

**Minutes of the
North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board
Education Building
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601-2825
March 10, 2014**

Attendance/NCCSAB	Alan Hawkes Joseph Maimone Baker Mitchell Helen Nance Paul Norcross (absent) Mike McLaughlin	Alex Quigley Eric Sanchez Tammi Sutton Becky Taylor Cheryl Turner Steven Walker
Attendance/SBE/DPI	<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Joel Medley, Director Thomas Miller, Consultant Lisa Swinson, Consultant Deanna Smith, Consultant Robin Kendall, NACSA Fellow Cande Honeycutt, Consultant	<i>SBE</i> Martez Hill Katie Cornetto <i>Attorney General's Office</i> Laura Crumpler

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

After extending a welcome to all participants, Chair Helen Nance called the March 10, 2014 session of the Charter Advisory Board meeting to order. Ms. Nance led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance. Immediately following she read the Ethics Statement. Ms. Turner stated that she would be recusing herself from any discussion related to Student First. Mr. Sanchez recused himself from discussions related to the Kerr-Vance application. Mr. Maimone recused himself from discussions related to the Excelsior and Shining Rock applications.

Mr. Joe Maimone made a motion to accept the February minutes. Mr. Steven Walker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

GOVERNOR PAT MCCRORY COMMENTS

Governor Pat McCrory greeted the Board. He stated that he was concerned about the fact that there seemed to be three separate silos in education and he would like to message that everyone should be on the same team to help all children. He further added that charters were also not a separate segregated unit of education. He commented that he was a big supporter of charters. He encouraged the Board to ask the tough questions and not to play politics. Decisions should be based on the facts and the same standards should be put on every school regardless of what type

of school they are. He noted that he had received good feedback concerning the Advisory Board and encouraged everyone to do their job and do the right thing. Ms. Nance thanked Governor McCrory and informed him that she appreciated him coming to the meeting and that the board shared his expressed feelings about helping all children.

Mr. Maimone made a motion to move application team reports to 8:00 am on March 11 so that they could go into evaluation team reviews. The motion passed unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Becky Taylor made a motion for the Charter School Advisory Board to go into closed session due to attorney-client privilege. Mr. Walker seconded. The CSAB voted unanimously to go into closed session.

Mr. Maimone made a motion that CSAB return to open session and it was seconded by Mr. Walker. The CSAB voted unanimously to return to open session and did so.

CHARTER RENEWAL UPDATE

Ms. Lisa Swinson shared the following information pertaining to charter schools renewing in 2015:

- There are 20 schools that are up for Renewal 2015.
- Of the 20 schools, renewal site visits have been scheduled for 12 of the schools beginning March 14th through May 23rd. The remainders of the site visits are scheduled to occur in the fall.
- Compliance Trends:
- 12 of the 20 schools have no areas of noncompliance.
- Of the schools that have areas of noncompliance one has significant noncompliance trends with Child Nutrition, three have noncompliance in Title II and three have noncompliance in exceptional children's. There is only one school that has more than one area of noncompliance.
- This winter, the board was informed you that they would be discussing amendments to the current charter renewal process. Will schools with high academics, strong finances and no compliance issues earn autonomy through a streamlined process? Our office is the process of drafting a Performance Framework that could be used to help streamline this process. The plan is to bring the information to the Board for feedback.

MEETING RESUMED AT 1:00 PM

MS. NANCE READ THE ETHICS STATEMENT. MR. MTICHELL RECUSED HIMSELF. MS. TURNER RECUSED HERSELF

CURRENT CHARTER SCHOOL DISCUSSION

Ms. Barbara Jones, Headmaster of Douglas Academy, read a letter to the Advisory Board that was emailed to the Advisory Board and placed on SBE E-board. Ms. Jones stated that the school currently has 33 students enrolled.

- Ms. Nance stated that she noticed that the school stopped accepting students after the 20th day. Ms. Jones stated that the school would not have been able to receive funding to support them. Ms. Taylor asked about the school's projected enrollment and Ms. Jones replied 225 but it was revised after the school had difficulty getting students. Mr. Quigley asked what reasons the school attributed to the low enrollment. Ms. Jones replied that many of the parents were concerned about the school not opening.
- Mr. Walker asked for an explanation for why the post office did not distribute the mailers because it was a big hit to the budget. Ms. Jones stated that they did not justify it. Mr. Walker asked how many students were from the south side. Ms. Jones stated that there are two students from the original targeted area. Ms. Sutton asked if enrollment had started for next year.
- Ms. Jones stated that seventy-five students have completed enrollment packets. Mr. Quigley asked for more information about the school's budget for the upcoming school year. The board chair, Mr. Ferrante, stated that the budget is based on 85. There was \$100,000 donation and management fee has been waived. The board is focused and there are some new members. He stated that the board is requesting a waiver or an extension. Ms. Jones has been doing community outreach. He explained that he has been the board chair on the board for a month. There are 3 new members out of 7. The board chair explained that the board's top two priorities are to increase enrollment and to block and tackle what they have been doing.
- Ms. Nance asked Dr. Medley if there was policy that you have to have 65 students. Dr. Medley stated that schools must have 65 students. A waiver can be granted if the school is geographically remote. Ms. Crumpler read the grounds for granting a waiver from the statutes.
- **Mr. Maimone made a motion that Douglas be granted a one year waiver. The schools second year PMR should be at 65. Mr. Hawkes seconded.** Ms. Nance asked what would happen if the enrollment is not 65. Ms. Nance stated that the process would take several months and they could go through a second year with the low enrollment.
- Ms. Lisa Swinson visited the school prior to opening. She noted that the school is located in a large building that previously belonged to Head Start. The school provides lunch and transportation but, not many students taking advantage of the transportation. Students are educated by levels, not necessarily by grade level.
- Mr. Sanchez asked for the recommendation from OCS. Dr. Medley stated that there are three schools that have been granted a waiver who served students that were placed there by the Department of Social Services. He further noted that granting the school a waiver may set precedent for upcoming applicants.
- **The motion passed unanimously.**

STUDENT FIRST

Dr. Medley stated that the issues with Student First Academy are that there are significant financial issues, turnover of the administrative staff and the board has had instances of not following Open Meetings Laws. He further noted that a recent site visit from DPI EC staff noted significant concerns in which student records were unorganized and compensatory time would need to be made for several students. Moreover, it appeared that the school did not have an EC program.

- Ms. Sutton asked about the number of students in the EC program. Dr. Medley stated that the records were in disarray and a number could not be established.
- Mr. Victor Mack, the board chair, explained that the board with the assistance of Prestige Preparatory Schools implemented a financial recovery plan. The board believes that in two and a-half years the school would be able to pay off the current debt.
- Ms. Nance asked why the EC program had been evaluated so poorly. Mr. Mack stated that the previous administration did not have an EC teacher until October. That teacher kept sloppy records. It wasn't until late December that the board was made aware of the severity. Prestige came in and completed a needs assessment. Arcadia Northstar does the schools Power School and ISIS.
- Ms. Nance asked if Arcadia notified the school of the financial deficit. Mr. Mack stated that in September, financial records showed the school was in good standing. In October, Arcadia informed the Board that the finances were not in good standing.
- Mr. Hawkes noted that the Charlotte Newspapers stated that the Board allowed the previous administrators' family members to be hired and there was misuse of the credit card. Mr. Hawkes asked if the same board was managing the school. Mr. Mack stated that the same board was running the school.
- The Board was not aware of the extent of the indiscretions until October. The Board did not believe that there were any embezzlements but expenses that were not properly documented. Mr. Walker asked about the violations of Open Meetings Laws. Mr. Mack stated that there were three meetings that were not documented correctly. They were emergency meetings to discuss the Head of School and Deputy Head of School as board members. During those meetings they were removed from the board. Open Meetings laws state that there does not have to be proper notice if they are emergency.
- Ms. Sutton asked about the number on the board. Mr. Mack responded that there were 6 original members on the Board. Ms. Nance asked about the number of students in the school. Mr. Mack replied 293.
- Jennifer Winstell, board member, stated that the board was in complete communication with all vendors. Mr. Quigley asked how much Prestige was being paid. The board member replied that they charge \$235 per student per year for three years. Mr. Mack stated they are a consulting group.
- Mr. Sanchez asked Dr. Medley about the urgency of the board. Dr. Medley replied that the school has been notified of complaints since the beginning of the school year. Since OCS notified them of the complaints they have responded on or before the deadline. The biggest concerns are the finances and EC program.
- Ms. Nance stated that the school was made aware of the EC problems in December but were still out of compliance in March. Mr. Mack replied that the school was trying to rectify it. The new director started five weeks ago. Ms. Nance stated that within the last 2 months the school should have been able to identify who the EC students were through PowerSchool. An action plan was presented to the EC Director in December but there was still noncompliance there.

- Mr. Quigley asked what the focus of the school was. Mr. Mack replied Cultural Arts. Deb Holiday, board member, stated that a member of the Board had been actively trying to correct the afterschool cultural arts program. They were implementing several different arts programs within the school day. They were trying to live up to the promise.
- Ms. Nance asked Dr. Medley what options the Board had. Dr. Medley stated that the Board could be given the chance to work their plan or their charter can be revoked.
- Mr. Maimone asked if there is a written correction action plan. Mr. Maimone stated that he did not have enough information to make a decision.
- Mr. Quigley asked about the schools 90 day plan. Mr. Mack stated that there is a financial plan.
- Mr. Maimone made a motion that by March 31, 2014 a corrective action plan be submitted that included the school's current budget. Mr. Quigley seconded. It was also requested that the principal and EC staff member be present at the April CSAB meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

The Advisory Board adjourned into application evaluation team reviews.

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CALL TO ORDER

After extending a welcome to all participants, Chair Helen Nance called the March 11, 2014 session of the Charter Advisory Board meeting to order. Ms. Nance led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance. Immediately following, she read the Ethics Statement and the mission of the Advisory Board.

Ms. Sutton recused himself from Kerr-Vance.

EVALUATION TEAM REPORTS

Ms. Nance explained that a representative from each evaluation team would present the recommendation to the Advisory Board.

- After reading information from the application rubrics, Mr. Maimone made a motion not to recommend an interview for Appalachian Heritage Academy, Cardinal Charter Academy at North Raleigh and Knightdale, Kerr-Vance Charter Academy and to recommend an interview for Asheville Math and Science and Gateway Charter Academy. Mr. Walker seconded. The motion carried 8-1 with Mr. Hawkes dissenting and Mr. Sanchez recusing himself.
- After reading the information from the application rubrics, Ms. Nance made a motion not to recommend an interview for AMITA, The Aviation Medical Technology, Heritage, and FOCUS

Charter School and to recommend an interview for Bastiat and Excelsior. The motion carried 9-1 with Mr. Hawkes dissenting.

- After reading information from the application rubrics, Mr. Sanchez made a motion not to recommend an interview for A. Michael Dixon, Bonnie Cone and, Felix A Penn and to recommend an interview for Addie C. Morris, Cabarrus STEM, and Charlotte Lab. The motion carried unanimously
- After reading information from the application rubrics, Mr. Quigley made a motion not to recommend an interview for Ballencrest Charter Academy, Capital City Charter, Central Wake Charter High School, Davidson Charter Academy, Essentials of Excellence Academy and recommended FernLeaf Community Charter School. Mr. Cheryl Seconded. The motion carried 9-1 with Mr. Hawkes dissenting.

ADJOURN FOR APPLICATION REVIEWS

The Advisory Board adjourned into application evaluation team reviews.

EVALUATION TEAM REPORTS

The Advisory Board reconvened. Mr. Maimone made a motion to vote on each application individually. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Nance shared information from the rubrics of Evaluation Team B. She made the following recommendations:

- Ms. Nance made a motion to forward KIPP Durham for an interview. Mr. Eric Sanchez seconded. The motion carried unanimously with Ms. Sutton and Mr. Quigley abstaining.
- Ms. Nance made a motion not to forward New Hope Charter School for an interview. Mr. Maimone seconded. The motion carried 9-1 with Mr. Hawkes dissenting.
- Ms. Nance made a motion to forward Matthews Mint Hill for an interview. Mr. Maimone seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- Ms. Nance made a motion to forward PAVE Southeast for an interview. Ms. Taylor seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- Ms. Nance made a motion not to forward Springs Academy for an interview. Mr. Eric Sanchez seconded. The motion carried 8-0 with Mr. Hawkes abstaining.
- Ms. Nance made a motion to forward Renaissance West for an interview. Ms. Taylor seconded. The motion carried unanimously with Ms. Sutton abstaining.
- Ms. Nance made a motion not to forward River Pointe for an interview. Mr. Quigley seconded. The motion carried 8-1 with Mr. Hawkes dissenting.
- Ms. Nance made a motion to forward Success Academy for an interview. Mr. Eric Sanchez seconded. The motion carried unanimously with Ms. Sutton and Mr. Hawkes abstaining.

Mr. Maimone shared information from the rubrics of Evaluation Team A. He made the following recommendations:

- Mr. Maimone made a motion not to forward Lee Scholars Academy for an interview. Mr. Walker seconded. The motion carried 8-1 with Mr. Hawkes dissenting.
- Mr. Maimone made a motion not to forward Lake Academy for an interview. Mr. Walker seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- Mr. Maimone made a motion not to forward Mecklenburg Charter Academy at Lake Norman for an interview. Mr. Walker seconded. The motion carried 8-1 with Mr. Hawkes dissenting.
- Mr. Maimone made a motion not to forward Mooresville Charter Academy for an interview. Mr. Walker seconded. The motion carried 8-1 with Mr. Hawkes dissenting.
- Mr. Maimone made a motion to forward North Carolina Connections Academy. Mr. Walker seconded. Mr. Hawkes asked if they would get funded the same amount as LEAs. He asked if there would be a physical address for students to be able to meet periodically for testing and meetings. He also asked if the hardware would be provided for students. The motion carried 6-2 with Ms. Sutton and Ms. Taylor dissenting.
- Mr. Maimone made a motion not to forward North Carolina Virtual Academy for an interview. Ms. Sutton seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- Mr. Maimone made a motion to forward Patriot Charter Academy for an interview. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Hawkes recused himself.
- Mr. Maimone made a motion not to forward Robert J. Brown Leadership Academy for an interview. Mr. Walker seconded. Mr. Hawkes asked for clarification on the finance section. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Sanchez shared information from the rubrics of Evaluation Team C. He made the following recommendations:

- Mr. Sanchez made a motion not to forward Furman Bridges for an interview. Mr. Maimone seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- Mr. Sanchez made a motion not to forward Kannapolis Charter for an interview. Ms. Taylor seconded. The motion carried 8-1 with Mr. Hawkes dissenting.
- Mr. Sanchez made a motion not to forward Mallard Creek STEM Academy for an interview. Ms. Taylor seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- Mr. Sanchez made a motion to forward Raleigh Matthews Academy for an interview. Mr. Maimone seconded. Mr. Walker asked for clarification on the votes for each section. Mr. Maimone added that the criteria for the Advisory Board were if the Education Plan, Financial Plan or Governance were inadequate the application would not be forwarded. Mr. Hawkes asked if that was etched in stone. Mr. Hawkes stated that he would have liked an explanation of the schools education plan because it had some unique qualities. The motion failed 1- 8 with Mr. Maimone, Mr. Walker, Ms. Turner, Ms. Taylor, Ms. Nance, Mr. Quigley, Mr. Sanchez and Ms. Sutton dissenting.
- Mr. Sanchez made a motion not to forward Mecklenburg Charter at McAlpine for an interview. The motion carried 8-1 with Mr. Hawkes dissenting.
- Mr. Sanchez made a motion to forward VERITAS Community for an interview. Mr. Maimone seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- Mr. Sanchez made a motion not to forward Next Generation for an interview. Mr. Maimone seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- Mr. Sanchez made a motion to forward Queen City STEM for an interview. Mr. Maimone seconded the motion. The motion carried 6-3 with Ms. Turner, Mr. Walker and Ms. Sutton dissenting.

Mr. Quigley shared information from the rubrics of Evaluation Team D. He made the following recommendations:

- Mr. Quigley made a motion not to forward Frontier Community for an interview. Ms. Sutton seconded. The motion carried 7-1 with Mr. Hawkes dissenting.
- Mr. Quigley made a motion not to forward Ignite Innovation for an interview. Ms. Nance seconded. The motion carried 7-1 with Mr. Hawkes dissenting.
- Mr. Quigley made a motion not to forward Open GATE for an interview. Ms. Nance seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- Mr. Quigley made a motion not to forward Our City's Community for an interview. Ms. Taylor seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- Mr. Quigley made a motion to forward Piedmont Classical for an interview. Ms. Sutton seconded. The motion carried 7-0 with Mr. Hawkes abstaining.
- Mr. Quigley made a motion not to forward Shining Rock Classical for an interview. Ms. Taylor seconded. There was a discussion regarding paid company members sitting on the board that cannot be voted off. Mr. Maimone stated that he would abstain from the vote because the legal advice that was given to the subcommittee was bad. Ms. Nance made a motion to table the discussion until further information could be received. Mr. Walker seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- Mr. Quigley made a motion not to forward Town Center for an interview. Steven Walker seconded. The motion carried unanimously with Mr. Hawkes abstaining.
- Mr. Quigley made a motion not to forward Union Preparatory for an interview. Ms. Taylor seconded. The motion carried 6-1.

Mr. Walker made a motion that the interviews take place with the full Charter School Advisory Board members being part of the 30 minute interview. The motion was seconded by Mr. Maimone. There was a discussion regarding the length of the interview time. Dr. Medley suggested that there be no presentation time by the applicants to ensure the CSAB has the questions answered. In previous sessions some groups took the majority of the time with their presentations and there was a motion without effective vetting. Mr. Quigley recommended the board chair of the subcommittee lead the interview process. **The motion failed 4-4 with Ms. Nance, Mr. Quigley, Ms. Taylor and Mr. Sanchez dissenting.**

Ms. Nance asked Dr. Medley to schedule a call meeting so that the CSAB could discuss the interview process.

The meeting adjourned.