Planning Year | Session 1
Charter School Governance
September 28, 2022
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session Name</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:15 AM</td>
<td>Sign In</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Welcome from OCS Team + Introductions</td>
<td>Ashley Baquero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:45 AM</td>
<td>Get To Know You</td>
<td>Share one Unique Feature about your school</td>
<td>Jenna Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Governance and Oversight Responsibilities</td>
<td>Strategies for Staying Out of Legal Trouble for Charter School Boards</td>
<td>Allison Schafer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45 AM</td>
<td>Roles and Responsibilities</td>
<td>Effective Governance: The Charter School BOD &amp; The Charter School</td>
<td>Dr. Darian Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 AM</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
<td>NC Charter School Laws &amp; The Charter Agreement</td>
<td>An update on laws and the Charter Agreement and how they affect your</td>
<td>Jenna Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;to be&quot; adopted policies.</td>
<td>Ashley Baquero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
<td>Admissions Policies &amp; Procedures.</td>
<td>What’s lawful and what’s not?</td>
<td>Jenna Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 AM</td>
<td>Amendment Process</td>
<td>The process for amending your charter application.</td>
<td>Ashley Baquero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 PM</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 PM</td>
<td>Ready to Open Framework and Minimum Standards to Open</td>
<td>Participants will be introduced to the RTO requirements.</td>
<td>Jenna Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
<td>Governance Strengthening Exercises</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jenna Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15 PM</td>
<td>Epicenter</td>
<td>An introduction to the online document repository and platform used</td>
<td>Meghann Russell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>for Ready to Open submissions and the Performance Framework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45 PM</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 PM</td>
<td>Expert on the Ground</td>
<td>Marketing, branding, public relations, and adapting to meet the budget</td>
<td>Tim Saintsing (KIPP NC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(planned to reality)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:45 PM</td>
<td>Wrap-Up</td>
<td>Closing remarks + Preview for October</td>
<td>Jenna Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
<td>End</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Welcome + Introductions
Office of Charter Schools

- Ashley Baquero, Director
- Jenna Cook, Renewals + RTO
- Anita Holbrook, Administrative Support
- Dr. Darian Jones, Professional Learning + Stakeholder Support
- Joseph L. Maimone, Performance Framework + Communications
- Melanie Rackley, Applications
- Dr. Barbara O’Neal, NC ACCESS
- Lakisha Robbins, NC ACCESS
- Davida Robinson, NC ACCESS
- Jay Whalen, NC ACCESS
Please Introduce Yourself & Share One Unique Feature About Your Proposed School
Governance and Oversight Responsibilities

Allison Schafer, SBE Attorney
Governance and Oversight
Responsibilities of Charter School Boards – Strategies for Staying Out of Legal Trouble

Allison Schafer
General Counsel for the North Carolina State Board of Education and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
September 29, 2022
North Carolina Law
“A charter school that is approved by the State shall be a public school within the local school administrative unit in which it is located. All charter schools shall be accountable to the State Board (of Education) for ensuring compliance with applicable laws and the provisions of their charters.”

“The board of directors of the charter schools shall adopt a conflict of interest and anti-nepotism policy that includes, at a minimum, the following:”

North Carolina Law

“The requirements of Chapter 55A of the General Statutes related to conflicts of interest.”

North Carolina Law

“A conflict of interest is a transaction with the corporation in which a director of the corporation has a direct or indirect interest.”

Conflict of interest transactions may be approved by the majority of the other directors of the corporation, but the transaction must still be “fair” to the corporation.

The conflict of interest and nepotism policies must also include “A requirement that before any immediate family of any member of the board of directors or a charter school employee with supervisory authority shall be employed or engaged as an employee, independent contractor or otherwise by the board of directors in any capacity, such proposed employment or engagement shall be disclosed to the board of directors and approved by the board of directors in a duly called open-session meeting.”

“The burden of... disclosure shall be on the applicable board member or employee with supervisory authority.”

Practice Tip #1

- If there is no board vote in a duly called open session to approve a conflict relationship AND if there is no official record of such a vote in the board minutes, it didn’t happen for purposes of the law and is not permissible.
A policy is worthless if it is not implemented with fidelity. Once you adopt conflict of interest and nepotism policies you must enforce them, or you are legally responsible for failure to do so.
“The school is subject to the financial audits procedure, and the audit requirements adopted by the State Board of Education for charter schools”

Practice Tip #3

- The auditor works for the charter school board and should serve as a check and balance on the school operators, including the school’s finance officer.
- The auditor should appear before the charter school board, either in person or virtually, to present copies of the annual audit report and answer questions from the board members.
- The board members have an obligation to provide financial oversight over the school operators. The audit is one important tool.
North Carolina Law

“The State Board of Education may terminate, not renew or seek applicants to assume the charter...upon any of the following grounds:”

North Carolina Law

“(2) Failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management;

(3) Violations of law;

(4) Material violations of...the charter ... 

(6) Other good cause.”

The use of state funds to purchase real property for charter schools is restricted.

N.C.G.S. § 143C-6-22(a): Disbursement and Use of State Funds. – Every non-State entity that receives, uses, or expends any State funds shall use or expend the funds only for the purposes for which they were appropriated by the General Assembly. State funds include federal funds that flow through the State Treasury.
Federal Conflicts of Interest Standards
Federal Law

- No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a Federal award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest.

- 2 CFR 200.318(c)(1)
Federal Law

- Such a conflict of interest would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract. The officers, employees, and agents of the non-Federal entity may neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or parties to subcontracts.

- 2 CFR 200.318(c)(1)
Strategies for Preventing the Misuse of Funds
Strategies for Preventing the Misuse of Funds

- There is no way to guarantee that you will not have employees in your school system who will try to spend money inappropriately or embezzle money.

- However, it is the responsibility of the board to make sure that you have in place strategies designed limit opportunities to misappropriate funds:
Strategies for Preventing the Misuse of Funds

- Internal controls, i.e., systems that provide for checks and balances to monitor employees who have responsibility for the money
- Adequate policies that provide for these appropriate systems
- Adequate training for board members, supervisory staff members, and finance staff
Strategies for Preventing the Misuse of Funds

- Consider having an employee who is assigned internal audit functions.

- Make sure the board receives reports regularly - monthly or quarterly - on the status of the board’s finances.

- Make sure any monies spent are spent consistent with the board’s budget.
Strategies for Preventing the Misuse of Funds

- The board should consider approving initial salaries and raises or have a salary schedule or other means of providing guidance and oversight of monies paid to school administrators in particular? Key administrators should never be setting their own salaries.
Strategies for Preventing the Misuse of Funds

▶ Make sure you receive and go over with your auditor the annual audit you are required to have done, and make sure you understand it (remember the auditor works for the board and should report directly to the board).

▶ Consider changing auditors every three to five years, so someone new can review your books.
Strategies for Preventing the Misuse of Funds

- Control who has access to electronic signatures, signature stamps, computer accounts that are used to transfer funds, school system credit cards, checks, petty cash funds, etc.

- Make sure there is a good system for approving travel and reimbursement for travel.

- Make sure there is a good system for approving purchase of goods.
Strategies for Preventing the Misuse of Funds

- Encourage employees to report suspected problems or concerns for investigation.
- Create a climate of “zero tolerance” for misuse or even the appearance of misuse of funds.
Red Flags
Red Flags

- A complaint or report from any source that there is mismanagement going on
- Incomplete or inadequate financial reports from school personnel
- Refusal or inability to provide information to the board
Red Flags

- Vague or unresponsive answers to board inquiries
- Failure to produce information requested by auditors - either yours, or those of another agency with oversight responsibility - or failure to produce complete information for auditors
Red Flags

- Finance staff who come in early, stay late and never take vacation and/or who never allow anyone to have access to their records or computer databases
Action Steps
Action Steps

- You need to act as quickly as possible to investigate and address the problems. Be aggressive. It’s your responsibility as board members, working with your attorney, auditor, and/or appropriate school staff to figure out and fix the problems.
Action Steps

- Call in an auditor and your attorney to help you determine if there is a problem. It is not expected that board members will be professional accountants or attorneys, but you will be expected to call them in if necessary.
Action Steps

- If the concerns center around a specific employee or head of a department, that person needs to be removed from his/her position IMMEDIATELY. Depending on the person’s position and the rights involved, he or she should be suspended with pay immediately, at a minimum, and all access to the school system accounts terminated until the matter is resolved.
Action Steps

- Remember Arthur Anderson’s alleged shredding of documents in the Enron scandal?

- Reinstatement is always possible if the person is cleared of wrongdoing. Leaving a person in a position of access to money when there is credible evidence of mismanagement or theft can result in civil, or possibly even criminal, liability.
Action Steps

- Report misappropriation/fraud to the appropriate authorities, including criminal authorities. NEVER try to hide or fail to admit problems you find.

- Cooperate fully with other agencies that may be involved - the State Board of Education, the FBI, the SBI, the State Auditor, local law enforcement. Failure to cooperate can make you a target.
Addressing Problems

- Make sure you implement whatever corrective actions are required by your auditor or other government agencies that have oversight responsibilities.

- Cooperate in criminal prosecutions of alleged wrongdoers.
Addressing Problems

- Remember that your financial records are public records and you must turn them over to any agency or even any member of the public who wants to see them. You can be sued for public records violations.
Possible Consequences
Possible Consequences

- Revocation of Charter/Closure of School
- Civil Liability - In Official or Individual Capacities
- Criminal Liability - For Intentional Misconduct
Tales from the Field
Tales from the Field

- The Virginia Beach School District ended the 1994-95 school year with a $12.1 million audited deficit.
- There was a Grand Jury investigation.
- The School Board was criticized for its failure to provide financial oversight.
In 2004, it was discovered that the Roslyn New York School District superintendent and other administrators had embezzled about $11 million between 1996 and 2004.

Six people pleaded guilty. Three former school system employees went to jail, including the former superintendent (for stealing about $2 million) and the assistant superintendent for business (for stealing about $4.5 million.)
In 2006, the last of seven defendants charged with defrauding the Wake County School System out of almost $4,000,000 over a number of years beginning in 2001, was found guilty of fraud and conspiracy and went to jail.
In 2018 the former Buncombe County Manager, her son and others were indicted for conspiracy and fraud for misuse of public fund based on:

- Use of county credit cards to purchase over $200,000 of personal goods;
- Spending about $2.3 million in public funds to purchase life insurance policies to cash in; and
- Taking kickbacks from contractors in the form of trips around the world, tickets to sporting events, spa treatments and cases of wine.

They are serving lengthy prison sentences.
Questions?
Roles and Responsibilities

Dr. Darian Jones, Office of Charter Schools
Anatomy of Effective & Reflective Governance

Dr. Darian Jones
September 28, 2022
Circle the Emoji(s) that reflect how you feel about ______________. Explain your reasons why...

I chose this Emoji because ........................................

.................................................................

.................................................................
MICHAEL JR.
Agenda

Learning Outcomes
• Board Development
• Meetings and NC Open Meetings Law
• Working with the Board of Directors
• Common Pitfalls of Governing Boards
• Frequently Asked Questions
• Next Steps and Self-Assessment/Evaluation Tools
## Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understand</th>
<th>Understand the development and structure of a high-functioning board and the relationship between the school director and board.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>Understand best practices for conducting meetings in accordance with NC Open Meeting laws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify</td>
<td>Identify common pitfalls of charter school governance and how to avoid them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Board Development
Number of Board Members

• Each charter school board should have between 5 and 9 members, ideally more than 7

• OCS highly recommends that charter school staff members **do not sit** on the charter school board due to a conflict of interest.

• Staff members **cannot** be voting members of the board.
Nepotism and Conflict of Interest Policies

4.3. The Nonprofit board of directors shall adopt and ensure compliance with a conflict of interest and anti-nepotism policy. This policy shall include, at a minimum, the following provisions:

1. No voting member of the governing board shall be an employee of a for-profit company that provides substantial services to the charter school for a fee.

2. (a) Prior to employing any immediate family, as defined in G.S. 115C-12.2, of any member of the board of directors or a charter school employee with supervisory authority shall be employed or engaged as an employee, independent contractor, or otherwise by the board of directors in any capacity, such proposed employment or engagement shall be:

   (i) disclosed to the board of directors and

   (ii) approved by the board of directors in a duly called open-session meeting. (b) The burden of disclosure of such a conflict of interest shall be on the applicable board member or employee with supervisory authority. If the requirements of this subsection are complied with, the charter school may employ immediate family of any member of the board of directors or a charter school employee with supervisory authority.

3. A requirement that a person shall not be disqualified from serving as a member of a charter school’s board of directors because of the existence of a conflict of interest, so long as the person’s actions comply with:

   a. the school’s conflict of interest policy established as provided in this subsection; and

   b. applicable law

4. No teacher or staff member that is immediate family of the chief administrator shall be hired without the board of directors evaluating their credentials, establishing a structure to prevent conflicts of interest, and notifying the Department, with evidence, that this process has occurred.

5. The requirements of Chapter 55A of the General Statutes related to conflicts of interest.
NC Open Meetings Law (NCGS 143-318.10)

• All meetings must be properly noticed physically at the school and/or on the school’s website.
• Committee meetings are subject to Open Meetings Law.
• Meeting minutes should be taken and approved at every meeting, including committee and subcommittee.
• Meeting minutes should be kept in a location available to the public (website) and links and attachments should be open to all, no request to view should be required.
Closed session procedures:

1. There must be a motion to go into closed session, and the motion must identify the permissible purpose from among those authorized in the statute. (A specific citation is not necessary as long as it is clear from the motion which provision is being invoked.) Once the closed session is complete, the public body must return to the open session to complete its business or to adjourn. State the purpose of going into closed session verbally and in the meeting minutes.

2. Closed session discussion must be kept confidential.

3. Maintain closed session minutes. Keep these notes separate from open meeting minutes.

4. Most voting will take place in regular open session, after the BOD has come out of closed session, but there may be certain matters which the BOD will take a vote on while in closed session. NC G.S. 143-318(11) Closed session
NC Open Meetings Law – Closed Session

There are ten (10) legal reasons in NC to go into closed session (pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11):

• To prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of this State or of the United States, or not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. General Statute 132 (Personnel, Student, Closed Session);
• To prevent the premature disclosure of an honorary degree, scholarship, prize, or similar award;
• Consult with attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege (not about general policy);
• Expansion (Real estate/business negotiation)
• Negotiations (terms of employment contracts)
• Personnel matters. General personnel policy issues may not be considered in a closed session
• Investigate concerns of criminal matters
• Form emergency plans for response to school violence
• To discuss and take action regarding plans to protect public safety as it relates to existing or potential terrorist activity and to receive briefings by staff members, legal counsel, or law enforcement or emergency service officials concerning actions taken or to be taken to respond to such activity;
• To view a recording released pursuant to G.S. 132-1.4A
NC Open Meetings Law – Closed Session

• What do you do if you want to make a decision based on the closed session discussion?
  • Come out of closed session and vote; in very specific situations, voting may be taken in closed session
  • Make a motion that makes clear to the public what the vote is for.
    • Voting ‘yes’ or ‘no’ on package A does not tell the public what package A is.
• Remember, you must come out of closed session to adjourn the meeting.
Can the board make decisions about the school through email?

No

Electronic “discussions” of school business involving several board members could be construed as a meeting and are in violation of the open meetings law.

You can communicate via email, just communicate individually and avoid a quorum of board members.

Do not “reply all” to an email from a board member that discusses school business.
Sample Meeting Agenda

- Call to order
- Reading of the School’s Mission and Conflict of Interest Policy
- Approval of Minutes
- Public Comment
- Approval of Agenda
- Officer Reports
- Director's report
- Special Committee Reports
- New Business
- Announcements
- Adjournment
Parliamentary Procedure

• Remember...
  • The board chair must restate the motions so all members of the board and audience can hear the motion.
  • All voting, according to open meeting laws, must be completed in open session, except in very limited situations which may allow for voting in closed session.
  • Voting cannot take place by secret ballot.
Working with Your Board
Responsibilities of the Board

• Each school and governing board is required to follow and adhere to:
  • Public charter school law
  • Charter agreement
  • All open meeting laws

• Effective governance includes:
  • Designing strategic, fiscal, and management plans
  • Outlining organizational responsibilities
Responsibilities of the Board

• Governing boards **should:**
  • Set the mission and vision of school
  • Analyze and evaluate school budget
  • Analyze and evaluate academic progress
  • Analyze and evaluate all reports
  • Give clear direction and support to the school director
  • Request amendments to the charter
  • Speak as one voice after decision is made
Responsibilities of the Board

• Governing boards should not:
  o Micro-manage school directors
  o Assume responsibility for day-to-day operations

• School directors should be prepared to update board members on all matters of the school.
  • Bring other staff (deans, operations/finance directors, etc.) to present and allow the board to ask questions.
## Roles and Responsibilities of Board vs. Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board Responsibilities</th>
<th>Administration Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility is to make sure the school performs through clear evaluative measures.</td>
<td>Leads and develops plans and procedures that drive the school’s performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The board asks “How well should the school perform at ....?”</td>
<td>The administration asks “How will I .....?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The board asks “What is our goal for the year?”</td>
<td>The administration asks “How will I achieve the board’s goal?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Roles and Responsibilities of Board vs. Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Board</th>
<th>The Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ends (Results)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Means (Strategies)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Why?</td>
<td>• How?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What?</td>
<td>• When?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How Much?</td>
<td>• Where?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vision</td>
<td>• Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Goals</td>
<td>• Action Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Policies</td>
<td>• Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monitor</strong></td>
<td><strong>Implement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vote</td>
<td>• Recommend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Roles and Responsibilities of Board vs. Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Oversight</th>
<th>Time, Attention, and Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Governance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Board Decisions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mission</td>
<td><strong>Admin Advice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Viability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partnership</strong></td>
<td><strong>Board and Administrator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Authorizations</td>
<td><strong>Share Decisions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Finance policies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enrollment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Employment Terms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operational</strong></td>
<td><strong>Board Advice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staffing</td>
<td><strong>Administrator Decisions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Charter school finances are the number one reason for charter school closure nationally.

The finance committee should review the budget and finance projections monthly and share this information with the board.

The board should have governance policies regarding finances and spending limits.
Budget and Board Oversight

- The **entire board** should always know the financial health of the school including:
  - The number of students currently attending
  - The number of students attritting each month
  - The current financial budget surplus or deficit
  - The cost of major projects of the school
Common Pitfalls of Governing Boards
Common Pitfalls of Charter School Governing Boards

• Individual board members acting as if they have authority to make decisions (including the Board President/Chair).

• Conducting illegal meetings by not properly posting a meeting, taking action in a workshop or executive session, or discussing inappropriate topics in closed (executive) session.

• Approving a budget that is not based on realistic projections.

• Meeting too often and for too long.
Common Pitfalls of Charter School Governing Boards (cont.)

- Failing to keep corporate records, such as the charter application, contract, bylaws, articles of incorporation, meeting minutes, etc., in a safe location where people can use them.
  - This includes student academic achievement records.
- Micro-managing or failing to focus on what matters most.
### Agreeing

- Agreeing to capital financing terms that overextend the charter school’s budget (this is usually done by projecting student enrollment too high).

### Neglecting

- Neglecting the board’s responsibility to create and to govern through board policies.

### Failing

- Failing to communicate with relevant constituencies (e.g. parents, authorizer).
Frequently Asked Questions
What is the North Carolina policy concerning meetings of public bodies?

- The North Carolina General Assembly has declared it to be public policy that all hearings, deliberations, and actions of public bodies be conducted publicly.

NC GS 143-318.9
What are public bodies?

- A public body includes government authorities, boards, commissions, committees, councils, or other bodies.
- This includes, cities, school administrative units, NC public universities. These groups are public bodies if their members are elected, appointed, and they are a decision making or advisory board.

NCGS 143-318.10
What kind of public notice is required for public meetings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Type</th>
<th>Notice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular Meeting</td>
<td>Seven (7) days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special-Called Meeting</td>
<td>Forty-eight (48) hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Meeting</td>
<td>After all board members are notified*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*You may consider only the business connected with the emergency circumstance.
Is it required to set up a schedule of regular meetings?

No, however, if you have a schedule of regular meetings, it is required that you keep a record of the schedule on file. Best practice is to have a schedule and post that schedule on your website.
Does the public have the right to speak at your meeting?

• The local board of education shall provide at least one period for public comment per month at a regular meeting of the board. The board may adopt reasonable rules governing the conduct of the public comment period, including, but not limited to, rules (i) fixing the maximum time allotted to each speaker, (ii) providing for the designation of spokesmen for groups of persons supporting or opposing the same positions, (iii) providing for the selection of delegates from groups of persons supporting or opposing the same positions when the number of persons wishing to attend the hearing exceeds the capacity of the hall, and (iv) providing for the maintenance of order and decorum in the conduct of the hearing. The board is not required to provide a public comment period under this section if no regular meeting is held during the month.

• Public comment

• Best practice is to allow time for public comments at the beginning of the meeting and limit the time each person can speak to three minutes.
  • Outline the process for scheduling and giving public comment in the bylaws.
Can you have a meeting by conference call or other electronic means?

Yes, but you must provide a location and means for the public to listen to the meeting.

The meeting notice should indicate where the public may listen.
Can the board make decisions about the school through email?

No.

Electronic “discussions” of school business involving several board members could be construed as a meeting and are in violation of the open meetings law.

You can communicate via email, just communicate individually and avoid a quorum of board members.

Do not “reply all” to an email from a board member that discusses school business.
Can you vote by secret ballot?

No.
Do you have to take minutes of meetings?

- **Yes**, every public body is required to keep accurate minutes of all official meetings, including committee and subcommittee.
- Closed session minutes should be kept separate from regular meeting minutes and they should provide a general account so that a person not in attendance would have a reasonable understanding of what happened. Closed session minutes can be skeletal and they may be sealed as well, so as to not frustrate the purpose of closed session.
Next Steps and Self-Assessment

**As board members, do you:**
- Have a clear distinction between the board’s responsibilities and the school director’s responsibilities?
- Clearly understand how to conduct transparent, effective, and lawful meetings?
- Have best practices clearly outlined in your bylaws?
- Have sufficient expertise to build subcommittees and dig into complex issues?
- Have mutual trust in the decision-making responsibilities of the administration?

**As a school director, do you:**
- Have a clear distinction between your responsibilities and the board’s responsibilities?
- Understand your responsibilities for informing and updating the board?
- Have a clear understanding of how you are evaluated by the board?
- Have clear and open lines of communication with the board?
- Have mutual trust in the decision-making responsibilities of the board?
Questions?
NC Charter School Laws & The Charter Agreement

Ashley Baquero, Director, Office of Charter Schools
Jenna Cook, Office of Charter Schools
Learning objectives:

- I am able to locate **NC Charter School Law**, **Charter Agreement** & the **NC State Board of Education Policy Manual**

- I understand North Carolina Charter School Law

- I am familiar with my school’s charter agreement and its provisions
Public School Unit (PSU) is a bucket term that includes charter schools, lab schools, and district schools.

Local School Administrative Unit specifically applies to districts and NOT to charter schools. (SL 2019-51)

Chapter 115C of NC General Statutes – Elementary and Secondary Education

Article 14A – Charter Schools
115C-218 Charter School Operation
115C-218.40 Charter School Transportation
115C-218.50 Nonsectarian and Fees
115C-218.60 Behavior Management
115C-218.75(a) Health & Safety Standards
115C-218.85(1) Course of Study Requirements
115C-218.90(1) Employment Requirements
115C-218.95(a) Causes for Non-Renewal or Termination
115C-218.100(a) Dissolution of a Charter School
**NC Charter School Law**

**115C-218.15 Charter School Operation**

- Shall be operated by a **nonprofit corporation** that shall have received **federal tax-exempt status** no later than **24 months** following final approval of the application.

- BOD shall adopt a **conflict of interest and anti-nepotism policy that includes the requirements of Ch 55A as related to conflicts of interest.** These will be part of the RTO deliverables.
The BOD shall decide matters related to the operation of the school (budgeting, curriculum, operating procedures).

- The **majority (means 50% plus 1)** of the non-profit board members and **50% or greater of the officers** have primary residence in the state of North Carolina. (Section 4.1 of Charter Agreement)
115C-218.40 Transportation

Charter schools may provide transportation for students enrolled at the school. The charter shall develop a transportation plan so that transportation is not a barrier to any student who resides in the local administrative unit in which the school is located. The charter school is not required to provide transportation to any student who lives within 1.5 miles of the school.
NC Charter School Law

115C-218.50 Nonsectarian and Charging Fees

- Shall be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations. You are public schools. You shall not be affiliated with a nonpublic sectarian school or a religious institution.

- Shall not charge tuition, or fees, except you may charge any fees charged by the local school unit in which you are located.

- You may, upon BOD approval, establish fees for extracurricular activities, except those fees shall not exceed the fees (for the same activities) charged by a local school administrative unit in which 40% or more of the students enrolled reside.
NC Charter School Law

115C-218.60 Behavior Management

- Shall comply with Article 27
- A charter may exclude a student from the charter school and return that student to another school in the local school administrative unit in accordance with the terms of its charter after due process.
- A charter school may also refuse admission to any student who has been expelled or suspended from a public school until the period of suspension or expulsion has expired.
A charter school **shall** meet the same health and safety requirements required of a local school administrative unit.

This is an important statute that lists a variety of health/safety requirements. Board members should familiarize yourselves with the requirements and administrators should be ready to implement.

- Includes items such as:
  - Informing parents/students on certain matters
  - Providing epi-pens
  - Anonymous Tip Line
NC Charter School Law

115C-218.85(1) Course of Study Requirements

- School shall provide instruction **185 days** or **1,025** hours over 9 calendar months
- School shall design its programs to at least meet the student performance standards adopted by the State Board of Education and the student performance standards contained in the charter
- A charter school shall conduct the **student assessments** required by the State Board of Education
- The school is subject to and **shall comply** with Article 9 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes and The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvements Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400, et seq., (2004), as amended
115C-218.85(1) Course of Study Requirements
Reading Proficiency & Student Promotion

- Options for 3rd grade students who are not proficient on the EOG
- Interventions shall be provided
- Exemptions for good cause
- Notice to families
- Requirements of notice
§115C-218.90 Employment requirements.

- An employee of a charter school is not an employee of the local school administrative unit in which the charter school is located.
- At least fifty percent (50%) of these teachers shall hold teacher licenses by December 31st.
- All teachers who are teaching in the core subject areas of mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts shall be college graduates. ALL EC teachers/coordinators must be licensed in EC.
- The board shall adopt a criminal background check which mirrors that of the LEA in which the charter is located.
§115C-218.100 Dissolution of a charter school

- A charter school that has elected to participate in the North Carolina Retirement System shall, for as long as the charter school continues to participate in the North Carolina Retirement System, maintain for the purposes of ensuring payment of expenses related to closure proceedings in the event of a voluntary or involuntary dissolution of the charter school, one or more of the options set forth in this subsection:
  - Minimum aggregate value shall be fifty thousand dollars ($50,000.00)
  - The SBE shall not allocate any funds unless the school has provided documentation of this. Permissible options include:
    - An escrow account, (2) A letter of credit, (3) A bond, (4) A deed of trust
  - Distribution of Assets: Upon dissolution, all net assets purchased with public funds, shall be deemed the property of the LEA in which the charter is located.
Charter Agreement

- The NC Charter Agreement outlines the requirements and processes by which the charter school must operate.
- Each board member should read the Charter Agreement in its entirety.
- The Charter Agreement may change annually to reflect legislative or policy (SBE) changes.
- Schools typically receive their Charter Agreement in May or early June (new schools).
- Charter Agreement
Let's Review

○ 10 Minutes – Silent Solo
  ○ Review the Charter Agreement on your own. Underline things you have questions about and put a star by things you learned.

○ 10 Minutes – Team Time
  ○ Share with your team the things you underlined or starred.

○ 5 Minutes – Share Out
  ○ Share with the whole group something your team discussed.
Quiz Time!

As a public charter school, we are required to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

a. No, this only applies to traditional public schools.

b. Yes, we are a public charter and are an LEA for purposes of IDEA.

c. We might not have to enroll EC students who need a separate setting or have transportation as a related service on their IEP as we really don’t have the budget for all of this.
Quiz Time!

The majority of the BOD members and 50% or greater of the BOD officers must have their primary residence in NC.

a. False
b. True
Quiz Time!

We can charge fees for extracurricular activities

a. No, we can never charge fees.

b. Yes, we can charge fees as long as those fees don’t exceed the extracurricular fees of the LEA in which 40% or more of our students would attend.

c. Yes, we can charge whatever fees we’d like because we are a charter and have that flexibility!
Quiz Time!

As a new charter school, my school calendar and schedule must provide for 185 days and 1,025 hours, right?

a. True

b. False

185 Days OR 1,025 Hours
Quiz Time!

My background check must **mirror** the background check requirements of the LEA in which my charter is located.

a. True

b. False, charters have the flexibility not to do background checks like the LEA in which they are located, or at all
Questions
Admissions Policies and Procedures
Learning objectives:

- Identify and locate pertinent [NC Charter School Law](#), [SBE Policy](#), and sections of the [Charter Agreement](#) to inform admissions, enrollment, lottery requirements, and best practices
- Summarize key components of a sound lottery application, lottery requirements, and enrollment
- Examine and understand an exemplar lottery application
- Understand and analyze common *misapplications* of pertinent law & policy
- Understand weighted lotteries
Charter Law

- Charter School Law 115C-218.45 et seq.
  - Speaks to lottery procedures, admission refusal, enrollment priorities, qualifications for admission.
  - Read and review in its entirety before drafting your admissions policies.
Charter Schools Student Admission

16 NCAC 06G.0504

✓ All charter schools admission procedures and policies shall comply with G.S. 115C-118.45.
✓ All charter schools shall have open admission procedures and policies. Open enrollment for a charter school must follow the mission statement and targeted population in the State Board of Education approved application.
✓ The admissions period shall be no less than 30 consecutive calendar days.
✓ If there are more applications than seats available, the charter school shall determine a date, time, and location to hold the legally required lottery. This lottery must be publicly noticed and open for public observation.
Recruitment + Enrollment

Charter Agreement, Section 7

• Student recruitment and enrollment decisions shall be made in a nondiscriminatory manner and without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, sex, religion, ancestry, disability or need for special education services.
Open Enrollment Best Practices

- Openness & Transparency is KEY
  - Schools should provide a summary of admissions and lottery processes (website, handout, handbook)
  - Waitlists should consist of received applications, include time-stamp, and should be recorded in alignment with the policies & procedure of the school
- Charters may begin the open enrollment period once the school is formally approved
- Lottery application should be limited in content and widely accessible
- Applications should be time-stamped and checked for completeness and recorded formally
Lottery

Lotteries: If the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building, students shall be accepted by lottery.

- Once enrolled, students are not required to reapply in subsequent enrollment periods.
- Weighted lotteries, those that give additional weight to individual students, must align with the mission of the school and be approved in the original charter application or approved through the amendment process shall be conducted according to the procedure in the statute (g1) and SBE policy CHTR-014. Please seek guidance through OCS.
Admissions + Lottery Policy

Develop robust admissions & lottery policies and procedures, including, but not limited to:

- Mission of the school
- Length of open enrollment period
- How to apply
- Applicant eligibility - best practice to cite 115C-218.45 verbatim
- Lottery Procedures
- Enrollment Priorities
- Must show efforts for the population of the school to reasonably reflect the racial and ethnic population of the local school administrative unit in which the charter is located.
Lottery Application

- One page
- Name of School Applying To
- Date of Application
- Grade this Year/Grade applying for in 23 - 24
- Sibling Information
- New Student Information: name; address; email; cell Parent/Guardian: names, address(es), email; cell; relationship to applicant
- Resident county
- Signature and date
- Applications must be postmarked by date certain
Lottery Application

Do Not Include:

- Country of birth
- Parent employer
- If Student Qualifies for Special Services or Programs such as EC or AIG
- Student Sex
- Economically disadvantaged/FRL
- How did you hear about us?
- Name of last school attended
- Any other identifiable information that could be considered discriminatory with regard to race, color, creed, national origin, sex, religion, ancestry, disability or need for special education services.

*These items can be included on an enrollment form after the student has been offered and accepted a seat.*
BEFORE - Lottery Best Practices

- Ensure process is open to the public, transparent, consistent, fair
- Staff members/BOD should have run through the logistics & practiced
- Recommend making a video recording of lottery
- Continue lottery until all names have been pulled
- Denote the number of opening per grade level
- Enrollment & waitlist procedures are given to families and on website
- Identify a method of selection
- Identify how student will be identified (FERPA-no PII)
- Clear separation of duties
AFTER - Lottery Best Practices

- Open & transparent
- If you made a mistake- “own it” and do the right thing
- Ensure results are accessible to families (on website/posted on wall)
- Policy should include how long families have to confirm the “offer of enrollment”
  - Address extenuating circumstances
  - Address non-responsive families
  - Recommend a length of 7 to 10 days
Enrollment Priorities

Decide which enrollment priorities 115C-218.45(f) you will select and list order of priorities:

- Sibling preference of currently enrolled students
- Siblings of students who have completed the highest grade
- Enrolled in a preschool program operated by the charter school in the prior year
- Children and grandchildren of the school’s full-time employees and children and grandchildren of the BOD (Limit 15% of Total Enrollment)
- A student who was enrolled within the two (2) previous years who left for an academic study abroad program, competitive admission residential program, or vocational opportunities of the student’s parent
- A student who was enrolled at another NC charter in the previous school year that does not offer the student’s next grade level
- A student who was enrolled in another charter school in the State in the previous school year that does not offer the student's next grade level and both of the charter schools have an enrollment articulation agreement to accept students or are governed by the same board of directors. Both of the charter schools have an enrollment articulation agreement or are governed by the same BOD
- A student who was enrolled in another charter school in the state in the previous school year
Lottery Procedures for Siblings

(1) If siblings apply for admission to a charter school and a lottery is needed under subsection (h) of this section, the charter school may enter one surname into the lottery to represent all of the siblings applying at the same time. If that surname of the siblings is selected, then all of the siblings shall be admitted to the extent that space is available and does not exceed the grade level capacity.

(2) If multiple birth siblings apply for admission to a charter school and a lottery is needed under subsection (h) of this section, the charter school shall enter one surname into the lottery to represent all of the multiple birth siblings applying at the same time. If that surname of the multiple birth siblings is selected, then all of the multiple birth siblings shall be admitted.
Quiz Time

Our BOD can approve a weighted lottery without involving OCS.

a. True
b. False
Quiz Time

Multiple birth siblings is an enrollment priority.

a. True
b. False

This is a lottery procedure, not an enrollment priority
Quiz Time

One of the enrollment priorities we may offer is for students enrolled in another NC charter during the previous year.

a. True
b. False
A weighted lottery ...

- **IS** a process designed to give certain categories of students additional “weight” or higher likelihood of being selected in a lottery
- **IS NOT** one of the seven statutory lottery priorities
- **115C-218.45 Admission requirements**
  - If a procedure for a weighted lottery reflecting the mission of the school has *been approved by the State Board as part of the charter*, and a lottery is needed, the lottery shall be conducted according to the procedure in the charter.
Educationally Disadvantaged Students

• Federal regulatory guidance defines *educationally disadvantaged students* as:
  • Economically disadvantaged;
  • Immigrant students;
  • Migrant students;
  • Homeless or unaccompanied youth;
  • English learners; and
  • Students with disabilities.
Weighted lotteries must be:

- Aligned with the mission of the school
- Approved during the original charter application (2017 and after) or requested and approved through the amendment process
- All policies must be reviewed/approved by OCS
Who qualifies?

- NC law does not specify which category of student qualifies for a weighted lottery, but it could be implied that educationally disadvantaged students as federally defined, would all apply.
Currently, NC Charter Schools using a weighted lottery must weight for *economically disadvantaged* students with the goal of improving economic diversity within the charter school.

Schools may also choose to weight any other category of *educationally disadvantaged* student.
Economically Disadvantaged

• Not defined in NC law, but usually defined as students who qualify for free or reduced lunch, whose family lives below the poverty line, or whose family qualifies for one or more federal benefits: such as SNAP, WIC, or Medicaid.

• Schools implementing a weighted lottery are given flexibility to determine how “economically disadvantaged” students will be (optionally) identified for lottery purposes.
• For any other category of student used, schools must explain how eligibility will be determined.
You may have a separate “box” or opt-in selection for parents to select consent to enter the WL. Must clearly be labeled “optional” and explain the WL process. This is ALL you may ask on the application itself.
Policy Requirements

▪ Explain the verification process in the policy and any instructions that go to WL selected enrollees.

▪ Verification takes place AFTER a student is pulled for enrollment. There should be no collecting of verification information until that point.

▪ If a family is unable to provide the supporting documentation necessary to qualify, the family should be contacted to offer assistance. If the family is still unable to provide the documentation, the application should be returned to the general waiting list.
The specific verification requirements depend on the type of weighted lottery.

**EXAMPLES:**

1. **Economically Disadvantaged**
   - Defined as any student who qualifies for Free and Reduced-Price lunch

2. **Multilingual Learner**
   - Defined as any student with a Home Language other than English and whose W-APT/Screener score identifies them as EL per NC DPI definitions

3. **Students with disability**
   - Defined as any student with a medical diagnosis of a disability or an IEP or 504 noting a disability identification or accommodation.

4. **Immigrant student**
   - Defined as any student who was not born in the United States and who has not attended U.S. schools for more than three full school years
The weighted lottery verification should include the following statement (or something similar) – “No specific information from your weighted lottery application and verification will be obtained beyond eligibility status, and the information will not be retained.”
Policy Requirements

- If an applicant qualifies for the weighted lottery, but is not chosen, the application should be placed in the general enrollment application pool.
How to Implement

Options:

1. Weighting a student’s individual chances in the general lottery.
2. Conducting the weighted lottery prior to the general lottery.
Weighting a student’s individual chances in the general lottery.

• In this approach, a student who opts into a weighted lottery is given a statistically higher chance of being selected through a random, general lottery.

• For example, Student A, who qualifies for the weighted lottery, is weighted two times (2x) in a general lottery compared to Student B who does not qualify.
Conducting the weighted lottery prior to the general lottery.

- In this scenario, students who qualify for the weighted lottery are randomly chosen until the specified target percentage is filled. Then, the remaining students who qualify for the weighted lottery, but were not selected, are placed into the general lottery pool, and the remaining seats are filled through a general lottery.
Weighted Lottery Data

- Schools should save detailed lottery records, including but not limited to printed and electronic documentation of the process, inputs, and results for a period of no less than three years after the date of the lottery.
THE CHARTER AMENDMENT PROCESS

ASHLEY BAQUERO
WHAT ARE WE AMENDING?

- The original charter APPLICATION (not the Charter Agreement)

G.S. §115C-218.7 “A material revision of the provisions of a charter shall be made only upon the approval of the State Board of Education.”

CHTR-014: Charter Amendments for Existing Public Charter Schools

Rules – 16 NCAC 06G.0510 and 16 NCAC 06G.0511

The policy and rule divides types of amendments into two categories: those that SBE must approve and those that OCS may approve.
KEY POINT

Any changes to your school’s SBE-approved charter application must go through the amendment process BEFORE implementing the change.
School requests amendment from OCS
• OCS determines if amendment requires SBE approval

OCS requests necessary documentation – assigns in Epicenter

If amendments are not in compliance with law or policy, OCS works with school to revise

OCS approves OR OCS makes recommendation to CSAB

CSAB reviews & makes recommendation to SBE
• Next month SBE discusses
• Following month SBE approves/denies

THE AMENDMENT PROCESS
KEY POINT

In most cases, the amendment process takes a MINIMUM of three months!!
CFU: CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

At a board meeting, your board discusses revising the bylaws.

Will this change require an amendment?

What is the first step in the amendment process?
AMENDMENTS REQUIRING SBE APPROVAL

➢ Enrollment growth greater than 30% for charters not currently low-performing or grade expansion not in the approved charter

➢ Relocation outside a 5-mile radius or approved LEA

➢ Transferring the charter to another non-profit entity
CFU: CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Your board is considering relocating to …
- a new facility 4 miles away from current school
- a new facility 6 miles away from current school
- the neighboring LEA

WHICH REQUIRES SBE APPROVAL?
AMENDMENTS REQUIRING SBE APPROVAL

➢ Altering the mission or targeted student population
➢ Employing or terminating a management company
➢ Change to the charter application with respect to the National School Lunch program
Your board decides to change the school’s mission statement.

Does this require SBE approval?

How long can you expect this process to take?
AMENDMENTS OCS CAN PROCESS

- Bylaws
- Charter School name
- The Articles of Incorporation
- Relocation within 5-mile radius
- Class sizes as stated in the application
- Curriculum changes
- Student transportation changes
- Food service plan changes
- One-year delay and/or using year 2 enrollment
- Length of school day and/or academic year
OTHER AMENDMENTS

Any proposed amendments not contained in the previous slides must be SBE approved.
MUST CONSIDER...

1. Demonstrated need
2. Impact on student population, BOD, and staff
3. Impact on LEA
REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

1. Board meeting minutes reflecting the vote of the Board of Directors for the school.
   - Need to clearly show a motion to approve the proposed amendments and forward to OCS.
   - Proposed amendments should be clearly reflected in minutes.
BOARD MEETING MINUTES

NOPE
- approve relocation
- approve bylaws
- approve changes to curriculum

YES
- approve motion to relocate from 123 ABC Drive to 500 Circus Ranch
- approve revisions to Section I-III of the bylaws
- approve revisions to curriculum in original charter to include …
REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

2. Cover letter explaining/justifying the request signed by the Board Chair and the lead administrator of the school.
   ▪ Both signatures required (unless an administrator has not been hired).
   ▪ Please see amendment checklist for more information.
REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

3. Strikethrough version of the original charter application.

4. Clean version of the original charter application to include the new language. This becomes your current charter application.
The easiest way to do this is using Microsoft Word Tracked Changes function. Track changes for Strikethrough version and then ACCEPT all changes for clean version.

STRIKETHROUGH/CLEAN VERSIONS
EPICENTER

After request received via email, tasks will be assigned through Epicenter for the collection of all required documentation.

Email amendment requests/inquiries to ashley.baquero@dpi.nc.gov
QUESTIONS?

Resources available here.
Lunch
12:30 PM – 1:30 PM
Ready to Open Framework

Jenna Cook, Office of Charter Schools
The framework provides an overview of the Ready to Open process and the two progress reports (RTO 1 & RTO 2).

The checklist specifies what evidences need to be submitted, the date, and exemplars.
## Guidelines for CSAB RTO Decision Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enrollment</strong></td>
<td>75% of Projected Enrollment by June 1st</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Facility**      | (a) Substantial progress toward attaining an Educational Certificate of Occupancy 30 Days before opening day  
                    (b) Valid comprehensive contingency plan in place 60 days before opening day |
| **Budget**        | Valid budget reflecting break-even number by June 1st                         |
| **RTO Progress Report** | All evidence checklist categories rated as emerging or quality (no insufficient ratings) |
Governance Strengthening Exercises

Due with RTO but should be worked on throughout the Planning Year.
Epicenter
Meghann Russell, Epicenter
Epicenter Learning The Basics
Today’s Topics

1. Navigation within Epicenter
2. Satisfying Requirements
3. Document Center
4. Q&A
5. Help Resources & Support
Epicenter Support Team

We’re here for you!

Access our highly trained support team
M-F 8 am – 7 pm ET

You will also get 24/7 access to our Help Center.
Break

See you in 10 minutes
Expert on the Ground

Tim Saintsing, KIPP NC
It’s great to be with you!

Department of Education

Uncommon Schools | Change History.
For the past 2 decades,

1. **KIPP Eastern North Carolina** has been serving students and families of Durham, Halifax, and Gaston through:
   - 2 elementary schools
   - 3 middle schools
   - 1 high school

2. **KIPP Charlotte** has been serving the kids and families of Charlotte through:
   - 1 elementary school
   - 1 middle school

**On July 1, 2021,**

KIPP ENC and KIPP Charlotte merged instructional and operational models with the support of KIPP North Carolina. Under that umbrella, we are currently serving 3,100 K-12 students across Charlotte, Durham, Halifax, and Gaston. It is among the largest charter networks in the state, and it is one of only a few public school districts in the entire South serving an equal number of rural and urban kids at scale.

**This merger was important**

because none of the 4 charters are performing near the level we know they can be. While only 2 of the 4 are considered Low Performing (Charlotte and Halifax), all 4, despite serving some of our state’s most vulnerable populations, can and should be performing among the top public schools in the state.
COVID-19 didn’t create the challenges our schools have faced for the past 10 years, it exacerbated and focused a very bright spotlight on them.

Which is why, in July of 2021, we set out together to co-create a multi-year strategic plan organized around 6 strategic priorities, all focused on raising student achievement:

1. **Liberation/Anti-Racism & Organizational Culture**: Strengthen school and org-wide cultures that prioritize liberation, anti-racism, equity, and the social and emotional health of students and adults so that they all experience belonging in our schools.

2. **Academics**: Strengthen and align curricula, instruction, assessment, and adult content expertise to ensure rigorous and joyful learning experiences for all students.

3. **Talent**: Attract, develop, and retain a staff that reflects the communities we serve.

4. **Alumni**: Build a statewide KIPP Through College and Career program that increases college graduation rates and supports all KIPP alumni toward independent, choice-filled lives.

5. **Growth & Sustainability**: Grow our region to become a fully enrolled financially sustainable K-12 system with replicable instructional and operational systems.

6. **Family & Community Engagement**: Partner with families and community members in the lives of our schools and in advocacy for policies that support student academic and social-emotional well-being.

We know the path to higher-achieving schools is long and difficult. But we are on it. This is our progress after 15 months...
Our strategic priorities

Liberation/Anti-Racism & Organizational Culture
• Recruited a new governing board, 2/3 of whom identify as people of color (includes a parent and an alum).
• Partnered with Lead 4 Liberation, our multi-year partner dedicated to creating liberatory environments for staff and students.
• Conducted a compensation study for all positions in our organization, and are now benchmarking ALL our charters’ pay to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg scale.
• Hired and recruited a Regional Support Team, which supports every school-based position, including a Director of Liberation & Equity, 3 Heads of Schools, an entire academic support team, and all back office services.

Academics
Curricula
• Adopted a new K-4 foundational literacy skills curriculum statewide and new reading comprehension curriculum.
• Adopted a new 5-8 foundational literacy skills curriculum statewide.
• Adopted a K-2 phonemic awareness curriculum.
• Adopted a new K-8 math curriculum.

Investment in People
• Enrolled every principal in Relay’s National Principal Training Fellowship program.
• Provided 4 weeks of summer PD to every school-based position.
• Host monthly PD and data days.
• Hosted a multi-day Science of Reading training in the summer for ALL staff.
Our strategic priorities

Academics

MTSS and Tier 3

- Entered into a 3-year long partnership with the Hill Center of Durham.
  - Each Tier 3-identified student is spending 45 minutes each day with a HillRAP interventionist employed at each of our 8 schools.
  - Hired a Hill Center partnership coordinator to oversee that program.

Staffing Model

- Placed second teachers in all K-4 classrooms in Charlotte, and every 2 classrooms in Halifax and Gaston.
- Placed a Teaching Fellow into each middle school grade in Charlotte, Durham, Halifax, and Gaston.
- Hired social workers at every campus.
- Hired a nurse at every campus.
- Launched a Principal In Residency program to train our next generation of principals (with 3 PIRs across two campuses this year, and a PIR alum launching Durham Elementary this year).

Assessments

- Adopted DIBELS as our foundational literacy skills benchmark assessment K-8.
- Partnered with the Achievement Network to author 3 interim assessments in Reading and Math 2-8.
- Calendared out Data Days after each IA administration.
Our strategic priorities

Talent
• Assembled a Talent & People Operations team to support staff in talent acquisition and HR.
• Preparing to stand up a performance management framework.
• Preparing to tie our teacher salary scales to teacher certification.
• Exploring the opportunity to partner with or create a statewide educator prep program for certification.

Alumni
• Preparing to launch a KIPP NC alumni association.

Growth & Sustainability
• Hired an entire in-house finance team.
• Preparing 5-year financial models.
• Conducted a population study for each one of our 4 charters to determine what the future enrollment trends will be in each given birth rates and population growth/decline.
• Conducted a thorough transportation audit with the help of a third-party transportation firm.
• Launched a new statewide school nutrition partnership with an external school food vendor.
• Withdrew all our charters from the state pension plan.

Family & Community Engagement
• Co-creating new statewide mission and vision statements with our communities.
• Co-creating new statewide values statements with our communities.
Over the past 15 months... 

We’ve learned a lot! 😊
1. Invest in **ridiculously super talent**, especially especially especially your instructional leader.

2. **Develop all your talent** at every opportunity you get with high-quality PD.

3. Recognize that the **talent landscape has tectonically shifted** during COVID.

4. Invest in **research-based, rigorous curricula**, especially in reading and math. Spend time on EdReports.

5. Inform your reading program with the **science of reading**. Know that the reading rope is a real thing, that your program has to have a great foundational skills component AND a great reading comprehension component.

6. Invest in **benchmark assessments** that will help you drive with data. Build a calendar around that data.

7. Put a premium on **joyous school cultures** (for both students and staff) and demand that it gets established from Day One. If your students are not running to school, they won’t be excited to learn when they get there.

8. Communicate often with everyone your **core values**, your **mission**, and your **value proposition**. Invest in a 5-year **strategic plan** to help you deliver on all those things.

9. **Build back office systems** from the start that will serve you well when you’re at scale, not for your Year 1 size.

10. Recognize that **student recruitment is a year-long endeavor**, not a three-month sprint, despite how the state allocates its per pupil revenue. Preference your communities’ **most vulnerable students**.
We’re all in this together.

Good luck!
And reach out if we can help!
Session 1 Wrap-Up
Important Dates:

- **December 2, 2022** – Ready to Open Part 1 Due
- **February 2023** - First Application and facility updates due to OCS (will submit monthly through opening)
- **March 2023** - RTO1 Resubmissions Due
- **May 19, 2023** – Ready to Open Part 2 Due
- **June 2023** - OCS will follow up according to the level of quality demonstrated in RTO
- **June 7-8, 2023** - New Charter School Leaders Institute
- **July 1, 2023** - Charter Agreement Begins
- **July 2023** – Enrollment Report #4 Due (includes facility update)
Next Steps

SURVEY WILL BE SENT. THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK!

SLIDE DECK ALONG WITH RTO FRAMEWORK + CHECKLIST WILL BE SHARED

TASKS WILL BE ASSIGNED IN EPICENTER
Thank you!

Please sign-out  Safe Travels Home!