

**Minutes of the
North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board
State Board Room 755, Department of Public Instruction
October 11, 2021
9AM**

Attendance – CSAB Members	
Jamey Falkenbury (non-voting) Rita Haire – absent John Eldridge Cheryl Turner Hilda Parlér Shelly Bullard	Eric Sanchez Terry Stoops Bruce Friend Lynn Kroeger Todd Godbey
Attendance – Other	
<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Dave Machado, Director Ashley Baquero, Consultant Claire Porter, Consultant Joseph Letterio, Consultant (remote) Darian Jones, Consultant (remote) Melanie Rackley, Consultant Jay Whalen, NC ACCESS (remote) Barbara O’Neal, NC ACCESS (remote)	<i>Attorney General</i> Stephanie Lloyd Forrest Fallanca <i>SBE Attorney</i> Allison Schafer – absent (present for closed session)

CALL TO ORDER

- The North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Mr. Bruce Friend who read the Ethics Statement and CSAB Mission Statement. Mr. Friend led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion: Motion to approve the October 2021 agenda and the September 2021 minutes.

Motion: Hilda Parlér

Second: John Eldridge

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

AMENDMENTS

Envision Science Academy Weighted Lottery

- Ms. Ashley Baquero, OCS Consultant, explained that Envision Science Academy (ESA) is requesting approval to implement a weighted lottery. The school opened in 2014 and serves 736 K-8 students. ESA is a STEAM and project-based learning program. Ms. Baquero explained the school is high performing with a school performance grade of A, 96.1% growth, and a Model STEM School of Distinction.
- Ms. Baquero explained that the school has set a goal of 10% economically disadvantaged student (EDS) population by the 2026 school year. The current EDS population is 5% of students. She spoke about wrap around services including student nutrition, after school, and summer programming.
- Mr. Friend asked the school to speak to transportation services. Mr. Charles Fuller explained that the school currently does not provide transportation but has not been a major issue due to the location of the school. He stated the school has contacted a vendor should it prove to be a barrier to new students. He explained it could be a cluster stop sort of program to pick up students at specific locations and bring to school. He stated the company is Delicate Transportation. Mr. Fuller stated he believes many of the students that would qualify for the weighted lottery live in a one-mile radius of the school.
- Ms. Kroeger asked about marketing for the weighted lottery qualifying students. Mr. Fuller spoke to web-based/social media advertising and also signage in the Wake Forest area. He stated they would also reach out to local churches and organizations.
- Ms. Monica Cutno, ESA board member, stated that the school also has a good relationship with the Boys and Girls Club. Ms. Hilda Parlér asked if the school has considered the local Wake Forest bus system. Mr. Fuller stated no, not at the moment, but that is something they could look into.
- Mr. Eric Sanchez asked for more information regarding the percentage goals established. Mr. Fuller stated the school wants to grow sustainably and they don't want to be in a situation where down the road when grant money runs out, they are in an unsustainable situation. He stated the school is very fiscally responsible and want to make sure they are growing in a sustainable manner.
- Ms. Cheryl Turner asked why, if the school believes the students who will qualify for the weighted lottery are in a one-mile radius, they haven't attracted those students yet. Mr. Fuller stated because the original application always intended to be in Wake Forest, but they had to start out in Raleigh for facility reasons. He stated that prevented the school from reaching those students the first few years, and then when very few students leave the school, it has been difficult to change the student population.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if the school believes it will attract Franklin County students as the school facility is close to the county line. Mr. Fuller stated yes, they have a large percentage of Franklin students and believe they will continue to attract. He stated they will definitely market into that area.

Motion: Motion to approve Envision Science Academy's weighted lottery request.

Motion: Terry Stoops

Second: Hilda Parlér

- Mr. Sanchez stated he will vote for this, but wish they were more ambitious. He stated the school has an amazing reputation and great campus. He stated it is right next to the Franklin County line where he believes a large population could use this opportunity. He wishes they would put more resources toward transportation and serving low-income students, but he is glad they are going down this road and he will support it.

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

Shining Rock Classical Mission Statement

- Ms. Ashley Baquero, OCS Consultant, explained that Shining Rock Classical is requesting a change to its mission statement. Ms. Baquero reviewed the changes to mission statement and explained the school went through a process of review and alignment with vision of school to determine the new mission statement.

Motion: Motion to approve Shining Rock Classical Academy’s request to amend its mission statement.

Motion: John Eldridge

Second: Lynn Kroeger

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

North Raleigh Relinquishment

- Ms. Ashley Baquero, OCS Consultant, explained that the Board of North Raleigh Charter Academy has voted to relinquish the charter for the school. Due to the increased costs of real estate and construction materials, the school is unable to secure the purchase of property to ensure a 2022 school opening.

Motion: Motion to accept North Raleigh Charter Academy’s charter relinquishment.

Motion: Bruce Friend

Second: Terry Stoops

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

NC CYBER ACADEMY

- Mr. Martez Hill, Superintendent, and Mr. James Mullins, Chief Operations Manager, gave a quarterly update for NC Cyber Academy.
- Mr. Mullins stated enrollment is currently 3024 students with an increase of approximately 700 since last year. He explained that almost 400 students have joined the elementary program since last year. He stated there are about 1250 students in the high school program currently.

- Mr. Mullins continued to explain increased interest in the program from parents and he stated that the majority of parents state they are either seeking a better educational fit for their student or a better cyber/remote option. He stated that over half parents surveyed stated they wanted flexibility for their student(s). He stated over half of new enrollment is from traditional schools and over 18% of those students are coming from a traditional remote program.
- Mr. Mullins spoke about reducing class sizes and trying to get under 35 students to one teacher. He stated they have added a guidance counselor this year and spoke about additional social-emotional supports this year.
- He spoke about current teacher recruitment to help reduce class size.
- Mr. Hill spoke to assessment data. He stated last year the school participated in NC Check-ins. He stated the school outperformed state data for reading and math for each grade level and were hopeful they would see this at end of year. He stated they were disappointed to not exceed state rates at end of grade testing for all test grades.
- Mr. Hill spoke about elective offerings and live learning opportunities. He spoke about efforts to improve end of grade testing outcomes.
- Ms. Kroeger asked if the 2020 single audit findings have been resolved. Mr. Mullens stated yes.

2021 CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

- Ms. Melanie Rackley, OCS Consultant, gave an overview of the 2021 application process. She previewed the interviews scheduled for the October CSAB meeting. She reviewed statutes, rules, and policies guiding the charter application process.
- She reviewed accelerated applicant requirements and geographic spread of applicant schools. Ms. Rackley explained the time guidelines for interviews. She explained the second-round process. She previewed applicant interviews scheduled for November 2021.

Interview Time	Committee (Lead)	Applicant Name	Applicant Type
10:15-11:15	Performance (BF)	Elaine Riddick Charter School	Accelerated

Elaine Riddick Charter School – Accelerated Applicant

- Mr. Dave Machado, OCS Director, stated that he visited the facility and believes it will be ready for opening. Ms. Baquero updated the board member roster and stated that Dr. Hortense Dodo and Dr. Koffi Konan will now be attending remotely.
- Ms. Rackley introduced the applicant. She stated this is the final accelerated applicant first round interview. She explained the applicant is proposing a school in Perquimans County. At capacity the school would serve 225 students grades K-8. There was an LEA impact statement submitted, the

applicant is a repeat applicant and they are partnering with an EMO, Torchlight LLC. She reviewed the map of the proposed location.

- Mr. Don McQueen began the opening statement. Mr. Friend asked if he is on the board. Mr. McQueen stated no, he is introducing the board. There was a short break taken so all board members could be present.
- Mr. Tony Riddick, Board Chair, gave the applicant's opening statement. He spoke about his family history. He spoke about his professional success and achieving millionaire status at 32 years old. He spoke about moving back to Perquimans and noticing the disparities in educational opportunity. He spoke about the summer program he started. He stated only about 30% of African Americans in the county graduate grade proficient.
- Dr. Dodo and Dr. Konan introduced themselves remotely and spoke about their professional experience. Ms. Reema Owens also introduced herself remotely and stated she operated a large health care facility and spoke about her professional experience. Dr. Lisa Swinson introduced herself remotely as a consultant with Torchlight and stated she will assist the board with the ready to open process. She stated she will stand in as school leader until the national search for a school leader is complete. She spoke about her professional experience.
- Mr. McQueen stated the EMO has invested over half a million into the facility. He stated they have also invested hundreds of thousands into other areas such as materials for facility and marketing.
- Mr. Riddick stated very little has changed in the application, which was previously approved. He stated they were shoot down because the building was not ready. He stated the community is in dire need of something different. He stated education must be approached in a different way or the country will continue to deteriorate.
- The CSAB began its question-and-answer portion of the interview.
- Mr. Friend presented questions regarding staffing and how the school envisions blended learning. He also has questions regarding the budget.
- Ms. Parlér stated she has questions about the purchase of the building and who will be the landlord. She asked why Dr. Dodo is serving two roles on the board.
- Ms. Turner would like to know what makes Elaine Riddick different than current options.
- Dr. Eldridge asked what the core professional development will be and asked about curriculum pacing guides. He also referenced the LEA impact statement and asked how the Elaine Riddick board would respond to the academic data presented by the county.
- Mr. Terry Stoops asked for more information regarding the EMO and the fact that some schools have not had success using Torchlight.
- Mr. Friend asked the board to respond to the questions regarding academic data and the record of the EMO, Torchlight Academies LLC.
- Mr. Riddick stated that the board's personal commitment is deeply entrenched in the community and Perquimans County and has been since 2004. He stated that the school is different because the board looked at where the students were failing in the community. He stated the program he ran for summer

programming, was based on data received from the superintendent of the county, and the board focused their personal resources toward improving the outcomes for the students.

- Mr. Riddick spoke about incarceration data for African Americans and spoke about the school to prison pipeline. Dr. Swinson stated what sets the school apart is the focus on Teach Like a Champion and Think Literacy. She stated professional development will be embedded into lesson plans. She stated Teach Like a Champion will help with professional development and class management. She spoke about data-driven instruction and utilizing models from Torchlight Academy.
- Mr. McQueen asked what schools are referenced in the LEA impact letter. Dr. Eldridge read the paragraph he referenced previously in the letter from Perquimans. Mr. McQueen stated that is part of the concern and Torchlight has written a response. He stated Torchlight LLC took over Torchlight Academy in 2015, and from that day forward the school has received a “C” or above. He stated the school has exceeded growth. He stated they were in the top 10% of growth in the entire state. He stated those are the actual facts and if they are referring to other schools, he would like the county to be more specific.
- Mr. McQueen stated he is also concerned because the entire process of the LEA impact statement is out of place based on their understanding of the law. He stated the law requiring LEA impact statements was repealed.
- Ms. Turner asked if different people came into Torchlight Academy in 2015, because wasn’t it still you? Mr. McQueen stated yes, we ran the school for twenty years, but the circumstances were different when Torchlight LLC took over in 2015. Ms. Turner stated it wasn’t a different set of people. Mr. McQueen stated well it was different circumstances. He stated being a management company allows things like borrowing funds and leveraging real estate.
- Ms. Turner asked about the organization that assumed Three Rivers, Global Education Management. She stated her understanding was that Mr. McQueen was part of Global Education Management and the only person left in that organization, so Mr. McQueen was actually running Three Rivers. She stated the implication of Torchlight’s response was that you were not running Three Rivers, when in fact you were. He stated that Three Rivers only had one year of operation with Torchlight. He stated that the test results and scores and letter grades prior to that year were not attributable to Torchlight.
- Ms. Turner asked if Three Rivers was an “F” for the year Torchlight ran the school. Mr. McQueen stated yes. Ms. Turner asked about Essie Mae Kiser Foxx and stated that school was also an “F”. Mr. McQueen stated there were a lot of other issues there with board members. He stated he doesn’t think you can look at one year of data and make conclusions.
- Ms. Parlér asked who holds the deed. Mr. McQueen stated he doesn’t hold the deed, but he owns the property. Mr. McQueen stated there is a land contract with the property owner that lasts for over ten years. Mr. McQueen stated he has a land contract, not a deed. Ms. Parlér stated she would like to see the contract because the deed does not have Mr. McQueen’s name or Torchlight.
- Mr. Friend asked about staffing and specifically why there is no guidance or social workers in the staffing plan. Mr. Riddick stated staffing will not be an issue and they are working hard with retired teachers and younger teachers coming out of school. He stated the salaries are in line with local salaries. He stated they have an agreement with the management company to assist and bring resources as needed. He stated the management company will be responsible for bringing those resources in as needed. Dr. Swinson stated they will also use contracted services. Mr. Riddick stated 25k was set aside

for exceptional children (EC) services. Mr. Friend clarified that he is speaking about guidance and social workers, not EC services.

- Mr. Riddick spoke about the need to serve the community and that no one has to like us or Torchlight. He spoke about statistics of Perquimans County. The board gave a closing statement. Dr. Swinson stated she works with Torchlight to ensure compliance so the management company will apply for Title I funds and make sure the school has the resources it needs. Mr. Riddick continued to speak about needs of the county. He stated he has a relationship with Mr. McQueen that goes back over thirty years and he knows his track record and capabilities. He stated of course mistakes have been made, which one of you hasn't made a mistake. He asked why the county schools are able to operate for thirty years miseducating our children.
- Ms. Turner stated she would like to respond to the "yanking the rug" comment. She stated CSAB made a decision based on the fact the facility was not ready only a month prior to the school opening. She stated the board was presented with no alternative and as of today, the building is still not ready.
- Ms. Parlér stated she still has questions about the lease because the lease states it will operate as a Delaware public charter school. She is unclear if the LLC operates in Delaware. She needs clarification on whether the EMO will sublet to Elaine Riddick.
- Mr. Sanchez asked about Three Rivers Academy because he does not know that history. Ms. Turner stated Three Rivers was once another charter school (operating under another name) that was closed by the state and opened for assumption by another non-profit. Global Education Management was the group that assumed the former school and opened it up as Three Rivers Academy. Mr. McQueen was part of the Global group and was the only person that remained with the group so Torchlight, run by Mr. McQueen, took over management. She stated there were definitely issues with the assumption and with the former group. But, she continued, the first year of academic data for Three Rivers was an "F" and the principles in both Global and Torchlight are the same people, so Torchlight effectively ran that school.
- Ms. Turner stated that Essie Mae Kiser Foxx was another charter board that partnered with Mr. McQueen and Torchlight. That school received a "F" and closed two years later. She stated both parties, Essie Mae Kiser Foxx and Torchlight blamed each other.
- Mr. McQueen stated Torchlight Academy was formerly Northeast Raleigh Academy and the name changed in 2002 and Mr. McQueen's EMO took over.
- Ms. Turner stated from her point of view, Mr. McQueen was still operating these schools regardless of the name of the organization.
- Mr. Friend stated no one would look at the performance of the county, and specifically the subgroup data presented, and think that is acceptable. He stated we certainly need boards to go into the communities that need high quality educational options. He stated he would like to respond to the comment, "you don't have to like us or Torchlight." Mr. Friend stated this is not about liking anyone but having confidence and trust that a board can operate a school.
- Mr. Friend continued that he has more questions regarding the budget, specifically Torchlight's fee because it's not in the budget. He stated he has more questions regarding staffing. He stated he is inclined to bring the board back for a second interview. He stated he is impressed with the board but has remaining questions.

- Mr. Stoops stated he agrees and would like to mention that there are a lot of new people on this board that have any previous history with the board or EMO and everyone here is looking at this application with fresh eyes.

Motion: Motion to move Elaine Riddick Charter School forward to a second interview.

Motion: Cheryl Turner

Second: Bruce Friend

- Mr. Friend stated it would be great to have the other board members in person next month.
- OCS staff explained that for second round interviews, applicants will receive specific questions and/or document requests posed by CSAB. Ms. Baquero explained that is a change from last year’s process. Ms. Baquero told Elaine Riddick applicant contacts to keep an eye out for an email from Ms. Rackley with instructions and deadlines. Elaine Riddick applicants stated they would do so.

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

**CSAB adjourned for lunch at 11:08am

2021 CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION INTERVIEWS – SECOND ROUND

Interview Time	Committee (Lead)	Applicant Name	Applicant Type
12:30-1:15	Performance (BF)	Revitalize Charter School (Second Round)	Accelerated
1:30-2:15	Performance (CT)	Oak Hill Charter School (Second Round)	Accelerated

Revitalize Charter School

- Ms. Rackley introduced the applicant for the second-round interview.
- Ms. Ansel Caceres, school founder and proposed head of school, gave the applicant opening statement. She thanked OCS staff for the assistance and support received. She stated that the school has obtained a contingency facility plan with the Garner Road Community Center. She described the facility as being in the target location and previously used as a YMCA. She stated currently it is used as an afterschool program and sports center. The space has 17,000 square feet indoors but also have a garden and outdoor space, just like the Casa Esperanza space. She stated it is enough space for year one including office space and flex space for things like EC services. She stated the lease rate will be discussed, to work within the school’s budget, if this contingency location is needed.
- Mr. Friend reminded the CSAB that this is a second interview and the applicant has responded to the previous questions submitted by CSAB. CSAB members thanked the applicant for answering thoroughly.
- Mr. Friend asked if the school plans to have a counselor. Ms. Caceres stated they do not plan on having a counselor because the social workers will provide those supports. She stated they are open to the conversation but thought intentionally about this decision and decided to keep the staffing plan as

presented. Mr. Friend asked how preliminary hiring is going. Ms. Caceres stated she is speaking with local universities but have not thought specifically about who they would hire.

- Mr. Stoops asked about staffing and particularly about recruiting new teachers. He asked if they will hire teachers with more than five years. Ms. Caceres stated yes.
- Ms. Turner asked how the two-teacher model will work with the proposed changes.
- Dr. Valencia Church-Williams, Board Chair, stated there will still be a two-teacher model but it will now be at least one fully licensed teacher and one teacher in training. She stated the goal is to retain the teachers in training and by year two they will both be fully licensed.
- Ms. Caceres spoke to the challenges with having so many student teachers and stated she is familiar with that through her work with Ember charter schools in Brooklyn. Ms. Turner stated she also has concerns with finding schools to get placement teachers. Ms. Caceres stated she is confident in that regard because she has spoken with almost all educator prep programs in the area and they would like to partner with the school. She spoke about recruitment activities and the selectivity of recruitment. She stated they want to recruit teachers who want to lead.
- Dr. Church-Williams stated they are in communication with NCCU and the school has agreed to work with the school to place master level Exceptional Children staff in the charter school. She stated they have also started to collaborate with UNC School of Education.
- Ms. Morgan Camu introduced herself as the Vice Chair of the board. She gave a closing statement and reiterated the passion and thoughtful planning of the part of the board. She stated the board appreciates the collaboration with the
- Mr. Friend thanked the board for coming back and for thoroughly answering the questions presented by CSAB in preparation for the second-round interview. He stated the role of the CSAB is to make sure they have full confidence and trust in the board that receives the charter. He stated he believes this board has the passion and experience to make this work. Ms. Parlér echoed those thoughts and stated she trusts this board.

Motion: Recommend to the SBE that Revitalize Charter School be moved to Ready to Open status on an accelerated timeline.

Motion: John Eldridge

Second: Lynn Kroeger

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

****CSAB adjourned for a break at 12:40pm.**

Oak Hill Charter School

- Ms. Rackley introduced the applicant for the second-round interview.
- Ms. Kelly McIntyre, Board Chair, gave the applicant introduction. She stated the intent to enroll form count is up to 265. She stated that the entire board participated in the first RTO training, all eight are present today. She spoke about community connections and donations including enough furniture to

furnish the entire school for the first three years. She stated this has allowed the board to shift funds to nutrition and fund a full, healthy breakfast program. She stated they are hiring a counselor for the school and have received a donation for over 3k to fund a library.

- She highlighted the educational program that focuses on back to basics and linear curriculum through Core Knowledge, Shurley Grammar, and Saxon Math. She spoke about the spiralized approach of Saxon Math. She stated the school will have high expectations for students but also staff and board members. She stated the core values are treat others right, make smart decisions, and maximize potential. She stated there were be a yearly outside evaluation of these core values.
- She spoke about county school consolidation and children that face bus rides up to three hours. She stated the board has had their community outreach team in communities without broadband to allow for in-person marketing and enrollment help. She stated the board represents at least six communities and two counties.
- Ms. Turner stated the board provided answers to the questions posed by CSAB and opened it to any further questioning from CSAB.
- Mr. Friend, Ms. Kroeger, and Ms. Parlér voiced appreciation for the detailed responses from the board.
- Mr. Sanchez asked for more elaboration regarding the breakfast program. Ms. McIntyre stated the school looked into breakfast options that are currently offered at local schools. She stated the board wanted to utilize the healthy aspect of milk or water options, fruit, and then add another healthy option such as yogurt or Nutrigrain bars. She stated that is how the board developed the budget for breakfast.
- Mr. Sanchez asked is there is a vendor for this option. Mr. Anthony Rodriguez, Goodall Consulting, stated the packages are pre-wrapped and so they can buy in bulk and distribute.
- Ms. Kroeger stated the original budget has 52k for nutrition, does that include breakfast and lunch? Mr. Rodriguez stated that breakfast would be in addition and available due to budget revisions taking into account donations for furniture.
- Ms. McIntyre gave the closing statement. She responded to a previous comment by Mr. Friend when he wondered why there are not more charter options in the area. Ms. McIntyre stated it is because of a lack of awareness. She stated the county has been through a lot in the last few decades due to the decline of the furniture industry. She stated there is an option here to break the glass ceiling of mediocrity and bring opportunity to the children of Caldwell County.
- Mr. Friend stated this process is about trusting a board can be successful in operating a school. Ms. Kroeger stated she is very impressed with the community outreach, and she too has a lot of confidence in this board.

Motion: Recommend to the SBE that Oak Hill Charter School be moved to Ready to Open status on an accelerated timeline.

Motion: Bruce Friend

Second: Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

Motion: (1:15pm) Move that we go into closed session pursuant to NC General Statute 143-318.11(a) (3) to consult with our attorneys in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorneys and the public body. Following closed session, CSAB will adjourn in public session, and no further business will be conducted.

Motion: Bruce Friend

Second: Todd Godbey

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

Motion: (2:27pm) Move to end closed session and enter open session to adjourn.

Motion: Bruce Friend

Second: Todd Godbey

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

ADJOURNMENT

- **Ms. Parlér made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:27 pm. Mr. Eldridge seconded and the meeting adjourned unanimously.**

**Minutes of the
North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board
State Board Room 755, Department of Public Instruction
October 12, 2021
9AM**

Attendance – CSAB Members	
Jamey Falkenbury (non-voting) Rita Haire – absent John Eldridge Cheryl Turner Hilda Parlér – absent Shelly Bullard	Eric Sanchez Terry Stoops Bruce Friend Lynn Kroeger Todd Godbey
Attendance – Other	
<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Dave Machado, Director Ashley Baquero, Consultant Claire Porter, Consultant Joseph Letterio, Consultant (remote) Darian Jones, Consultant (remote) Melanie Rackley, Consultant Jay Whalen, NC ACCESS (remote) Barbara O’Neal, NC ACCESS (remote)	<i>Attorney General</i> Stephanie Lloyd Forrest Fallanca <i>SBE Attorney</i> Allison Schafer – absent

CALL TO ORDER

- The North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Mr. Bruce Friend who read the Ethics Statement and CSAB Mission Statement. Mr. Friend led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion: Motion to approve the amended October 12, 2021 agenda.

Motion: Hilda Parlér

Second: John Eldridge

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

SALLIE B. HOWARD SCHOOL OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCE

- Mr. Sandeep Aggarwal, Assistant Director, Ms. Pratibha Rani, Elementary principal, Ms. Diana Torres, Dean of Arts and Humanities, and Ms. Kimberly Hines, Dean of Student Services.
- Mr. Machado asked the school to share how the NC ACCESS funds are being used. Mr. Aggarwal stated the grant has helped the school to maintain the biotech program at the school. He spoke about industry leaders that have come to the school and that the school sees great potential in future opportunities for students. Mr. Aggarwal stated the grant funds have also allowed the school to purchase more buses.
- Mr. Stoops asked what the advice the school would give to applicants wanting to open a charter school. Mr. Aggarwal stated everyone involved needs to be clear on the school’s mission and focused on that mission.
- Mr. Sanchez stated that the school really does live the
- Mr. Sanchez asked if the school has experienced struggles with staffing. Mr. Aggarwal stated that people don’t leave jobs, they leave managers. He thinks the school has been successful because so many staff members have been aligned with the mission and vision of the school. He stated the idea is current and alive and present to staff on a daily basis. He stated if staff believe in a mission, it is difficult to pull them away. He spoke about accountability and that when staff understand the accountability is
- Mr. Aggarwal stated the school has had a very low attrition rate. He stated many on the leadership team have been at the school for nearly twenty years. Ms. Rani stated that the school celebrates each other. She stated the team has high expectations of each other but we invest in each other through work. She stated when she speaks to teachers each morning, she connects with them on a personal level. She stated staff connects on a personal and professional level. She spoke about rotating team lead positions and master teachers on staff. Mr. Aggarwal stated he believes staff sees the investment of leadership as well.
- Mr. Aggarwal stated that he also believes the leader, Ms. Joanne Woodard, is exceptional.
- Ms. Kroeger asked about adding a high school and maintaining the school culture. Mr. Aggarwal stated they were very fortunate because they had a great leader for middle and high school. He stated there were very few problems because the school had such an established culture.
- Mr. Aggarwal spoke about new teachers. He stated that when they send new teachers to other teachers’ rooms to observe, leadership gives specific areas to observe. Otherwise, he explains, the new teacher is unsure of what to observe. He spoke about how that leads to deeper practice.

2021 CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION INTERVIEWS

Interview Time	Committee (Lead)	Applicant Name	Applicant Type
10:00-11:00	Policy (CT)	Agape Achievement Academy	Standard

11:30-12:30	Performance (BF)	The Phoenix Preparatory Academy	Standard
-------------	------------------	---------------------------------	----------

Agape Achievement Academy

- Ms. Rackley introduced the applicant. She explained the applicant is proposing a school in Cumberland County. At capacity the school would serve 120 students grades K-5. There was an LEA impact statement submitted, the applicant is not a repeat applicant, and did not partner with a EMO/CMO.
- Ms. Doris Taylor, Board Chair, gave the opening statement for the applicant board and introduced the accompanying board members. Ms. Stephanie Walsh, Board Secretary, explained that she is a retired teacher and explained how her and Ms. Taylor met and discussed the need to have an additional option for students in the area. She spoke about how the board wants to target students that need additional help and have had difficulty in school. She stated the county is very transient and the board feels that with their expertise, the school could be an outstanding resource in the community. She stated the board wants a smaller learning environment.
- Ms. Walsh continued to speak about wanting to help students identify strengths and provide intense instruction, including instruction to families to help their own students. She spoke about wanting open communication with families. She stated the board would like to get back to some programs that are no longer utilized in schools. She recapped by stating the school wants small classes, dedicated staff, intense instruction, and open communication.
- Mr. Jesse Brayboy, Board Treasurer, introduced himself and explained he had a learning disability as a child and now runs a company for special needs adults. He stated he is very sensitive to the needs of children with different needs. He spoke about how he believes catching children when they are young is key.
- Mr. Leon Dantzler, board member, spoke about his childhood in the community and how important it is to have a rigorous and safe environment for children. He stated he believes this school could have a positive impact on the children of Cumberland County.
- Mr. Friend stated he has questions about the authorship of the application.
- Mr. Stoops stated he has questions about the partnership between the school and the faith-based nonprofit mentioned in the application.
- Ms. Turner stated she wants to confirm the school understands the timeline. She also wants to know if anyone on the board is planning on working at the school. She has questions about the organizational structure, staffing, and many questions about the budget. Mr. Sanchez has questions about the budget as well. He stated the budget outlines 12% exceptional children (EC), but the board seems to be focused on this population, so he would like to understand the projections.
- Ms. Walsh stated that when writing the application, the board pulled too much they may want to choose from in terms of the educational program. She stated the school will be accepting EC students and evaluating needs.

- Mr. Friend asked about authorship because the application had verbatim references from another application. Ms. Walsh stated the application was a team effort and that the team looked at other applications as they wrote theirs. Ms. Turner stated her issue with that is that there is a certification section that asked if text is copied from another application and that certification is blank.
- Ms. Turner asked several questions about the budget. Ms. Taylor stated there may be some errors. Ms. Turner stated the problem is that this application, if approved, becomes the contract with the state, and the CSAB cannot knowingly approve a contract with several errors.
- Mr. Friend asked how the board has gauged parental interest. Ms. Taylor stated the board has completed surveys since submitting the application. She stated when they wrote the application, they hadn't done that yet, but they have a plan now.
- Ms. Kroeger asked the board to speak more about the stated purpose of the school (to improve student learning). Ms. Taylor spoke about using MTSS and Read to Achieve. Ms. Turner stated that both MTSS and Read to Achieve are mandated by the state, so every school in the state is required to use those. Ms. Turner stated that she believes the board should spend more time with the application. She stated there are basic areas the board should know more about. She stated if you are proposing programs that are already mandated by the state, you are not doing anything different.
- Mr. Godbey stated there is certainly a need for school like this and he believes the board has good ideas and your heart is in the right place, but there is work to be done about how you would actualize this plan.
- Ms. Taylor stated she understands and hopes that they would be given the chance to go back and make improvements. She stated the team has the ability to go back and make it better. Mr. Brayboy stated that his company has seven employees, and he used that knowledge to formulate the budget. He spoke about insurance projections. He stated he brought that to the table as a board member and he knows they should have done more extensive research on quite a few things.
- Mr. Friend thinks the board's heart is in the right place and encourages them coming back next year. He stated he cannot support a second interview because the application is not ready.
- Ms. Turner gave the board advice on preparing another application for a new cycle. She recommended that the board attend training by the Office of Charter Schools. Mr. Machado gave the applicant board information about the next cycle and his contact information.
- Mr. Sanchez stated the passion and humility is compelling, but he also thinks that there is some mindset missing. He gave examples from today's interview and advice moving forward.

Motion: Recommend to the SBE that Agape Achievement Academy not be moved to Ready to Open status.

Motion: Eric Sanchez

Second: Bruce Friend

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

The Phoenix Preparatory Academy

- Ms. Rackley introduced the applicant. She explained the applicant is proposing a school in Pitt County. At capacity the school would serve 805 students grades K-12. There was an LEA impact statement submitted, the applicant is not a repeat applicant, and did not partner with a EMO/CMO. The applicant received assistance from Leaders Building Leaders.
- Mr. George O'Garro, Board Chair, gave the board's opening statement. He spoke about the school's mission and the diverse experience on the board. He stated the board seeks to recruit additional members from Pitt County. He stated Ms. Wanda Wright is absent and Mr. Ken Peel is attending remotely. He stated he is a private wealth advisor and lives in Los Angeles, works in New York City. He stated the board will explain more about that. He spoke about board experience. He summarized county academic data and absenteeism. He also stated that Pitt County has a lack of choice. He spoke about Core Knowledge curriculum and its principles. Mr. O'Garro spoke about the benefits of intergenerational benefits including improved academics, enhanced social skills, and less likely to use drugs/alcohol or skip school. He spoke about the benefits for the senior participants. Finally, he summarized benefits to the community.
- Mr. Stoops had questions about the educational program and stated he does not recommend a board with as many as 21 members.
- Mr. Eldridge asked the school to consider the impact statement's assertions and asked for the school's elevator speech. He also wanted to know how the board selected Core Knowledge.
- Ms. Kroeger asked for more information about community presence and academic goals. She also wanted to know the relationship between Springshire. She mentioned there may be confusion about the name because there is a Phoenix Academy in NC already. She also presented questions about the lease payment.
- Ms. Turner asked about the layout of the classrooms and specifically the remote classrooms and classrooms for kids with incontinence. Why does the board expect a full class of incontinent children?
- Mr. Sanchez posed questions about the budget and the child nutrition program. He asked for clarification on the budget and the drop in surplus at year three.
- Mr. Sanchez requested more information regarding salaries.
- Mr. Friend asked how the board came together.
- Mr. O'Garro stated himself and Mr. Kenneth Walker are out of state board members. He stated the two of them are connected through the retirement center. He stated the school will be funded via bond which is why the lease is low. He stated that also explains how the surplus works in the budget. He stated him and Mr. Walker are carry overs from the retirement center side, and the remaining board members are involved in education. He stated they recruited local educators.
- Ms. Kroeger asked if the bond is already issued. Mr. O'Garro stated the bond is not issued, but the bond will be issued with no interest payments until year five. He stated the bond is the same bond that is the bond for the retirement center.
- Mr. Friend asked if the two are dependent on one another. Mr. O'Garro stated the retirement center is happening and it would be unfortunate if the school isn't approved, but the retirement center will

go forward. Ms. Turner asked if the school is on the property plans already submitted to the city. Mr. O'Garro stated yes, but it is pending approval.

- Ms. Kroeger asked if the school will then pay a lease to the retirement center. Mr. O'Garro stated yes. Ms. Turner asked who owns the school building. Mr. O'Garro stated the land belongs to the retirement center but the facility will belong to the school.
- Ms. Kroeger asked what the balloon payment would be in year five. Mr. O'Garro stated the payment in year five would be around two million which is what is built into the surplus the year prior.
- Mr. Falkenbury asked about the name of the school and if the board believes that will cause problems. Mr. O'Garro stated a lot went into the decision for that school name but they wouldn't be opposed to changing if needed for approval.
- Ms. Turner asked about how the board chair and vice chair can ensure they will be responsive when they live out of state. Mr. O'Garro stated they will both be available and be at board meetings.
- Mr. Friend has asked about the head of school. Mr. Walker stated they are currently recruiting and they are looking for someone that can implement the vision and Core Knowledge curriculum.
- Mr. Walker spoke about the history between him and Mr. O'Garro and his experience on a school board. He spoke about the vision of creating a better retirement center connected with a school. He stated they know they need additional local board members, but their experience is important.
- Mr. Walker spoke about targeting minority and low-income populations. He stated they will accept all schools, but they want to reach families that believe they need additional options for their students. He stated he is a product manager, and he thinks about what the product is – a better education, a better life.
- Ms. Turner asked why the school chose Core Knowledge. Mr. Walker stated he believes in the philosophy of building background knowledge. He believes the circling of knowledge as children make progress.
- Mr. Sanchez asked how K-5 works in terms of classroom/teacher ration and staffing model.
- Ms. Forney stated she is a local board member and initially the school is looking at a ratio of 25 students per teacher. She stated teacher assistants would be utilized in K-3.
- Ms. Turner stated the enrollment projections go down and asked why. Mr. Walker stated the reality is that some kids could enter the school and eventually decide to go somewhere else. He stated they hope to keep all kids, but they expect to lose some. Ms. Turner stated that is not her experience. Mr. Eldridge stated that you may have a waitlist too.
- Mr. Walker gave a closing statement for the board and explained the vision of building an intergenerational community. He spoke about wanting the school to be a place where kids learn about the global community and also be active and healthy. He spoke about the opportunities available here in North Carolina and the importance of having a sense of what is available to students.

- Mr. Kenneth Peel, board member, introduced himself and stated he is a resident of Greenville and spoke about the benefits of this intergenerational approach. He stated this program would be a benefit to this region.
- Ms. Turner stated she is very intrigued by this idea, but she needs to have more information to make sure this school could work.
- Mr. Falkenbury asked about the permit process and CSAB members reminded him that a facility is not required at this point because it is not an accelerated application.
- Mr. Friend stated he would consider removing Core Knowledge from the mission statement and consider a name change. He spoke about his experience with a charter school that was closed in Pitt County. He stated a lesson learned was that being local is very important and one of the challenges the school faced was not having leadership and the board that was invested in the community.
- Mr. Friend stated they could use more parental interest evidence.
- Mr. Sanchez stated the business experience is important, but the idea of a balanced board is important and there needs to be more information about the instructional side. He stated the teacher ratio numbers referenced do not align with the budget. He stated more elaboration is needed in that area. Mr. Sanchez stated you can really need a lot of staffing when you get into high school and offering AP classes.
- Mr. Stoops stated he appreciates the innovation.

Motion: Recommend that the Phoenix Preparatory Academy be moved to a second-round interview.

Motion: John Eldridge

Second: Cheryl Turner

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

*****CSAB adjourned for lunch at 12:00pm.**

DIRECTOR'S UPDATES

- Mr. Machado gave his monthly update. He spoke about recent State Board items and visits to schools.
- Ms. Baquero gave logistical updates and stated the next meeting is November 8-9th. She gave instructions for second round interview preparation.

Interview Time	Committee (Lead)	Applicant Name	Applicant Type
1:30-2:30	Policy (LK)	IMPACT Leadership Academy	Standard

IMPACT Leadership Academy

- Ms. Rackley introduced the applicant. She explained the applicant is proposing a school in Lenoir County. At capacity the school would serve 360 students grades K-8. There was an LEA impact statement submitted, the applicant is a repeat applicant, and did not partner with a EMO/CMO.
- Dr. Eric Kneubuehl, Board Vice Chair, gave the applicant opening statement. He stated the board is aware of the challenges in opening a new charter school. He stated that Lenoir County schools have made significant growth and we believe the county and city of Kinston are improving. He spoke to significant research that supports the benefits of charter and district collaboration. He stated it is in that vein that IMPACT hopes to collaborate and not compete with LCPSS. He spoke to community partnerships that would provide direct access to programs and resources within the community supporting families.
- Dr. Kneubuehl spoke about collaboration in the community and work with K-12 educators that have significant experience during the development of the application.
- He spoke about Kinston Charter's closing that took place over seven years ago and that the board believes the city is ready for a new charter opportunity.
- Ms. Kroeger asked if the board only has four members. Dr. Kneubuehl stated yes, that some board members decided to leave because professional conflicts following the LEA's statement.
- Mr. Friend asked if the current board members are the same as former board members.
- Mr. Godbey asked for clarification on the transportation plans.
- Ms. Kroeger asked for clarity on the class sizes planned because it is inconsistent in the application. She asked the board to explain the teacher schedule which is a nine-hour work day.
- Ms. Kroeger would like more elaboration from Ms. Singleton regarding the educational program.
- Ms. Turner would like to know who, on the board, lives in Lenoir County.
- Dr. Kneubuehl stated three of the original are still on the board. He stated Gordan Darragh is a new member.
- Dr. Kneubuehl stated two board members resigned from the board due to pressure from their work places in Kinston.
- He continued that he has additional members in the works and can now better educate potential members about the challenges posed. So, yes, he stated, there are only four members and no one lives in Lenoir County.
- He stated he has a facility that would work ready to go if the school gets approved. He stated it is a church facility that at one time housed a charter school.
- Mr. Danny King, board member, stated he has a presence in the county and serves children through a mental health provider in the county. He spoke about connections to Kinston and stated he has been on the ground in Kinston since 2005.

- Dr. Dorothy Singleton, Board Chair, spoke about project-based learning. She stated students are presented with an idea or current issue and then students do research to investigate, develop the idea.
- Mr. Darragh, board member, spoke about IMPACT time that gives students experiences they may not otherwise have, extra academic time, individualize instruction, engagement, and more. He spoke more about IMPACT time and what the school will offer students.
- Dr. Kneubuehl stated the class size of 12 was an error in the application and it should be 20. He stated the school is doing single gender classes.
- Mr. Friend would like more differentiation between blended and personalized learning.
- Dr. Singleton spoke about meeting students at their own level.
- Mr. Friend asked the board to define personalized learning. Dr. Singleton stated it pertains to assessing what each student needs and meeting those needs. She spoke about understanding what each child needs to master. She spoke about pulling out students in small groups for specific instruction. Mr. Friend asked if students will have voice and choice in what they learn and how they demonstrate understanding. Dr. Singleton stated yes. She spoke more about personalized learning.
- Mr. Friend asked why there a need for single gender classrooms. Dr. Singleton spoke to differences in the genders in terms of how girls and how boys learn. She stated they are brought back together at points in the day and still learn from each other.
- Ms. Kroeger stated she has concern that there is too much going on in the educational plan.
- Dr. Singleton gave a closing statement for the board.
- Dr. Bullard stated she is hearing a lot of buzz words and it lacks focus.
- Mr. Friend stated there is some improvement from last year and he believes there is a need in the community, but he's struggling with this application.
- Mr. Friend stated he can't understand the IMPACT Leadership Academy elevator speech because there are so many areas it is trying to cover.
- Ms. Kroeger stated she is leaning toward not feeling this application is ready.
- Mr. Falkenbury stated he is having a difficult time envisioning what the school day would look like based on the presentation of the application.
- Mr. Stoops mentioned the difficulty even the applicant recognized with the county making progress in its schools, therefore making it more competitive to attract students.
- The CSAB discussed whether the applicant would be best served by reapplying in January 2022 under an accelerated timeline which would make the opening date the same as this timeline, 2023.
- Mr. Friend stated that is what he recommends. He stated the applicant needs greater focus and needs to have local board members.

- Ms. Kroeger stated the applicant will need to have a facility and a clear and compelling need if they come back under an accelerated timeline.
- Dr. Eldridge stated he suggests the applicant reach out to schools with similar plans to get advice on how to focus priorities.
- Mr. Godbey stated that by focusing on the educational plan, you can firm up your brand, which will help the applicant show demand.
- Mr. Stoops and Ms. Turner stated there is research out there about single sex/single gender classrooms and that can

Motion: Recommend that IMPACT Leadership Academy not be moved as Ready to Open.

Motion: John Eldridge

Second: Cheryl Turner

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

LK BF

2:25