

Minutes of the North Carolina Charter School Review Board
State Board Room 755, Department of Public Instruction
January 8, 2024
9 AM

Attendance – CSRБ Members	
Alex Granados- (nonvoting) Dr. Rita Haire Dr. John Eldridge Alex Quigley Hilda Parlér Dr. Shelly Shope	Eric Sanchez- Absent Bruce Friend Dave Machado Todd Godbey Dr. Bartley Danielsen- Absent Stephen Gay
Attendance – Other	
<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Ashley Baquero, Director Joseph Letterio, Consultant- Absent Melanie Rackley, Consultant- Virtual Jenna Cook, Consultant Dr. Natasha Norins, Consultant Dr. Brandi Gill, Consultant Nicky Niewinski, Consultant Megan Carter, Consultant Davida Robinson, NC ACCESS- Absent Dr. Barbara O’Neal, NC ACCESS- Absent	<i>Attorney General</i> Zach Padget- Absent <i>SBE Attorney</i> Allison Schafer- Absent <i>Teacher/Principal of Year</i> William Storrs- TOY- Absent Maria Mills- POY- Absent TJ Worrell- POY Ryan Henderson- TOY

Recording of January CSRБ Meeting: [January 2024 NC Charter Schools Review Board Meeting - Jan. 8, 2024 \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Call To Order

Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Bruce Friend

Mission and Ethics Statement:

- Mission and Ethics Statement, Mr. Bruce Friend, Board Chair

Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

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

Second: Dr. Shelly Shope

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

Motion: Dr. John Eldridge motioned to approve December 2023 minutes.

Second: Dr. Rita Haire

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

January Charter Schools Review Board Meeting

Amendments: Ms. Nicky Niewinski, OCS Consultant

- GO BIG – Relocation and Enrollment Reduction Update
 - Ms. Niewinski introduced GO BIG and noted they were asked back this month to clarify the amendment presented in December. The amendment is no longer needed. However, given the questions/concerns mentioned in December it was determined that GO BIG representatives should come before CSRБ to address those concerns.
 - The Board Chair introduced herself and the members of GO BIG board that were in-person and online. She then went into a brief overview of the founding history of their school. This included previous charter school applications.
 - Reviewed the mission and vision of the school and their passion and dedication to the mission.
 - Shared program highlights including planned support programs.
 - The Board chair discussed current facility plans which remain in the designated zip code of their application.
 - Mr. Friend asked if they've started enrollment for 2024 and if there was strong demand.
 - The Board Chair noted that 10 families have enrolled, out of the 100s on their interest list. Noted a partnership with a consulting firm to boost enrollment in target demographic.
 - Mr. Machado asked what their projected numbers were, and the Board chair outlined their projected enrollment of 300, break even number of 280.
 - Mr. Friend asked if they were providing transportation for families, and a GO BIG board member explained their current transportation plan which included a few school busses, carpool system and a plan that may include the public transportation system in Charlotte (CAT).
 - Ms. Parlér asked if parents would need to pay for that service and Ms. Tiller and the Board Chair explained how the school would support parents who needed help paying for that service including McKinney Vento families.
 - Ms. Parlér asked what the exact fee was for a 'CAT' pass and the board was unclear to what that fee was.
 - Mr. Friend asked if they were voting on anything since the amendment last month was to move zip codes (and now they are not). Ms. Niewinski stated that was correct. It was determined that based on concerns expressed in December, the GO BIG board was asked to present to provide an update to CSRБ. Ms. Baquero also reminded CSRБ that they would receive regular updates on 8 RTO schools beginning in a few months.

- Mr. Friend expressed concern over the enrollment numbers and stressed they work hard to get the adequate enrollment numbers. Mentioned recent closure of a school due to low enrollment.
- Dr. Haire congratulated the school for finding a facility and asked if they are still working with ACD. The Board chair said they were not.
- Mr. Machado suggested they look at their transportation plan again due to the safety concerns of putting a kindergartner on a ‘CAT’ bus. Dr. Haire also noted concern over not knowing how much one of those passes cost. Board chair reiterated desire to figure this out and understand what parents might need from the school.
- West Triangle High School – 2nd Delay
 - Ms. Niewinski introduced the amendment requesting a second delay. Noted all required documents have been submitted.
 - Mr. Quigley mentioned his previous connection with the school and noted that he left the board last September so there’s no COI between him and the school regarding this amendment.
 - Mr. Friend asked Mr. Quigley about the facility and a previous partnership with Carolina Achieve. Mr. Quigley mentioned there shouldn’t be any enrollment concerns since it was a stand-alone facility. He additionally noted this school would be open in 2024 if the facility they initially found was not denied for political purposes. Noted the reasoning / details pertaining to the proposed location and feels this school would be very popular with a stronger financial position as a result.
 - The Executive Director of the Board – Mr. Webb – explained the current situation and the history of their facility during the RTO process. Noted this proposed location would get costs down to \$17 per sq ft. after they get to their final size. Reiterated his excitement and desire to go with this property and said they are working with the developer to get everything in line.
 - Mr. Machado asked if this was part of the NC Access Program and Ms. Baquero said yes, she asked Mr. Webb what their award was, and Mr. Webb said that it was close to \$1.2 million. First reimbursement was approved in November of \$105,000. Dr. O’Neal has given them until September to spend down balance.
 - Dr. Haire asked for clarification on the delay and expressed concern over Mr. Quigley’s proposal to have a 3-year onboarding ramp for new charter schools. Mentioned that they – as the CSRБ – need to really know when changes occur with applicants as a way to monitor alignment with original applications. Concerned about precedent being set when there seems to be large material changes to a school’s application prior to opening.
 - Mr. Quigley reiterated his reasoning for why he believes their needs to be a 3-year on ramp. Expressed frustration over the amount of money WTHS is sitting on that they can’t spend due to the timeline they are pressured to follow. In reality, this is a more conservative enrollment projection.
 - Mr. Webb explained why they want to add a 10th grade option in year 1 based on relationships built with families whose students would’ve been students in 9th grade but will now be going into 10th grade when school opens. Maintaining commitment to those families remains a priority.
 - Dr. Haire expressed concerns over the proposed enrollment and how it would drastically change their application if they hit their projected enrollment numbers.
 - Mr. Quigley and Mr. Friend both agreed with this, and Mr. Friend noted that budgets change significantly throughout and right after the RTO process.

- Mr. Quigley asked if they got approved for a higher budget in the first delay and explained that when he wrote the application, he modeled it after research of similar school models. Stated the initial vision of WTHS becomes more material due to stronger support from the community they are moving closer to. Stated in the end this is a much better plan than what some other schools have come to us with. Gave more details pertaining to this application with his experience helping to write the application.
- Mr. Machado reiterated that it was difficult and asked that Mr. Webb answer a majority of these questions rather than Alex. Mr. Webb then introduced all other board members who were on the call.
- Dr. Haire agreed with what Alex mentioned and asked what the policy is regarding amendments to avoid any potential differences in approvals between schools. Want to make sure we're consistent.
- Ms. Baquero mentioned there are rules in place – in the Administrative Code – that require OCS to bring certain amendments to the CSRБ and others that allow OCS to approve. Stated sometimes there are details that OCS may miss when evaluating amendments where CSRБ input becomes helpful; and addressed other concerns that Dr. Haire had regarding enrollment.
- Mr. Quigley agreed with Ms. Baquero adding if there is evidence a school is not going to open, or drastic changes are going to be made, then the school needs to go back into the application process. Several board members agreed with this.
- Dr. Eldridge added that there must be room for CSRБ judgment when evaluating amendment requests based on situation.

Motion: Dr. John Eldridge motioned to approve West Triangle High School's Request for a 2nd Delay and amendment as written.

Second: Mr. Todd Godbey

Discussion:

Mr. Quigley asked if OCS can look at what other state authorizers are doing in regards to timelines to open and Mr. Machado noted that he wants to have that conversation but that he thinks it is something that needs to be changed legislatively and not with the CSRБ.

Vote: Unanimous

Passed Failed

- Achievement Charter Academy – Grade Level Expansion
 - Ms. Niewinski introduced the amendment and noted statutory guidelines as reason school needs to come before CSRБ for approval. She noted that although they are listed as CLP, they have had significant academic growth and received awards from DPI for this growth. She also noted they are NC ACCESS recipients and mentioned the proposed enrollment charts over the next 2 years.
 - Mr. Friend asked for clarification on why they were before the board. Ms. Niewinski clarified based on CLP status. Without that status, this grade level expansion could happen without an amendment.

- Mr. Friend asked why they decided to take 2 years for this amendment (2 grade levels over 2 years). School leader noted that due to their small size it would help with student retention for families to know they will serve K-8.
- Ms. Parlér asked where they are located and noted that the area might yield an expanded enrollment. School leader mentioned facility limitations related to student enrollment. Stated they would like to expand further but don't have the space at this time.
- Mr. Gay asked to clarify Ms. Parlér's question. He stated trying to get it right before getting too big. The school leader agreed with Mr. Gay's perspective and stated they hope to expand the facility in the future.
- Mr. Gay asked if they believed they needed to expand due to increasing costs; The school leader said yes and mentioned a few reasons why they are currently unable to expand. Also noted other 2 charter schools within 20 minutes were K-8 and school is losing students as older students went onto higher grades and families would take younger siblings so all kids were in the same school.
- Dr. Eldridge asked about fund balance, and the board chair gave her school's fund balance. Also noted they were under-enrolled last year but caught up this year.
 - Dr. Eldridge asked the Board Chair to give an elevator speech on why their school is different than Harnett County. The school leader explained the Glasser model based in SEL and how they serve students.

Motion: Mr. Dave Machado motioned to approve the amendment as written.

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Discussion:

- Mr. Machado noted this school has done a good job of being a neighborhood school and surviving through COVID.

Vote: Unanimous

Passed Failed

- Quality Education – Weighted Lottery
 - Ms. Niewinski introduced amendment as well as board members in-person and online. Noted the school opened in 1997 and is seeking to add a weighted lottery to their application. She also noted they are required to seek approval of the CSRБ due to the nature of this change and OCS has worked with school to make sure everything was in order before coming to the CSRБ.
 - Mr. Friend asked if there is a waitlist across grade levels and Dr. Turner, school leader, said yes there's a small waitlist across all grades.
 - Dr. Haire asked why they decided to do this now since they've been open since 1997. Dr. Turner noted that although they are already serving the requirements for this, their participation in the NC ACCESS program strongly recommended to implement the weighted lottery. Wanted to put this in writing that we weren't afraid to serve this population.

Motion: Mr. Dave Machado motioned to approve the amendment as written.

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Discussion:

Vote: Unanimous

Passed Failed

School Business – 2024 Renewals Presentation and Audit Review: Ms. Shirley McFadden, NCDPI
Monitoring and Compliance Manager

- Mr. Friend introduced Ms. McFadden and noted that the board gets a financial review of the 17 schools in renewal before voting on them in February.
- Ms. McFadden gave an overview of what School Business does and noted that each year they do a financial health test of all charter schools. She also went into detail on some of the items that were examined in the financial health analysis.
 - She noted they had the option to add a school to non-compliance based on board policy and listed the options within that policy they could choose from.
- Ms. McFadden noted all schools in renewal and added 12 of the schools had no issues. Added there is one school they had to place in non-compliance.
 - Marjorie Williams Academy – who is not in noncompliance – is not making a lot of revenue. She noted that last FY, they accounted for the ESSER III funds received in their revenue and noted that it was over 50% of their revenue for FY 23.
 - The Capitol Encore Academy- spent more than they made. Noted that the management company might be waiving the fees, but they needed more analysis.
 - Community School of Davidson- a few COI's. She noted the treasurer of the board was also the director of the school; a contracted bookkeeper was the spouse of the board chair; and 3 board members are employed by the school. More details were listed in her presentation. She added DPI needs to do its due diligence to examine those related parties and see if there has been any change since they initially found this.
 - Movement School Eastland- on Financial Noncompliance due to a few reasons. She noted they were in the negatives for government fund balances and owed a \$250,000 loan on 6/24 to the Movement Foundation.
- Dr. Haire asked if there has been any status update for Movement Eastland in the past and Ms. McFadden noted they would be put on financial noncompliance due to the negative balances. She also added that Movement presents its finances 'as a whole' instead of individually and that DPI must go in individually.
- Ms. Parlér asked if this is the only 'Movement' School and Ms. McFadden noted that this was the only one up for renewal. Dr. Haire asked if this school wasn't up for renewal if they would have found these noncompliance issues and Ms. McFadden said yes.
- Ms. Baquero asked if DPI staff would get a letter before it's sent out and Ms. McFadden said yes and clarified the procedure that her staff would be using to send out those letters.
- Mr. Machado asked how they found out about those relationships from 'Community School of Davidson' and Ms. McFadden said that it was found in the audit and listed as a 'relationship'.

2024 Renewal Cohort Update: Ms. Jenna Cook, OCS Consultant

- Ms. Jenna Cook introduced herself and gave a reminder that CSRБ would not be voting on the renewal cohort today.
 - She gave an overview of the schools in the renewal cohort and noted that the CSRБ interviewed 14/17 schools (all but the 10-year renewals). She also noted the data that was provided in previous meetings as well as a data sheet they received for these schools.
 - Ms. Cook went over a summary of the placements within the renewal cohort and noted potential discrepancies in data collection due to the pandemic and potentially other findings from school business. She also noted schools on the CLP list and the changes from December’s meeting for Children’s Village Academy from 3-year renewal to non-renewal.
 - Ms. Cook went over the voting guidelines and noted CSRБ would be voting based on the current renewal guidelines. She stated schools have been notified and can send any data/supplemental documentation to the board.
- Mr. Friend asked if CVA has been notified of these changes and there still may be a school that changes ‘brackets’ due to findings found by school business. Mr. Friend and Ms. Cook mentioned it may be fair to bring back schools that could be moved due to School Business’ findings back for another interview. Other board members discussed this topic and Mr. Machado asked how many schools might have to come back. Mr. Friend said 2.
- Mr. Machado noted that Movement needs to get the conversation on whether they will become a CMO finalized as that might help them with their issues.
- Mr. Friend agreed with Mr. Machado and noted it would be fair to bring them back for an interview as they are now potentially hearing about this for the first time. Also stated they would like to hear from Children’s Village Academy due to the findings in their report.

Remote Charter Academy (RCA) Legislation Presentation

- Ms. Baquero introduced the objectives of OCS with this new legislation.
- Starting in the 2024 cycle, schools can come before the board strictly looking to open a remote academy. Additionally, she added, previously opened schools can open a remote academy if they submit an amendment.
 - She pointed to the legislation language to clarify the summarized point. She noted that a school could be fully remote, fully in-person with a remote option for students, and hybrid.
- School/applicant has to specify whether remote academies would have either statewide enrollment or regional enrollment. She noted the changes in the regional enrollment definition since previously it was not allowed.
- Ms. Baquero also touched on the definition provided for RCA’s and noted they may satisfy the number of required days/hours through remote instruction.
- Discussed rules regarding enrollment for students and the role parents have in this process. Noted the rules regarding students with disabilities. Overall, an RCA shall still meet the same requirements as listed in 14A.
- Section is important to schools that are considering full statewide remote academies or other fully remote academies as the legislation spells out what they need to offer.
- She continued by adding these requirements a RCA must provide:

- Any hardware and software needed to participate in the RCA. Students may not be charged rental fees but may be charged damage fees under rules adopted by the SBE.
- Access to a Learning Management Platform that enables monitoring of student performance and school-owned devices, as well as video conferencing and supervised text-based chat for synchronous communication.
- Access to the internet that is available during instructional hours, evenings, and weekends.
- Technical support that is available during instructional hours.
- Adaptive or Assistive devices as required by the child’s IEP/504 plan.
- An RCA may require students to attend in-person to fulfill State-mandated assessments and for student meetings. Additionally added that the school must have certain staff for this meeting.
- Transitioned to the approval process and plans they would need to submit before the CSRБ.
 - Approvals would initially be for 5 years and there is a minimum of two statewide remote charter academies that meet the qualifications of this part beginning with the 2026-2027 school year and thereafter.
- Dr. Eldridge asked for clarification on whether schools with contingency plans fall into this legislation. Ms. Baquero said no this would be a whole new school. Dr. Eldridge followed up by asking if schools would still be required to submit these plans, and Ms. Baquero said they – OCS – would like to see that happen.
- Mr. Friend added a few concerns with some of the requirements the legislature is putting on these schools. Noted they really want to see the applicant flush out how they are going to handle potential loopholes in the system. He cited his personal experience running a ‘blended’ school. He added that parents needed to know that if a student is in the remote academy, they are not guaranteed a seat in the face-to-face classroom.
 - Ms. Baquero agreed with Mr. Friend on those concerns. She also added that the current programs in the pilot have statutory ways to transition a student from remote to traditional.
- Ms. Baquero continued her presentation discussing the operation and renewal process.
 - Each approved RCA shall adhere to the amendment process like traditional schools.
 - Changes to the school business codes and there is going to be a lot OCS needs to discuss with School Business regarding this matter.
 - SBE report requirement and noted there is an option to add any recommended statutory changes in this report.
- Ms. Baquero noted the two statewide virtual charter schools’ pilots end in the 2025-2026 school year.
 - Summarized OCS next steps:
 - Remote academy section of the charter school application completed.
 - School Code implications/process was going to be looked at as well as:
 - Monitoring / Compliance
 - Consider five-year term implications – Different renewal process and how one handles amendments may cause some issues.
- Dr. Elridge asked if there should be any requirements for currently opened schools to prove if they are even eligible to get that.
- Mr. Godbey stated there should be some guidelines for those schools as well that are listed as CLP.

- Mr. Friend asked what’s going to happen to schools that already have been approved for the blended model. Ms. Baquero noted they’ll need to re-evaluate that as well, and there is a lot that is going to be pushed out by OCS to educate schools. Said they will need to highlight the difference between the contingency plans vs. a full RCA.
- Mr. Machado asked if the 11/15 report due date is feasible considering when the state wide school data comes out. Ms. Baquero said that due to when the data is certified, it would be better if that date gets pushed back.

Remarks from Mr. Friend

- Mr. Friend noted that the SBE sent Dr. Eldridge and Mr. Friend a ‘Red-Line’ version of the renewal guidelines. Stated there are ideas on how to improve their renewal guidelines.
 - He noted they are not ready to vote on these today and that it would take some time for members to look through the document and create suggestions.
- Mr. Machado noted that he saw this presentation during SBE meeting and asked if there was some sort of conversation prior to that meeting between CSRБ and SBE since the SBE implied there were conversations previously.
 - Mr. Friend noted there were conversations prior to the meeting that new guidelines would come out, but they did not receive the current guidelines he is mentioning until Friday before the holiday weekend.
 - Ms. Baquero noted that she has met with SBE legal and talked about what is applicable vs. not applicable in their work. Said that she also received those potential changes the Friday before the holiday weekend.
 - Dr. Eldridge noted what Chair Duncan mentioned about how this would not apply to the current renewal cohort. He and Ms. Baquero noted the initial set of guidelines were created to help place schools in an original ‘bracket’ and help CSRБ/OCS organize the renewal cohort.
 - Mr. Friend noted there have been conversations in the past to add comments and feedback from the SBE into their current guidelines and said that it would take time to go through these suggestions.
 - Mr. Machado and Mr. Friend discussed the conversation regarding the change in comparability data from 5 percentage points to 2 percentage points.
 - Mr. Granados asked if this were to become a policy if there would be less flexibility to vote outside of these guidelines. Mr. Friend and others said they hoped not. Mr. Friend concluded by saying that he will be meeting with representatives from the State Board to discuss this.

Adjourn for Lunch – 12:30

Introduction to 2023 Charter Application Interviews: Ms. Melanie Rackley, OCS Consultant

- Ms. Melanie Rackley introduced the applications that have previously been approved and noted the counties today’s 2nd round interviews were going to potentially be located in. She also introduced the 2024 application cycle timeline for schools – including timelines for standard and accelerated applications.

Sledge Institute- Standard, 2025

- Ms. Melanie Rackley introduced the Board of Directors to the School; as well as their mission, number of students, and other details pertaining to their application. She also introduced the choices the CSRБ had regarding this application and introduced some of the questions they were asked/answered from CSRБ previously.

Opening Statements from the School Board

- Ms. Sledge, CEO, introduced herself and the board members. She began her presentation by reiterating the need for this school in Vance County. She touched on the model their school was going to use and gave reasons why they would be successful.
 - She mentioned their board has filled out and they have been doing a lot of work in the fundraising and marketing areas. Additionally mentioned a facility update and noted that there has been a large increase in the number of students who are planning to enroll – based off interest surveys.

Questions/Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Dr. Eldridge thanked the board for being here.
- Dr. Shope asked if they could run through the numbers for signatures.
 - Ms. Sledge said there are roughly 332 students ready to enroll upon opening. She listed the counties they came from and noted that their projected ADM was in the 120s.
- Mr. Friend asked if they were surprised they were getting interest from outside their projected counties.
 - Ms. Sledge said no as they see the desire families have to put their students in stronger performing schools – citing the low performing schools in the counties they plan to serve.
- Mr. Friend asked how their surplus in year 4-5 is so much larger than the first 3 years.
 - Ms. Sledge noted that it was due to the addition of the high school and any surplus in the first 3 years would be going towards that creation of a new facility. Mr. Friend stated it would get more expensive as they add these programs and not what their budget reflects.
- Dr. Haire asked about the Org Chart and what role Ms. Sledge would play.
 - Ms. Sledge outlined how the org chart would change over the first few years of their school and noted that she would serve as the Lead Administrator.
- Dr. Haire also asked about the two budgets on E-Board and OCS/CSRБ members noted that the new budget is in PDF form.
 - She also expressed concern over the ‘top-heaviness’ of the budget; Ms. Sledge noted the model of their staff layout is based on the other schools she’s worked in previously and noted the intensity of the work they were doing.
- Dr. Eldridge asked what their expected FRL would be. Ms. Sledge said they project 100%.
 - Dr. Eldridge noted that he didn’t see a counselor / EC teacher. Ms. Sledge stated they do add EC staff in year 2 and also mentioned that a counselor would be added year 2 as well. She added that teachers would also be trained to help students.
 - Dr. Eldridge asked about the \$10,000 line item for PD and Ms. Sledge confirmed that would be her role.
- Mr. Friend asked if the facility they’re starting in would be cheaper than the one they hope to use permanently, and Ms. Sledge explained the timeline they are looking at for new facilities.
- Dr. Haire asked about familial relationships between the facility they plan to use for office space and the buildings listed on the documents they re-submitted.

- Ms. Sledge clarified that although her sister is on the board, they do have a COI policy in place. She then explained there is no connection between the board and the owners of the facility.
- Mr. Friend asked about the numbers for legal counsel / financial officers and noted that some of them were a little low. Ms. Sledge stated they were projecting those to be covered by grants.
 - Mr. Friend and Dr. Eldridge explained it was important to outline in the budget what ‘real money’ could be available in the budget.
- Dr. Haire asked about a breakeven budget.
 - Ms. Sledge stated the magic number would be 100 and Mr. Yudin – a board member – noted they would look at staff expenditures if they couldn’t hit certain enrollment guidelines.
 - Dr. Eldridge reminded the board they need 80 students to stay open and Mr. Yudin noted that he was just using those numbers and was aware of the policy.
 - Ms. Parlér asked why they chose the members from out of state, and what was the percentage of those from out of state.
 - Ms. Sledge noted the board members were selected due to previous work experience, and based on what they are strategically looking for.
 - Ms. Sledge added that about 80% of the board is NC based.
- Dr. Haire stated that Mr. Williams – another board member – is a rockstar based on her research of him.
 - Ms. Sledge – and Mr. Williams – thanked the board for those remarks and added all the other board members were just as qualified.
- Mr. Machado asked about the EDS population being projected at 82% and 100% FRL; asked why there is no transportation plan.
 - Another board member came up and mentioned they plan to purchase 2 busses to serve students in other counties. Mr. Friend noted that the budget doesn’t support that, and the board member said it was a more recent development.
 - Ms. Sledge also noted the other schools in the area and how they had / did not have a transportation plan. Also stated they discussed this in their previous CSRБ meeting and went against vans due to the fact CSRБ said no to vans in October.

Closing Remarks from the School Board

- Mr. Williams and Mr. Kingsberry came up and introduced themselves and explained how their background makes them grateful and fortunate to work with and give back to the community they grew up in. He also thanked CSRБ for giving the board a second chance.
 - Mr. Kingsberry explained why he is on the board and noted that it is nice to see educators and leaders looking to improve school choice for students. Mr. Kingsberry noted he is working as the legal counsel for the school and that’s why that number is so low.
 - Ms. Sledge added they have taken CSRБ feedback, and they are growing with the feedback received. She reiterated the boards passion to fix the areas mentioned and thanked the board for their time.

Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Mr. Quigley noted it was a very passionate board and feels very confident with the board. Has additional questions about the Ed Plan and says it could be confusing understanding what they’re saying they are going to do vs. some of the details pertaining to those programs.
 - He noted that Henderson Collegiate is using a completely different model.

- Dr. Shope reiterated the board is extremely passionate, but she is still a little disappointed in the lack of clarity on the budget. Said that as a school leader it is imperative to really know those numbers.
- Mr. Friend said he is grateful they did come back as the first application – in his opinion – wasn't complete. He noted he's torn since the budget they had doesn't highlight the things they are saying. He cited the surpluses and how small they are.
- Dr. Shope agreed with Mr. Friend's statement.
- Mr. Henderson asked what's going to happen with the grants and what might happen if / what are the odds they don't get one?
 - Several Board members noted there are very few guaranteed grants, and they shouldn't factor this into their budget.
- Mr. Friend asked if they have a facility 100% ready to go and Ms. Parlér asked about square footage.
 - Ms. Sledge said it was also contingent on getting approval today and the facility was 32,000 sq ft and two stories.
- Mr. Machado stated the only reason they would get approval today – from him – is due to the grit and passion of the board. He noted his concerns with the budget and there will be a lot of challenges they'll have to overcome.
- Mr. Quigley added that he – and CSRБ should as well – consider how all schools change their budgets often and that all schools start small. He's torn since he wants to open small charter schools in rural communities but also with enrollment he's concerned.
 - He and other CSRБ members noted they liked how they would cut staff if they came in under-enrolled.
 - Mr. Friend reiterated his concerns over the budget showing what they are planning to do.
- Dr. Haire noted the lease agreement was in place and that showed commitment. Ms. Sledge explained the details of that agreement and how it was contingent on approval today. Dr. Haire said that she sees both sides of the argument but overall supportive.
- Mr. Quigley added he wants to see more financial knowledge on the board but also applauded the number of educators on the board. Overall said he thinks he'll support it.

Motion: Mr. Alex Quigley motioned to approve Sledge Institute's charter application

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Discussion:

- Several CSRБ members expressed reservations on that motion. Mr. Friend stated he is supportive of the board and thinks they are strong but sees a lot of flaws in the merits of their application.
- Mr. Machado noted again the grit and passion but also questioned the decision-making process of the board.

Vote: Unanimous

- Passed Failed

- Dr. Eldridge and Mr. Quigley begged them not to have lower than 80 students and to send a budget whenever they had it done.

HYPE Leadership Academy; EMO: NC Educational Solutions- Standard, 2025

- Ms. Melanie Rackley introduced the Board of Directors to the School; as well as their mission, number of students, and other details pertaining to their application. She also introduced the choices the CSRБ had regarding this application and an overview of the questions they asked them to

complete prior to their second interview. She also added that the EMO and DPI's legal counsel is present to provide feedback on other questions CSRБ had.

Opening Remarks from the School Board

- Mr. Burns came up and thanked the board for giving HYPE a second chance. He mentioned what they have done after the board's first interview and noted they have done a lot of work to show the interest in the community. Also mentioned the members that were online and in-person.

Questions and Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Ms. Parlér commented that she was grateful they answered the question about the CMO.
- Dr. Haire asked for a facility update.
 - Mr. Burns noted they found a facility under construction currently near a 400-home community. Stated it's in a business park they would use and currently the builder is covering up-front costs of the building. Mr. Poole – another board member – noted they do have a letter of intent for the facility and backup plans in place if construction isn't done.
 - Another board member noted the backup facility is about 0.25 miles away from their planned facility after a question from Ms. Parlér.
 - Mr. Friend asked what work has been done regarding family interest.
 - Mr. Burns mentioned they attended a community event in the housing development nearby that yielded over 140 survey responses. Noted a few other events planned.
 - Another board member mentioned they have done and plan to do community zooms. Additionally, they are working with a community outreach specialist to set up town halls and work with other partners in the community, but some are pending approval of the charter. She also listed a few other places they have reached out to and gotten feedback from.
- Dr. Eldridge asked about their current student interest and their projected ADM. Mr. Burns said 160+ students currently interested with projected enrollment over 300.
- Ms. Parlér asked about the aquatic center marketing.
 - Board member mentioned they plan to sync with their calendar and set up a table and advertise to the community at those events. Stated there are connections to the parents in the community through this center.
 - Mr. Burns did note surveys they give out has a QR code that gives them data related to interested families so they are able to continually reach out to these parents.
- Mr. Friend asked about the 8% cost the CMO plans to charge, and asked what is going to happen if they are short students, etc.
 - Mr. Burns stated they plan to lower the fee and Mr. Poole said they'd charge at the end of the year so the school would have operating funds in the beginning of the year.
- Dr. Eldridge asked who would own the facility.
 - Mr. Poole stated they are renting and explained the details of the arrangement.
 - Dr. Eldridge asked about the low utility costs and a board member mentioned the number was based off another school in the area. Mr. Kneer came and explained some of the additional details pertaining to the financing and Mr. Poole said they hope to buy the building in 5 years.

Closing Remarks

- Mr. Burns noted that there is nothing like what they plan to do in this community and said they will put the work in to create the program in this community.

- Another board member came up and thanked the CSRБ for the second opportunity. She added that the local school district has extremely low EOG scores, and – based on her children’s experience – the community needs the leadership development their proposed academic model would provide.

Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Ms. Parlér liked the marketing they planned to do.
- Dr. Haire asked about their other school, and they mentioned it started K-5 and are now expanding into high school.
- Mr. Godbey summarized the CMO’s plans to create a new nonprofit and the CMO agreed that was an accurate summary.
- Mr. Machado asked about the data presented through School Business from the other CMO school and Ms. Cook noted that there is no non-compliance just a few things to note.

Motion: Mr. Todd Godbey motioned to approve HYPE Leadership Academy’s charter application

Second: Mr. Dave Machado

Discussion:

- Vote: Unanimous

- Passed Failed

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

- Ms. Baquero noted the meeting dates for February and introduced the new staff member on OCS’ team.
- Mentioned there will be more periodic updates on the schools in RTO scheduled to open in 2024.
- 2025 renewal schools will receive remote and in-person site visits starting at the end of January. Also added there are 38 renewals this cycle.
- Stated they will begin hearing from schools who are low-performing – based on certain guidelines – and stipulation schools in February.

Motion to Adjourn: Dr. John Eldridge

Second: Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

2:30 pm