

Minutes of the North Carolina Charter School Review Board

State Board Room 755, Department of Public Instruction

January 13, 2025

9 AM

Attendance – CSRБ Members	
Alex Granados- (nonvoting) Dr. Rita Haire Dr. John Eldridge- (Absent) Alex Quigley Hilda Parlér (Absent) Dr. Shelly Shope	Eric Sanchez (Virtual) Bruce Friend (Virtual after 1 st break) Dave Machado Todd Godbey Dr. Bartley Danielsen Stephen Gay (Absent)
Attendance – Other	
<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Ashley Baquero, Director Joseph Letterio, Consultant - Remote Melanie Rackley, Consultant Jenna Cook, Consultant - Remote Dr. Natasha Norins, Consultant Dr. Brandi Gill, Consultant Nicky Niewinski, Asst. Director Julie Whetzel, Consultant Megan Carter, Consultant	<i>CSRБ Attorney</i> Steven Walker <i>SBE Attorney</i> Allison Schafer - Absent <i>Teacher/Principal of Year</i> Lee Haywood – TOY Sarena Fuller – POY - Absent

Recording of Jan. 13 CSRБ Meeting: [LINK](#)

Call To Order

Pledge of Allegiance & NC Flag Salute: Mr. Dave Machado

Mission and Ethics Statement:

- Mission and Ethics Statement, Mr. Dave Machado
 - Mr. Machado recused from Cardinal Charter at Wendell Falls.

Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

Motion: Dr. Rita Haire motioned to approve agenda for January Meeting

Second: Dr. Shelly Shope

Vote: Unanimous

☒ **Passed** ☐ Failed

Motion: Mr. Alex Quigley motioned to approve December 2024 minutes.

Second: Dr. Rita Haire

Vote: Unanimous

☒ **Passed** ☐ Failed

January Charter Schools Review Board Meeting

Introduction of Superintendent Mo Green: Mr. Dave Machado

- Mr. Machado introduced Supt. Green.
 - Superintendent Green began his remarks by going over his background in education and past legal experience inside and out of North Carolina. He noted how his time working as a lawyer helped him become more involved in education through their partnership with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.
 - He noted that his vision is like that of Guilford County Schools – Achieving Educational Excellence. He stated there is a focus on all aspects including character development. He noted there has been a lot of good progress, and there is a lot of work to be done.
 - He then outlined his pillars: To Support our schools, Revere our educators, Community and Parent Engagement, Secure school environment and others.
 - He stressed that he wants to listen and learn through his ‘Mo Wants to Know’ initiative and from that he will draft his strategic plan. He said that within NC the best way forward is not to be confrontational, but instead to work for the benefit of the students in NC. He said that with this they can achieve the constitutional mandate of giving a sound education.
 - He concluded by thanking the board for being here and working on the challenges and issues that are constantly coming before them. He urged them to have their ‘North Star’ be to achieve excellence and said that he looks forward to hearing the conversations as they move forward.
 - Mr. Machado and Mr. Quigley expressed how supportive they are of Ms. Baquero and the OCS staff.

2025 Application Revisions: Ms. Melanie Rackley, OCS Consultant

- Ms. Rackley introduced herself and gave a brief overview of the sections in the new 2025 charter application. She said it was set to launch on the 31st of January.
- She continued by going over some of the internal discussions that OCS staff had to try and make the application more efficient and strived to streamline certain sections to allow for more detail for the board. She also noted the addition of some statutory citations to ensure compliance.
- She shared alternative options that were expanded upon; other language added to ensure that management organizations were showing financial strength and stability; and some more details on commonly asked questions that the board asks each school during the applicant interview process.
- Dr. Haire asked if OCS is open to revisions or willing to add suggestions. Ms. Rackley stated they could make some revisions but they would then have a tight timeline for turnaround and testing with the application site.
 - Dr. Haire gave a suggestion to improve the budget template including adding a line for student devices and other technology items. She said that with the onset of virtual schools that would be needed. She also added some clarifications for classrooms and other materials to help members spot the important information.
 - She also mentioned there is not a lot of information about teacher evaluation and recommended dividing that question to have more detail on all those sections.

- Dr. Shope said that it seems the narrative is just repeated in other sections and to encourage them to be more bulleted and specific so they can get to the meat of the question.
- Dr. Haire noted another budgetary suggestion including IT support roles.
- Mr. Machado thanked OCS for the hard work. He said that he would like to have more time to get stakeholder input and suggested using the application this year but have a new one next year.

Motion: Mr. Dave Machado made a motion to use the current 2024 application in order to obtain stakeholder input for a revised application for the 2026 cycle.

Second: Mr. Alex Quigley

o Discussion:

- Mr. Godbey asked why they don't just approve of this and say they're going to revise them further. Mr. Machado noted some of his concerns but said that he couldn't really be too specific since there was not a lot of time for him / other board members to read the proposed revisions.
- Dr. Shope said the big thing that may be 'killing this' is the January 31st deadline. She said that she would like more time to give feedback.
- Dr. Haire asked when the feedback cycle/opportunities opened. Ms. Rackley explained the process OCS used and other general feedback from the public. She noted that a lot of the public comment came from submitted applications, and she listed some questions that had more feedback/comment.
- Dr. Haire asked how long OCS has been working on the revisions. Ms. Rackley said 4 months.
- Dr. Danielsen said that he recognized the amount of work put into it and said that this was not an example of 'Congress passing something to see what's in it'. He said that he wants to be careful about the applicant's time, and that they don't want it to be more burdensome than it must be. He said he agreed with both Mr. Godbey's point and Mr. Machado's point.
- Dr. Haire asked if this is paused if the budget changes can be put in. Ms. Rackley responded yes.

Vote: 7:1 – Yes: RH, DM, ES (remote), BD, SS, JE (remote), AQ. No : TG

- ☒ Passed ☐ Failed

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

- Ms. Bennett introduced herself and began sharing financial information related to charter schools in the renewal process.
 - o She went over the number of renewals and stated 4 schools had no audit report with no response to inquiries. She also added that 6 schools have cautionary or red flag issues that will be monitored more.
 - She stated none of the 10 schools raise concern to the level of 'extreme fiscal concern'. Emphasized, however, that she doesn't wait until the renewal opportunity to raise concerns and bring them to the board but instead brings them up on a annual cycle.

- o She summarized some of the items that were reviewed, including indicators of financial distress and the goals for rectifying them. She noted this was the same review process for the LEAs / PSUs.
- o Mr. Machado asked if they've notified the schools and OCS of those on the 'list of 10'. Ms. Bennett said that she has and explained in detail the process used for putting schools in certain brackets of financial non-compliance.
- o She listed the schools that were in the 'list of 10'.
 - Community School of Digital and Visual Art – Declining ADM and no audit report for the last two years. Stated she got word the school is going to push the audit to end of February. She said they will most likely have to freeze federal fund access and mentioned some statutory requirements that may have to be exercised. She listed the disciplinary status that they have.
 - Dr. Haire asked if they get responses from the school but not the information they need. Ms. Bennett said they get responses but it's always 'they're going to push it out'. She said they're going to call the CPA firm today.
 - Movement Freedom – No audit report at time of report release.
 - They did receive an audit report on 01/08, and they are reviewing. Preliminary findings are few and it looks good.
 - Washington Montessori – No Audit Report and lack of responsiveness in inquiries. She stated they are in talks with the CPA firm as well for more information but hope it will get resolved quickly.
 - Doral Academy of North Carolina – No Audit Report and lack of responsiveness to inquiries.
 - Ms. Bennett noted they do have a healthy ADM but haven't given an update as of today.
 - Charlotte Secondary – Declining ADM and low fund balance; along with some others listed in the presentation. She stated the school responded with corrective actions on 11/15/24
 - Cardinal Charter Academy at Wendell Falls – Large drop in ADM, large drop in cash balance and concern that if support stops from the CMO then a lot of costs will be not covered.
 - Reaching All Minds Academy – Stable ADM, Significant reduction in unassigned fund balance. She did note that this appears to be due to a capital investment and noted that this reduction in funds could be due to a capital investment based on what she saw in their audit report.
 - Mr. Machado asked if this was a school that was in non-compliance with Federal Funds and Ms. Baquero/Ms. Bennett stated they didn't think so but would follow up.
 - Mr. Machado asked if this school had a factually sound audit and Ms. Bennett said yes but they would like to see a proactive plan on how they will re-establish their fund balance.
 - Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School – ADM Stable, Audit identified material weakness in accounting processes and an issue with IDEA program (resolved recently).
 - Ms. Bennett reiterated that the school has responded with actions but noted the weakness in accounting processes shows some fiscal concerns but overall their ADM is stable.

- United Community School – Reduced fund balance, expenses exceed revenue and in default of SBA Loan. She noted that the school responded with corrective actions, but she was concerned the low amount on that loan should've been able to be paid off.
- Lakeside Charter Academy – Expenses exceed revenue for 3 of 4 past years, high interest rates and other charges and a current ratio of .75.
 - Mr. Machado asked what the other charges were – outside of interest – Ms. Bennett stated they don't have that detail but would be willing to find it out.
- Mr. Quigley asked what capital project was completed on the previous slide and Ms. Bennett stated they would investigate that further.
- Mr. Machado asked what school didn't have the audits for two years and Ms. Bennett clarified it was CSDVA. Mr. Machado said he knows how difficult it is for auditors to be found but was very concerned that it hasn't had an audit in 2 years. Ms. Bennett stated they would not be able to review until March. Ms. Bennett's CPA in School Business stated they are looking for a new CPA firm.
- Mr. Quigley asked if CSDVA had a management firm for finance and Ms. Bennett stated they could get it. Several board members and Ms. Bennett said they'd strive to get those answers before the vote today.
- Dr. Haire asked what they meant by a line item and Ms. Bennett said it's liabilities over assets.
- Ms. Baquero asked if 32C is the only disciplinary status and Ms. Bennett said yes. Ms. Baquero asked for clarification on Red Flag vs. Cautionary and Ms. Bennett said that was an internal thing. She said those listed as cautionary were given an official cautionary letter.
- Mr. Quigley asked if in her opinion Reaching All Minds shouldn't get a 10-year renewal. Ms. Bennett stated they would have to reach out to the school for more info on that.
- Ms. Bennett clarified that they monitor schools all year and it's not just done before these renewals.
- Dr. Shope confirmed that it appeared to be a capital investment for RAMA and Ms. Bennett said yes.

Community School of Digital and Visual Arts

- Mr. Battle – board chair – introduced himself and other members present before the board today. He stated the two years of audits is concerning and he understands the board's concern.
 - He reiterated they recently lost their bookkeeper, auditor and Executive Director. He said that it was difficult to find an auditor and that's why they're where they are today.
 - He mentioned that they have found an auditor and that they would have a clean '23 audit this week and a '24 audit in February.
- Mr. Battle mentioned how the population they serve is a difficult one but they still have exceeded growth.
- Dr. Haire asked about the other items that OCS noted such as a lack of fire inspections, minutes, and others. Another board member stated there are minutes that are missing on the CSDVA website but they are working on that.
 - He then went over each issue saying that he wasn't aware of those compliance issues, but he reiterated they are going to investigate that.

- o Mr. Machado asked who at the school would know that stuff and the board member said that because of not having an ED it is difficult to maintain compliance and train staff to keep areas in compliance. He stated they are teaching staff to handle the minutes. Mr. Machado said he was very concerned about the concerns listed and Mr. Battle said they are working diligently to address them. He and Mr. Battle listed the ADM at 210.
- Mr. Machado asked if they weren't up for renewal if the CSRFB would even know about them. A board member said that he thinks the staff is doing well. He stated they are working to get the staff back in place and are excited that their ADM is growing again.
- Dr. Shope asked what their plan is to get those staff back. The Board member said they will wait until they get their 2024 audit and then see what cash is left to hire those roles – particularly the ED position.
 - o Mr. Battle said that one of the advantages they have is they own the building, but it is old. He mentioned that they do have about \$2-3 million in equity they could leverage if they did decide to sell the building.
- Dr. Haire they were informed back in November '23 about the auditor going their separate ways. She mentioned some of the other concerns that were brought back up previously including posting minutes. Board members clarified the minutes and said they would be put to paper within a few weeks. Dr. Haire did note they did exceed growth and that was a positive sign and that the ADM does appear stable.
- Mr. Friend – online – asked a few questions:
 - o How many people who are on the board are present today and Mr. Battle said 2/5 currently present, and one was here but had to leave.
 - o Mr. Friend asked if they had a head of school / principal and Mr. Battle said yes. Mr. Friend asked if the ED would serve the school, or the board and Mr. Battle clarified what the ED did in the past and how they worked as the superintendent role.
 - o Mr. Friend mentioned his concerns about transparency and noted again he doesn't see the meeting minutes on the website. Another board member and Mr. Friend discussed when the board met in 2024, and the board member stated they are working to put the minutes to paper.
 - Mr. Friend listed the leadership of the school and said that he's wondering why they are saying they're short-staffed. The Board member stated they did have a reduced staff but recently deputized someone to put the minutes to paper and on the website.
 - Mr. Friend stated they are not following governance practices.
- Mr. Machado asked who their auditor was, and Mr. Battle listed who it was. He and Mr. Machado discussed when the audits would be done, and other details related to the auditor.
- Mr. Machado said that he agrees with Mr. Friend and his remarks. He said that the amount of tax-payer dollars they are receiving makes him concerned that it appears the school doesn't have a leader.
- Ms. Baquero added concerns that OCS has had and went over the timeline of these concerns when the renewal process began close to 2 years ago.
- Mr. Battle stated what Ms. Baquero said was fair but reiterated that they don't have an ED and will have the resources to fix things when they sell the building. He said they are issuing corrective action and reiterated they are performing well academically. He mentioned some of the remarks Supt. Green said in his discussion and said that he takes responsibility for the board issues.
- Dr. Haire asked when the ED stepped away. Mr. Battle and another board member said it was Sept. 2023.

- Dr. Haire asked if they were marketing the school and plans for it if they were to sell it. The Board member said they were marketing it and they had plans in place but are trying to get a better price for their building.
- Mr. Quigley reiterated Dr. Haire's question and the board member gave more specific answers on the spaces they're looking at.
- Dr. Eldridge commented that the discussion today is not really about the students and their performance, but it should be about taking accountability for their actions.
- Mr. Godbey asked for the responsibilities of the three administrators listed on their website. The Board member said the principal is in charge of academics, the second administrator is in charge of operations and other school functions, and the third administrator is in charge of compliance-based issues.
- Dr. Haire asked if Mr. Crawford is serving in the interim role and Mr. Crawford said yes and he is being compensated as an independent contractor for his work.

Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School

- The Board chair introduced himself and the board members present before them today. He said that they are working to fix the financial concerns that were mentioned and that it was difficult to find an auditor. He said their auditor was from California after a question from Mr. Machado.
- Mr. Friend thanked the board for publicly posting their minutes and hoped that it would continue. He noted that the comparability data when looking at the local LEA was very far behind and asked how the students they are serving are better off academically than the students at the local LEA.
 - Another board member mentioned that the data has been stagnant for the past 10 years. She mentioned the students do have significant emotional/social concerns and listed some of the support programs they were implementing. She also mentioned they were able to meet growth within the subgroups. She did say that she believed this would be the year they would see increased proficiency and that was due to small class sizes and increased outreach and communication with parents.
- Dr. Shope asked for clarification on the comment about growth for Native American students. The Board member clarified growth in EVAAS for Native American, EDS and other subgroups. She also mentioned that they still weren't a 'C' school, but they are closing the gaps.
- Dr. Danielsen asked why the numbers mentioned by the school are so different from the data given to the board and Dr. Shope clarified that it was growth based. Dr. Shope reiterated that the proficiency rate for Native American students was only 16%.
 - The Board member said it was their goal to increase growth so they can increase proficiency. She stated they also have seen less turnover in students and that is also contributing to greater success.
- Mr. Machado asked what grades they serve, and the board member said K-12. Mr. Machado and the board member discussed the largest class size in the school.
- Mr. Machado asked what encourages Native American populations to send their kids to the school when they are significantly below the LEA.
 - The board member said that transportation and access to an administrator was difficult in a very rural county, and they are working to increase communication with parents.
- Ms. Baquero said that internal data does show what the board member said is accurate. She did note that EVAAS growth scores were the highest in the county when looking at other high schools.
- Mr. Quigley noted that the school is an 'F' school ever since the outcome of common core.
- Mr. Friend asked what's going to make this year different and what is different today than 2016, 2019, and 2022.

- o The school leader explained what had happened since she got on in 2022-2023. She said that the growth the students had will eventually crack into proficiency. She said that with the 3-year renewal and if the board keeps her, they will see that growth.
- Dr. Haire asked if the school is required to submit a school-improvement plan and Ms. Baquero said yes. She stated they have submitted one and that a school like this would most likely have to update it every year due to turnover but that the plan would grow into a '3-5-year plan'.
- Mr. Quigley said that over the 9-10 years he's been on the board he's seen a new leader each time, and that they've been saying the same thing in a very compelling way. He said that overall, this isn't a new pitch.
- Mr. Godbey asked if in those years if they've been able to show the potential for growth like what they've seen in last year's EVAAS data. Mr. Quigley said that he doesn't remember the exact data but says that at some point they just have to say this isn't working. He reiterated that these discussions aren't easy and that they need to ask those hard questions.
- Dr. Shope said that she recognizes why she's shining light on the good data. She said as a school leader, it is also important that they shine the light on the bad. She said that admitting it's bad and discussing a plan to fix it.
- The Board Chair noted they have done a large reorganization of the school and they have seen growth since hiring the school leader.
- Mr. Friend asked if the board has maintained the same leadership / structure, and the board chair noted how long each member has been on the board and how they are elected every 3 years. Mr. Friend asked if they are a member of the tribal council they are on the school's board and the Board chair said yes.
- Dr. Haire asked about the comment 'Staying to themselves' and the Board Chair said that the people in the community themselves are very un-trusting of those outside the community. Dr. Haire asked if it would be better if they opened the school and integrated more and another board member said yes and gave some data on those who are two-or-more races.
- Dr. Haire stated it appears that Native American students do better in a more integrated classroom and the Board member said yes and that the support they get from other students is an amazing thing to see.
- Ms. Nicholson – instructional coach – said that she went in and looked at the data to establish where the school was and where they needed to go. She explained some of the additional work that she has done based on her experience working in DPI's ELA team. She acknowledged that the 17% is true and they are working to target and improve that amount.

Adjourn for lunch until 12:15

LUNCH

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

- Mr. Machado yielded to Ms. Bennett who noted that the fund balance for the school in question previously was used to acquire land and that they have healthy ADM and other finances.
 - o Ms. Bennett went more into detail on the '21% interest rate' and where the money went. She also recommended tabling the schools that didn't have audits after a question from Mr. Machado.
- Mr. Machado and Ms. Baquero discussed how they are going to be voting on the schools.

- Jenna Cook presented information regarding the charter school renewal voting process, mentioning previous meeting discussions and citing statute and SBE policy. She also touched on why each school was placed in certain renewal categories.
 - She mentioned that some accountability concerns for Haliwa-Saponi have been rectified. She also discussed some of the compliance issues for Community School of Digital and Virtual Arts. She noted that Piedmont Community Charter School had met all requirements and are in policy compliance.
- Mr. Machado and OCS staff outlined which schools need to be pulled out in the 10-year renewal guideline group.
 - Dr. Shope noted that she is not comfortable with giving a ‘D’ school a 10-year renewal. Dr. Haire added that there is a lot of good schools in this cohort.

10-Year Placements:

- 01F Alamance Community School
- 10A Classical Charter Schools of Leland
- 11B ArtSpace Charter School
- 26B Alpha Academy
- 32Q Reaching All Minds Academy
- 32T Discovery Charter
- 34G The Arts Based School
- 36B Piedmont Community Charter School
- 41Q Revolution Academy
- 51B Johnston Charter Academy
- 60F Metrolina Reg Scholars Academy
- 60J Socrates Academy
- 65A Cape Fear Center for Inquiry
- 73A Bethel Hill Charter
- 86T Millennium Charter Academy
- 90A Union Academy
- 95A Two Rivers Community School

Motion: Dr. Haire move to grant 10-year placement schools a 10-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025, not including the 2 schools mentioned in discussion.

Second: Mr. Todd Godbey

Vote: Yes: BF (remote), RH, DM, TG, ES (remote), BD, SS, AQ

- ☒ Passed ☐ Failed

7-Year Placements

- 41K Piedmont Classical High School
- Discussion:
 - Mr. Friend noted past discussion to move Piedmont Classical HS into a 10-year renewal category, citing comparability data and growth data. Mr. Godbey and Dr. Haire concurred
 - Mr. Godbey asked what put them in the 7-year category and Ms. Cook explained that it was because they were not comparable in '21-'22.

Motion: Dr. Shelley Shope move to grant Piedmont Classical High School a 10-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025.

Second: Mr. Todd Godbey

Discussion:

- Dr. Danielsen said that he feels more confident voting for this now.
- Mr. Friend and some OCS members discussed whether another school was in the 7-year renewal cohort and Ms. Cook clarified there was only this one.

Vote: Yes: BF (remote), RH, DM, TG, ES (remote), BD, SS, AQ

- ☒ Passed ☐ Failed

5-Year Placements

- 93P Rolesville Charter Academy
- Discussion:
 - o Dr. Haire said she thinks they are at the proper placement. Mr. Friend concurred.

Motion: Mr. Bruce Friend move to grant Rolesville Charter Academy a 5-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025

Second: Dr. Rita Haire

Vote: Yes: BF (remote), RH, DM, TG, ES (remote), BD, SS, AQ

- ☒ Passed ☐ Failed

3-Year Placements

- Mr. Machado noted that the only renewal school they shouldn't vote on as a block is Lakeside, and Mr. Godbey added Community School of Digital and Visual Arts and Movement Freedom citing the inability to fully review. Mr. Machado also added Haliwa-Saponi be removed due to not having an audit.
- Mr. Quigley said Cardinal Charter, Bethany Community School and RISE Southeast were schools he wanted to go over and put in a 5-year.
- Mr. Godbey noted he felt Wilmington School of the Arts and Rising Leaders Academy could be a 5-year renewal.
- Mr. Machado noted for clarity if they should vote individually on each school.
- Mr. Friend said Kestrel Heights and RISE Southeast were schools he had notes on possibly changing.
- Mr. Walker asked to just go down the list for clarity reasons and restate their thoughts on each individual school.

- 13C A.C.E. Academy

Motion: Dr. Rita Haire moved to grant A.C.E. Academy a 3-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025

Second: Dr. Bart Danielson

Vote: Unanimous

- ☒ Passed ☐ Failed
- 32C Community School of Digital & Visual Arts

Motion: Mr. Dave Machado moved to not renew Community School of Digital and Visual Arts

Second: Dr. Bart Danielson

Discussion:

- Dr. Haire did say that growth and other items were increasing in the right direction.
- Mr. Godbey stated there were positives on academics, but he is tripped up on the governance side and other compliance issues.
- Dr. Danielsен asked about the appeals process and Ms. Baquero discussed the appeals process with the CSRБ. Mr. Machado and Ms. Baquero discussed when the SBE gets involved as part of the appeal process and Mr. Friend confirmed the process was correct.
- Mr. Machado stated his reasons were the lack of leadership, no minutes on the website, and no audits. Operationally, he said that he feels they have had plenty of time to prove to CSRБ they should stay open, and he is concerned about the operational integrity of the school.
- Dr. Haire agreed and said that governance wise – citing specific reasons noted in their renewal discussion – convinced her opinion.
- Mr. Friend said he appreciates the work of the staff to turn the academics around but noted that the board owns the charter. He noted specific examples such as the board not publicly putting their minutes online and them only having 2/5 members present today – among other things.
- Dr. Danielsен said as a matter of governance, he is trying to gauge how they judge the capability of the board. He said if their charter was on the line, they would've found someone to fix the problems and raise the money to keep the school afloat. He said he doesn't feel confident in the board's competency but did note they have the right to appeal. He said he wouldn't recommend appeal however before they fix those problems.
- Mr. Friend noted they would not be able to fix these problems in 10-days as per statute.
- Mr. Godbey asked what the timeline is for filing their appeal to getting the appeal meeting. Mr. Friend and OCS confirmed when that would be and Dr. Danielsен said that he would be in favor of tabling and shutting them down next month.
- Mr. Machado explained that his motion was due to failure to follow fiscal compliance. He cited statute section 2, 4, and 6 as reasons for non-renewal.
- Dr. Shope explained how it was not responsible of the board to determine if they had money after an audit was performed and that they should be tighter.
- Mr. Friend agreed with the previous comments made.
- Mr. Quigley noted that all his interactions with them have been professional and said that he has worked with some of their team in the past.
- Dr. Haire noted that the needle has moved for academics, but the lack of governance is what is inexcusable.
- Mr. Sanchez asked for more detail on their financial information and Ms. Bennett explained their financial compliance issues such as a declining ADM and not presenting audits. Mr. Sanchez said

that overall, they don't know the school's financial situation since they haven't gotten any reports, and Ms. Bennett said that's correct and went over some details on their fund balance.

- Mr. Sanchez asked if the school opened in 1998, and Ms. Baquero said yes. Mr. Sanchez stated it's difficult since the academic data is positive. He said it appears the board is not doing some of the basic things they are supposed to do despite the school improving academically. He stated the conversation earlier was embarrassing and complemented Mr. Friend for hitting it on the head.
- Mr. Machado reiterated that he is concerned about the operational integrity of the school.
- Dr. Haire stated they are facing a freeze of federal funds and the fact they are listing their school on the market is another area of concern. She also noted they just recently hired an auditor after 18 months.
- Mr. Sanchez asked how far away they were from a 'C'.
- Mr. Friend responded that he doesn't believe they can present 2 years of audits in 30 days or less than that if they vote to close today.
- Dr. Danielsen clarified that he wanted to give the school more time to get done what they needed to get done in 10 days so that the group that hears the appeal has more information CSRБ might not have. He said overall the very low turnaround is what motivated his discussion.
- Ms. Cook explained they were 5 points away from a 'C'.
- Mr. Quigley stated he will be voting no since he doesn't want to vote to close schools in his community.
- Ms. Baquero reiterated the motion and the statutory reasons why.
- Vote: 6:2 Yes – BF (remote), RH, DM, TG, BE, SS No – ES (remote), AQ
- ☒ Passed ☐ Failed
- 43D Achievement Charter Academy

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

Second: Mr. Todd Godbey

o Discussion:

- Mr. Machado noted their proficiency and comparability data over the past three years.
- Dr. Danielsen also noted their subgroup data.
- Mr. Godbey stated this is their first renewal but also noted some of the data that was previously mentioned.

Vote: Unanimous

- ☒ Passed ☐ Failed

53C Rising Leaders Academy

- Mr. Godbey stated his notes show steady academic growth over the last three years and they've seen steady proficiency and comparability gain.

- Dr. Haire said that she doesn't think they meet the criteria for a 5-year renewal noting the low-performing and 'CLP' designation.
- Mr. Machado reiterated their performance scores.

Motion: Dr. Shelley Shope moved to grant Rising Leaders Academy a 3-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025

Second: Dr. Bart Danielson

- o Discussion:
 - Dr. Haire noted they came in and asked for a 5-year renewal but also noted performance and comparability concerns over the last few years. She said she agrees with the motion overall.
 - Dr. Danielsен noted that they have improved every year and would be comfortable giving them 4-years.

Vote: Unanimous

- ☒ **Passed** ☐ Failed

60K Charlotte Secondary School

Motion: Mr. Todd Godbey moved to grant Charlotte Secondary School a 3-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025

Second: Dr. Bart Danielson

- o Discussion:
 - Dr. Haire said they aren't typical for a 3-year renewal and hoped they would improve in the future. She did note some of their data as well.

Vote: Unanimous

- ☒ **Passed** ☐ Failed

61J Lakeside Charter Academy

- Tabled for discussion next month

61K United Community School

- Mr. Machado asked Ms. Bennett if they defaulted on an SBA loan and if that was concerning to her. Ms. Bennett said that she was concerned since it was \$600 a month and \$7,000 a year. She stated the school said it was due to a change in personnel and said they could try and obtain more information if they tabled.

Motion: Mr. Todd Godbey moved to table until the February CSRБ meeting to get more clarification from School Business.

Second: Dr. Rita Haire

Vote: Unanimous

- ☒ Passed ☐ Failed

65B Wilmington Preparatory Academy

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

Second: Dr. Rita Haire

Vote: Unanimous

- ☒ Passed ☐ Failed

65H Wilmington School of the Arts

Motion: Mr. Todd Godbey moved to grant Wilmington School of the Arts a 5-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025

Second: Mr. Eric Sanchez

Discussion:

- Mr. Machado clarified their performance and Mr. Godbey and Mr. Friend clarified whether they were on CLP or not.
- Dr. Haire said that the data shows they would be in the 5-year renewal and OCS confirmed the reason they were in a 3-year renewal was due to their CLP designation.

Vote: Unanimous

- ☒ Passed ☐ Failed

92P Southern Wake Academy

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

Second: Mr. Todd Godbey

Vote: Unanimous

- ☒ Passed ☐ Failed

93A Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School

Motion: Mr. Dave Machado moved to not renew Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School

Second: Mr. Alex Quigley

- Mr. Friend asked why they wouldn't table citing the audit issues.
- Ms. Baquero said they were initially thought to be on the list without an audit, but they did present an audit.

Discussion:

- Dr. Danielsen said that the big issue with him is the school is performing very poorly. He said nevertheless he is not inclined to close the school citing the other public schools in that county and the growth scores for this school exceed those of the traditional public schools in the county. He said that as a board they are appropriately concerned with the charter school and noted that this is not a school that makes charter schools look good. He stated this is a school that members of the community seem supportive of, but he is hesitant since there are not a lot of other options.
- Dr. Shope agreed with what was mentioned, but also added the school is considerably below the LEA in a variety of demographic subgroups.
- Dr. Danielsen responded by saying that overall, he is concerned for the students.
- Dr. Shope asked for the current ADM and Mr. Godbey said 145 at the time of interview.
- Mr. Quigley asked what the turnover rate was, and it did not appear to be available.
- Mr. Godbey said there's data that shows they've had a long time to really turn it around but that the overall growth they've seen is a glimmer of hope that convinces him not to vote to close it down.
- Mr. Quigley stated what he has seen makes him think they are just going to be back here in the 3-year category. He said if the board was okay with it they should just give them a 10-year renewal so that they don't have to speak with them every three years, especially if the board thinks they are serving a purpose in the community.
- Dr. Haire noted where they would be looking at based on some of the data and the policy outlined in legislation. She did note Mr. Quigley's comments that they have been given a 3-year renewal 3 times before.
- Mr. Quigley agreed but said the data from the last 10-years is the true determinant of what's going to happen in the future. Mr. Quigley stated in the end it's not a discussion on the data but a philosophical discussion on a variety of things (role/value in the community, long-term value to the brand, etc.).
- Mr. Sanchez asked about enrollment and Mr. Godbey clarified the enrollment numbers. Mr. Sanchez said the points mentioned before are true and the performance doesn't reassure him that they'll ever punch through the ceiling. He also said he agrees with Dr. Danielsen however citing their enrollment staying roughly the same. He said that what Mr. Quigley said is true and he doesn't feel like he can close a school that appears to be adding value to the community.
- Dr. Haire said she recognizes what is being said but that statutorily they meet the bar. She said that it does come down to a philosophical discussion. She said she doesn't like the performance but that statutorily they do meet the bar.
- Mr. Quigley said that considering other data points 'qualitative' is the better word to use in this discussion. He said if there's a school that should be shut down this would be one of them – based on quantitative results. He also asked if this school is in place to serve the Native American population and asked if they were lower in the population they said they were serving (in terms of comparability to the LEA).
- Dr. Danielsen stated they have to look deep to find the nugget of positive data but that overall, not all the data is bad. He said most of it is but agreed with Mr. Godbey's remarks.
- Dr. Shope confirmed the composite score for comparability to the LEA.
- Mr. Friend said that this is a hard one – citing Mr. Sanchez's and Mr. Quigley's remarks. He said that there is a large community/cultural aspect they must consider as well. He said he felt confident with the school leader that was there today and it was different from the school he voted to close because they listened to the board's suggestions from November and are not facing any compliance issues.

- Mr. Machado noted that the statutory reasons for closing would be #1 (Low academic performance) and #6 (good cause identified).

Vote: 4:4 tie Yes- BF (remote), DM, SS, AQ No – RH, TG, ES (remote), BD

- ☐ Passed ☒ Failed

Motion: Mr. Todd Godbey moved to grant Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School a 3-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025

Second: Dr. Bart Danielson

Discussion

- Dr. Shope asked if there was a 1-year renewal term and Mr. Machado said that they can add stipulations which would be more work for OCS.
- Mr. Friend asked what would happen if they tabled and Mr. Quigley said it would be based on who is here.
- Dr. Haire also noted that it would also give more time to deliberate on the vote.
- Mr. Sanchez noted they did vote to open two charter schools nearby and that it may have to come down to the ‘Free-Market’.
- Mr. Machado said that he is a proponent of the free market but expressed some other reservations about this idea.

Vote: 5:3 Yes – RH, DM, TG, ES (remote), BD No – BF (remote), AQ, SS

- ☒ Passed ☐ Failed

93T Cardinal Charter Academy at Wendell Falls

- Mr. Quigley led this conversation since Mr. Machado recused. Mr. Quigley began by giving his rationale behind making this a 5-year renewal. He did note this school was still below the LEA in comparability but that based on subgroup data they are above the LEA last year.
- Mr. Godbey concurred that he had 3-5 in his notes as well. He said that overall, the performance is improving but the student count is declining; because of this, he didn’t believe they should be moved to a 5-year renewal.
- Dr. Shope asked if a previous point was right, and several members said that the ‘1-point away from a ‘C’’ was correct.
- Dr. Haire said that looking at the legislative criteria they don’t meet the guidelines for a 5-year renewal. She said they would have to keep their exception in mind when looking at other schools but in her opinion – and based on the criteria – they are in the right place.
- Dr. Danielsen said he’s very hopeful for this school based on the data but that he doesn’t find anything compelling to move them up to a 5.

Motion: Dr. Bart Danielson moved to grant Cardinal Charter Academy at Wendell Falls a 3-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025

Second: Mr. Todd Godbey

Vote: Unanimous – Mr. Dave Machado, recused

- ☒ Passed ☐ Failed

96C Dillard Academy

Motion: Mr. Todd Godbey moved to grant Dillard Academy a 3-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025

Second: Mr. Bruce Friend

Vote: Unanimous

- ☒ Passed ☐ Failed

61T Movement Charter School

- Tabled for next month

79A Bethany Community School

- Mr. Quigley said he thinks they are in the 3-year and Mr. Godbey said that based on the data he thinks they should stay in the 3-year category.
- Dr. Danielsen said that when a school is comparable it is worth noting and that he would be supportive of a 5-year renewal.
- Mr. Sanchez stated he doesn't see the argument for them 'deserving' based on the fact they haven't met growth in the last 3 years.
- Mr. Machado and others clarified the previous renewal terms.
- Mr. Godbey noted they haven't met growth, but they are increasing in proficiency. He also noted that they are in a community that doesn't have a lot of charter school options.
- Mr. Sanchez asked for a clarification on the remarks.
- Mr. Machado expressed disappointment they haven't met growth the last 3 years but since they are a C school now, they do deserve a 5-year renewal.

Motion: Mr. Todd Godbey moved to grant Bethany Community School a 5-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025

Second: Mr. Dave Machado

Discussion

- Mr. Sanchez noted that this year they were 2 points away from growth but previously they were 12 and 16 points away from growth. He said that based on this and previous discussions he cannot support the motion.
- Dr. Danielsen said that his experience as a professor at NC State shows they can have more than one path in being successful. He stated he is comfortable saying a school is doing well if they are performing better than the local county.
- Mr. Machado said he appreciated Dr. Danielsen's comments. He reiterated the performance data and said that if he was a parent in that school, he'd want his kids to go there.

Vote: 6:2 Yes – BF (remote), RH, DM, TG, BD, SS No – Eric Sanchez (remote), AQ

- ☒ Passed ☐ Failed

93J RISE Southeast Raleigh Charter

- Mr. Friend said he had in his notes to move them up to a 5-year renewal based on growth and performance scores improving a lot. He also noted that when looking at comparability they were doing well in '23-'24.
- Mr. Sanchez agreed and said that if this was a 'D' school that had growth then he wouldn't be there, but this giant leap he has seen this year supports his belief for a 5-year renewal.

Motion: Mr. Eric Sanchez moved to grant RISE Southeast Raleigh Charter a 5-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025

Second: Dr. Bart Danielson

Discussion

- Dr. Shope said they would be applicable for a 7-year renewal if they didn't have that CLP designation.
- Mr. Godbey noted they weren't comparable to the LEA either of the past 3-years.
- Ms. Cook noted that if they were not CLP they would be in a 7-year renewal.
- Mr. Godbey stated he has a note that 40% of teachers are licensed and asked how they can square that when the requirement is 50%.
- Ms. Baquero said they really don't have a 'stick' but they are seeing a concerted effort to increase the number of licensed teachers at their school.
- Dr. Danielsen noted the LEA they are in is a very big and very diverse LEA. He stated the parents are probably very happy this school exists and cited non-academic reasons as to why this might be so.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if they had another year of not low performing, they would be off CLP and Ms. Baquero confirmed. Mr. Sanchez and Ms. Baquero confirmed the definition of 'low performing'.
- Mr. Friend said he agrees with 5 but said the only thing holding him back from a 7-year renewal is his hope that they can continue the trend from '23-'24 in the future.
- Mr. Quigley stated he hopes to see that too and said his relationship with the leader is strong.
- Dr. Danielsen stated he would like to see them get to a point where they're not entirely reliant on one-person.
- Mr. Sanchez and Ms. Cook clarified if they would be on CLP if they exceeded growth two years ago. Ms. Cook said no, and Mr. Sanchez said that he'd be fine with a 7-year renewal. Dr. Shope agreed.
- Mr. Friend asked OCS if they could grant them a 5-year renewal and then extend that if data shows improvement. Several board members said that would make things more of a rolling renewal. Mr. Friend said that since they can revoke at any time, they should also be able to add more.
- Mr. Walker said that legally they would be able to, but Mr. Machado said it would open it up for a lot of issues.

Motion: Mr. Eric Sanchez revoked his motion and moved to grant RISE Southeast Raleigh Charter a 7-year renewal term starting July 1, 2025

Second: Dr. Shelley Shope

Discussion:

- Mr. Machado asked for clarification. Mr. Sanchez said that Dr. Danielsen's point that this school serves a unique population and that it is in a difficult area. He also cited their growth and performance and how that warranted this vote.
- Dr. Haire asked if it would be alright to see a 7-year renewal for a school that is 26% lower and 12% lower comparable for whites and two or more races.
- Mr. Sanchez stated the growth and how close they were; along with their trajectory and presentation and other categories, gives him the belief they deserve the 7-year renewal.
- Dr. Danielsen said he agrees he would curve up for the .2 away from exceeding growth.
- Dr. Shope said this school was in the top 10 for growth in NC and Dr. Haire stated her comments were really based on trying to be consistent.
- Mr. Machado said he will support the motion out of respect for the school but said that he is a little uncomfortable for adding the metric of 'the presentation' to their determination

Vote: 6:2 Yes – BF (remote), DM, ES (remote), BD, SS, AQ No – RH, TG

- ☒ **Passed** ☐ Failed

2024 Charter Application Second Interview: Ms. Melanie Rackley, OCS Consultant

Legacy Traditional Schools; EMO - Vortex - Standard, 2026

Introduction

- Ms. Rackley introduced the Board of Directors of 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. She noted the school has come back after making edits to their initial application. She highlighted they had a facility, and they did have a site visit from Ms. Baquero. She also went over some background information regarding the EMO and noted some of the due diligence they asked the board to review before partnering with the EMO.

Opening Statement by the School

- Ms. Broadway introduced herself and the other board members present and thanked the board for their time today. She said the board has chosen to contract with Vortex and acknowledged the board will be the ones holding the charter.
- She went over the model of the school and discussed some of the curriculum and model of the school. She also said that she doesn't anticipate having anyone from the board to be hired by the school and they plan to fill out their board with a parent and never with a Vortex employee.
- She reiterated the demand for the school and shared there are 900+ prospective students on their interest list. She then listed why she thinks there is such demand for their school.

Questions/Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Dr. Haire reiterated the details of their application when they came back in November.
- Dr. Shope acknowledged the input and level of detail that were put into answering the second-round questions that were sent. She said she was very appreciative of the effort they put in.
- Dr. Haire agreed and said she liked them being very straightforward with a lot of their answers.
- Dr. Haire asked if there have been any changes on the building plans and the status of that over the next 6-8 months.

- Ms. Broadway said that they are ‘one foot forward’ and that as soon as they get approved, they can give a call to get it fully on track. She and Dr. Haire went over some of the details of the building section of their contract.
- Dr. Shope asked if any board members were from Lincoln County, and they said that they were from Charlotte and Gaston.
- A representative from the EMO gave details over the plan regarding the property and clarified that Vortex would not be an owner of the property after a question from Mr. Machado.
- Dr. Haire asked if they could explain more about the bond and another rep from the EMO noted the bond they would be getting and the details pertaining to where, when and the interest rate they would be getting. A member of the board – Mr. Crutchfield – said that it was difficult to make assumptions, but they would make adjustments as needed.
- Mr. Machado asked about the first two years of payments and if they would be forgiven and several people mentioned the board would only pay the principal first and the interest would be tacked on at the end of the loan term.
- Mr. Friend asked if the board has attained legal counsel outside of Vortex. Mr. Crutchfield said they had discussions but have not contracted with an attorney. He said that if approved they plan to do that as one of their first actions.
- Dr. Danielsen asked if an Arizona Non-Profit would own the building, and he said the hope would be that there would be a lease to purchase agreement. He asked if any of the schools in that network are in the leasing to purchase network. A representative of the EMO said no, none do at this time.
- Dr. Danielsen and the representative of the EMO discussed the lease agreement, and they confirmed they could finance that back in the end.
- Mr. Machado and Mr. Crutchfield discussed whether they would eventually own the building and if they saw it as an issue
- Mr. Machado asked if they saw the 760-student population number as feasible for their first year and Mr. Crutchfield said that it was and noted the large growth of young families in that area.
- A representative from the EMO noted they are doing extensive outreach and marketing to families in that community.
- Dr. Haire asked if the building discussions had been narrowed down and Mr. Crutchfield said yes and in the Clemmons Area.
- Dr. Haire asked for more clarification on the ‘CE’ programs. A representative of the EMO said that they plan to offer those programs and Mr. Crutchfield said that the board can look at partnering with the local YMCA like surrounding schools do.
- Mr. Machado asked if the transportation plan was contracted/connected to Vortex and a representative from the EMO said they will possibly contract that out, but the board would be involved in setting those cluster stops up. Mr. Machado recommended figuring out those stops ahead of time instead of waiting for their population to determine and then offering it. The representative of the EMO said the board would look at making that a priority should this application be approved.
- Dr. Haire noted they gave a thorough response on curriculum and they answered questions about the relationship with all parties involved. She also went over other information that was answered in the questions they asked. Ms. Broadway said that where the parcel is located, they can also pick up some students in the Davie County area.

Closing Statement by the School

Mr. Crutchfield closed their presentation by giving some points:

- A study that said their model was a ‘Gap buster’. He also added they are confident in their partnership with their EMO and as a board are extremely excited to bring this school into fruition.

Deliberation by the CSRБ

- Mr. Machado said he thinks this is a very strong board and that he trusts the board did their homework on their management company. He said he was impressed with the Vortex people and said he supports the application.
- Dr. Danielsен agreed and said that the history of ‘Gap Busting’ was quite impressive and important data. Dr. Danielsен and OCS confirmed a quorum was present.

Motion: Mr. Dave Machado motioned to approve Legacy Traditional School’s charter application

Second: Dr. Bart Danielsен

Discussion:

- Mr. Friend thanked the board for taking the time to answer the questions CSRБ had. He noted he thinks Mr. Walker reviewed the agreement to insure it met all rules and stipulations.
- Dr. Haire also said she investigated it but noted she is not an attorney. She said she has confidence in voting on a replication that is successful in other states. She thanked everyone present for their work.

Vote: Passes 5-1 Yes: BF (remote), RH, DM, BD, SS No : ES (remote)

- ☒ Passed ☐ Failed

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

- Ms. Baquero said they may make February a 1-day meeting.
- Mr. Machado announced his resignation from the board after today’s meeting due to an opportunity that he couldn’t pass up. He thanked everyone for everything. Mr. Friend thanked Mr. Machado for his service to the board.

Motion to Adjourn: Dr. Rita Haire

Seconded: Dr. Bart Danielsен

3:20 pm