



November 1, 2019

District 5 (South Central Raleigh)
Jim Martin, Chair
JMartin4@wcpss.net

District 4 (East Raleigh)
Keith Sutton, Vice Chair
KSutton@wcpss.net

District 1 (Northeast Wake)
Heather L. Scott
HScott@wcpss.net

District 2 (Southeast Wake)
Monika Johnson-Hostler
MJohnsonhostler@wcpss.net

District 3 (North Raleigh)
Roxie Cash
RCash@wcpss.net

District 6 (Central Raleigh)
Christine Kushner
CKushner@wcpss.net

District 7 (West Raleigh/Morrisville)
Chris Heagarty
CHeagarty@wcpss.net

District 8 (Southern Wake)
Lindsay Mahaffey
LMahaffey@wcpss.net

District 9 (Western Wake)
Bill Fletcher
BFletcher@wcpss.net

NC Department of Public Instruction
Office of Charter Schools
Mr. Dave Machado, Director
6301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, N.C. 27699-6301

Dear Mr. Machado and Advisory Board Members:

Wake County Public School System appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on charter school applications affecting our school system. This statement is in reference to Carolina Royal Academy, which plans to locate in Chatham County, but draw students from both Wake County and Chatham County.

Wake County Public School System opposes the approval of this charter school.

We submit the following points for your consideration.

1. While the application is incomplete and vague in many areas, it clearly fails to identify community interest or demand that is not already being met by multiple schools in western Wake County.

The comparison to western Wake is appropriate largely because the residential base does not yet exist in eastern Chatham County to support the suggested marketing plan (page 65) or the initial enrollment targets. (Enrollment targets differ to some degree on pages 7 and 77 of the school's application.)

While the applicants state their desire to locate in Chatham due to the number of existing charter schools in nearby Cary (page 23), they list no Chatham County residents as potential board members while listing four from Wake County (page 47).

2. A comparison of academic choice relative to Carolina Royal Academy suggests no substantive difference with WCPSS. At the highest level, the school's mission statement (page 21) echoes the mission statement of the Wake County Public School System. At the classroom level, the repeated references to Singapore Math echo the same instructional beliefs and methods found in the WCPSS math curriculum.

The importance of digital skills, expressed as an emphasis on computer science in the charter application, is also found in the district offerings of WCPSS. The district offerings range from broad-based digital skills in all schools, to magnet school themes, to specific programs such as Apex High School's Academy of Information Technology -- one of the highest-rated National Academy Foundation schools in the country.

3. With no substantive transportation plan (page 71), the goal of creating a student body that is 35 percent economically disadvantaged and 8 percent English Language Learners (page 8) is unrealistic. Due to housing patterns, those demographics are difficult for WCPSS to achieve in the targeted area despite a wide range of academic programs and the authority to assign families. Without a robust transportation system, the application as written will produce a school that further segregates.

4. The suggestion that the charter school would easily fill because it would need to draw only 0.2% of the district's K-6 membership is misleading. Should the applicant find land anywhere near the proposed target area of eastern Chatham County, it would be too far away for the vast majority of students living in Wake.

The actual area affected by a charter school in the proposed area would more likely be the same areas that have been targeted -- and will continue to be targeted -- with a sustained building program routinely and broadly supported by Wake County voters. These schools are not only among the newest in the county, they are also among the highest-performing in the Triangle. Parent demand and support for their schools in these areas are obvious.

Wake County Public School System respectfully requests that this application not be recommended by the Charter Schools Advisory Board or approved by the State Board of Education. While an application with detail would provide a genuine opportunity to analyze the school's impact, the current application provides enough information to appreciate Carolina Royal Academy as proposed fails to meet any of the six legislative purposes for charter approval.

Respectfully,



James D. Martin
Board Chair



Cathy Q. Moore
Superintendent