</i> Dr. Jake Wilson – POY - Remote Lindsay Phillips – TOY - Remote

CSRB Recording: [Day 1 - December NC Charter School Review Board - Dec. 8, 2025](#)

Call To Order

Pledge of Allegiance & NC Flag Salute: Bruce Friend

Mission and Ethics Statement:

- Mission and Ethics Statement, Bruce Friend, Board Chair
- Recuse: Hilda Parlér – ALA Charlotte

Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

Motion: Dr. Rita Haire moved to approve agenda for December 2025 Meeting
Second: Todd Godbey

Vote: Unanimous

Passed Failed

Motion: Hilda Parley moved to approve November 2025 minutes.

Second: Stephen Gay

Vote: Unanimous

Passed Failed

December 8 Charter Schools Review Board Meeting

Amendments: Julie Whetzel, OCS Consultant

- Centerpoint Classical (RTO) – Enrollment Reduction

Ms. Whetzel shared information included in the Executive Summary.

Discussion:

Matthew Schneider (Board Chair of Center Point Classical Academy) and Mary Katherine Sauer (Representative) participated to answer questions.

Facility Overview:

- Temporary site is a church in southeastern Guilford County with classroom space for the reduced enrollment.
- The facility has not been used as an educational space before.
- The applicant is working to ensure compliance for occupancy, including sprinkler systems, ADA compliance, exits, and restrooms.

Enrollment & Marketing:

- Originally projected enrollment was reduced to approximately half.
- The school currently has about 60 applicants; active marketing delayed pending finalization of facility lease.
- Plans to begin intensive marketing in January–February with facilities finalized for promotion.
- Dr. Rita Haire questioned building compliance and prior facility use.
- Dr. John Eldridge and Jeremy Wall expressed concern over uncertainty in data and possible need for a one-year opening delay.
- Mr. Bruce Friend highlighted that the applicant's responses contained tentative language ("I think," "believe"), signifying caution.
- Discussion included whether the applicant had developed a permanent site plan and future capacity projections.

Motion: Bruce Friend moved to approve Centerpoint Classical's amendment to reduce enrollment as presented.

Second: Dr. Rita Haire

Nay: Todd Godbey, Hilda Parlér

CSRB Discussion:

- Eric Sanchez expressed concern over generalities of answers by the school and the CMO representative.

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

OCS Renewal Presentations: Jenna Cook, OCS Consultant

- Ms. Cook provided CSRB with information regarding renewal policies and legislation followed by school introductions.

American Leadership Academy (ALA) Charlotte

Dialogue/Discussion Summary

- Jenna Cook provided an overview of ALA Charlotte, formerly Aristotle Preparatory Academy, a K–8 school in Mecklenburg County.
- The school's performance history included an F and D rating in the preceding years, while meeting growth for three consecutive years.
- Concerns raised: School is not comparable to its LEA, has ongoing financial non-compliance issues (negative unassigned fund balance, expenditures exceeding revenues, ADM decrease >5%), and continues to be in “continually low-performing” status.

School presentation summary:

- Board Chair recognized deficiencies but stressed improvements in enrollment growth, academics, and stability under new leadership.
- School Director detailed upgrades to school facilities, technology, new transportation services (4 new buses), one-to-one device ratio, and the hiring of highly qualified teachers.
- Discussed partnerships with community organizations and implementation of MTSS intervention groups.
- Highlighted plans to raise school grade from D to B within three years through instructional coaching, curriculum fidelity (Eureka Math Squared, CKLA), and data-driven PLCs.

Key questions and comments:

- Dr. Eldridge and Dr. Rita Haire questioned the stagnation in academic comparability and out-of-date school improvement plan.
- Finance concerns were re-emphasized by multiple members; board members advised immediate correction of the non-compliance status.
- Charter One, VP of Operations, defended the school's direction, emphasizing recent leadership and financial investment for long-term improvements.

Board feedback:

Members expressed the need for tangible academic data improvement, concern over recurring 3-year renewals, and reiterated financial stability as the top priority.

The Institute for the Development of Young Leaders

Dialogue/Discussion Summary

- Jenna Cook summarized IDYL's strong academic performance: a C rating, continuous exceeding of growth for three years, and comparability to the LEA for two of the last three years.
- No compliance or financial issues were reported.
- School was recommended for a 7-year renewal based on achievements and consistent comparability.

School presentation:

- Founder and Board Chair highlighted being named the #1 NC charter school in academic growth statewide by DPI.
- Principal emphasized sustained systems, professional development, family outreach, and student success stories (notably students exiting IEP programs).
- The school demonstrated increases in all subgroup performances, with consistent financial stability and clean audits.
- Focus areas included continued accelerated growth, maintaining teacher retention, and providing trauma-informed instruction.

Board member feedback:

- Dr. Eldridge and others praised the data-driven model and recommended the school serve as a mentor for struggling charters.
- The school was asked to correct website links for board minutes.
- Discussion arose around the 6-point gap in one LEA comparability measure, which technically places the school outside the “five-point” guideline, but board members indicated discretion could allow a longer renewal term.

Gate City Charter Academy

Dialogue/Discussion Summary

- Jenna Cook described Gate City Charter Academy (K–8, Guilford County) as meeting growth 2 of the last 3 years, maintaining comparability with its LEA in 2 of the last 3 years, with no compliance or fiscal issues.

School presentation (virtual):

- Board President recounted founding history and the school's mission to serve East Greensboro's historically underserved families.
- Principal presented data:
 - Reading proficiency ↑ by 15 pts; math ↑ by 11 pts from 2021–2023.
 - Met growth two of the last three years, nearly meeting in the third.
 - Subgroup analysis showed Black and Hispanic student proficiency exceeded district peers consistently.
 - Economically disadvantaged and English learner students outperformed Guilford County's averages.
- Highlighted stable leadership, consistent improvement, and compliance with all state and federal standards.

Board reaction:

- Board members commended continuous academic and subgroup progress.

- Advised ensuring that board minutes remain up-to-date and accessible.
- Recognition that Gate City fits criteria for a 7-year renewal under CSRB guidelines.

Success Institute Charter School

Dialogue/Discussion Summary

- School leadership joined virtually following weather delays.
- The board reviewed data with questions about a comparability discrepancy; OCS staff (Ms. Cook) explained possible data masking due to small subgroups.

School presentation summary:

- Enrollment increased 24% due to access to a new facility shared with the Boys and Girls Club.
- Implemented blended learning interventions and monthly diagnostics for student progress.
- Finance: Resolved a small deficit caused by ESSER funding misunderstanding; FY audit now reflects positive fund balance and no findings.
- Leadership confirmed a positive relationship with the Boys & Girls Club, though upcoming sale of the building may require a written lease commitment with new property owners.

Board discussion:

- Commended financial recovery but strongly advised securing a multi-year written lease to ensure facility stability.
- Recognized ongoing progress in achieving and exceeding growth metrics.

Union Day

Dialogue/Discussion Summary

- Jenna Cook noted Union Day as a K–12 school, performing at a C rating and meeting or exceeding growth two of the last three years. Recommended for a 10-year renewal due to consistent performance and compliance.

School presentation:

- Executive Director summarized the school's reach across six counties and improvement in growth (+6.3 pts average gain over three years).
- Focus areas: EC student achievement, professional development, and teacher retention.
- EC Initiatives: More push-in support, standards-aligned goals, foundational-skill reinforcement.
- PD: Transitioned from monthly to weekly sessions, differentiated for grade levels.
- Teacher Retention: Provides 100% paid health insurance, covers certification costs, supplies teacher budgets.
- Instructional improvements: Double-blocked math, increased after-school programs, blended ELA and social studies content, schoolwide data meetings, and inclusion of enrichment programs (AIG, Word Masters, Math Olympiad).
- School achieved full International Baccalaureate accreditation for middle and diploma programs — first North Carolina charter to do so.
- Scholarship awards now total over \$900,000 with projections exceeding \$1M.

Board discussion:

- - Questions on enrollment distribution between lower and high school; interest in K-8 vs high-school impacts on scores.
- Praise for multi-level data practice and staff investment.
- Commendation for school's broad representation and depth of presentation.

Asheville PEAK Academy

Dialogue/Discussion Summary

- Jenna Cook reported that Asheville Peak is completing its first renewal cycle. The school has exceeded growth in two of the last three years and improved from a D to C grade, but has ongoing financial non-compliance and EC program compliance issues.

School presentation:

- Executive Director highlighted strong academic growth, enrollment increase from 30 to 245, and 100% growth waitlist.
- Predominantly Black and economically disadvantaged, outperform Asheville City Schools in math, reading, and science.
- Focused on closing the achievement gap using trauma-informed and restorative practices.
- Stressed community partnerships and commitment to scholar well-being.

Compliance issues addressed:

- Financial: Implemented internal control reviews, strengthened board oversight, diversified revenue, and improved procedures.
- EC: Previously had one-person department; now it has full EC Director and five certified teachers. All prior corrective actions are completed with the help of DPI consultants.
- Requested a seven-year renewal to demonstrate sustained compliance and to aid in facility construction plans supported by city and housing authorities.

Board discussion:

- Confirmed EC non-compliance corrections and ongoing process monitoring.
- Members requested internal documentation on special education case timelines and "indicator 11" compliance analysis.
- Commended leadership transparency and growth trajectory but noted a seven-year renewal may exceed standard policy due to prior compliance findings.

Introduction to 2026 Charter Application Interviews: Melanie Rackley, OCS Consultant

- Ms. Rackley reviewed the application process, legislation, and timeframe for applicant interviews.

Cape View Leadership Academy: EMO – ACCEL Schools - Standard

Introduction

- Ms. Melanie Rackley introduced the Board of Directors to the School; as well as their mission, number of students, and other details pertaining to their application. She also introduced the choices the CSRB had regarding this application.

Applicant's opening statement:

- Board chair and other members include Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, and Community Engagement.
- All board members are Pender County residents and parents.
- Mission: combine leadership-driven and career-tech education under a community-centered model.
- Board highlighted diverse expertise in education, risk management, and data analytics.
- Key CTE pathways identified: Aviation/aerospace, healthcare and emergency services, and construction trades.

Discussion and Key Concerns Raised by Board Members:

- Conflict of Interest: Board chair and treasurer (husband and wife) confirmed no employment-based conflict exists.
- Board email use: Clarification requested as to why some board members used personal/pender charter emails.

Rationale for Selecting EMO:

- Applicant clarified a “typo” in their submission—Accel has no current NC presence, contrary to the application.
- They selected Accel through networking; a neighborhood acquaintance recommended the company.
- Cited “education expertise” though EMO has limited CTE-specific record.

Facility Concerns:

- Plan for either new construction or leased building owned by the EMO.
- No current buyout terms or right-to-purchase agreement defined.
- Board's attorney negotiating a separate facilities contract to prevent dependency on EMO.
- Board members warned that if EMO owns the facility, loss of contract could equate to loss of the building.

Curriculum Model: Described as hybrid, technology-driven instruction; teacher-led with digital integration and assessment data tracking.

Budget Analysis:

- Year-one surplus: \$166 (very tight margin).
- “Other funds” category (~\$500,000 in year 1 and >\$1 million in later years) unexplained and essential to balancing the budget.
- Employee administrative “pass-through” charges ranged from \$100,000–\$200,000, description unclear.

- Additional pay-per-student fees beyond 15% management fee include:
- AMP platform (\$50/student)
- Computer rental (\$400/student new; \$300 returning)
- IT support (\$25–50K depending on enrollment).
- Board members questioned whether these were duplicative of the 15% fee.

Operational Questions:

- One administrator and one clerical staff member in Year 1; concerns this is insufficient to execute EMO deliverables.
- Special Education staffing and EC budgeting unclear; response suggested one EC teacher at startup based on projections.

CTE Alignment with EMO:

- Board confirmed EMO does not currently operate CTE-focused schools.
- Selection based largely on perceived management strength, not CTE expertise.
- Board claimed CTE-focused elements would come from local partnerships (Cape Fear Community College, workforce boards).

Due Diligence Questions:

- Board members questioned multiple school closures under EMO in Ohio; applicant said half attributed to the pandemic and others to “real estate or authorizer decisions.”

Financial Dependence:

- Board conceded EMO may “pick up” financial slack in early years to stabilize operations.
- Attorney Review: Board has independent legal counsel reviewing EMO agreements.

Motion: Dr. John Eldridge moved to invite Cape View Leadership Academy back for a second interview.

Second: Stephen Gay

Yay: Dr. John Eldridge, Stephen Gay

Nay: Bruce Friend, Dr. Rita Haire, Hilda Parlér, Todd Godbey, Eric Sanchez, Eric Guckian, Dr. Shelley Shope

Vote:

- Passed x Failed

Motion: Dr. Rita Haire moved to deny Cape View Leadership Academy’s charter application.

Second: Hilda Parlér

Nay: Stephen Gay, Dr. John Eldridge

Vote:

- ☒Passed ☐Failed

Myrtis Simpson Walker Academy - Standard

Introduction

- Ms. Melanie Rackley introduced the Board of Directors to the School; as well as their mission, number of students, and other details pertaining to their application. She also introduced the choices the CSRB had regarding this application.

Applicant's opening statement:

- Board Chair, Co-Chair, and other board members present.
- Modified the previous concept: now a single-gender classroom model (not separate schools).
- Emphasized community diversity in east Charlotte and data-driven instructional planning.
- Music and entrepreneurship integration described as tools to enhance critical thinking, discipline, and creativity.
- Cited high parent interest (~400 survey responses) through community outreach and events since September.

Discussion Highlights:

Model Clarification:

- Grades K–2 will be coeducational; Grades 3–5 single-gender classrooms.
- Electives, lunch, and recess will combine genders.
- Board members expressed concern this hybrid design may confuse parents and contradict marketing materials.
- Suggested drawing firm parameters (e.g., K–2 coed, 3–5 single-gender consistently).

Curriculum Coverage:

- Core academics use Amplify (ELA) and Eureka Math.
- Arts-integrated and entrepreneurship modules paired with core subjects.

Budget Concerns:

- Year-one surplus narrow (~\$9,000).
- No clear allocation for curriculum, student devices, or technology.
- Instructional materials line: \$5,000; textbooks \$6,000 – deemed inadequate.
- No line items for custodial, legal, or transportation staff.
- Board claimed “donations” of musical instruments and AI/robotics equipment would offset deficits.
- Concern raised that reliance on donations is unsustainable.

Marketing and Enrollment Strategy:

- Outreach through East Charlotte churches, Hispanic community groups, and social media.
- Board reported strong parent interest but presented no verified data from active campaigns.

Proposed Schedule (Example):

- Monday half-days for planning and professional development.
- Core instruction (ELA, Math, Social Studies) with scheduled electives Tue–Friday.
- Integrated entrepreneurship and music modules.
- Board questioned logistics and staffing implications.

Community Engagement:

- The school's name honors educator Myrtis Simpson Walker. Board chair told personal family story emphasizing legacy of equity and education.

Overall Board Observations:

- Demonstrated passion and mission-centered intent but lacked operational readiness.
- Continued issues from first application version: insufficient budget allocation, weak financial planning, unclear academic execution plan, and inconsistent model structure.

Motion: Hilda Parlér moved to deny Myrtis Simpson Walker Academy's charter application.

Second: Eric Guckian

Nay: Stephen Gay, Bruce Friend

Vote:

- Passed Failed

Adjourn: 2:45 pm

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December 9, 2025

9 AM

Attendance – CSAB Members	
Jeremy Wall- (nonvoting) Dr. Rita Haire Dr. John Eldridge Eric Guckian Hilda Parlér Dr. Shelly Shope - Remote	Eric Sanchez - Remote Bruce Friend Lindalyn Kakadelis - Remote Todd Godbey Gerald McNair - Remote Stephen Gay - Absent
Attendance – Other	
<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Ashley Baquero, Director Joseph Letterio, Consultant - Remote Melanie Rackley, Consultant Jenna Cook, Consultant Dr. Natasha Norins, Consultant: Absent Dr. Brandi Gill, Consultant Megan Carter, Consultant Nicky Niewinski, Asst. Director Julie Whetzel, Consultant	<i>CSRB Attorney</i> Steven Walker <i>SBE Attorney</i> Allison Schafer - Absent <i>Teacher/Principal of Year</i> Dr. Jake Wilson– POY - Remote Lindsay Phillips – TOY - Remote

CSRB Recording: [Day 2 - December NC Charter School Review Board - Dec. 9, 2025](#)

Call To Order

Pledge of Allegiance & NC Flag Salute: Bruce Friend, Board Chair

Mission and Ethics Statement:

Hilda Parlér: recuse from Wake Prep

Todd Godbey: recuse from GLOW

Bruce Friend stated he wanted to reconsider vote from yesterday from Cape View and make a motion to bring back for second interview.

Context: The prior day, December 8, Cape View Leadership Academy's application was denied after a failed vote to grant them a second interview.

Proposer: A board member (Chair, unnamed in transcript section) moved to reconsider that outcome for the purpose of further investigating the EMO's financial agreement and budget structure.

Legal clarification: Only a member who voted on the prevailing side of the previous decision could move reconsideration. The motion could be seconded by any member regardless of prior vote. The General Counsel confirmed this interpretation.

Motion: Bruce Friend moved to reconsider Cape View's charter application and grant them a second interview.

Second: Lindalyn Kakadelis

Yay: Bruce Friend, Lindalyn Kakadelis, Dr. John Eldridge, Gerald McNair, Dr. Shelley Shope

Nay: Dr. Rita Haire, Hilda Parlér, Todd Godbey, Eric Sanchez, Eric Guckian

Vote: 5:5 tie. Motion fails per attorney.

- Passed
- ✗ Failed

Discussion:

- Eric Sanchez asked what substantive change had occurred since the previous day's vote.
- The Chair responded the intent was to ask additional direct questions of the EMO and review budget specifics.
- No further debate ensued.

Ready to Open (RTO) Update & Proposed Revisions to Minimum Requirements to Open: Ashley Logue, OCS Director

Announced that the Office of Charter Schools will take an additional month to gather public feedback.

Objective:

- To host a statewide public information session explaining the RTO structure to stakeholders.
- Clarify misconceptions, especially for individuals or schools not recently involved in the RTO procedure.

- The Chair affirmed the session would be held before the January or February Review Board meeting to consolidate relevant input.

Renewal Presentations: Jenna Cook, OCS Director

Jenna Cook outlined statutory eligibility for 10-year charter renewals under NC General Statutes.

Statutory Criteria Recap:

The law requires the Review Board to renew a charter for 10 years unless any of the following apply:

1. Failure to provide financially sound audits for the past three years.
2. Failure to achieve academic outcomes comparable to their local education agency (LEA).
3. Noncompliance with state or federal law, the school's bylaws, or provisions of its charter.

Only schools meeting all three criteria were presented for this 10-year renewal recommendation.

Summary of Schools Presented

1. Clover Garden School – Alamance-Burlington County (K–12)

- Opened: 2001; Last renewal: 2014 (10 years).
- Performance: *B (2021), C (2022–2023).
- Exceeded growth once in last three years.
- Academically comparable to LEA all three years.
- No compliance or financial concerns.

2. New Dimension School – Burke County (K–12)

- Comparable to LEA over the previous three years.
- No compliance or financial issues identified.

3. FernLeaf Community Charter School – Henderson County (K–12)

- Comparable to LEA within the required five-percentage-point margin.
- No compliance or financial deficiencies.

4. Bradford Preparatory School – Mecklenburg County (K–12)

- Comparable for three consecutive years.
- EC compliance note: Areas of noncompliance identified by the Office of Exceptional Children during the IDEA monitoring review. EC confirmed the school is on track to resolve all corrective action items by the January deadline.

5. Pioneer Springs Community School – Mecklenburg County (K–12)

- Comparable all three years.
- Compliance update: Working to close an EC Indicator 11 issue; continuous progress since March 2023. Correction expected within standard one-year remediation period.

6. Unity Classical Charter School – Mecklenburg County (K–8)

- Comparable to LEA all three years.
No open compliance or financial warnings reported.

7. Telra Institute – Mecklenburg County (K–8, approved K–12 expansion)

- Operating K–8 with expansion approval.
- Comparable performance to LEA across all three years.
- No noted compliance or financial issues.

8. Moore Montessori Community School – Moore County (K–8)

- Comparable to LEA in all last three years.
- No compliance or financial issues reported.

9. KIPP Pride College Preparatory (formerly KIPP Gaston College Prep) – Northhampton County (K–12)

- Recently merged with KIPP Halifax.
- Comparable academically to LEA all three years.
- No compliance or financial concerns.

10. Roxboro Community School – Person County (6–12)

- Comparable to LEA in all three years.
- Clean compliance and financial reports.

11. Old Main STREAM Academy – Robeson County (K–8)

- Academically comparable each of last three years.
- No compliance warnings or financial irregularities.

12. Faith Academy Charter School – Rowan–Salisbury Schools (K–8)

- Comparable to LEA.
- One compliance item noted: Beginning Teacher Support Plan pending full approval. The work plan has been submitted; final revision still under DPI review.

13. Carolina Charter Academy – Wake County (K–8)

- Comparable for all three years.
- No compliance or financial findings.

Discussion:

- Jenna Cook and board members commended improvements by several of these schools, which had only three-year renewals in the prior cycle but have now achieved ten-year eligibility.
- Specific congratulations extended to Carolina Charter Academy and Moore Montessori for significant improvement since their previous renewals.
- Members noted that schools often receive more attention when struggling; the board expressed appreciation to the high-performing schools for sustained excellence.
- Dr. Rita Haire confirmed that growth is not a required statutory element for deciding 10-year renewals—only comparability, compliance, and financial soundness.
- Consensus: No objections to any school's eligibility for 10-year renewal.

Girls Leadership Academy of Wilmington

- Representing GLOW: administrative staff, Beacon Education Foundation Board, and school board members.

Key Highlights:

- Mission: Support each student academically, socially, and emotionally through a college-preparatory leadership model.
- Student Population: Diverse; significant representation of economically disadvantaged, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities.

Improvement History:

- Formerly low-performing (grade “D,” with no growth met before 2019).
- Implemented wide-reaching reforms in culture, structure, and instruction.
- 2021: Met growth for first time.
- 2022: Met growth again, raised performance grade to “C.”
- 2023: Exceeded growth; top 4% statewide, with another nine-point performance increase.

Comparability Context:

- Over five years, closed academic gap with district to within four points (within comparability margin).
- Noted that comparability measured solely against “all students” data does not reflect mission-focused subgroups.

Subgroup results:

- Black students: +9 points above district.
- Hispanic students: +4 points above district.
- Economically Disadvantaged: +2 points above district.
- Students with Disabilities: Within or above district comparability range for multiple consecutive years.

Graduation and Postsecondary Success:

- Graduation rate high (adjusted for occupational programs).
- Nearly all students apply to and are accepted to college; current senior class has achieved \$4.6 million in merit scholarships.
- Multiple Quest Bridge national scholars; one student recently accepted to Washington University in St. Louis.

Staff Development and Culture:

- Collective teacher efficacy—a unified belief that team efforts ensure results—identified as key factor in sustained growth.
- Teacher retention and instructional consistency noted as central to long-term success.

Board Questions & Discussion:

- Bruce Friend: Praised data-driven presentation and transparency about challenges; asked about enrollment stability—school confirmed steady trend for manageability and sustained quality.
- Dr. John Eldridge: Asked about uneven performance in Math I (some subgroup variances). Principal explained specific instructional supports and coaching for contract teachers, showing progress.
- Dr. Rita Haire: Discussed impact of 10-year vs. 7-year renewal. Principal responded that a 10-year would symbolize recognition of long-term stability and success, enhancing morale and financial viability.
- Lindalyn Kakadelis: Asked whether 10-year term affects financing; Chair and Todd Godbey confirmed from their own school experience that a 10-year term greatly benefits lending and grant opportunities.
- Eric Sanchez: Applauded leadership model and recommended other charters learn from GLOW's turnaround process.
- Chair Conclusion: Commended GLOW's progress: "An evidence-based model of sustainable improvement and mission alignment."

Davidson Charter Academy

- Presenters: CEO, Principal, Director of Education, 5th-grade teacher and School Improvement chair.

Key Points:

- Mission: Inspire independent thinkers and engaged citizens through parental and community partnership.

Demographics: ~900 students; diverse population, mirroring regional demographics. Roughly half from Lexington City, one-third from Davidson County.

Academic Goals:

- Regain "C" grade by June 2024; long-term target "B."
- Raise reading proficiency from 60% → 70%, math 55% → 70%, and science 65% → 75%.
- Maintain data-driven instruction via PLCs, NWEA MAP, NC Check-Ins, and MCLASS tools.

Staff Retention Initiatives:

- Implemented the "DCA Way"—a cultural framework emphasizing respect, cooperation, and positive intent.
- Increased teacher salaries by 10% above state schedule, added retirement match to 5%.
- Hospitality Committee program for recognition and morale.

Challenges Identified:

- Teacher shortages in previous year: 7 classrooms staffed by substitutes.
- Leadership overhaul: prior dual-director model replaced by unified CEO system.
- Need for consistent structure and systems for communication, discipline, and professional growth.

Facilities and Growth:

- New middle school building opened Fall 2023, housing grades 6–8.
- Enrollment expanded from 400 (2017) to >900 (2023).

Community Engagement:

- Partnerships with law enforcement, fire departments, Dragonfly House advocacy center, and PTO events.
- Student success in athletics and arts; sportsmanship and academic achievements emphasized.

Board Questions & Comments:

- Dr. Rita Haire: Asked how teacher retention is being addressed—school highlighted the DCA Way culture shift and recognition systems.
- Dr. John Eldridge: Encouraged a site visit after seeing cultural transformation success.
- Bruce Friend: Observed that staff turnover, while disruptive, sometimes yields “addition by subtraction,” improving long-term alignment.
- Consensus: Board members supportive of renewal; acknowledged unusual audit finding unrelated to financial issues.

Following Davidson’s presentation, Board members discussed a perceived inconsistency between state statute and renewal guidelines.

Observation:

- Guidelines state that schools designated as “low-performing” may not qualify for seven-year renewals.
- However, G.S. §115C-218.6 (statute) does not mention low-performing status as a restriction for automatic ten-year renewal.

Guidance from Counsel:

- The law governs; board has discretion when issuing renewals for less than ten years.
- Guidelines serve as internal advisory, not mandatory rule.
- Schools meeting all three statutory criteria (financial, compliance, comparability) are eligible for ten-year renewal even if “low-performing.”

Conclusion:

- Clarification accepted that board retains discretion to adjust renewal length despite guideline inflexibility.

Wake Preparatory Academy

- Presenters: Board Members, Administrative Directors, and EMO Representative.
- Hilda Parlér recused.

Key Details:

- Current Enrollment: ~2,600 students; four-county reach (Wake, Franklin, Granville, Johnston). Waitlist over 1,000 students.
- Graduation Rate: 97%; 90% pursue college enrollment.

Financial Explanation:

- FY22 audit showed a one-time startup deficit of \$32,000 due to inaugural operational costs.
- FY23 audit reversed this: unassigned fund balance now +\$714,000.
- Board set policy requiring 5% reserve surplus and monthly EMO reviews of financial statements.

Academic Performance:

- High school English II and Math I exceeded growth in 2022 and 2023.
- Math III and Grades 4–5 meeting expected growth; grade 3 below target (addressed with new interventions).
- Core strategy: data-driven instruction with weekly PLC analysis.
- English Learner subgroup (238 students): 68% proficiency—outperforming district average.
- Hispanic/Latino subgroup: 63% proficiency—also above district peers.

Achievement Goals: Elevate “C” → “B” (2024) → “A” (within three years).

Staffing:

- 90% licensed teachers (minimal subs currently).
- Early recruitment cycles and extended training (two-week institute).
- Added two reading interventionists and academic coaches.
- Offering licensure stipends, professional development, and mentor programs.

Culture and Community:

- Core values: RAISE (Respect, Accountability, Integrity, Service, Excellence).
- Extensive community involvement, K–12 service events, and leadership programs.
- Full athletics, fine arts, DECA, National Honor Society, and peer mentor programs.

Board Questions & Comments:

- Bruce Friend: Confirmed the financial caution involved ~\$32,000 out of \$22M budget. Expressed disbelief that such a small percentage triggered non-compliance.
- Todd Godby: Supported full-term renewal; encouraged legislative clarification regarding “cautionary” interpretation.
- Dr. Rita Haire: Asked about impact of enrollment growth on staffing—school described early recruitment pipeline and low turnover.
- Dr. Rita Haire: Asked about current substitute usage; school reported only one long-term sub across grades.
- Dr. John Eldridge: Commended performance; recommended more proportional assessment of financial findings.

Board Consensus: Recognition that Wake Prep met all academic and operational standards; minor financial issue resolved per FY23 audit.

Monroe Charter Academy

Recused: Eric Sanchez

Presenter: Jenna Cook provided a school overview.

- Previously based in Union County, recently approved for relocation to Mecklenburg County (November 2025 meeting).
- Grades: K–8
- Enrollment: ~130 students
- First charter in 2016; opened 2017.
- Previous renewal (2020): Three-year term with stipulations.

Academic Performance:

- School performance grade: “F” for three consecutive years.
- Met expected growth 2 of the last 3 years.
- Not comparable to LEA (Union County); gap widened annually across three years.
- Subgroup data also below LEA averages.

Compliance Status:

Three unresolved required actions from OCS renewal site visit:

1. Amend board bylaws (task incomplete in compliance management system).
2. Update background check policy to align with county procedures.
3. Correct closed session procedures in minutes (failure to cite statutory reason per G.S. 143-318.11).
No sufficient evidence of correction provided. School reports engagement with legal counsel but no documentation submitted.

Financial Standing:

- Financial Cautionary Status: ADM decreased >5%.
- Expenditures exceeded revenue by \$41,000.
- Single audit finding: Deficient procurement and contract management oversight.
- Disciplinary Non-Compliance: Placement on financial non-compliance—disciplinary status for two causes:
 1. Lack of valid Certificate of Occupancy (CO) at new facility.
 2. Exceeded allowable five remote instruction days permitted under G.S. §115C-84.3 due to ongoing virtual operations.

Result: DPI froze all state funding pending valid CO documentation.

Current Operations:

- School is currently operating remotely via virtual instruction since week of November 13, 2023
- No certificate of occupancy for the new Mount Moriah facility in Mecklenburg County.
- Reported progress with county permitting office; awaiting fire-alarm upgrades before eligibility for inspection.

- No official completion timeline provided—original November statement estimated “no more than two weeks.”

School Presentation:

- Founding Principal, and two members present.
- Presentation centered on student growth progress and community engagement:
- Noted that 90% of students were predicted by EVAAS data to be non-proficient.
- Reported 74.9% of students demonstrated growth in 2023.
- Emphasized personalized instruction, family communication, and data-driven small groups.
- Shared individual student success stories and support for parents of EC students.
- Requested seven-year renewal, arguing the school shows growth momentum and improved climate.
- Admitted CO is not yet secured; reliant on carryover and local funds for operations during state funding freeze.

Questions and Discussion by the Board

- Bruce Friend: Confirmed the school stated in November meeting that maximum two weeks were needed to secure a CO. Questioned change in timeline and readiness.
- Dr. Ford clarified: Mecklenburg County permitting process required additional procedural steps after initial application; extended timeline due to new fire alarm requirements.
- Jenna Cook: Affirmed school’s virtual operation exceeds five allowable days; statute leaves no flexibility absent approved remote or virtual charter status. Confirmed school has not provided required documentation for closing compliance items.
- Dr. John Eldridge: Expressed concern regarding operational legality: “I don’t know what we’re renewing … there’s no building.”

Board Member Inquiry:

- Asked whether the school formally applied for remote/virtual approval.
- Dr. Ford indicated a remote academy application was submitted over the prior weekend.
- OCS clarified: submission fell outside established statewide application window, which all schools must follow annually (no off-cycle review permitted).
- Contextual Commentary: A supporting board participant explained that relocation challenges are not unprecedented in charters; requested time rather than closure, asserting issues stem mainly from permitting.
- Some members acknowledged the hardship but emphasized inability to permit illegal operation.

Motion: Bruce Friend moved to enter closed session pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) for attorney-client consultation.

Second: Dr. John Eldridge

Vote: Unanimous

- Passed Failed

CLOSED SESSION: 12:15 pm

Motion: Bruce Friend moved to return to open session.

Second: Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

- Passed Failed

Return to open session at 12:46

NC DPI School Business Services Report re: Monroe Charter Academy

- Presenter: Amanda Friedrich, Business Systems Manager, School Business Division (DPI).

Data Provided:

- Total State Allotment: \$1,089,000.
- Year-to-date drawn: \$949,661 (~87% of total).
- Federal allotment: ~\$157,000 remaining, roughly half restricted to IDEA and Title program.
- Combined state/federal drawdown: ~85–90% of available funds.

Concerns:

- Given school year only halfway complete, financial sustainability is doubtful.
- State funds frozen pending CO approval or valid authorization to operate as a virtual charter school (full-time online), not merely a “remote extension.”
- Confirmed carryforward local funds or donations could be sustaining operations temporarily—but those are not state dollars.

Board Discussion Following Report:

- Members observed that over 80% drawdown midyear signals fiscal distress.
- Noted that major unspent funds are federally restricted, extreme limits on usage for general expenses.
- Consensus: school likely cannot operate financially through end-of-year.

Remote Academy:

Motion: Bruce Friend moved to not accept/consider remote academy application.

Second: Todd Godbey

Rationale:

1. Application submitted outside required statutory timeline.
2. School lacks qualifying brick-and-mortar facility—remote academies function only as extensions of an approved physical campus.

Vote: Unanimous

- Passed Failed

Motion: Dr. John Eldridge moved pursuant to N.C. General Statute 115C-218.95 to terminate the charter of Monroe Charter Academy, effective immediately, for the following reasons:

- 1) A failure to meet the requirements for student performance contained in the charter, namely the 2024-25 school year having a GLP of 12.4%, which is 58.3% below the LEA's GLP;
- 2) Failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management because of decreasing ADM and expenditures exceeding revenue by over \$180,000;
- 3) Violations of law, including operating remotely for a longer period than allowed by state law, resulting in a freeze of at least two funding sources; and
- 4) Violations of the charter by failing to have an educational certificate of occupancy as required by the charter.

Second: Hilda Parlér

Discussion:

Monroe Board Member:

- Acknowledged challenges, thanked board for fairness, requested limited "grace period" (two weeks) to resolve CO and resume legal operations.
- Argued closure immediately before holidays would deeply affect students and families, asked for chance to meet explicit deadline.
- Principal agreed, expressed regret but no further operational alternative identified.

Board Discussion:

- Todd Godbey: Expressed sympathy but stressed board cannot allow operations in ongoing legal violation.
- Bruce Friend: Recalled November assurance that CO would be obtained "in two weeks"; stated lack of progress leaves no further option.
- Dr. Rita Haire: Reiterated compassion for families but emphasized fiduciary duty to protect state resources and legal responsibility under charter statute.
- Consensus: Acknowledged leadership effort but determined extended leniency would constitute complicity in illegal instruction and misuse of public funds.

Vote: Unanimous

- Passed Failed

Charter Termination Effective Immediately.

Post-Vote Actions:

- Chair instructed OCS to send formal termination letter outlining: Board motion and effective date, statutory appeal rights, closure procedures and immediate next steps.

School directed to:

- Secure and preserve student records and state property.
- Cease instruction until further notice.

- Coordinate directly with OCS staff for transition logistics.

Introduction to 2026 Charter Application Interviews: Melanie Rackley, OCS Consultant

- Ms. Rackley reviewed the application process, legislation, and timeframe for applicant interviews.

Somerset Preparatory Academy NC: EMO – Somerset NC - Standard

Introduction

- Ms. Melanie Rackley introduced the Board of Directors to the School; as well as their mission, number of students, and other details pertaining to their application. She also introduced the choices the CSRB had regarding this application.

Applicant's opening statement:

- Highlighted Somerset's record of eight National Blue Ribbon Schools, multi-state success, and professional mentorship network.
- Over 300 family interest surveys submitted from Union County residents.
- Primary focus: early literacy and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, math) instruction in a nurturing environment.
- Cited ability to leverage multiple Somerset leadership teams for shared professional development and academic data systems.

Questions and Board Discussion:

- Improvements since previous application.
- Added local representation (two Union County members).
- Clarified exclusive management agreement with Somerset Academy, Inc. – not Academica directly.
- Adjusted term of agreement to five years renewable, rather than the previous 10-year concern.
- Fee reduced/frozen to \$50 per pupil.

Management Agreement:

- Updated to grant the Somerset North Carolina board full autonomy regarding facility selection, principal hiring, and legal counsel.
- Confirmed independent board counsel via McGuire Woods law firm.

Curriculum:

- Replicating “Pembroke Pines” model; early learning foundation using McGraw-Hill Wonders, i-Ready, and Project Lead the Way (STEAM) for upper grades.
- Specific curriculum not finalized until principal onboarding so that local leader can “own” academic decisions.

Budget and Operations:

- Initial enrollment goal: 360 students year one; growth to 600 by year four.
- Budget conservatively designed but supported by \$2 million federal CMO grant distributed over four years.
- “Other Funds” line represents after-school revenue, school events, and donations—historically achieved across Somerset schools nationwide.

- Building Hope Foundation will assist with facilities and financing.
- Facility selection to begin immediately upon approval.

Replication Fidelity:

- Network plan mirrors governance, support model, teacher training, and data-driven inclusion strategies.
- Local board ensures community engagement; national network provides continuous quality assurance.

Local Adaptability:

- Union County parent representative emphasized region-specific demand and rapid population growth.
- Board asserts model will translate fully while customizing culturally responsive aspects for local community engagement.

Oversight and Legal Counsel:

- Clarified existing Somerset oversight structure:
- Somerset Academy, Inc. handles compliance, finances, and HR systems (ADP Totalsource).
- Local board retains sole authority over facility selection and principal hiring.
- Both board and CMO have separate legal representation.

Questions on Transportation:

- Board plans for contracted bus service and parent carpool coordination.
- Contract funds for transportation included in budget; initial limited size.

Comments from Board Members:

- Members praised clarity, transparency, and low management fee.
- Applauded the collaborative and well-written contract.
- Encouraged local board members to be active “boots on the ground.”
- Chair observed this proposal shows “a model EMO/CMO relationship” citing balance of autonomy and accountability.

Motion: Bruce Friend moved to approve Somerset Preparatory Academy's charter application and move to the Ready to Open process.

Second: Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

- Passed Failed

Celeste Beauty Academy Incorporated - Standard

Introduction

- Ms. Melanie Rackley introduced the Board of Directors to the School; as well as their mission, number of students, and other details pertaining to their application. She also introduced the choices the CSRB had regarding this application.

Applicant's statement:

School Mission & Niche Program:

- CBA designed to merge academics and cosmetology certification training, providing postsecondary career-ready options.
- Students will graduate with diplomas and licensure-eligible hours in cosmetology.
- Curriculum integrates cosmetology principles into core sciences (chemistry, biology); industry standards align with NCCOS requirements.
- Partnerships under development with Paul Mitchell School and other local salons for apprentice placements.
- Early community outreach through “Project Connection” presentations in middle schools, Boys & Girls Clubs, and community youth events.

Board Composition & Governance:

- Added new member: Tana Wiggins (former principal, education expert).
- Confirmed anti-nepotism, conflict of interest, and separation of governance/management policies.
- The Executive Director is not a voting board member; principal will be separately hired and licensed.

Academic Model & Daily Structure:

- Academic core courses (math, ELA, science, social studies) with cosmetology hours embedded across subjects.
- Freshman/Sophomore years – theory and classroom integration.
- Junior/Senior years – on-site/lab-based hands-on training.
- Plans to create future on-site community salon for partnership-based experiential learning.
- Curriculum based on State Board of Cosmetic Arts CTE framework.

Student Experience:

- Class ratio aimed at 10–15:1.
- Small cohort instruction: targeted mentorship and self-esteem development emphasized.
- Students must complete both high school credits and cosmetology hours; graduation requirement includes a capstone business plan project.

Community & Marketing:

- Target enrollment: 100 students Year 1; 200 by Year 5.
- Over 140 interest forms collected from direct family outreach and youth programs.
- Marketing: “Vision Board Parties,” school events, speaking engagements in middle schools, and digital campaigns.
- Future plans to involve alumni, local professionals, and business donors.

Budget Review and Concerns:

- Board members probed detailed line items:
- Concerns Identified:
 - Break-even budget with no cushion; single-student absence could trigger deficit.
 - Missing counselor position and proper benefits allocations.
 - EC teacher listed under “elective/specialty staff”—clarified misplacement.

- Classroom technology (\$20K) underfunded; estimated actual costs 3–5× higher.
- Contracted services minimal; contingency funds low.

Applicant Response:

- Staffing will expand as enrollment grows; consulting EC services budgeted if needed.
- Daybreak Consulting (Charlotte-based charter start-up consultants) now assisting with compliance, staffing, and budget adjustments.
- Pursuing Charter Growth Fund grant for additional startup capital.

Board & Founder Responses:

- Founder emphasized personal passion: licensed cosmetologist, FAMU graduate; pursuing continued education at UNCC.
- Board reinforced mission to empower underrepresented youth via career pathways and entrepreneurship readiness.
- Will ensure adjustments in day structure, hours compliance, and fiscal plan during RTO phase.

Board Discussion

- Dr. Rita Hair raised statutory compliance and academic-hour concerns, emphasizing need for accurate scheduling and state graduation requirements.
- Dr. John Eldridge: Praised founder's work ethic and mission alignment. Warned about fragility of break-even charter budgets and staffing gaps (notably counseling staff).
- Lindalyn Kakadelis: Commended innovation in model (aligned with charter law's call for experimentation). Warned that meeting required hours, credits, and enrollment minimum (65 students) is non-negotiable to avoid closure risk.
- Bruce Friend (Chair): Highlighted that the interview shifted perception positively from the written application. Stated the model is innovative and founder shows tenacity.
- Todd Godby: Reinforced urgency of strong enrollment plan and marketing implementation "to avoid financial non-compliance pitfalls."

Motion: Dr. John Eldridge moved to approve Celeste Beauty Academy's charter application to the Ready to Open process.

Second: Eric Guckian

Vote: Nay – Dr. Rita Haire

- Passed Failed

Director's Update & Adjourn: 4:05 pm

Ashley Logue, OCS Director, Reminded members that the January meeting would be scheduled January 12-13, 2026. A draft agenda will be released shortly. Noted ongoing opportunity to submit feedback regarding the RTO process revisions.

Bruce Friend): Requested all board members to submit RTO improvement feedback to Ashley and her team before the January meeting. Thanked staff and participants for a productive two-day session. Extended holiday greetings and recognized Board Member Hilda Parlér for her birthday.