

Minutes of the North Carolina Charter Schools Review Board

Remote

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

Tuesday June 24, 2025

1:30 PM

Attendance – CSAB Members	
Jeremy Wall (nonvoting) - Absent Dr. Rita Haire Dr. John Eldridge - Absent Hilda Parlér Dr. Shelly Shope Eric Guckian - nonvoting	Eric Sanchez Bruce Friend Lindalyn Kakadelis Todd Godbey Dr. Bartley Danielsen - Absent Stephen Gay
Attendance – Other	
<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Ashley Baquero, Director Joseph Letterio, Consultant - Virtual Nicky Niewinski, Asst. Director Jenna Cook, Consultant - Virtual Melanie Rackley, Consultant - Virtual Dr. Brandi Gill, Consultant - Virtual Dr. Natasha Norins, Consultant - Virtual Megan Carter, Consultant Julie Whetzel, Consultant - Virtual	<i>CSRB Attorney</i> Steven Walker <i>SBE Attorney</i> Allison Schafer Absent - Absent

Livestream Recording: [CSRB June 24, 2025](#)

Call To Order

Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to NC Flag: Mr. Bruce Friend

Mission and Ethics Statement: Mr. Bruce Friend

- Mission and Ethics Statement read by Mr. Friend. No conflicts were declared by any board members.

Approval of the Agenda

Motion: Ms. Lindalyn Kakadelis moved for approval of the agenda

Second: Mr. Stephen Gay

Vote: Unanimous

☒ Passed

☐ Failed

Special Called Item: Agape Achievement Academy Ready to Open Status: Ms. Ashley Baquero, OCS Director

- Ms. Baquero provided background on Agape Achievement Academy, a charter school slated for Cumberland County that was tabled at the June 9, 2025 meeting due to budget concerns. The school was asked to resubmit a budget at their break-even enrollment of 126 students for grades K-3 in year one.

Presentation by Agape Achievement Academy

Representatives Present: William O'Kelly and Dr. Doris Taylor

Key Points Presented:

- Current enrollment: 126 students (at break-even)
- Facility: 11,000 square feet
- Budget highlights for year 1: Total expenditures \$1,177,351.50, total revenue \$1,177,914.20, surplus \$526.52
- Received donation of 49 computers
- Located within 5 miles of military base

Board Discussion and Concerns:

Technology and Operations Budget Concerns (Mr. Friend):

- Questioned adequacy of \$11,000 for classroom devices and software for 126 students
- Raised concerns about \$5,000 legal services budget
- Noted \$5,000 staff development budget for 13 staff members (\$400 per person)
- Questioned combined custodian/bus driver position at \$10,000

Instructional Materials Concerns (Dr. Shope):

- Expressed concern about \$10,000 budget for instructional supplies and materials
- Emphasized tight margins with only \$500 surplus

Enrollment Projections (Dr. Haire):

- Questioned inconsistent enrollment projections showing 21 students in kindergarten for year two versus 42 in year one
- Identified error in enrollment pattern that should be corrected

Funding Discrepancies (Dr. Haire):

- Questioned "Other Funds" category showing \$45,000 in year one
- Identified significant discrepancy in federal EC funding projections
- Noted projected 13 EC students should generate approximately \$20,000-\$28,800 in federal funds, not \$45,000+ shown in budget

Staffing Status (Ms. Kakadelis):

- Confirmed school has hired 4 teachers, data manager, operations director, principal, custodian, and is interviewing EC teacher

Additional Revenue Sources (Mr. Friend):

- School indicated potential for 21st Century Grant and other grant opportunities
- Confirmed relationship with First Horizon Bank for potential loan if needed

Motion and Vote

Motion: Ms. Hilda Parlér moved that the board not approve Agape Achievement Academy to exit the Ready to Open (RTO) process

Second: Ms. Lindalyn Kakadelis

Discussion: Board members expressed concerns about:

- Inadequate understanding of budget components
- Unsubstantiated funding sources
- Very thin operating margins with no reserves
- Risk of financial difficulties after opening

Roll Call Vote:

- Mr. Stephen Gay: Aye
- Mr. Bruce Friend: Aye
- Dr. Rita Hair: Aye
- Ms. Hilda Parlér: Aye
- Mr. Todd Godby: Aye
- Mr. Eric Sanchez: Aye
- Dr. Shelley Shoppe: Aye
- Mr. Lindalyn Kacadelis: Aye

Result: Motion passed unanimously (8-0)

Resolution

The North Carolina Charter Schools Review Board voted not to approve Agape Achievement Academy to exit the Ready to Open process at this time due to budget concerns and inadequate financial documentation.

Next Steps

The Office of Charter Schools will provide information to Agape Achievement Academy regarding next steps.

Motion: Ms. Hilda Parlér moved to adjourn

Vote: Approved unanimously

Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:51 PM