

Minutes of the North Carolina Charter School Review Board

Virtual Meeting - Department of Public Instruction

February 10, 2025

9 AM

Attendance – CSRБ Members	
TBD- (nonvoting) Dr. Rita Haire - Absent Dr. John Eldridge Alex Quigley Hilda Parlér Dr. Shelly Shope	Eric Sanchez Bruce Friend - Late TBD Todd Godbey Dr. Bartley Danielsen Stephen Gay
Attendance – Other	
<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Ashley Baquero, Director Joseph Letterio, Consultant Melanie Rackley, Consultant Jenna Cook, Consultant Dr. Natasha Norins, Consultant Dr. Brandi Gill, Consultant Nicky Niewinski, Asst. Director Julie Whetzel, Consultant Megan Carter, Consultant Tara Whitbread, Consultant	<i>CSRБ Attorney</i> Steven Walker <i>SBE Attorney</i> Allison Schafer - Absent <i>Teacher/Principal of Year</i> Lee Haywood – TOY - Absent Sarena Fuller – POY

Recording of Feb. 10 CSRБ Meeting: [DAY 1 MEETING](#)

Call To Order

Pledge of Allegiance & NC Flag Salute: Mr. John Eldridge

Mission and Ethics Statement:

- Mission and Ethics Statement, Mr. John Eldridge

Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

Motion: Ms. Hilda Parlér motioned to approve agenda for February Meeting

Second: Dr. Bart Danielsen

Vote: Unanimous

☒ **Passed** ☐ Failed

Motion: Dr. Shelley Shope motioned to approve January 2025 minutes.

Second: Dr. Bart Danielsen

Vote: Unanimous

☒ Passed

☐ Failed

Approval of Revised 2025 CSRБ Meeting Calendar

- Ms. Baquero noted the 4 changes that were on the calendar and stated the updated calendar was also on EBoard.

Motion: Ms. Hilda Parlér motioned to approve revised 2025 CSRБ meeting calendar

Second: Dr. Bart Danielsen

Vote: Unanimous

☒ Passed

☐ Failed

February Charter Schools Review Board Meeting

Amendments: Ms. Julie Whetzel, OCS Consultant

GO BIG Enrollment and Relocation

- Ms. Whetzel introduced the school and noted they are in RTO. She stated that OCS approves relocation requests but since GO BIG is in RTO and requested to decrease enrollment they are being brought before the board. She then went over the rationale the school provided for the enrollment decrease and said that there were a few attached documents that came from the school discussing changes in budget and other things.

Questions from the CSRБ

- Dr. Eldridge asked if they are dropping from 300-150 in year 1 and asked what's causing that drop. Ms. Whetzel stated this is due to the new location being only able to hold 150. Dr. Eldridge asked if they'd bounce back in Year 2 and Ms. Whetzel said she didn't know and yielded to school leaders online.
 - Dr. Howe – a school leader – confirmed and said they are looking at a more permanent facility by year 2. She and Dr. Eldridge discussed this further and Dr. Howe added they have room to add modulars/other classrooms.
- Ms. Parlér asked if they were confident that the numbers would remain the same and Dr. Howe stated they are 'vibrantly hopeful'. Another school leader said they have been working with the project management team and they are hopeful that by 2026 they will find it too. The school leader added that approval of this amendment by CSRБ will be helpful in signing contracts and other items pertaining to their new building.
- Dr. Eldridge asked if they had documents on the additional impact on the budget. Dr. Howe said it was in a separate document and Dr. Eldridge thanked them for pulling that up.
- Mr. Gay asked what their current family interest is and Dr. Howe stated they are currently above 30 applications and their lottery is in March. She also said they are waiting to tell parents a permanent address. Ms. Baquero added that monthly reports of RTO schools would be given to the CSRБ beginning in March.

- Dr. Eldridge asked what the thought process was in not asking for a third delay? Ms. Baquero said that any RTO school is able to request a delay and clarified the rules regarding requesting a delay.

Motion: Dr. Shelley Shope motioned to approve GO BIG’s enrollment and relocation amendment request.

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

☒ Passed

☐ Failed

West Triangle High School Third Delay

- Ms. Whetzel introduced the school and noted they are in RTO. She reviewed the history of the school and their facility.

Questions from the CSRБ

- Dr. Eldridge asked what the school is doing to keep interest in the school.
 - A school leader noted they continue to get new interest applications weekly and they are remaining communicative of any and all changes with families.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if they’re potentially leaving the area and the school leader said there is a lot of difficulty and they’d probably be back in a few months for a relocation request. He stated this request is to help them get time to pursue the option to relocate. He then mentioned a grant they received and he, Mr. Sanchez, and Dr. Eldridge went over the grant details and what / when it would be received by the school.
- Ms. Parlér asked what they’re being charged and the school leader said none.
- Dr. Eldridge asked what next steps are if they don’t have a facility and the school leader said they’d most likely have to look at folding. He then reiterated how thankful he is of his board and they’d fight hard to keep it open.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if there was any risk of having to pay back the grant money if they fold and the school leader said no. Mr. Sanchez said that with ‘Great Schools’ being involved it’s really reassuring to him.
- Dr. Fuller asked what’s different now in this approach and the school leader said it’s strictly location this time around. He went more into detail on this plan and reiterated again that Orange County is not going to approve any new charter schools.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if they move areas how does that affect the matriculation rates and the school leader gave statistics of planned students, and noted they do plan to provide bus services.
- Mr. Quigley said he initially wrote this charter but is not on the board anymore. He stated this initially was a replication of Triangle High School and mentioned there are very few stand-alone charter high schools in NC. The school leader went into detail on why he became so passionate about this school and mission.

Motion: Ms. Hilda Parlér motioned to approve West Triangle High School’s third delay amendment request.

Second: Mr. Stephen Gay

Vote: Unanimous

☒ Passed

☐ Failed

Stipulation Schools Update: Ms. Jenna Cook, OCS Consultant

- Ms. Cook gave a recap of stipulation schools and when/who gave them. She went over the steps and other items needed during their 3-year renewal. She also went over details on their school improvement plan and any compliance issues. She went through each school individually and noted the schools that were in the 2026 renewal cohort.
- Paul R. Brown Leadership Academy
 - Dr. Wray and other school leaders introduced themselves. Dr. Wray began his presentation by going over each individual section of their improvement plan and their improvement goals. He additionally highlighted training that staff, school leaders and board members would go through and, when they have taken place in the past.
 - He transitioned into giving a summary of academic, governance, and financial compliance concerns and noted how academic scores have improved and either met or exceeded growth with detailed charts and graphs.
 - He concluded by mentioning the enrollment data over the last three years and how it showed steady improvement and growth overall.

Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Dr. Eldridge thanked them for their presentation and for the whole team being there and supporting the school leader.
- Ms. Parlér was very impressed with their overall performance and growth.
- Mr. Godbey concurred and said that he has enjoyed seeing their overall progress.
- Monroe Academy
 - Dr. Ford introduced herself and the board members present on the call. She began her presentation by going over the guidelines and stipulations in the school improvement plan and required by the various parties. She continued by touching on training that she and other leaders have taken and when they took them/when they will be taken.
 - She continued by touching on academic growth and noted they didn't meet any growth measures in the 2024 evaluation cycle. She mentioned they sat down after that and planned strategies – including tutoring and other services they created and provided to students, staff and leaders.
 - She continued by going over the NWEA growth scores and noted they are off all noncompliance. She concluded by going over a three-year plan and stated this year they have a really good team that is even stronger due to some teachers resigning and others who want to be held accountable coming on.

Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Dr. Eldridge asked the board to talk them through their situation with the location they are in now. The school leader stated they were trying to get a permanent occupancy permit and cited issues between them and the city. They mentioned they got a temporary occupancy permit in August and the reason they couldn't get the permanent permit is because they had a well within 100 feet of their school. She stated their attorney and the local board are working on a solution that they need to get done by the end of February.
- Dr. Shope thanked them for their presentation and said she's happy to see them moving in the right direction. Ms. Fuller concurred and noted that the fund balance growth was also great to see.
- Dr. Eldridge gave his opinions on the school that he observed on his visit to the school.
- Rocky Mount Prep
 - A school leader came and introduced themselves and other board members present on the call. She began her presentation by going over the stipulations required by the school over the last three years and how they have implemented certain areas of their school improvement plan through new and existing programs and services to students, staff, and school leaders. She stated the continued investment is showing good results.
 - She continued by talking about training programs that staff and leaders are taking including specific training and who their partners are. She also mentioned they have weekly improvement and teaching sessions. She noted teacher improvement plans they have implemented for newer teachers to NC.
 - She went over their schools academic and growth data and noted they are no longer on financial noncompliance or disciplinary/legal noncompliance. She also noted who they partner with to insure continued compliance and how they are going to attend future training to insure continued compliance.
 - She concluded her presentation by going over some successes and challenges that they are seeing.

Questions and Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Mr. Friend asked are they having any challenges with staff attendance/attrition. The school leader said that this is the first year in several that the school is fully staffed. She also said that staff attendance is doing really well but they still face challenges with 'normal' things (sickness, etc.).

2025 Charter School Renewal School Business Report: Ms. Jennifer Bennett, Sr. Director, School Business:

- Ms. Bennett introduced herself and began her presentation by going over what is reviewed by her department and their goals with this review.
- She continued her presentation by following up on the schools that were requested in the January CSRБ Meeting. She went over schools that had no financial or fiscal concerns; those whose audits showed some fiscal concerns; as well schools that did not submit their audit. She continued by going over each school's summarized findings from their audits, stressing the ones that her office was asked to review in January. She also made sure to note any action items that schools told her they would do.

Questions and Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Dr. Eldridge, referencing a previous finding, asked how they found out about these things. Ms. Bennett said that if a concern gets to the audit report, it's normally a bad sign since there's other times to fix the issue before it gets to the audit. She and Dr. Eldridge discussed follow-up from her office that will be continuous. Dr. Eldridge asked if other divisions may uncover other things as the ball keeps rolling and Ms. Bennett said yes and reiterated that her job is not in the CSRБ 'cycles' but instead an 'every year' cycle.
- Mr. Friend asked if 61T is doing their coding in-house or if they're doing something different. Ms. Bennett said she thinks it's happening in house but she'd follow-up on that specific question. She says she hasn't seen a lot of the concerns found in 61T in other schools.

Renewal Voting and Discussion: Ms. Jenna Cook, OCS Consultant

- Jenna Cook presented information regarding the charter school renewal voting process and began each school's presentation by going over changes in each school's application/renewal. She listed if there were any changes in compliance or in any other category at the school.

07A Washington Montessori, 10 year placement

Motion: Ms. Hilda Parlér moved to grant Washington Montessori a 10-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025

Second: Mr. Bruce Friend

Vote: Unanimous

☒ Passed ☐ Failed

93V Doral Academy of North Carolina, 10 year placement

Motion: Mr. Todd Godbey moved to grant Doral Academy of North Carolina a 10-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025

Second: Mr. Bruce Friend

Vote: Unanimous

☒ Passed ☐ Failed

61J Lakeside Charter Academy, 3 year placement

- Mr. Friend mentioned that he would like to hear from the school and Mr. Mohammed – principal of the school – introduced himself and gave his credentials. He reiterated how excited their leaders are in moving the school forward to a strong academic and governance footing. He also noted how confident they are to produce the results they have come to expect from Lakeside.
- Ms. Parlér recused from the vote.

Motion: Mr. Bruce Friend moved to grant Lakeside Charter Academy a 3-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025

Second: Dr. Shelley Shope

Vote: Unanimous

☐ Passed

☐ Failed

61T Movement Charter School, 3 year placement

- Dr. Eldridge said that the audit report created a lot of questions and asked the board if they should push the decision off or vote another way. He and Mr. Friend discussed this and Ms. Baquero asked if they could push the vote to March. Ms. Cook said yes they could push it to March.
- Ms. Baquero, Dr. Eldridge and others discussed what would happen if they did vote to Non-Renew and if they should add stipulations onto the school similar to what they just heard from other schools.
- Mr. Godbey said that he agrees and that a school has a right to address the things found before the board but also said the school should address the concerns outlined before they get to the board.
- Dr. Eldridge confirmed they could push it to March.

Dr. Eldridge tabled the discussion until March.

61K – United Community School, 3-year placement

A school leader noted an email that addressed some of the concerns and noted they were previously addressed at past CSRБ meetings.

Motion: Mr. Bruce Friend moved to grant United Community School a 3-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

☐ Passed

☐ Failed

Remote Charter Academy Amendments: Ms. Julie Whetzel, OCS Consultant

STARS Charter

- Ms. Whetzel introduced the legislation pertaining to remote academies and went over the outline of these amendment discussions.
- The ED of the school introduced himself and went over a brief history of their school. He mentioned how they have gotten a B on their school report card in the past few years and how several of the surrounding PSUs don't have a virtual option. He stressed that he wants to give parents, teachers and students another option.
- He continued his presentation by going over the academic overview of their proposed remote academy, and how they would implement a synchronous and asynchronous learning model that allows parents and students to chart their own path for assignments and work. He said this allows parents to track their student's attendance and teachers to see how things are progressing.
- He continued by going over the 'Learner Profile' they are going to implement and noted that students would be supported by coaching and resources from both their family and SVA staff. He

went into detail on the curriculum and technology that will be in this program and stressed that there will be a heavy EC presence so it is available to all types of students.

- He concluded his presentation by going over their current approach to educational innovation and their vision for the future.

Questions from the CSRБ

- Mr. Friend asked what the thinking was behind keeping the school grades 4-9, if it's their anticipation to focus on areas in their geographic area, and clarification on who will be the actual online instructors.
- The ED mentioned that he intends to serve their county and the surrounding counties with their online options.
- He also mentioned that he chose 4th grade as the starting point since that is when kids start to get used to working with laptops. He also noted their high school is starting to see a waning interest after 10th grade and there are other stronger options for those kids after 10th grade.
- He confirmed they would really focus on making EC teachers available.
- Mr. Friend noted he agrees with the decision to be fully prepared to test in a remote environment and be prepared for possible EC needs.
- Ms. Parlér asked if IT support will be offered right away if any issue were to pop up / persist. The ED said yes and that it was his primary focus, and he set a timeline to get help to the students in 5 minutes or less.
- Dr. Eldridge asked a specific question about a variety of on-line curriculums. The ED went into detail on one of them they plan to use and the relationship to the other programs Dr. Eldridge listed.
- Dr. Eldridge asked if the board must get approval to use a particular curriculum for their 9th grade students. The ED stated they'd have NC certified teachers and they'd still be required to take the EOCs. That – he thinks – would satisfy the requirements and the ED noted that they have 'NC' on their curriculum so it is in compliance with state standards.
- Mr. Friend noted that another one of their curriculum plans is already well-established in North Carolina. The ED noted a partnership with Johnston County's Virtual program and their work to help draft a strong program.
- Mr. Friend commented they need to make it clear who is going to own the processes required to run both an in-person and virtual school.
- Ms. Fuller asked how they envision their staff interacting with the cohort of students to fulfill their vision. The ED said that by year 3, he hopes to have staff that are there as support. He said that he wants to learn how it works for the first year or two and figure out what supports are needed during that time.

Closing Statement from the Board

- The ED reiterated they try to push the envelope and reach people where they are, and where their students can perform best. He said it's their responsibility to enter that arena and learn from this experience.

Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Mr. Friend said he is going to vote to approve and thinks the plan is strong and well thought out.
- Ms. Parlér said that it appears they have a handle on what they are looking for.

Motion: Mr. Bruce Friend motioned to approve STARS Charter’s remote academy amendment request.

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

☒ **Passed**

☐ Failed

Tillery Charter Academy

- The principal of the school introduced herself and went over a brief history of the school and the location of the students they serve. She went over the enrollment projections and broke it down by grade. She noted that their curriculum already has an online option and that would be what they plan to use.
- She also stressed that their teachers will receive the same professional development and that there would be open communication between parents, students, and teachers. She also noted that needs – such as nutrition and transportation – will be met following the same guidelines as in-person students.

Questions from the CSRБ

- Mr. Gay asked if this could all be done in-house and the principal said yes. She also stated their staff is open to it and that if the budget allowed they would discuss adding additional staff if needed.
- Mr. Friend asked if they will have teachers that teach both in-person students and online. The principal said both but they would be setting schedules to accommodate teachers classes.
- Mr. Friend asked if they would be compensated any differently and the principal stated they would have to evaluate it but she hopes to add more to their salary.
- Mr. Friend asked if remote students could participate in other things that the school offers like sports and the principal said yes.
- The Principal said that online students would still be able to work with the school’s intervention team and other resources.
- Dr. Eldridge asked when families apply are they choosing whether they want to be virtual or in-person. The principal gave the grades that were on a waitlist but stated they currently don’t have a waitlist for in-person classes. He and the principal confirmed that students cannot go back and forth between the in-person and virtual classes.

Closing Statement from the Board

- The Principal stressed that this would be a great option for students

Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Mr. Friend said he'd support the application and that it was very small and very innovative (since they were doing it themselves). He noted other things the principal listed in her presentation as more proof that this is a good program.
- Ms. Parlér agreed that she liked everything being done in house.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if any board members had cause for concern when looking at the data from the past few years.
 - Dr. Eldridge said that it did pass through his mind and asked Ms. Baquero when their last renewal was. Ms. Cook stated they received a 3-year renewal in 2024 and Dr. Eldridge said that that is something the school will have to take into account when looking at their 2027 renewal date.
- Dr. Danielsen commented that he thinks the data is going to be mingled together with the online and in-person students.
 - Mr. Friend disagreed and noted they get a separate school code for the online school/remote academy.
- Dr. Danielsen asked if they are looking at a school with both together or are they doing two separate renewals?
 - Mr. Friend said that was a great question and they'd have to look at the language in the law. He gave an example of his school and what he does.
 - Dr. Danielsen said that it would be great if they could come in and do things simultaneously. Mr. Friend concurred and reiterated his past points.
- Dr. Eldridge said he likes how the data is broken down so it can be compared to one another (in-person vs. virtual). Mr. Friend went more into detail on the legislation pertaining to Remote Charter Academies.

Motion: Mr. Bruce Friend motioned to approve Tillery Charter Academy's remote academy amendment request.

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Discussion:

- Mr. Sanchez said he posed his previous questions since the 'Report Card' data is showing that they are moving towards the 'Low-Performing' designation and it appears the school is possibly stretching itself too thin by trying to open a virtual academy.

Vote: Passed 6-3 (ES, JE, AQ in the negative)

☒ Passed

☐ Failed

Director's Updates: Ms. Ashley Baquero, OCS Director

- Ms. Baquero introduced a new staffer they'd introduce in-person in March and said that more updates will come later.

LUNCH & Motion to Adjourn: Ms. Hilda Parlér, Todd Godbey seconded

11:56 am