

**Minutes of the
North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board
Education Building
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601-2825
May 8, 2017**

Attendance/NCCSAB	Alan Hawkes Joseph Maimone Phyllis Gibbs Sherry Reeves Cheryl Turner Hilda Parlér	Alex Quigley Eric Sanchez Tammi Sutton – <i>Absent</i> Tony Helton Steven Walker Kevin Wilkinson – <i>Absent</i>
Attendance/SBE/DPI	<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Dave Machado, Director Deanna Townsend-Smith, Assistant Director Cande Wood, Consultant Kebbler Williams, Consultant Craig Tucker, Consultant	<i>SBE</i> Martez Hill – <i>Absent</i> <i>Attorney General</i> Laura Crumpler <i>SBE Attorney</i> Katie Cornetto

CALL TO ORDER

The North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) meeting was called to order at 8:31 am by Chairman Alex Quigley who read the Ethics Statement and CSAB Mission Statement. Mr. Steven Walker led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The question was asked if there were any conflict of interest with respect to any matters coming before the board. **Mr. Joseph Maimone and Mr. Tony Helton recused themselves from any discussion or voting regarding Aristotle Preparatory Academy.**

Ms. Sherry Reeves made a motion to approve the April 10-11, 2017 minutes, as amended. Ms. Hilda Parlér seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION UPDATES & POLICY DISCUSSION

- The CSAB received updates on past and pending SBE items along with updates on SBE policies. Mr. Dave Machado, Director, Office of Charter Schools (OCS) led the discussion.

- Mr. Machado began the discussion by introducing Dr. Maria Pitre-Martin, former Chief Academic and Digital Learning Office, to the CSAB. Dr. Pitre-Martin was appointed by the SBE as the new Deputy Superintendent for the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).
- Dr. Lou Fabrizio, Director, Data, Research and Federal Policy, DPI and Dr. Tammy Howard, Director, Accountability Services, DPI provided the CSAB with updates from the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). President Donald Trump signed an executive order to review all United States Education Department (USED) regulations and guidance to make sure that none goes above and beyond what is required by federal law. Review of that information will result in a report that will be presented to the president within 300 days. On May 1, the first draft version of the ESSA plan was posted using the new template that the USED asked all states to use. A link to the draft plan can be located on the DPI website. On the draft plan there are placeholders, many in the area of accountability, but feedback can be submitted online.
- Because many states are not submitting plans until September 2017, and federal money still needs to keep coming to North Carolina, the USED is asking that each state signs assurances. Assurances are statements that the State Superintendent will need to agree to and sign for the states to continue receiving funds. Assurances will need to be signed and submitted by June 2, 2017.
- There are three House Bills (HB) that directly affect school performance grades or ESSA plans. HB 87 is a bill that, if it becomes law, will require the state to not submit its ESSA plan to the USED until the week prior to the deadline. HB 322 is a bill that would change the percentages for student performance versus growth from 80 percent performance and 20 percent growth to fifty percent performance and fifty percent growth. HB 458 requires that there is a separate grade for the student performance and a separate grade for growth. HB 458 also indicates that the school performance grades information that will be used to meet the requirements of the federal ESSA. Dr. Howard explained that with respect to HB 458, it would use the achievement score for ESSA, and that score has been redefined in the proposed legislations to meet the needs of ESSA.
- Dr. Howard explained that the draft ESSA plan has several Title I pieces that have not been completed because we are waiting to receive feedback from stakeholders and continued discussions currently taking place. The SBE did approve eliminated double testing for students in the eighth grade. Now that the elimination was approved, the blank demarcation of holding for more information will now be completed in the plan because of the most recent approval.
- An assessment area, which is a part of the assessment section, of the ESSA law gives states an option, not required, to use a nationally recognized assessment in lieu of the state adopted high school assessment. Nationally recognized assessment such as SAT, ACT or Smarter Balance would replace NC Math 1, English II and Biology for those high school students. If the states

allow this option, a district and/or charter school, would come forward and express their interest in using these assessments.

- **No action was taken by the CSAB following this presentation.**
- Mr. Nathan Craver, Digital Learning and Media Inventory Consultant, provided the CSAB with updates from data and assessment collected from technology programs. The digital learning and media inventory (DLMI) replaced the NC annual media and technology report. The DLMI is a survey that collects data from all the charter schools and districts in NC. It is aligned to the NC digital learning progress rubric. The purpose of the progress rubric is to allow a district to take part in its improvement process, and to evaluate where they stand in digital learning initiatives in their schools.
- The data collected through the inventory helps schools plan for local decisions. The new reporting tool allows districts and charter schools to look at their data and see how they compare to other districts and charter schools in the state. The main goal of the DLMI is to increase charter school participation. A section that specifically relates to charter schools has been added to the DLMI to help increase the participation this year.
- **No action was taken by the CSAB following this presentation.**
- Mr. Craig Tucker, Education Consultant, OCS, provided the CSAB with an update to the Charter School Program (CSP) grant. Since the last CSAB meeting, the deadline for the grant was extended until May 18. Feedback was received from various stakeholders that was incorporated in the grant.
- Mr. Sanchez questioned about the schools who are currently in the process of applying to the federal government for funding before the state applied for the grant, and their eligibility status if the state is approved for funding. Mr. Quigley explained that the schools should be able to apply for funding through the federal government directly and through the state, if awarded the grant. Mr. Tucker explained there are two grant opportunities, one for just State Education Agencies and one for Charter Management Organizations (CMO). Mr. Tucker further explained that if OCS is awarded the grant, they will administer the funds and schools will apply to OCS as part of a sub-grantee progress.
- Mr. Machado concluded the discussion by providing the CSAB of State Board of Education (SBE) May meeting updates.
- Dr. Townsend-Smith provided the CSAB with information on Aristotle Preparatory Academy's amendment request to employ a Charter Management Organization (CMO). The OCS provided the CSAB an overview of the CMO agreement for Aristotle Preparatory Academy. If approved, this agreement would shift the responsibility of the board handling the day-to-day operation to the CMO. When reviewing fees, Aristotle is interested in entering the CMO agreement with AAC. The fee to be paid to AAC shall equal to a sum of five percent. If the school performance

increases by a letter grade, then the fee would increase to ten percent. Additionally, Aristotle has agreed to a three-year contract with the CMO.

- **Mr. Walker made a motion to recommend that Aristotle Preparatory Academy's amendment request be moved to the SBE for approval. Ms. Parlér seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Maimone and Mr. Helton recused.**

SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS

- Mr. Jonathan Bryant, Executive Director, Lincoln Charter School and Melissa Lasarski, Lincoln Charter, provided the CSAB with a presentation about their Dream Big Program. The Dream Big Program allows students to broaden their outlook when searching for colleges around the country. It is an extra-curricular initiative that exposes Lincoln Charter students to highly selective colleges or universities. The experience allows students to visualize themselves in higher education environments. Students are encouraged to look at the school being highlighted that year not necessarily as a specific option, but as a reminder that they can “dream big” when it comes to their education after high school. There are only a limited number of slots available each year into the program, so there is an application process that students must complete.
- Ms. Xatli, ESL/Title III Consultant, NCDPI and Dr. JoAnne Woodard, Executive Director, Sallie B. Howard, provided the CSAB with a presentation about serving English Language Learner's (ELL). The ELL population has increased in NC. Out of 168 charters, at least 130 charters has one ELL in their system. There are three charter schools with more than one ELL, and Sallie B. Howard is one of three schools that has excelled with working with English learners.
- Dr. Woodard stated Sallie B. Howard is a school of the arts. From the inception of the school, many tracks in the performance were offered and they have only improved their program each year. Sallie B. Howard currently has 860 students enrolled and will be expanding to high school in 2019. The teachers infuse the arts with the academics to provide a deeper learning experiences for each child
- Ms. Jessica Lacrome, Theater Teacher, provided an example of how the teachers get the students involved with the integration of the arts and academics.
- **No action was taken by the CSAB following this presentation.**

COMPLIANCE UPDATE

- Ms. Cande Wood, Education Consultant, OCS, provided the CSAB with compliance updates for Kestrel Heights School (KHS) and Heritage Collegiate Charter School.
- At the April 6 SBE meeting, the state board decided to uphold the original recommendation of the three-year charter renewal for KHS, with additional stipulations. KHS was required to appear before the CSAB at the May meeting with a plan to retain an independent professional auditor at

the school's expense, and provide a timeline for a thorough audit. Dr. Mark Tracy, Executive Director, KHS presented the required information to the CSAB.

- Dr. Tracy explained that a contractual agreement has been executed with Leaders Building Leaders to complete the professional audit by the October 2017 timeline. Dr. Tracy provided updates about the transition of the high school closure and outlined that the process was going as smoothly as possible considering the circumstances. KHS is trying to work with other charter schools and Durham Public Schools to help transition their high school students to other local high schools.
- Ms. Wood explained that Heritage Collegiate was a charter school that opened in 2014 and is currently in its third year of operation. The compliance team had identified several concerns with Heritage Collegiate. Heritage Collegiate is a continually low-performing school, with significant concerns in the academic section of its 2016 Performance Framework. Although their financial audit was received, it was turned in significantly late. The school also continues to have persistent licensure non-compliance since the beginning of its operation, with only 29% of their teachers being licensed. Overall, the delay in response from the school including all three areas of charter school operation is a concern that has prompted the school to appear before the CSAB.
- Dr. Kashi Hall, Executive Director, Heritage Collegiate, provided explanations to the recent compliance issues with Heritage Collegiate. Dr. Hall explained that the school is currently in partnership with the Visiting International Faculty (VIF) program to help meet the charter licensure requirement. There had been difficulties with recruiting and retaining quality teachers to Bertie County due to the lack of incentives the county is able to offer. Dr. Hall explained that they were without an Exceptional Children (EC) teacher for several months. Dr. Hall believes that the correct number of teachers who are licensed at her school was close to the 50% requirement.
- Dr. Hall explained that the current student enrollment was 308 students, with the highest number being 325 at the beginning of the school year. The school was funded at 282 students, with a projected Average Daily Members (ADM) of 360. Mr. Quigley expressed concern with having only one EC teacher to the number of students enrolled at the school.
- Mr. Walker explained that there was no excuse for the audit and Performance Framework being late. The CSAB has the responsibility of making necessary recommendation to the SBE based on the audit and it is difficult when there is not an audit present. Mr. Walker explained that the attention to details was part of the foundation of the compliance issues with Heritage Collegiate. When asked why the audit was submitted late, Dr. Hall explained that there was no excuse and it would not happen again.

- Mr. Walker asked how many schools that had not turned their audit in by March 2017. Ms. Alexis Schauss, Director, School Business Administration explained that if schools have not provided their audit by January, they are placed on the non-compliance list. There were only ten schools placed on the non-compliance list. Nine of the ten schools submitted their audit in January, Heritage Collegiate was the only school that did not submit their audit in January. After a school is placed on the non-compliance list, they have a thirty-day window to comply. If the school does not comply within thirty days, they are elevated to a probationary status. The financial audit was just recently received from Heritage Collegiate, showing no findings in the audits or exceptions. Ms. Schauss explained that although the school is low on cash funds, they are not financially insolvent.
- The CSAB questioned OCS about its site visit to Heritage Collegiate. Dr. Kebbler Williams, Education Consultant, OCS explained that the school is a mobile unit campus, with access to an adjacent convention center. The three classrooms for fifth grade are separated by a partition between each class. Unless everyone in the fifth grade is quiet or all talking at the same time, it can create an ineffective learning environment. Dr. Williams explained that the level of rigor in the classroom is very limited as well as differentiation in instructional activities. However, the school creates a safe environment for the children and basic needs are met for each child.
- After further discussion, the CSAB requested that Heritage Collegiate come back before them at their June meeting. The CSAB also stressed the importance of having the board members present at the next meeting.
- **No further action was taken by the CSAB after this discussion.**
- UpRoar Leadership Academy, scheduled to open in 2017, were asked to come before the CSAB to explain their most recent request amendment request for approval. Genesia Newsome, Founder, UpRoar Leadership Academy and Latoya Purvis, Head of School, UpRoar Leadership Academy came on behalf of the school.
- UpRoar was seeking an amendment request to charge students for lunch, with free breakfast being provided. Ms. Newsome explained that the essential goal was to provide free breakfast and lunch, but they currently could afford free lunch during the first year. Mr. Helton asked if they were enrolled in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program. Ms. Newsome said that because they do not know the demographics of their population, they were going to wait until year two to determine if they will enroll in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program.
- Mr. Walker expressed his concern with the amendment to change to the meal plan. The fact that UpRoar was offering free breakfast and lunch was what made the school stand out against other schools during the application process. Mr. Walker was concerned that recommending this

amendment for approval would set the precedent that a charter applicant could say what they would like to get a charter granted, and then make significant changes once approved.

- Ms. Newsome explained they have partnered with several local organizations to increase funding for the lunch program and there were plans in place to provide free lunch and breakfast after year one of operation.
- Mr. Quigley explained that the budget could be adjusted to possibly accommodate free breakfast and lunch. He expressed the importance of exploring the Free and Reduced Lunch Program to see if they would meet the requirements to offer free breakfast and lunch to the students.
- After further CSAB discussion, UpRoar decided not to move forward in requesting a change to their amendment in regard to its meal plan.
- **Mr. Steven Walker made a motion not to approve the amendment request for UpRoar Leadership Academy. Ms. Parlér seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**
- Ms. Schauss and Ms. Wood provided the CSAB with proposed changes to CHTR-006, the finance and governance non-compliance policy.
- Ms. Schauss explained that all proposed changes to the policy was helping to align with current practices. The procedure for placing a school on the non-compliance list does not fall on the Superintendent or Chief Financial Officer, so that language should be stricken. Additionally, some of the language shortens reporting deadlines for the schools to deliver data to the department. The policy changes clarify that it is not a sequential non-compliance determination, some schools are placed on immediate non-compliance, depending on the severity of the financial situation.
- **No action was taken by the CSAB following this discussion. The CSAB will discuss final changes to the policy at its June meeting.**

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

- Ms. Cecilia Holder, Legislative Liaison, SBE, provided the CSAB with Legislative updates from the current 2017-18 session. Ms. Holder explained that there were a total of 118 House Bills (HB) and 56 Senate bills that in some way impact K-12 education. There are only seven bills that directly impact charter schools:
 - HB 159: an act that extends the amount of time that a charter school has to elect to become a participant in the Teacher and State Employment Retirement System (TSERS).

- HB 285: an act that requires two hours of suicide prevention awareness training for school personnel.
- HB 514: would specifically allow a municipality to operate as a charter school.
- HB 779: will allow enrollment growth greater than 30% to be considered a material revision of the charter but is not identified as low-performing. There are potential fiscal implications when moving from 20% to 30%.
- HB 800: an act that will change charter school laws and allow a business entity to partner with a charter school and reserve 50% of those slots for children of employees of that business.
- HB 806: will require student and family fair notice and an impact statement prior to closing or restructuring of a charter school.
- HB 826 modifies low performing school definition.
- **No action was taken by the CSAB following this discussion.**
- **Mr. Walker made a motion for the CSAB to go in to closed session. Mr. Helton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**
- **Mr. Walker made a motion to come out of closed session. Mr. Maimone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**
- **Ms. Sherry Reeves made a motion to have the board of Heritage Collegiate to appear before CSAB at its June meeting. Mr. Maimone seconded the motion. Mr. Maimone requested that the board bring June 30 budget projections, final enrollment numbers for the year, projected enrollment numbers and a new budget for the 2018-19 school year. The motion passed unanimously.**

CSAB STRATEGIC PLANNING/ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CSAB MEMBER SERVICE

- Dr. Townsend-Smith began the conversation by recognizing that the current CSAB has been together as a group for four years. Senate Bill 337, passed in 2013, created the current CSAB, with eleven voting members. Since its inception, membership has changed twice, once with HB 334 and under HB 17. When the CSAB begins its July 1 meeting, it will be under what was established in HB 17, with eleven voting members: four from the House, four from the Senate, two from the SBE, and the Lt. Governor's Designee.

- The OCS presented plaques to publicly acknowledge those on the CSAB with terms expiring June 30, 2017.
- Dr. Townsend-Smith explained that strategic planning was essential each year to make sure that the CSAB and SBE mission and goals are met. The OCS has developed specific work streams to help make sure the CSAB has the appropriate information to do its work each month.
- Although conference call meetings were originally scheduled at the last planning year session for the 2016-17 school year, they will not be included for the 2017-18 school year. There was a consensus that the work more effective/efficient when everyone is together able to discuss in person rather than on the telephone.
- In the report compiled by the OCS, Dr. Townsend-Smith highlighted key dates and topics from the CSAB meetings during previous years to assist with planning the 2017-18 CSAB meetings. The report was created to serve as a quick reference guide for the CSAB to refer to whenever pertinent questions arise about topics and dates from previous CSAB meetings. The report was also compiled to help lead a discussion around what lessons have been learned from the application and renewal process, how to improve, and what the CSAB can do to continually improve from a policy prospective.
- Moving forward, the OCS will create a report for the next renewal cycle. The OCS feels that the CSAB should not issue initial recommendations, but only outline if they will interview a group before making those recommendations to the SBE. This will eliminate any confusion regarding the CSAB's preliminary recommendation versus the final recommendation being sent to the SBE for final approval.
- Mr. Walker recommended that in the August meeting, there should be voting for both the Chair and Vice Chair for the CSAB. Mr. Maimone proposed the idea of the possibility having the CSAB meeting at a different location other than the SBE room each month. Ms. Parlér also proposed the idea of after stating The Pledge of Allegiance to the US Flag, then afterwards, the CSAB should salute the NC Flag.
- Mr. Sanchez expressed that it is has been a pleasure to see the progress of the CSAB and how the numbers are starting to show that progress based on the CSAB's work. Increased efforts with applications by applicants are being made based on deliberations and comments of the CSAB. The more consistent the CSAB is with looking for quality in sections of the applications, the more people will see the importance of submitting quality applications in the future. Every charter that is opened may not be the best choice for every student in the community in which the school is opened. It is important to have resources available for schools to diversify and the CSAB needs to hold themselves accountable to make sure those choices are available.

- Ms. Parlér stressed the importance that the CSAB is charged with reviewing each application on its own merit. Mr. Hawkes expressed that the CSAB could be more favorable for promising applicants and less critical and think about the children who will be denied the opportunity to attend that school because their application is denied.
- Mr. Alex Quigley concluded the discussion by expressing gratitude to the OCS and CSAB for all their hard work throughout the year.
- No further action was taken by the CSAB.
- **Mr. Walker made a motion to adjourn the May 8 meeting. Mr. Helton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.**