

**Minutes of the  
North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board  
Education Building  
301 N. Wilmington Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601-2825  
December 8, 2014**

Attendance/NCCSAB	Alan Hawkes (absent) Joseph Maimone Phyllis Gibbs Helen Nance Sherry Reeves Mike McLaughlin	Alex Quigley (absent) Eric Sanchez Tammi Sutton (absent) Becky Taylor Cheryl Turner Steven Walker
Attendance/SBE/DPI	<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Joel Medley, Director Lisa Swinson, Consultant Deanna Townsend-Smith, Consultant Robin Kendall, Consultant Shannon Sellers, Consultant Kebbler Williams, Consultant Brian Smith, Consultant Cande Honeycutt, Consultant	<i>Attorney General's Office</i> Laura Crumpler  <i>SBE Attorney</i> Katie Cornetto  <i>SBE</i> Martez Hill

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Chair Helen Nance. She led the CSAB in the Pledge of Allegiance, read the Ethics statement and the CSAB Mission Statement.

Ms. Nance stated that there would be a discussion concerning Longleaf School for the Arts during the meeting. She explained that the principal, Dr. Broome, was a former employee at her school two years ago. She asked if the Board thought it would be a conflict of interest for her to participate. Mr. Steven Walker stated that if her relationship with Dr. Broome did not impede her judgment there was no conflict.

Mr. Joseph Maimone commented that he emailed clarifications to the October minutes in which he requested for a line to be deleted, a word change and clarification on a motion that he made. **Ms. Cheryl Turner made a motion to approve the October minutes with the aforementioned amendments. Ms. Becky Taylor seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Mr. Maimone made a motion to approve the November minutes. Ms. Turner seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**At 9:06 am, Mr. Steven Walker made a motion to go into closed session to discuss legal matters. Ms. Turner seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**At 9:43 am, Mr. Walker made a motion to go back into open session. Ms. Taylor seconded. The motion carried unanimously. No action was taking following closed session.**

### **CHARTER RENEWALS**

Ms. Shannon Sellers stated that the CSAB recommended that thirteen of the twenty schools not be brought in for an interview concerning renewals. Mr. Walker read from the November 2014 minutes that schools that were not brought in for an interview would receive a ten year renewal if there were no findings in the school's audit. Ms. Sellers informed the CSAB that three of the thirteen schools' audits had not been received by Friday, November 5, 2014. Ms. Turner asked if audits should have been received to the LGC by October 31. Ms. Leigh Ann Kerr, assistant director of Finance and Business, replied yes. Ms. Alexis Schauss added that she had not received information regarding any of the schools requesting an extension.

#### **Alpha Academy**

- Ms. Lisa Swinson provided an overview of Alpha Academy's historical academic data, subgroup data and highlighted a governance concern. She stated that OCS and CSAB recommended a ten year renewal with the stipulation that no paid employee be a voting member of the board.
- Representatives from the school distributed packets to the CSAB. Mr. Eugene Slocum, Executive Director, informed the CSAB that Alpha Academy had been in operation for fifteen years. He explained that during the schools inception, they struggled with enrollment and finances and Mrs. Susan Slocum turned things around with the school. He added that members of the board signed a conflict of interest form each year and the school is transparent. He shared information related to the school's academic data.
- Mr. Maimone stated there were no quarrels about the school's academics. He inquired about the number of board members the bylaws stated that the school shall have and then explained that it was recommended that Mrs. Slocum not be a voting member of the Board. Mr. Slocum explained that the Board addressed the matter and desired for her to continue serving on the Board.
- Mr. Walker inquired about the school's conflict of interest policy and if it were located in the bylaws or if it were a policy. Mr. Simon Johnson, member of the board, read from Section GP-9.1a of the school's bylaws which explains the board member's code of conducts related to conflicts of interests. Ms. Norma Campbell, the board's chairperson, replied that during the board meeting where salaries are discussed Ms. Slocum does not vote.
- **Mr. Maimone made a motion to allow the schools attorney, Mr. Stephon Bowens, to speak. Mr. Walker seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**
- Mr. Bowens explained that the Board made it a practice to voice issues when there was a conflict and it is stated in the meeting. He stated that the legislature had already made a decision that teachers could serve as nonvoting members. Ms. Crumpler stated that it was not a matter of whether it is legal or illegal but if it was a best practice. The problem is that charter board members are elected official and having family members on the board looks like a conflict to the public. Mr. Bowens stated that the school's board would not object if there were general rules related to paid employees of a school serving as a voting member of a board. He added that Alpha felt as if they were being singled out. Ms. Turner replied that Alpha was not being singled out. In fact, during previous renewals and new applications the same recommendation has been made. Mr. Walker concurred.

- **Mr. Maimone made a motion to recommend Alpha Academy for a ten year renewal with stipulations that any staff member or spouse of administration not be a voting member of the board. Ms. Taylor seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School**

- Ms. Sellers provided an overview of Haliwa Saponi's historical academic data, subgroup data and highlighted concerns with the school's exceptional children's program. She stated that the Office of Charter Schools recommended non-renewal of the school's charter based on academics and noncompliance in the Exceptional Children's program. In addition, according to the CSAB Renewal Framework the recommendation would also be nonrenewal.
- Mr. Williams Hussey, Director of Exceptional Children's Department, informed the CSAB that Haliwa was significantly out of compliance and would be required to provide compensatory education to their children with IEPs.
- Ms. Carol Ann Hudgins shared information from Haliwa's LEA Program Assessment. She noted that there were several findings from the visit ranging from poorly written IEPs to classroom observation in which specially designed instruction was not happening for children. Mr. Walker asked if the items could be fixed and what the amount would be. Ms. Hudgins replied that the financial commitment was significant.
- Mr. Walker asked for a member of the Board to explain how they were going to come into compliance when the school is looking at a deficit. Ms. Michelle Varian, principal of Haliwa, commented that paper work for one of the non-licensed teachers has been submitted to DPI licensure.
- Ms. Turner asked if there were going to be any penalties to the school. Mr. Hussey replied that there would not be any money taken away but his office would be reassessing how they are currently doing things based upon Haliwa's report. If the school's charter is approved, the EC department will provide goals with short turnaround times.
- Ms. Michelle Varian, principal, introduced herself and the other representatives of the school which included board members and 1 other administrator, Ms. Rebecca Arroyo. Packets were distributed to the CSAB.
- Mr. Maimone noted that the school had underperformed the LEA and asked what the school was doing to address that. Ms. Varian replied that the school implemented Academy of Math, increased professional development, will have a focus on parent engagement and is working on teacher licensure for staff. The school had been looking at individual students instead of grade levels.
- Mr. Sanchez commented that the NC Report Cards showed that there had been a significant difference in graduation rate and subgroup data from the local LEA. Mr. Michael Richardson, chairman of the board, replied that there had been many challenges that the school had been able to overcome. The school had already begun to address EC issues. If the school did not have all of the money it needed, the tribe would be able to provide it.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if they would be in full compliance with EC by the end of the year. He also inquired about the measureable goals that they would be able to see at the end of his school year. Ms. Arroyo replied that there was turnover in administration and there were two teachers who were interim administrators after the administrator resigned last school year. From 2010-2012 the school instituted benchmark data that they are no longer using. They will have data from Read to Achieve and Academy of Math. Ms. Varian added that all the seniors will graduate and

the school was looking at creating partnerships so that students could dual enroll in the community college. All third graders would pass Read to Achieve and the proficiency for the school would be eighty percent within the next three to five years.

- Mr. Maimone asked how many of the seniors had passed with a passing score in Algebra, Biology and English II. Ms. Varian did not know because she had not looked at the data. She added that they passed the courses but they have not passed the EOC.
- Mr. Walker noted that the school's enrollment was increasing each year so the parents are making decisions to send their children to the school. Mr. Hussey added that EC would be willing to set benchmarks for the major issues that are in the program. The criteria would be very strictly set.
- **Mr. Maimone made a motion to give Haliwa-Saponi a one year renewal with stipulations that all compliance issues were addressed. Ms. Taylor added that she would like for them to provide a report to the CSAB in March with an update. Mr. Maimone replied that he would also like for them to provide an update in July with testing data. Mr. Walker seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Healthy Start Academy**

Ms. Honeycutt provided an overview of Healthy Start's historical academic data, subgroup data and highlighted a governance concern. She stated that the school had not been comparable to the LEA in any of the last three years and the subgroup data revealed that the school underperformed the district in every subgroup except LEP. She added that during the renewal process the school was not in compliance in EC. She stated that OCS and CSAB recommended a three year renewal with stipulations.

- Ms. Hudgins reported to the CSAB that the EC department conducted a targeted visit and discovered that the school had remedied the noncertified staff noncompliance issues. The school would have to provide compensatory education for the three months that the EC students were taught by a noncertified teacher.
- Dr. Jim McCormick, principal, stated that they were the first charter school to open and them currently had 387 students. He distributed a packet of information to the CSAB.
- Mr. Walker asked if the school lost students since the beginning of the school year. Mr. Maimone asked about the school's ADM. Mr. McCormick replied that there were approximately 35 students who moved since the beginning of the school year and ADM was 350.
- Mr. Walker asked if the school had a strong fund balance. The board chair, Ms. Liz Morey, replied that the fund balance was a little under one million dollars.
- Mr. Maimone replied that it was disappointing that the subgroups were well below the local LEA. Mr. McCormick replied that the school has some programs in place to address literacy and a consultant has been brought in to help the teachers develop lesson plans. There has also been an additional class added to all grades in K-3.
- Mr. Sanchez commented that it seemed like the school was at a plateau and they were using the student population for not performing well. He asked what the school's goals were. Mr. McCormick replied that the goal was to make growth and have at least a sixty percent composite score.
- **Mr. Walker made a motion to recommend Healthy Start Academy for a three year renewal with stipulations that the school become compliant in EC. Ms. Turner seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Phoenix Academy**

Ms. Robin Kendall provided an overview of Phoenix Academy's historical academic data, subgroup data and highlighted a governance concern. She stated that the school was currently on the Academic Watch list and there were governance concerns due to stipulations given with the SBE approval of a charter amendment. The Office of Charter Schools recommendation for Phoenix Academy is a 7 year renewal. If the school attains 60% proficiency or meets growth for 2014-2015 school year and the 2015-2016 school year, the term may become 10 years.

- Mr. Walker asked if a school does not make growth or sixty percent composite if they would be asked to come back before the CSAB because the statute puts stipulations on the charter. Dr. Medley responded that that matter would go before the SBE. Mr. Walker asked if the information that was requested by SBE would already be in a report that OCS had. Ms. Taylor responded that the SBE asked for a progress report highlighting academics, finances and operation and the report was supposed to be specific to the EMO.
- Mr. Chris Swadener distributed a booklet to the CSAB. Mr. Walker asked if the school could turn in the progress report prior to the end of the year. Ms. Cornetto stated that she spoke to the board chair who requested a template. The booklet that was presented to the CSAB was deficient and appeared to be promotion material for the school.
- Mr. Walker made motion to recommend a ten year renewal with stipulations that Phoenix Academy submit the report to SBE by the deadline. Ms. Reeves asked if the report had not been submitted if that counted as a current noncompliance. Mr. Swadner replied it was a formatting issues and that was why the report had not been submitted to SBE. Mr. Maimone seconded. Ms. Taylor stated that she would like to revisit the recommendation regarding the academic growth. Dr. Medley replied that OCS had a difficult time recommending a ten year renewal for a school that may possible be receiving termination. Mr. Chris replied that bringing in new students affected the school's data.
- Mr. Sanchez asked Dr. Medley for clarification regarding the SBE stipulations and formatting of the document. Dr. Medley replied that the stipulations were created on September 5, 2013. The school had more than a year but they never contacted the office about formatting until after we notified the school of missing the report's deadline.
- Mr. Maimone made a motion to allow the school's attorney to speak. Mr. Sanchez seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The school's attorney commented that the school looked at it as they provided all of the information that the SBE requested during the renewal process. He added that the document would be submitted shortly. There was a challenge in communication in which the attorney took fault. The motion failed 3-4 with Ms. Reeves, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Sanchez, and Ms. Turner dissenting.
- **Mr. Sanchez made a motion to recommend Phoenix Academy for a 7 year renewal due to the charter being on the academic watch list. If the school attains proficiency or meets growth for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years, the term may become 10 years. In addition, the board must follow the stipulations set forth by SBE. Ms. Taylor seconded.** Mr. Walker read from the statute and further commented that the he did not understand why the school was not receiving a ten year renewal based on the framework. Ms. Turner stated that the school was not currently compliant. **The motion carried 5-3 with Ms. Gibbs, Mr. Maimone and Mr. Walker dissenting.**

### **Southern Wake Academy**

Ms. Honeycutt provided an overview of Southern Wake's historical academic data, subgroup data and highlighted academic concerns. She stated the Office of Charter Schools recommended a five year renewal.

- Mr. David Thomas, director of the school, distributed a packet of information to the CSAB. He explained that there had been big academic changes to the school in which middle school had been added to the school.
- Mr. Maimone asked if the school had developed a reputation for growing EC students. Mr. Thomas replied that the school had established a relationship with the Autism Society. The school is meeting or exceeding growth. Ms. Taylor asked if there had been any EC Compliance issues. Mr. Thomas replied no.
- **Mr. Maimone made a motion to recommend Southern Wake Academy for a ten year renewal. Mr. Walker seconded.** Ms. Taylor asked if there had been any changes to the Board. Mr. Carol Reed, former school director, replied that there were 7 members and 4 had been on for 4 or more years. Mr. Sanchez noted that the EC data was remarkable and that other schools should be looking to learn from them. **The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Success Institute**

Ms. Sellers provided an overview of Success Institute's historical academic data, subgroup data and highlighted a compliance concern with Child Nutrition. She stated that the school had not been comparable to the LEA in any of the last three years.

- Dr. Lynn Harvey, Director of Child Nutrition (via telephone) stated that the issue was the counting meals at the point of service had not been accurately reported by the school. Ms. Turner asked if they had to have money reclaimed. Dr. Harvey replied that they have had less than one thousand dollars of their funds reclaimed.
- Ms. Teena Williams, principal, stated that the school was requesting a 10 year renewal. She asked the CSAB if they had any questions.
- Ms. Taylor stated that the enrollment numbers were not growing and inquired about the reasoning for that. Ms. Williams explained that the initial charter was written for one hundred students. There was a steady enrollment of ninety-three. The school was not losing kids and there was waiting list. .
- Ms. Taylor asked if the school could take more students. Ms. Williams stated that space was the issue. Eighty percent of the students receive free and reduced lunch. Lunch was inputted manually and she was advised by DPI staff not to purchase a machine to do a head count submission. The school spends over \$26,000 from the budget to fund child nutrition. There has been a nutrition specialist hired.
- Ms. Sanchez asked how many kids are served per day and how much money is being lost per day. The school serves ninety-five students per day and is reimbursed seven thousand dollars a month and spending sixteen thousand dollars a month. Ms. Taylor stated that she was concerned that the school was taking a hit financially in child nutrition. Ms. Turner asked if the school was preparing their own meals. The school is preparing their own. Mr. Sanchez asked why the school would continue to do the program if they continue to lose money at around \$4 per child each meal.

- Mr. Walker commented that the school has had some issues with their scores. Ms. Williams replied that the school was not prepared when the curriculum changed and and forty-one percent of the students are transitional.
- **Mr. Sanchez made a motion to recommend a three year renewal with stipulations that the school nutrition noncompliance is cleared by the end of the year and they remain compliant the term of the charter. Mr. Maimone seconded and he added a stipulation that a five year financial plan be completed by June 30, 2015. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **The Academy of Moore**

Ms. Swinson provided an overview of The Academy of Moore's historical academic data, subgroup data and highlighted academic concerns. She stated that the Office of Charter Schools recommended a five year renewal because they had not been comparable to the local LEA 2 out of 3 years.

- Ms. Allyson Schoen, principal, explained that the school transitioned from a traditional to year round and there was a drop in head count. The school once served a K-8 but eliminated the middle school program. The school serves forty percent of students who have parents that are deployed. The school was ranked 14<sup>th</sup> out of all schools for Read to achieve scores and they have implemented intense remediation.
- Mr. Maimone asked if there were any curriculum changes. Ms. Schoen replied that there was no down time and after 5 years the school has built a solid staff. Ms. Taylor asked what happened with 4<sup>th</sup> grade in 2012-13. Ms. Schoen explained that there was a lot of instructional time lost when the school implemented Covey. Ms. Reeves replied that the school is comparable to the LEA.
- **Mr. Maimone made a motion to recommend The Academy of Moore for a 7 year renewal. Ms. Turner seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

### **Dynamic Community Charter School**

Ms. Sellers explained that Dynamic Community Charter School was invited to attend the CSAB meeting because of financial and academic concerns. She shared information from a news report and the school's website that evidenced that school's concerning financial status. Ms. Sellers gave an overview of a site visit that she conducted in which more information about the schools finances and academic concerns were noted.

- Mr. Hussey stated that the Exceptional Children's office conducted a site visit and there were troubling findings at Dynamic. Ms. Hudgins presented information from a LEA program assessment. There were major issues with Child Find procedures, IEP and discipline to students with disabilities. The building had been used previously as a nursing home and the small room sizes were still reflective of this. Every student in the school is owed compensatory services at this time.
- The Chairman of the Board replied that she was surprised at some of the information that was cited in the EC report that was given. She requested additional time to digest the report. As far as funding was concerned, she explained that there were forty-six students who were identified and had not received funding and the school operated for 3 months without EC funding. The staff had received training but the previous lead administrator may not have kept up with it.

- Ms. Taylor asked the name of the curriculum that was being used. The board chair or the lead administrator did not know the name of the curriculum. Ms. Turner reminded that board that during the application interview funding was highlighted as a concern. Board chair replied that they were not aware that they would have twenty-four home schooled students and IEPs were rewritten for a separate setting. As far as funding, the parents raised one hundred thousand dollars this year and next year they would be eligible for other funds.
- Mr. Maimone read from the school's approved application and inquired about the number of original board members that were on the board. The board chair replied that the people listed in the application are the ones who wrote it but are not current board members.
- Mr. Maimone stated that the approved application stated that the board anticipated all children at DSS would be exceptional children. He added that it sounded like the school was opened completely unprepared. The Board chair replied the school administrator was not well versed in EC. Mr. Maimone asked how the board could hire a lead administrator who did not know EC well. She replied that the Board made an error in that hire and one that shared the passion of the board he lacked the administrative skills that was needed in that position.
- Ms. Taylor asked if the Board had a budget. The Board chair replied that the budget that she had did not reflect changes that were communicated to Arcadia or grants that the board applied for.
- Ms. Taylor asked if the findings in the report were incorrect. The board chair replied that some of what they were saying was inaccurate. Ms. Taylor asked if the lead administrator, who was formerly a teacher at the school, knew the curriculum and what was being taught. She responded that the teachers were using literature and they are using a full curriculum that may be called the Explore curriculum. She was not aware of the school's curriculum. Ms. Taylor stated that her response was very concerning.
- Ms. Crumpler stated that if the CSAB made a recommendation to SBE nothing would immediately happen. The board would be called in to answer questions by a panel that would then make a recommendation.
- Ms. Gibbs made a motion for the school to come back in two months. Mr. Maimone replied that there was an urgency and added that the lead administrator and entire board attend the January meeting with a satisfactory report for the issues that were addressed. Ms. Gibbs accepted the amendment. Ms. Taylor requested that someone from DPI go out and observe. The motion failed 4-4 with Ms. Taylor, Ms. Turner, Mr. Sanchez and Ms. Reeves dissenting.
- Ms. Taylor made a motion to initiate the revocation process for Dynamic. It was seconded by Ms. Turner. Mr. Walker stated that he could not in good conscious make a recommendation when the school did not receive the information until Friday at 3:30 pm. Ms. Gibbs added that they had been blindsided. Mr. Maimone stated that the application was approved and they needed due process. Ms. Nance added if the CSAB recommended that it go to the SBE and it gives them several months to go to SBE. The motion failed 4-4 with Mr. Maimone, Ms. Gibbs, Mr. Walker and Ms. Reeves dissenting.
- **Mr. Sanchez made a motion to invite the entire board and EC teacher to CSAB in January to present a plan on how issues would be corrected by the end of the school year. If the school does not provide a satisfactory report, a revocation recommendation would be made. Mr. Walker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**



Ms. Honeycutt stated the Longleaf School for the Arts was asked to come before the CSAB because of financial concerns that were highlighted in the schools board meeting minutes. There were also governance concerns in which there were no current board members who were founding board members.

- Sabrina Frances, Board chair, explained that there was a new board. The members of the board had been serving four months or less. The board is helping to improve board governance. The new board saw the budget for the first time in September. At the last board meeting there was a positive surplus of three thousand dollars projected at the end of the year. Dr. Broome had resigned her position so her salary could be used and teacher's salaries would not be reduced. Dr. Broome would entertain the idea of negotiating a contract next year as long as the school is financially sound.
- Ms. Turner replied that she was impressed with the knowledge of the school. The budget is tight and can be done with monitoring. Dr. Broome replied that there are weekly meetings scheduled with finance.

### **Washington Montessori**

Ms. Swinson provided an overview of Washington Montessori's historical academic data, subgroup data and highlighted compliance concerns in Exceptional Children's and Title II. She stated the Office of Charter Schools recommended a five year renewal because they had not been compliant in all areas during the 2014-15 school years. **Mr. Walker made a motion to recommend a ten year renewal for Washington Montessori and if they are not compliant within a year, they are to be brought back before the CSAB. Ms. Gibbs seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Schauss shared financial audit information for Arts Based School, Art Space, and Millennium Academy. **The recommendation from the November CSAB meeting was accepted as these school audits had no findings.** Ms. Schauss noted that although Phoenix Academy had sound finances, there was an unusual loan that she would be asking the school about. Ms. Turner asked for the information concerning the loan to be shared with the CSAB.

**Mr. Maimone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at meeting 4:39 pm. Ms. Taylor seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**