

**Meeting Minutes
of the
NC Public Charter School Advisory Council Meeting
State Board Rm. 755
February 11, 2013**

Attendance/NCPSCAC	Aaron Means Kwan Graham John Betterton Richard Hooker (absent) Alfred Dillon Rebecca Shore Tim Markley	Jennie Adams Paul Norcross Baker Mitchell (absent) Alan Hawkes Robert Landry Joseph Maimone Cheryl Turner Kate Alice Dunaway
Attendance/SBE/DPI	<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Thomas Miller, Consultant Lisa Swinson, Consultant Cande Honeycutt, Consultant Joel Medley, Director <i>State Board of Education. Legal Council</i> Katie Cornetto	<i>Attorney General's Office</i> Laura Crumpler <i>State Board of Education, Executive Director</i> Martez Hill

CALL TO ORDER AND MEETING AGENDA REVIEW

After extending a welcome to all participants, Chairman John Betterton called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. He reviewed the meeting agenda and explained that the Council would adjourn to meet in discussion groups based upon the following topics: 1) Collaboration and Flexibility, 2) Funding and 3) Sibling and Licensure. The Council then adjourned to meet in discussion groups.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Council returned from its discussions groups shortly after 1015am and Mr. Betterton resumed the Council's business by considering approval of past meeting minutes. Ms. Jennie Adams made a motion to approve the December 10, 2013 minutes, and it was seconded by Mr. Aaron Means. The vote passed unanimously with Ms. Dunaway abstaining. Mr. John Betterton noted a typographical error on page one of the December 19, 2013 minutes. Ms. Jennie Adams made a motion to approve the minutes with that correction, and Mr. Joseph Maimone seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Ms. Kate Alice Dunaway stated that a key point of discussion was missing from page 4 of the January 14, 2013 minutes. Mr. Maimone made a motion to pass the January 14, 2013 minutes with the key points added. Ms. Cheryl Turner seconded it. The vote passed unanimously.

CHARTER APPLICATION PROCESS ISSUES

Mr. Betterton explained that he presented the Council's recommendation to the SBE during their February meeting. He reported that the SBE was not comfortable with mandating use of the automated application in the middle of the application process. He shared that they also spoke of legal implications. The SBE did require that all applicants utilize the automated application in the upcoming rounds. The SBE also admonished the Council to review the content of the applications rather than the format of submission.

Discussion/Comments:

- Mr. Hawkes asked the chair if the SBE had sympathy regarding the amount of pro bono work that may be occurring with the review of the applications.
- Dr. Joel Medley explained that regardless of whether the applicants submit their application through the automated system or through the regular method, the Council will receive an electronic copy (PDF) to review.
- Dr. Thomas Miller displayed the rubric and briefly explained that the Council members would be able to insert comments and scores on the rubric. At the conclusion of the review, all Council member comments will be included and labeled.
- Mr. Betterton presented a document with his recommendations for how the Council could review the projected 156 charter applications.
- Dr. Medley explained that external screeners would be trained to review the applications and provide comments to OCS. OCS will then review those comments before presenting them to the Council. He added that OCS may not be able to physically attend all the meetings if they will be held regionally. However, OCS could join the reviews via webinar. He further stated that OCS would not have comments available by March 11th, the next scheduled meeting date.
- Mr. Maimone suggested that the Council make the determination as to what applications are complete. Dr. Medley stated that the screening checklist that is currently online can be changed based on the Council's recommendation. He further explained that comments submitted to the Council will be specific and will include page numbers for easy identification.
- Mr. Hawkes suggested that the Council talk to Dr. June Atkinson about getting in-house screeners. He further added that the absent Council members, Mr. Baker Mitchell and Mr. Paul Norcross, educated him that Dr. Atkinson informed them that there are in-house experts who can screen the applications. He stated that the purpose would be to move the charter application further along so that Council could review applications that were complete. Dr. Medley replied that all of the screeners had been approved by Mr. Philip Price.
- Ms. Crumpler suggested that there be an additional column regarding the sections that need additional scrutiny. Dr. Medley replied that a fourth column could be added.
- Mr. Maimone suggested that each review subgroup be able to invite non-Council members to assist with the review. Ms. Crumpler replied that it is not illegal but it could complicate matters. Ms. Turner replied that she sees it as a problem. Dr. Markley stated that having written comments could be permissible and he reminded the Council that applicants are not allowed to talk during the review.
- Dr. Medley informed the Council that he hopes to have applications posted online by March 11.
- Ms. Dunaway suggested that there not be a March meeting but each subcommittee determine how many applications would be read and reviewed in April and May.

Recommendations:

- **Mr. Joseph Maimone made a motion that the Council not meet as planning in March. The application subcommittee reviews will occur during the scheduled April and May meetings. In June, the full Council will meet to determine which applications will be invited. The Council will make adjustments to the aforementioned dates, if needed.** Ms. Jennie Adams seconded. The vote carried 9-1 with Mr. Hawkes abstaining and Dr. Markley dissenting.

Mr. Betterton adjourned the Council for lunch at 12:00 pm.

The Council reconvened at 1:00 pm.

ADVISORY COUNCIL BY-LAWS

Ms. Katie Cornetto distributed TCS-C-026, the SBE policy for the NC Charter Advisory Council. She asked that the Council notify her of any personal or professional contact with people related to the application process. She also stated that she was available for any needed discussions and asked Council members to contact her with any questions. These conflicts should be submitted, by email, to Ms. Lisa Swinson by March 11, 2013. She also noted that the process is evolving and conflicts can be identified after the March 11th date.

Discussion/Comments:

- Dr. Landry stated that he may be in violation of the 75% attendance that is listed in the by-laws. He explained that he foresees additional dates that he will be absent in the upcoming meetings. If a Council member is not able to attend consistently, they cannot be effective. If a person is not in attendance it is hard to make informed decisions.
- Ms. Dunaway stated the Council should further discuss the attendance rule.
- Ms. Crumpler explained that the Council decides what the repercussions are for not attending 75% of the meetings.
- Ms. Dunaway stated that the Council needs to raise the bar and absenteeism should not be overlooked. If a person cannot give an explanation, then the Council should look hard at that question about their dependability for the review.
- Mr. Hawkes commented that he favors that it be a recommendation not a hard or fast rule.
- Mr. Betterton stated that he would be sending out letters to those who were not meeting the 75% attendance in the by-laws.

CHARTER APPLICATION ISSUES CONTINUED

Dr. Medley asked if the Council had specifics for OCS to address during the initial screening to be deemed incomplete. The following items were suggested by Council members:

- Negative fund balance
- No less than 5 on the Board
- Determining any out of state board members
- The number of biographies that are connected to the by-laws
- Consistency with titles throughout the application: school name, personnel

- Exceptional children's program that does not fulfill all the laws
- Application must be signed and notarized by a Board member
- Dr. Medley commented that incomplete applications will not be forwarded to the Council.

DISCUSSION GROUPS REPORT

Collaboration and Flexibility:

Ms. Turner shared that LEAs and charters could share contracted services such as child and nutrition. Flexibility that might be helpful to districts would year-to-year contracts and facilities specifications. There were no specific or collaborative strategies discussed other than the need to build trust between both groups of public schools.

Funding:

Mr. Dillon shared that DPI Staff presented information about how LEAs and charters are funded. Mr. Maimone suggested that any money coming from tax monies should be shared equally and there needs to be legislative change. Ms. Adams noted that the issue is that LEAs and Charters do not agree with how much money should be distributed. In other words, there is too much gray area that needs clarification

Sibling and Licensure:

Mr. Maimone stated that his group discussed all teachers should be college graduates and schools could have 50% licensed. Simplifying lateral entry after 3 successful years of teaching should be a local decision. Ms. Crumpler stated that licensure is a function of the State and that all charter schools are not equal to how they can govern licensure. Mr. Maimone added that a PRAXIS exam needed to be passed. He also discussed ideas of how students in neighboring states could be allowed to attend charter schools.

NEW BUSINESS: CAMERON CREEK

Dr. Medley opened this discussion by sharing that Charlotte Learning Academy, a fast track applicant, contacted OCS alleging that their application had been copied by Cameron Creek. Dr. Medley sent Cameron Creek a letter sharing the claim and asked for a response. Cameron Creek provided a timely response and denied the allegations. At last week's State Board meeting, Dr. Medley shared this new information. Since the Council is the first pass of a quality test, the SBE was interested in the Council's review of the matter. Continuing the analysis, OCS went through the application line-by-line. There was significant throughout the entire application; and in several instances, the name Charlotte Learning Academy was not removed from the Cameron Creek application. This information was displayed for all members of the Council and Cameron Creek to see. Dr. Medley also presented a slide from the training for regular round applicants in January 2012 (which also was on the website) that pointed out that copying was "A Tripping Hazard." Finally, Dr. Medley showed the signed signature page of the submitted Cameron Creek application that said: "All information contained herein is complete and accurate, realizing that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the application process or revocation after award." Two members of the Cameron Creek Board were in attendance: Ms. Sylvia Cole and Mr. Melvin Sharpe. They came forward to offer their explanation.

- Ms. Cole displayed iThenticate and explained that the website shows that the information from their application came from various websites. She stated that information from her document came from DPI and CMS. Dr. Markley asked if anyone from Cameron Creek had performed a detailed analysis between these two applications since the allegations had been made. Ms. Cole stated that she had not read, nor did she do an analysis of their application with Charlotte Learning Academy's application.
- Mr. Sharpe explained that all Board members were given a portion of the application and were asked to work on it. He explained that he worked on the by-law section and drew information from Pennsylvania.
- Dr. Landry asked if the application could have been an indirect paste. Ms. Cole stated that there were 7 Board members who may have used information from other applications but the majority of the information came from CMS and DPI.
- Ms. Turner asked how Charlotte Learning Academy's name appeared in the Cameron Creek document. Ms. Cole replied that she cannot state that one of the Board members did not look at Charlotte Learning Academy because each Board member had a section to work on. She stated that there are 3 members who are no longer on the board.
- Ms. Cole stated that she had not looked at Charlotte Learning's application and could not state whether the information was taken from their application. Mr. Sharpe stated that the majority of the information is generic information and they were instructed to use information that was already on the website as a guide from OCS. Dr. Medley responded that OCS has never told anyone to copy anyone's application but had, in fact, pointed out the problems of copying directly from another application.
- Ms. Adams pointed out that there were similarities in the budget for expenditures such as staff development even though the student enrollment numbers and grades were different.
- Ms. Turner stated that if they pulled the information from the web, it should have been referenced. Ms. Cole stated that she did not know that she needed to list the sources for the information.
- Dr. Shore stated that writing the application is the least of the hard work from opening a school. Their actions show a lack of seriousness for putting in the necessary effort to open and operate a successful charter school.
- Ms. Cole stated that she takes full responsibility for what has happened and has taken the process seriously. A lot of time and finances have been invested.
- Mr. Aaron Means asked what the Council was to do. Dr. Medley said they could recommend the State Board grant them a full charter, shorten the term of the charter, or that the school should not receive one at all. Ms. Crumpler stated that the assumptions of integrity are now being challenged and the Council needs to decide if they want to application to advance.

Recommendation: Ms. Turner made a motion that Cameron Creek not be awarded a final charter but they have the option to resubmit in the future. Dr. Landry seconded. Ms. Crumpler explained that there would not be an opportunity for them to resubmit this application because the SBE will meet after the March 1 deadline. Dr. Miller added that this group had submitted a Letter of Intent to file an application, so they have that possibility. The chair called for the vote and the motion carried unanimously.

UPDATE ON FAST TRACKS

Dr. Miller displayed a chart that informed the Council about Projected ADM, Actual Year 1, Year 2 projections, and summary notes for the Fast Track Schools.

- Dr. Landry asked if Dr. Miller was aware of the number of American Citizens that attend College Prep and Leadership.
- Dr. Medley added that because two large families moved, Water's Edge enrollment was affected.
- Dr. Miller shared the NC Charter Planning Wiki Page. He explained that the last two sessions were offered face-to-face sessions and via webinar.
- Dr. Medley added that the SBE did approve Uwharrie Charter crossing over LEA lines.

DISCUSSION GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS TO SBE

Sibling and Licensure:

- **Mr. Maimone made a motion that included 3 recommendations:**
 - **A simplified lateral entry system is put in place for all schools to hire lateral entry teachers. Teachers who have three years of strong evaluation, pass the PRAXIS and have a successful standardized testing results could be offered a SP1 license.**
 - **Allow siblings of currently enrolled students, employees of the school and board members to have preferential enrollment.**
 - **Schools that are near state lines can allow students from neighboring states to attend if there is no wait list. The school will not receive state or local funds but can charge a fee.**
- The motion passed unanimously.

Funding:

- **Mr. Dillon made a motion that charter schools should receive a prorated portion of state lottery capital funds like the LEAs. Maimone seconded.** Mr. Maimone also wanted to look at ways of clarifying how money would be shared with charter schools, but the motion was not amended to include that language. The motion passed 10-2 with Mr. Norcross and Dr. Markley opposed.

Collaboration and Flexibility:

- There were no recommendations from collaboration and flexibility group. Mr. Norcross, however, asked who the recommendations would go to and what the purpose would be. Mr. Betterton stated that it would go to SBE and could be added to the legislative agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Maimone moved for an adjournment of the meeting. Mr. Norcross seconded it. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned.