

**Minutes of the
North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board
State Board Room 755, Department of Public Instruction
February 7, 2022
9AM**

Attendance – CSAB Members	
Jamey Falkenbury (non-voting) Rita Haire – absent John Eldridge Cheryl Turner (remote) Hilda Parlér Shelly Bullard (remote)	Eric Sanchez Terry Stoops Bruce Friend Lynn Kroeger Todd Godbey (remote)
Attendance – Other	
<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Dave Machado, Director Ashley Baquero, Consultant Claire Porter, Consultant Shaunda Cooper, Consultant (remote) Darian Jones, Consultant Joseph Letterio, Consultant (remote) Melanie Rackley, Consultant Barbara O’Neal, NC ACCESS (remote) Jay Whalen, NC ACCESS (remote) Davida Robinson, NC ACCESS (remote)	<i>Attorney General</i> Stephanie Lloyd (remote) Forrest Fallanca <i>SBE Attorney</i> Allison Schafer – absent (present at closed session)

CALL TO ORDER

- The North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Chair Turner who read the Ethics Statement and CSAB Mission Statement. Mr. Bruce Friend led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Ms. Turner recused from discussion and voting on the Sugar Creek amendment request and the GO BIG application interview.

Motion: Motion to approve the January 2022 meeting minutes.

Motion: Bruce Friend

Second: Terry Stoops

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

Motion: Motion to approve the February 7th agenda.

Motion: Bruce Friend

Second: Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

Teacher and Principal of the Year Recognition

- Mr. Dave Machado, OCS Director, introduced the current Charter School Teacher of the Year, Mr. Jeremy White.
- Dr. Darian Jones, OCS Consultant, spoke about his work in the professional development workflow. He stated the highlight of his work with OCS is working with teachers nominated for Teacher of the Year. Dr. Jones stated that the two top finalists were outstanding. He spoke of how difficult it was to choose one Teacher of the Year.
- The finalist, Ms. Amber Nead, introduced herself. She spoke about her work teaching agriculture for Northeast Carolina Prep. She spoke about agriculture education in the state. She stated there are about 24k students in NC involved in FFA and even more in agriculture education. She stated that agriculture is the number one industry in NC.
- She stated that she also is the advisor for the school’s FFA program. She stated the program received the highest national honor for FFA programs.
- Dr. Jones introduced Mr. William Keegan Storrs – 2022 NC Charter Teacher of the Year – Roxboro Community School. Mr. Storrs introduced himself and spoke about teaching Spanish at Roxboro. He spoke about the explosion of the Spanish population in the community and need for more Spanish outreach. He spoke about his work translating and collaborating with his peers and the community. He thanked OCS staff, his colleagues and Ms. Ashley Bailey, the 2020 Charter Teacher of the Year.
- Dr. Jones stated this was the first year that charter schools were able to participate in the Wells Fargo Principal of the Year process. He introduced the five finalists. He introduced Ms. Maria Mills – Principal of the Year – Carolina Charter Academy.
- Ms. Mills spoke about the honor of being Principal of the Year and the pride from her students and colleagues. She stated that her teachers are the reason she is here. She spoke about being able to provide choice to students in Harnett, Wake, and Johnson counties.
- Mr. Gregg Sinderson, Charter One, stated it is their honor to sponsor the Principal of the Year for the second year in the row. He introduced fellow staff members and presented checks to the finalists.

AMENDMENTS

Tiller School

- Ms. Ashley Baquero, OCS Consultant, explained that Tiller School is requesting a mission statement change. She read the changes aloud. Ms. Kelly Riley, Head of School, clarified the new mission and spoke more about the pillars of the school and how that is reflected in the new mission and vision.

Motion: Motion to approve the Tiller School’s mission change request.

Motion: Bruce Friend

Second: Lynn Kroeger

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

Sugar Creek Charter School

- Ms. Baquero explained that Sugar Creek Charter School is requesting to implement a weighted lottery. She stated the school serves K-12 students in Charlotte and has operated for 23 years. She stated the school serves 92% economically disadvantaged students (EDS) and has set a goal to enroll more English Language Learners (ELL). She spoke about expansion of services to meet the needs of greater ELL students including staffing, bus routes, and outreach.

Motion: Motion to approve Sugar Creek Charter School’s request to implement a weighted lottery.

Motion: Lynn Kroeger

Second: John Eldridge

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy

- Ms. Baquero explained that Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy is requesting to implement a weighted lottery. She stated the school serves K-12 students in Rutherford County and has operated for 23 years. She stated the school serves 19% economically disadvantaged students (EDS) and has set a goal to enroll 38% EDS by the 2025 school year. She spoke about expansion of services to meet the needs of greater EDS students including staffing, bus routes, and outreach.

Motion: Motion to approve Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy’s request to implement a weighted lottery.

Motion: Bruce Friend

Second: Lynn Kroeger

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

2021 CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

Interview Time	Committee (Lead)	Applicant Name	Applicant Type
10:15-11:05	Policy (CT)	Nalanda Academy	Standard

- Ms. Melanie Rackley, OCS Consultant, presented the application interview reminders to the CSAB. She explained the second round process and stated that the remaining applications today were all second round interviews.

- Ms. Rackley gave the applicant introduction. The applicant proposes a K-8 charter school in Wake County. She stated the school will open as K-2 and at capacity at year five with 346 students. She stated the school will use lunch vendors, transportation, and will use a weighted lottery. She stated there was an LEA impact statement submitted. She stated this is not a repeat applicant and is not using an EMO/CMO.
- Mr. Sandeep Aggarwal gave the board's opening statement. He stated the board is committed to reaching out to all students – different economic and ethnic backgrounds. He spoke about the board's diversity and capacity. He stated there are three members from the world of education, but however, they are committed to bring more racial diversity. He stated there is a new female Caucasian board member. He stated STEM and mindfulness will be components of the school. He stated that mindfulness is a means to the end and is scientifically backed. He gave an example of how it can be integrated into the classroom including with short breaks for breathing and counting between periods.
- He continued that there was a misconception about the time taken to use mindfulness. He stated that there are only 25 minutes used for mindfulness. He stated there was also a misconception about the languages and will offer multiple languages including Spanish through electives. He stated the board wants to do what charter schools were intended to do by bringing an innovation, academically successful program. He stated the board is supported by Sallie B. Howard's administration and a letter of support can be obtained if necessary.
- Ms. Parlér would like clarification about the EOGs and EOCs.
- Mr. Stoops would like more information about the number of language offerings.
- Ms. Turner stated she feels like the STEM answer was clarifying, but the answers were not clear regarding the amount of time utilized for direct mindfulness instruction.
- Mr. Friend stated he still needs more information regarding the demand for this type of school. He would like more information about the people taking the survey. Ms. Turner agreed.
- Mr. Dewald Coetzer stated the school will absolutely participate in the state required assessments and will teach the standard course of study. He stated that the key with integrating mindfulness is to help students be present and less distracted. He stated mindfulness helps with student focus and regulation.
- Mr. Singh stated that the school would like to offer as many languages as possible based on the interests of the students. He stated in the early years, the school may only offer two, due to budgetary constraints but would like to expand as they progress.
- Mr. Singh gave a demographic breakdown of the interest meetings. He stated there were 84 participants and 81 were positive. He stated the demographics were 54% white, 19% Hispanic, 21% Asian, and 3% African American.
- Ms. Jois stated that mindfulness will not take over the academic program. She stated the 25 minutes of mindfulness will teach the why and how of mindfulness. She stated they will learn about calming the mind, focus, gratitude. She stated the 25 or 30 depends on whether it is elementary or middle school students. She stated the students will use games and activities to engage and help students learn.

- Mr. Friend asked how you take a teacher that has no background in mindfulness and teach that teacher to understand. Ms. Jois stated there will be a mindfulness and yoga coach to help bring awareness to teachers about how it works.
- Mr. Friend stated that he is still concerned about demand because the survey went to people that were already engaged in yoga and probably were aware of mindfulness already.
- Dr. Raj Polavaram, Board Chair, stated that this a big concern of the board, to bring the understanding of mindfulness to people that may not be familiar. He spoke about the benefits of the practice of mindfulness and integration into academics.
- Mr. Friend asked about grade levels. The board stated that the school will be K-8.
- Mr. Sanchez asked about staff recruitment and stated that salary levels are modest and professional development costs are low. He wants to know how the board thinks they will find this type of specific staff. Mr. Aggarwal stated the school will have in-house professional development through the use of its network including other charter schools and experts in the building.
- Mr. Sanchez asked about the proposed leader. Mr. Aggarwal stated no one on the board will take that position, but they are confident that there are leaders who are passionate about this concept and bringing something innovative to the community.
- Mr. Aggarwal stated that there were a variety of surveys given and spoke about working with the community to understand needs and familiarize people with mindfulness.
- Mr. Coetzer gave the closing statement for the board. He spoke about the board's belief in the greatness of children and the spoke about the importance of mental health supports for children. He stated he is a principal of a private Christian school, and he sees it with his students. He stated that academics will be at the core and that mindfulness will support the academic success of students. He stated the reason this board is here, all from other countries, is because of education. He stated he wants to make sure all kids can succeed. He stated the goal is to give a world of possibilities to students.
- Dr. Eldridge stated he is in a different place after reading the second round information and hearing from the board today. He spoke about how his own school uses mindfulness, even if it's not called that, to help students including things like breathing breaks. Ms. Kroeger stated she is in support of this as well and how important social emotional learning is right now.
- Ms. Parlér stated that she wishes the application would have encompassed everything seen today. Ms. Turner stated that no one knows if this will work, but if it does, it could be amazing. She stated she would encourage the board to be really diligent in making sure the outreach goes to communities that are not familiar with the concepts so the school population is diverse.
- Mr. Sanchez stated that he agrees and is happy there is at least an informal partnership with Sallie B. Howard, especially to be able to recruit staff and students.
- Mr. Friend stated that doing the work to make sure you are reaching a heterogenous population is the key and he feels better about how mindfulness is woven into the programming after hearing them today.

Motion: Recommend to SBE that Nalanda Academy be moved to Ready to Open status.

Motion: Eric Sanchez

Second: John Eldridge

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

Great Opportunities and Boundless Innovations for Girls - GO BIG

Interview Time	Committee (Lead)	Applicant Name	Applicant Type
11:10-12:00	Performance (BF)	Great Opportunities and Boundless Innovations for Girls - GO BIG	Standard

- Ms. Rackley gave the applicant introduction. The applicant proposes a K-8 charter school in Wake County. She stated the school will open as K-2 and at capacity at year five with 700 students. She stated the school will participate in the NSLP, transportation, and will use a weighted lottery. She stated there was no LEA impact statement submitted. She stated this is a repeat applicant and is not using an EMO/CMO.
- Ms. Turner has recused from discussion and voting.
- Ms. Pemberton and Ms. Howard gave the board’s opening statement. The board presented data regarding science and math disadvantage for girls of color attending Charlotte schools in their target area.
- Ms. Kroeger stated the answers were very thorough, but she still has concerns about the extended day and professional development.
- Mr. Friend stated he is still concerned about the extended calendar and school day and the toll that takes on staff. Ms. Kroeger stated they are seeing so much burn out for teachers right now.
- Mr. Falkenbury asked for clarity on where the school would pull students from. Ms. Pemberton spoke about where students would draw from.
- Mr. Friend asked about staff recruitment and concerns about burn out. Ms. Pemberton stated that they already have staff interested in teaching at the school because they understand the mission and the need for this school.
- Mr. Sanchez asked what the board perceives as the social emotional needs of the students and gender specific curriculum and how does that inform staffing. Ms. Pemberton stated there is no gender specific curriculum that exists but there are models that work for educating girls in STEM. She stated one of those is single sex education because girls face gender stereotype and gender bias. She spoke about math and science self-concept. She spoke about her experience as an alumna of an all girls school.
- Ms. Matthews began the board’s closing statement by expressing gratitude to CSAB. She stated they were asked to respond to four areas of concern coming into the second round. She spoke about recruitment data. She stated they shared the data showing girls consistently underperform in science

and math in the target area. She spoke about educator evaluation and support. She stated the model is inspired by a boarding school model and there are educators willing to commit to that type of program. She stated the program is supported by the budget.

- Ms. Pemberton closed with a quote by Michelle Obama. She stated that no girl's race, gender, economic status, or zip code should determine the quality of school available. She spoke about the history of girls being underserved in STEM education. She stated Charlotte girls should be afforded quality of opportunity. She spoke about the passion of the board.
- Ms. Parlér stated she believes they are ready.
- Mr. Friend stated that his concern is about the extended day and the demand on the teachers. He also recognized he doesn't have the expertise to know about all-girls education and the challenges faced by girls in the classroom.
- Ms. Kroeger stated the board is strong and committed, but she has reservations about the budget, professional development, and extended days.
- Dr. Etheridge stated he doesn't have an idea of how the day would flow and wonders if some of the things currently in the schedule may be targeted, rather than offered every day, for example interventions and acceleration.
- Mr. Sanchez stated there is a lot to figure out. He stated that the question is if the CSAB believes the board can figure it out before opening. Mr. Sanchez stated he had hoped some of the answers were given more depth, but he believes the board, passion, and need are there.
- Dr. Bullard stated the need is there, but she hopes the board will consider the extended day concerns.

Motion: Recommend to the SBE that GO BIG be moved to Ready to Open status.

Motion: Hilda Parlér

Second: Terry Stoops

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

DIRECTOR'S UPDATES

- Mr. Machado gave an overview of the SBE approvals from last week's meeting including enrollment and expansion requests. He stated renewal recommendations were made and SBE will vote next month. He stated that Dr. Shaunda Cooper is leaving OCS and Ms. Claire Porter will lead renewals and RTO until a new staff member is brought onboard.
- Ms. Turner asked about compliance concerns that came out of the latest compliance meeting. Mr. Machado stated that our office can send minutes from those meetings to CSAB.
- Ms. Parlér asked about the renewal discussion. Mr. Machado stated that there were a few concerns about three-year renewals, but that it was explained that the only other option for those schools would be nonrenewal and they were not performing at a nonrenewal level.

**CSAB adjourned for lunch at 11:30.

Interview Time	Committee (Lead)	Applicant Name	Applicant Type
1:00-1:50	Policy (LK)	Honor Preparatory Charter School	Standard

- Ms. Rackley gave the applicant introduction. The applicant proposes a K-5 charter school in Mecklenburg County. She stated the school will open as K-1 and at capacity at year five with 549 students. She stated the school will participate in the NSLP, transportation, and will use a weighted lottery. She stated there was no LEA impact statement submitted. She stated this is not a repeat applicant and is not using an EMO/CMO.
- Mr. Barnhardt gave the board's opening statement. He stated the board has reflected after the first round and have taken time to highlight revisions they have made to be responsive and learn from the CSAB members.
- He continued that two of the board members have extensive language in dual language programming. He stated that two are directly connected through entrepreneurial endeavors focused on diversity and inclusion. Mr. Barnhardt continued that he has led schools with high minority populations. He spoke about plans for engagement over the ready to open process. He explained streamlining that took place on the website to allow dual language.
- Mr. Barnhardt stated that teacher pay was increased by \$2500. He stated that the school has secured 150k grant money for start-up. He also spoke about student interest. He spoke about the board's unwavering commitment to school diversity and community partners.
- Ms. Parlér asked whether the school will lease or purchase the facility. Ms. Kroeger stated typically we don't see reimbursement from NSLP in the budget, but she has noted the amount does not exceed surplus, but it will make the budget tighter.
- Mr. Friend asked why the board didn't make the counselor position full-time. Mr. Barnhardt stated that now that they have grant funding, they will certainly consider making that a full-time position.
- Mr. Barnhardt stated the facility will be a lease in the first few years with the goal of building or finding a more permanent facility going forward. Ms. Kroeger asked for class ratio information. Mr. Barnhardt stated there will be 32 students with two full-time teachers in each class for the full year.
- Dr. Eldridge asked if the school anticipates being Title I. Mr. Barnhardt stated yes, they believe so. Dr. Eldridge stated that may help support funding.
- Dr. Eldridge asked how they calculated EC funding. Mr. Barnhardt stated they looked at trends in the local schools and anticipated 9% EC students. Ms. Turner stated that is very high for K-1 because most would not be identified by that time. Ms. Turner stated Sugar Creek takes 120 new kindergarteners each year and they only have about 2-3 come in with IEPs and then a few added with speech only services. Mr. Barnhardt stated they will need to look at that and recalibrate expectations.

- Ms. Gina Esquivel gave the board’s closing statement and spoke about the need for a dual language program in the area. She spoke about soft skills and the commitment to the whole child and intersectionality.
- Ms. Kroeger stated she felt confident in the responses today, and her concern would be the need and demand for this type of program.
- Dr. Eldridge stated there is more work that needs to take place with the budget because it is very tight. He stated he appreciates they have obtained grant money but there are other areas that they will have to consider in funding. He stated he still feels this is a great concept with a passionate board, but the enrollment is so small they will need to be very careful with funding.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if Mr. Barnhardt participated in the Building Excellent Schools (BES) program. Mr. Barnhardt stated yes, he is in the second year of that program. Dr. Eldridge asked if the grant money is for specific use. Mr. Barnhardt stated for planning and implementation.

Motion: Recommend to the SBE that Honor Preparatory Charter School be moved to Ready to Open status.

Motion: John Eldridge

Second: Lynn Kroeger

Vote: Unanimous

(Todd Godbey no longer present)

Passed

Failed

OFFICE OF LEARNING RECOVERY

- Dr. Jeni Corn, Director of Research and Evaluation, gave a presentation on Learning Recovery Research.
- She stated that the mission of the Office of Learning and Recovery (OLR) is to serve PSUs by providing the research and support needed to make evidence-based decisions to aid in recovery and accelerate learning for all students.
- She spoke about her team’s next steps including gathering input and consensus on OLR research and evaluation priorities. She explained the draft Research and Evaluation Plan for Learning Recovery. She stated the purpose is to combat the impact of lost instructional time and accelerate learning for all students by evaluating the implementation and impact of the interventions sponsored by the OLR and support decision-making about continuation, expansion, and targeting of the programs. She continued they are also using research to identify, extend, scale, and sustain programs that demonstrate impact, and build a clearinghouse of NC Promising Practices.
- Dr. Corn outlined the plan’s drivers including legislation and explained next steps and timelines. She explained the major research questions:
 1. Implementation: How were state-funded learning recovery and acceleration strategies implemented? What were the most promising local learning recovery and acceleration practices? What are the costs associated with the strategies?
 2. Impact: What were the near- and longer-term outcomes of the state and local learning recovery and acceleration strategies on students, educators, and families by subgroup and contextual variables?

3. Improvement: What strategies should be considered for continuation, expansion, and targeting of the programs? What is our ROI/Cost-Benefit?

- Dr. Eldridge stated he hopes the findings are shared with policy makers. He stated he hopes there is an advocacy for those working with students to understand how they money is impacting students. Dr. Corn stated yes, they are working to understand how decisions are made at the local level and what the impact of those decisions are for teachers and students. Dr. Eldridge spoke about schools not being able to pay for mental health services such as counselors.
- Mr. Sanchez asked for more information about next steps and possible recommendations. Dr. Corn stated she is thinking more of interventions, but you can't just use EVAAS data. Dr. Corn stated she believes the findings from this report will inform how the SAS EVAAS data team does its calculations. She stated it will need to readjust based on the recent data drops. Mr. Sanchez asked if subgroup data is a focus. Dr. Corn stated yes, as it relates to subgroups that are at high risk for loss during the pandemic.
- Ms. Parlér asked if this will go past the pandemic. Dr. Corn stated the funding now goes through 2024, so that remains to be seen.
- Mr. Stoops stated that an issue is that you can recommend to districts how to spend the money, but in the end there is only so much you can do to direct how the money is spent. Dr. Corn stated that she has worked for partnerships and building capacity so districts see us as resources and use research to guide decisions.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion: Move that CSAB go into closed session pursuant to NC General Statute section 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with our attorneys in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorneys and the public body. 2:04PM

Motion: Lynn Kroeger

Second: Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

Motion: Move that CSAB leave closed session pursuant to NC General Statute section 143-318.11(a)(3) and enter open session to adjourn. 3:23PM

Motion: Hilda Parlér

Second: Lynn Kroeger

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

ADJOURNMENT

- **Mr. Friend made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:23PM. Ms. Kroeger seconded and the meeting adjourned unanimously.**