

Minutes of the North Carolina Charter Schools Review Board

State Board Room 755, Department of Public Instruction

September 9, 2024

9 AM

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

Recording of September CSRБ Meeting: [NC Department of Public Instruction Public Meetings – YouTube](#)

Call To Order

Pledge of Allegiance/North Carolina Flag Salute: Mr. Bruce Friend and Ms. Hilda Parlér

Mission and Ethics Statement:

- Mission and Ethics Statement, Mr. Bruce Friend, Board Chair
 - Dr. Eldridge recused from Legacy Classical
 - Mr. Quigley recused from Carolina Achieve

Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

Motion: Dr. Shelly Shope motioned to approve agenda for September Meeting

Second: Dr. John Eldridge

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

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

Second: Dr. John Eldridge

Vote: Unanimous

Passed Failed

Approval of CSRБ 2025 Meeting Calendar

Motion: Dr. John Eldridge motioned to approve the CSRБ 2025 Meeting Calendar

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

Passed Failed

Approval of CSRБ Chair

Motion: Ms. Hilda Parlér motioned to approve Mr. Bruce Friend as CSRБ Chair

Second: Dr. John Eldridge

Vote: Unanimous

Passed Failed

Approval of CSRБ Vice-Chair

Motion: Mr. Alex Quigley motioned to approve Dr. John Eldridge as CSRБ Vice-Chair

Second: Mr. Eric Sanchez

Vote: Unanimous

Passed Failed

Introduction of TOY and POY – Board Advisors: Dr. Natasha Norins, OCS Consultant

- Dr. Norins introduced the candidates and gave information about each. Both individuals then introduced themselves as well:
 - Sarena Fuller, Art Space Charter, POY
 - Lee Haywood, Uwharrie Charter, TOY

Amendment: Ms. Julie Whetzel, OCS Consultant

- RISE SE Charter Academy – Mission Statement
 - Ms. Whetzel introduced the amendment. She read the old mission statement and gave an overview of the school. She then went over changes to the mission statement stating a desire to shorten the statement and make it more in line with their new name.
 - Mr. Quigley said that the new mission statement makes sense.

Motion: Dr. John Eldridge motioned to approve RISE SE Charter Academy amended Mission Statement

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

Passed Failed

- Piedmont Classical High School – Mission Statement
 - Ms. Whetzel introduced the amendment. She read the old mission statement and gave an overview of the school. She noted that they changed the mission statement to reflect their goals discussed at their 2024 retreat. She read the new mission statement and noted all the support that the school has received regarding this change.
 - The school representative said that the original statement didn't align with the goals of the school and that this new group has created a mission and vision statement that they are following at this time and expresses what they are doing currently with their kids.

Motion: Dr. John Eldridge motioned to approve Piedmont Classical High School's amended Mission Statement

Second: Dr. Shelly Shope

Vote: Unanimous

Passed Failed

- Voyager Academy - Mission Statement
 - Ms. Whetzel introduced the amendment. She read the old mission statement and gave an overview of the school. She noted all the changes and updates to their mission, vision and 5-year plans. She also added that they shortened the mission statement and received strong support from constituents and members of the school.
 - The school representative (Ellie) reiterated what Ms. Whetzel said and expressed her belief that the new mission statement reflects the new goals of the program.
 - Mr. Quigley noted that Voyager consistently exceeds growth and that since 2017 – confirmed by Ms. Ellie – they have continually done well. He noted that Rise also grew significantly only behind Mr. Sanchez's school.

Motion: Dr. John Eldridge motioned to approve Voyager Academy's amended Mission Statement

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

Passed Failed

- Carolina Achieve – Relocation Over 5-Miles
 - Ms. Whetzel went over the details of this amendment. She noted the market studies done talking about the region and the number of school age children in that area. She also discussed the changes to the ADM requested and the plans for their new school.

- Mr. Friend asked the chair (Mr. Oxaal) for any more information and Mr. Oxaal went over the budget surplus and plans for the school based on where their location will be moving to. He noted that 2/3 of the surplus will be taken away due to the change and the increased rent/cost of the new area.
- Mr. Machado asked if the school would be in a new LEA and when they would begin the process. Mr. Oxaal said that they've been working with Mebane and their Planning Commission and plan to stay in the same LEA.
- Mr. Machado asked if they have surveyed their current population and asked if they'll come with them to the new school. Mr. Oxaal stated they have done market surveys and he has seen similar characteristics to those studies based on the growth of Mebane.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if there was any change in the demographics of the region they are moving to and Mr. Oxaal stated he didn't think so.
- Mr. Sanchez asked about the population and if they have surveyed them and Mr. Oxaal stated they have gone to community events and have gotten a lot of interest, plus they have received a lot more reception and enthusiasm from Mebane than they did in Hillsborough.

Motion: Mr. Bruce Friend motioned to approve Carolina Achieve's request for Relocation Over 5-Miles

Second: Dr. John Eldridge

Discussion:

- Mr. Sanchez asked if there was any studies done or any concerns from OCS. Ms. Baquero stated they had a lot of documentation. Ms. Parlér asked if there was any transportation concerns and Ms. Baquero said no.
- Mr. Friend asked if there were any changes to their planned bus service. Mr. Oxaal noted the increased costs that would come with the move.
- Dr. Eldridge said he was interested in who did the feasibility studies and Mr. Oxaal gave the company name.

Vote: Unanimous – Mr. Alex Quigley recused

Passed

Failed

- Legacy Classical – Change in Management Company
 - Mr. Walker noted that he is not providing any legal services regarding the Legacy Classical application/in general.
 - Ms. Whetzel introduced this amendment. She went over the history of the school's partnership with their current management company and introduced the board.
 - The board's attorney, Lisa Stella-Gordon, introduced herself and thanked Mr. Walker for recusing himself due to his conflict of interest. She stated they added documentation today that outlined this as well. Mr. Parnell and another board member introduced themselves.
 - Mr. Machado asked about their confidence in not having a management company moving forward. Mr. Parnell stated in his opinion they haven't worked with them at all this past year and they should be fine moving forward.
 - Mr. Friend asked again about not having an EMO/CMO to support them and Mr. Parnell said that he is incredibly confident and proud of the staff and said that it will get easier for them as they move forward.

- Mr. Machado asked if they will be contracting for financial services and Mr. Parnell gave the company name and said they would continue that relationship. Mr. Quigley asked if they paid the 14% management fee plus paid Acadia and Mr. Parnell said yes. He and Mr. Parnell went over what the 14% covered but said he wished not to be disparaging. The board's lawyer noted again that the chair is confident they can run the school on their own and noted she gave a letter to the Review Board's leaders and the Review Board's lawyer this morning.
- Mr. Machado noted the role of the board in this situation and expressed discontent on some of the comments said at the podium.
- Mr. Quigley and the board lawyer went over the previous contract and the fees charged. The lawyer noted that she didn't believe they were talking about a legal document and added that it appears the board was paying the 14% plus fees when other services got contracted out.
- Mr. Sanchez asked if there were any questions that couldn't be asked/ discussed regarding the disagreement / conversation between the two parties (the school and the management company). Mr. Friend stated this was a decision of the board. Mr. Sanchez noted that the board has discussed some of these matters previously and the board lawyer noted that she began representing the board just a month ago and would have advised against this contract.
 - Mr. Sanchez asked if there were things that with her expertise the Review Board should look for in other applications. The lawyer noted that as stewards of the public trust and public finances the Review Board needs to do a better job at digging more into these companies and should have been able to due to their extensive knowledge of all things charter. She said that a lot of schools have not gotten legal expertise and that a school really needs to do their due diligence – since it's not all on the CSRБ – and have an attorney look over the contracts.
 - Mr. Sanchez asked if there was anything they can look at in future applications. The lawyer noted that in the initial application the board was asked several times how easy it was to terminate the contract with the company. She noted some ethical and legal concerns she had. Mr. Machado and Mr. Friend jumped in and said that the comments should be on the topic at hand. Mr. Parnell said that going into this in 2021 they knew nothing of charter schools and explained why they partnered with the group initially.

Motion: Mr. Dave Machado motioned to approve Legacy Classical's request to change their Management Company

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Discussion:

- Mr. Sanchez stated they have been talking about this a lot and that this is a wakeup call to being able to look into these contracts and make this a part of their vetting process for these schools and their applications. He said this is a part of their duty and they need to be more aware of things moving forward.
- Ms. Parlér encouraged boards to hire their own legal counsel to go through all documents before coming before the board.

- Mr. Friend reiterated the other comments mentioned and said that he disagrees with the comment that the board isn't being responsible with taxpayer funds and their fiduciary responsibilities. He applauded the members of the board and their work.

Vote: Unanimous – Dr. John Eldridge recused

Passed

Failed

Introduction to 2024 Charter Application Interviews: Ms. Melanie Rackley, OCS Consultant

- Ms. Rackley introduced the new statutory rules regarding the approval process of the board and other requirements of the board/Office of Charter Schools. She also discussed changes to the appeal process of CSRБ decisions citing statute that put the SBE in the appellate role.
- She went over the application cycle for this year, including the number of applicants, number of accelerated applications and other details. She reviewed the decisions from 2023 and who will be moving onto the RTO cohort.
- Ms. Rackley went more in depth on the accelerated application rules and other details pertaining to the board regarding applications and feedback provided by OCS and other DPI offices. She also noted that should the board deny an applicant, they now have appellate rights to the SBE.
- Ms. Rackley continued her presentation by going into more detail on the 2024 cohort: including enrollment projections and county distribution.

2 Hour Learning Online Academy - Accelerated

Introduction

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

Opening Statement from 2 Hour Learning Online Academy Board

- Ms. Price – Board Chairman – introduced herself, explained the model her school uses, and gave her credentials. She stated she is a mother and has opened 8 private schools. She introduced the other members of the board and noted the goals of their NC school. She also introduced the members of the board online.
- Ms. Wasiolek – another board member – introduced herself and gave her credentials citing her extensive leadership at Duke and NC State.
- Mr. Manalo introduced himself shortly after and gave his credentials and why he wanted to join this project.
- Ms. Stearns introduced herself and gave why she wanted to join the project. She cited her kids and her experience as a teacher in Cabarrus County.
- Mr. Cooney introduced himself and noted that he will touch on the mental health/counseling side of the school later.
- Mr. Price introduced himself and stated his experience in the finance world.
- Ms. Price concluded by noting that students desire remote learning and stated that students are incredibly successful in a variety of ways while using this model. She outlined the model and data to support student success. She noted that a few of their board members have a conflict of interest but they are actively seeking more NC board members, and the conflicted members will resign upon finding those.

- Ms. Wasiolek concluded her segment by touching on the importance of teaching life skills through this school.
- Ms. Price said that she believes their program is an alternative option that will bring homeschool families into the public school system while still allowing their students to attend remote learning. She also said their school helps both students and teachers and noted that online surveys showed over 1000 positive impressions when asked if they should bring the program to NC.

Questions/Deliberations from CSRБ

- Ms. Parlér commented that the school’s promotional video was about the classroom. She asked about the 2 hours per day and for more details on that. She also asked about how they’ll handle EC, ELL, and other special needs students and how they will handle interventions. She also asked about the on-site testing and how they’ll tackle the need for students to have a healthy meal to help them learn.
 - Ms. Price went over the 2-hour program noting they start with a 15-minute launch event in a cohort followed by a 25 minute per subject day for 2 hours (with breaks in between). She noted that this is very similar to how students learn at their in-person schools who spend their time on computers. She touched on the role of the AI tutor in the program, and she noted they do not know how families will provide food for their students at lunch and said that it was the responsibility of the family to insure they have food for their students when they chose to have their students learn from home. Afternoon cohorts focused on life skill workshops. She also touched on their learning programs citing the Ukrainian refugees that are learning at a rate of 2.9x faster than others who aren’t using their program.
 - Ms. Price noted that in the application they will have testing centers within an hour of students. She also added their program meets students exactly where they are so they will be able to address needs of students regardless of their EC status or socio-economic status. She cited the number of students of low socio-economic status they teach at another school and noted that AI doesn’t discriminate, instead it raises the floor and breaks through the ceiling.
 - Mr. Price noted that in their new budget they have allocated money towards contracting services for EC needs as well as a full-time staffer to help with EC. He also clarified the concerns with the administrative offices.
- Mr. Friend asked about the schools in Texas and what type of schools they are. Ms. Price clarified.
 - Mr. Friend followed up by asking who runs the school and asked about the distinction between the curriculum provider and the person running the school.
 - Mr. Price explained the distinction and stated the way they do the students day at the Texas Charter School (explained above) they will also use that in NC.
 - Mr. Friend asked about the AI tutor and how is that tied into the actual curriculum.
 - Ms. Price stated they are able to get all of their curriculum needs done in the morning and that in the afternoon, they are focusing on other life skills such as Financial literacy, public-speaking, etc.
 - Mr. Friend asked who is evaluating the students work in the morning.
 - Ms. Price said the ‘Guide’ (AKA a teacher) is using the data gathered by the AI tutor to monitor progress. She also said the data is available to all parties involved. She shared how the curriculum is aligned with the standards NC requires.
 - Mr. Quigley asked about the program and asked for clarification on whether 2-Hour Learning was the curriculum provider

- Ms. Price said that her experience comes mostly from private after opening her first school in 2014 but noted there was interest for this program in a public setting. She gave a few examples of their schools in Texas and noted potential future partnerships.
- Mr. Quigley asked if all their schools have brick-and-mortar settings.
 - Ms. Price mentioned they have testing centers and are aligned primarily with the rules of the state that the school resides. The only ones using the virtual program were the Ukrainian refugees.
 - Mr. Quigley asked what the per pupil cost was for the Ukrainian refugees and Ms. Price said \$2,000/year.
- Mr. Quigley asked if that program in Ukraine would be emulated in NC.
 - Ms. Price said that was not the plan but noted that the virtual aspect will. She also touched on how younger students will be involved in this as well.
- Mr. Quigley asked if they all have a brick-and-mortar experience though and Ms. Price said this will work in a virtual environment but mentioned that it will not be like a typical day for teenagers (doom-scrolling TikTok) or like the COVID experience. She said that students will be able to learn what they need to learn and that students will go along their learning path efficiently and effectively.
 - Mr. Quigley noted that the data is compelling, but this is the first time this board is executing the program as a virtual school, and it would be a pilot here in NC. He said that a better way to do this would be to partner with an existing charter school so they could leverage some of the facilities among other things. He said they are having great results, but the parents would need to follow-up to make sure the second half of the day is effective.
- Dr. Shope asked for more explanation on what they'd do with kids that don't have as much motivation, and more clarification on the AI platform.
 - Ms. Price went into detail on the education platform they are using. She said that 90% of the success comes from a motivated student and they work within their program to make sure they are fostering students' motivation in their coursework and incentives. She argued that other aspects of their program – such as a digital currency class – inspire motivation and allow students to trade in their success for things they like – helping create a lot of success in their schools.
- Dr. Eldridge asked how they are going to get to the 1025 hours of seat time and Ms. Price said that the students will be in class for the same time as other schools just that their schedule will look different.

Closing Remarks from the School Board

- Mr. Price stated there was a lot of helpful feedback and thanked them for that. He said that he feels they have addressed the feedback mentioned and yielded to Ms. Price.
- Ms. Price thanked the board for how serious they take educational outcomes. She stressed looking at results and cited an example of students who was in the 34th percentile to the 70th+ percentile in one year. She also stressed there is a demand for this type of program in NC and they are going to become a totally independent board that is going to focus on boosting students' educational profiles.

Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Mr. Quigley noted how compelling Ms. Price was on her argument and believed that this could be scaled at a more reasonable pace. He stated the tuition rates of the 2-Hour Learning private school (\$40,000/year) and said that it would be cheaper with the public dollars. He stated he thinks this

can be piloted in an existing NC school to prove the results and then after that be scaled statewide.

- Ms. Parlér said she doesn't think 25 minutes per subject is enough and that she had some concerns over the number of hours.
 - She and Mr. Quigley went further on this and mentioned current virtual schools time on task and concluded that people will tend to go for a number of days approach vs. a total hour's approach.
- Mr. Friend noted it was not right to compare this to COVID and reiterated Mr. Quigley's point about partnering with a charter school and scaling from there. He did say this program is intriguing but stressed that he is still confused with the role of the teacher. He also said that he is not sure where the 33-1 ratio comes from.
- Mr. Sanchez reiterated other comments from CSRБ members but noted there are accessibility issues when over half the state is rural. He added that he was not fully confident that this is a school they should be approving. Seems best to use this as a school partnership then as a stand alone.
- Dr. Fuller – POY – noted that she is concerned with the developmental appropriateness of a young student learning online due to the massive amounts of engagement that parents and teachers need to give these kids. She also added that it would be very difficult for the school to meet the calendar requirements.
- Mr. Sanchez and Mr. Friend asked about the standard course of study and Mr. Friend agreed saying that this is why he asked/wasn't clear about the role of the teacher compared to the role of AI and the parent.
- Mr. Machado noted this is very innovative. He stated he doesn't think there was much to support a strong demand that would warrant approval of an accelerated application.
- Mr. Quigley went more into detail about the budget, and it was something the board should look at if they were to reapply as a standard school next year. He said that should there be another virtual application like this one from a different school, they should look at these types of things on their application.
- Dr. Eldridge said he is intrigued how AI can be used to help students move at their own pace citing difficulties with teachers interacting with students of different skill levels. He said he would love to implement some of their programs in their schools to adjust their teaching platforms but overall struggled to see how this would work out statewide.
- Mr. Quigley noted again that this is an accelerated application.
- Mr. Friend reviewed the options the board had.
 - Mr. Quigley said he won't support this, and Ms. Parlér said she's torn on whether to support a 2nd interview vs. not approving this year.

Motion: Ms. Hilda Parlér motioned to deny 2 Hour Learning Online Academy's charter application.

Second: Mr. Eric Sanchez

Discussion:

- Mr. Friend agreed with Mr. Quigley but stated they do see a path for this company to work with existing charter schools to grow their own virtual academies. He said there is promise but that the model wasn't set up for a full statewide school.

Vote: Unanimous

- Passed Failed

CSRБ Bylaws: Mr. Steven Walker, CSRБ Attorney

Mr. Friend noted that most changes to the CSRБ bylaws were the name (CSAB – CSRБ). Mr. Walker noted that a lot of the changes were name related and stated the changes to Rule 3 helped clean up the process related to rule changes if the statute it was tied to changed.

Motion: Dr. John Eldridge motioned to approve the amended bylaws as presented.

Second – Ms. Hilda Parlér

Vote: Unanimous

- Passed Failed

- Mr. Walker noted that this is an initial adoption of bylaws which is why they didn't need to vote on this next month.

LUNCH

Trinitas Classical - Accelerated

Introduction

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

Opening Statement from the School Board

- Mr. Lockman – Board Chair – introduced himself and mentioned they are blessed to have a facility in an area that is seeing extremely high growth. He mentioned that he has experience in operating and running a school through the successful opening of his private school.
 - He stressed there is large demand due to the very high growth of the region/county. He also said there is a huge demand based on the number of employers and corporate headquarters nearby. He stated there will be large infrastructure upgrades that are either being built or planned to be built. He further argued on the demand by citing census data and a newspaper article touching on the overcrowding at local public schools.
 - Mr. Higgins – another board member – introduced himself and touched on his experience creating a charter school in Arizona. He said this experience helped bring valuable insight to the current board.
 - Ms. Nutting introduced herself and gave her credentials. She stated she passionately supports this school and said her values and experience in education makes her excited for this school. She expressed excitement over the work being done and stated her work on Portrait of a Graduate in Mooresville really inspired her support and passion for this school.

Questions/Deliberations from CSRБ

- Mr. Friend asked what work is being done for the schools who are not in the targeted ‘homeschool’ audience. Mr. Friend stated there seems to be a lot of reaching out to specific populations and wanted to make sure all audiences were being reached out to.
 - Mr. Higgins said that classical education is something that has been taught for a while and they took out doctrinal teaching of religion and shifted it to a more historical teaching of religion. He said that the homeschool group they’re reaching out to, is based on the trends among NC’s educational environment since NC is a voucher state. Mr. Higgins also noted that homeschool students could purchase their curriculum and have a place to study at their school if they needed it.
 - Mr. Friend and Mr. Higgins discussed the voucher programs and clarified the role of the voucher program in NC. Overall, Mr. Higgins said that the goal was to try and bring homeschool families back into the school system.
- Dr. Fisher asked who the target audience is – homeschool or the population that has moved to the region – and how they are going to address special needs students.
 - Mr. Higgins noted they have staff in place to address special needs students and that they are trying to target a variety of audiences.
 - Ms. Nutting came up and stated the goal is not to fill the building with homeschool kids but to give a choice to the community. Regarding EC, she believes the school will be well-equipped to handle student needs.
 - Mr. Higgins – after being asked by Mr. Friend – noted they have budgeted for admin help but don’t have anyone yet minus Ms. Nutting.
- Mr. Machado reiterated the point on the homeschool and noted that the work they are trying to do for homeschool students is admirable. He also asked if after-school programs will be provided for those parents who can’t get their children on the early release days.
 - Several board members said yes to the early release question.
- Mr. Machado asked for more details on the transportation plan, citing that a carpool is not a transportation plan.
 - Ms. Nutting mentioned they are going to create a more detailed transportation plan when they figure out who needs the transportation. She mentioned a shuttle plan as well. Mr. Machado stated it is important to have that so it’s not a barrier to parents who want to enroll their child.
- Dr. Shope asked if they are going to have a school counselor/other staff in their budget. She was wondering how they planned to cover that.
 - Mr. Higgins noted the cost it would take to contract out transportation services and said they have a reserve fund to address any additional transportation needs.
 - Mr. Higgins stated they will look to add counseling and other services as soon as they find out about which students need them. Dr. Shope said they probably want to have those services starting in K-5 and reiterated that there is going to be a need in the school and to think about adding that into their budget.
- Mr. Friend asked what curriculum they use.
 - Mr. Higgins went through the curriculums they will be using (by subject), and details about each curriculum.
- Mr. Friend asked about the application / why the school planned was listed in recent legislation. Mr. Higgins stated that in his meetings with local leaders they wrote it in legislation to try and be a part of contributing to the great need in the community.
- Mr. Friend asked how the school is reaching out to a variety of different communities.
 - Mr. Higgins stated they have used community events to get in front of as many people as possible across a wide range of groups. He reiterated that this is a stand-alone school and that there were no similar schools to theirs within an 18 mile radius.

- Mr. Friend reiterated the homeschool question and asked about having homeschool parents bring their kids in and purchase their curriculum. Mr. Higgins and he clarified that students would be able to purchase curriculum.
 - A few board members asked if that was legal. Mr. Walker stated it is illegal to use public funds for private benefit but that he didn't want to make a legal opinion on it until he went further into the plans.
- Mr. Machado asked about relationships to the board and to the curriculum.
 - Mr. Higgins said he is completely donating everything for the first few years and there are no ties to him and/or his companies.
- Mr. Sanchez asked about demographics
 - Ms. Nutting said that the demographics across various areas of the county is different, and that since it is a large county there is a unique diverse population of families that they would be able to serve. She cited her personal experience at her old school to back this up.
 - Mr. Sanchez – referencing the demographic subgroups – asked for clarifications on certain numbers in the application (ESL, economically disadvantaged and EC). Ms. Nutting said that some were typos but that the ESL students were representative of the large number of families that speak more than one language in the household.
 - Mr. Sanchez – citing their budget and other parts of the application – noted that they are budgeting for 7% EDS and saying they'll serve 33% EDS.
 - Ms. Nutting said that she does not anticipate serving 33% of their population with FRL. Mr. Sanchez and Ms. Nutting went over and clarified the numbers involved and the proposed demographics served. Ms. Nutting reiterated that the most important thing is to make sure that people will be served if they want to come to the school.
- Mr. Sanchez asked about their growth goals and said that after 5 years they should have their feet under them and see higher growth.
 - Mr. Higgins stated they were being conservative in their estimates and hoped that in 5 years they will be able to come before the board with better numbers.
- Mr. Sanchez said that overall, the whole narrative is a bit less concrete hearing the answers to the application questions – citing the responses for food and transportation plans.
 - Mr. Higgins stated they have a big reserve to adjust plans accordingly and will work to establish more concrete plans.

Closing Remarks from the School Board

- Dr. Lockman reiterated that we should be doing everything possible to add more classrooms in the area. He cited the charter school down the street with a very large waiting list.
- Mr. Clark – Board Member – introduced himself and gave his credentials. He said that his children wouldn't have been able to get the quality education he now receives, without the choices in the region.
- Mr. Famiglietti – two-time Olympian – said his time seeking obstacles in sports and his lack of stability in his home life really inspired him to serve the underserved population. He says that his teaching methods used in sports are beneficial to students now a days; and, that he wouldn't turn away students just like his former mentor did for him.
- Mr. Tribolet noted that the classical education – like what they do in Switzerland – is what really drew him to the project.
- Mr. Long – retired judge from Virginia – noted that throughout his career he has worked with the school systems to help young students and families. He also went over his credentials and said that the programs he is a part of and knows about are incredibly beneficial to the students. He also

said the staff and the physical building are incredibly strong and turnkey and that the need is there.

Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Mr. Machado stated the board is very impressive but there was a lot of questions that didn't get answered (such as the demographics and populations served). He also expressed concern that there are several schools that are not able to survive off the successes of a nearby charter school. He also expressed concern over the Transportation plans and wondered if they have visited classical schools in NC. Overall, he would like to see them come back and answer a few more questions but noted they were an accelerated application.
- Dr. Shope stated there were a lot of grey areas in the application that were stated; and, there were a few times where the team presenting said different things than other board members.
 - Ms. Parlér agreed with Dr. Shope's statements and said she'd like more clarification on the homeschool and curriculum purchasing plan they mentioned (whether it's legal or not).
- Mr. Friend said that he is not sure who the school is really focused on and overall, just has a lot more questions that he feels didn't get answered.
- Mr. Quigley noted the importance of having a building but said that it doesn't guarantee a charter. He asked Ms. Baquero if they were notified of the naming of the school in the legislation and Ms. Baquero said that it was brought to their attention via a media request. Mr. Quigley said that he had some concerns about that and a board going around the process regardless of if they were offered support by the legislature.
 - Mr. Sanchez reiterated previous comments and added that the responses to many of the questions seemed very political. He felt they didn't zoom in on their vision but in fact did the opposite.
- Mr. Friend asked what the local municipality has to say about this school citing his own school in Holly Springs.
- Dr. Eldridge said that to go back and cleanup the application in the areas that board members had questions, bringing them back would constitute 'a substantial change' being made to the application. He and Mr. Friend went back and forth on this and said that similar scenarios always caused concern and questions amongst board members. He reiterated that they need to also evaluate the fact it is an accelerated application.
- Mr. Quigley stated they needed to evaluate the merits of the application regardless of if they have a building citing the very high bar for accelerated application. Overall, he said that he wouldn't support the application with these concerns.
- Dr. Eldridge stated they didn't believe it needed an accelerated application.

Motion: Dr. John Eldridge motioned to deny Trinitas Classical's charter application.

Second: Mr. Eric Sanchez

Discussion:

- Dr. Eldridge stated he doesn't believe there's not a need; but, they should take the feedback and come back later after really looking at who they are. He also cited concern giving away the money allocated in legislation with this many questions left.
- Mr. Friend stated it would be difficult to figure out what they would need to hear during a second interview to change board members opinions in 30 days (after confirming with Ms. Baquero on the rules).

- Dr. Shope stated that if they were to come back they would just be able to answer the questions that the board has.
- Mr. Quigley said that giving groups a second interview really can't be like giving feedback on a first draft and then coming back with a final product.

Vote: Unanimous

- Passed Failed

Motion to Adjourn: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Second: Mr. Bruce Friend

1:55 pm

Minutes of the North Carolina Charter School Review Board

State Board Room 755, Department of Public Instruction

September 10, 2024

9 AM

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

CSRБ September Meeting Recording: [NC Department of Public Instruction Public Meetings - YouTube](#)

Call To Order

Pledge of Allegiance/North Carolina Flag Salute: Mr. Bruce Friend and Ms. Hilda Parlér

Mission and Ethics Statement:

- Mission and Ethics Statement, Mr. Bruce Friend, Board Chair
 - Dr. Eldridge recused from Centerpoint Classical

2025 Renewal Cohort Preview | Stipulation Schools (2026 Renewals) Updates: Mrs. Jenna Cook, OCS Consultant

- Ms. Cook began her presentation by mentioning the wide geographic spread of renewal schools and that out of the 38 schools 17 of them are on track for a 10-year renewal. The other ones will need to appear before the board.
- Ms. Cook then discussed the work OCS has done in preparation for this group of renewals and broke it down into year 1 and year 2. She then explained the renewal site visits and who they spoke with during those visits.
- Ms. Cook mentioned the renewal schedule saying when the schools will present to the Review Board, when school business would present, and when the board would vote. She also noted OCS would place a school at the recommendation based on the new renewal guidelines and the board could vote how they wish.

- Ms. Cook also mentioned the new rules added to the policy regarding comparability data to the local LEA that was a topic of discussion several times last year.
- Mr. Friend commented that other leaders need to be informed how much work OCS put into the renewals last year and asked how OCS communicates with the school when discussing their recommendation.
 - Ms. Cook mentioned they do give comparability data during renewal visits to the school and noted that a school who gets 1 aspect of a '7-year renewal' thinks they should jump up instead of meeting all 3.
- Dr. Shope asked if they are coming in trying to present like they are in a different bucket.
 - Ms. Cook explained what OCS tells schools about the presentations and noted they are asked to use the guidelines as their guide if they believe they should be in a different placement.
- Mr. Quigley asked if they could get data on schools that have been around for a long time and cited a hypothetical.
 - Ms. Baquero noted that if the school was open, they have the data and will make sure that a low-performing school has that data pulled in this year's renewal applicants.
- Mr. Friend asked which school is up for their first renewal.
 - Dr. Fuller stated that her school is one of the 38 schools and said that she is thankful on how clear and thorough OCS has been.
- Ms. Baquero said that OCS has revised the self-study as well to make their report less 'fluffy' and more succinct. She stated this also allows schools and the board to use the data to prove themselves.
- Mr. Quigley asked what the accountability standards are for lab schools and if they just get to exist in perpetuity, and Ms. Baquero said that she doesn't know. Mr. Quigley gave a few examples of very low performing lab schools.
- Ms. Cook gave an update on 2023 renewal schools that were given stipulations either by the State Board of Education or by the then Charter School Advisory Board. She went through all of the requirements and the actions taken by the school and OCS to ensure those requirements are being met. She also noted any compliance issues with the schools and when they plan to meet with the schools again.
 - Schools mentioned were ZECA; Monroe Charter Academy; Paul R. Brown Leadership Academy; Rocky Mount Preparatory; and Apprentice Academy; and Next Generation Academy.
 - She noted that Apprentice relinquished their charter in August but noted stats for their school regardless.
 - She said all these schools will be in the 2026 cohort.
- Mr. Friend asked now that they are the authorizer/renewal board do those stipulations apply or do they apply if the board wants to. Mr. Walker mentioned that is correct, but they should still consider all the data, all the stipulations, and any possible reasoning behind not meeting those stipulations to insure that defending the board's decisions are possible.
 - Mr. Friend – citing Rocky Mount Prep – asked if there is a way to get performance data before the school opens for the new school year to avoid closing a school while the year is ongoing.
 - Ms. Cook said that OCS doesn't have that data until it is released to the SBE in September so they can't. She did note however that this school would come before the board prior to opening after their renewal term ends and explained this in more detail.

- Dr. Eldridge stated the board also has the power to say the school already failed and has one year to prepare to close.
 - Ms. Baquero noted that virtual check-ins are still happening and noted they can come before the board if the board wants to. Dr. Eldridge noted that maybe the CSRБ can ask the SBE for preliminary data whenever they have it but based on face value, they didn't meet the stipulations and should be closed.
- Mr. Friend asked for an enrollment update for Monroe Charter and Ms. Baquero stated they have requested that by this Friday. He also noted that he is happy ZECA is doing well and said that he believes the CSAB voted to shut down ZECA but the SBE kept them open.
- Dr. Eldridge said if a school does in fact need help, they should look at and reach out to Paul R. Brown and see what they have done over the last few years.

Introduction to 2024 Charter Application Interviews: Ms. Melanie Rackley, OCS Consultant

Somerset Preparatory Academy & EMO: Somerset Academy, Inc. - Standard

Introduction

- Ms. Melanie Rackley introduced the Board of Directors to the School; as well as their mission, number of students, and other details pertaining to their application. She noted that there are 75 schools across 5 states in their network of schools, and they have a student population of over 42,000 students. She stated they are going to replicate the school from Broward County Florida and provided evidence to this and the growth, enrollment and employment statistics. She gave a snapshot of some news stories about the school network and some possible legal questions to consider. She also explained the choices the CSRБ had regarding this application.
 - Mr. Walker – CSRБ Attorney – in response to possible legal questions stated there is a statute that says certain things mentioned in the law are not enforceable but mentioned it's hard to enforce due to the large number of exceptions. He did say that would have to be something they'd have to talk about with their legal counsel.

Opening Statement from the School Board

- Ms. Echaniz introduced herself, introduced her other board members, and gave her credentials. She noted that she is excited about starting a school network in NC / Union County in line with the mission of Somerset Academy. She went over the mission of the Academy and gave a historical overview of the schools and touched on their leadership and growth across the nation.
 - She also mentioned recent awards given to their schools and highlighted their commitment to diversity by citing their demographics served; and noting an accolade given to them by Stanford University.
- She mentioned that elementary schools in Union County are very crowded and will only continue to grow and that is what motivated them to look for a site in this area (West Union County specifically). She then touched on performance statistics in Union County and noted the need and their desire to help these students.

Questions/Deliberations from CSRБ

Mr. Friend asked who the board members are present today, and Ms. Echaniz introduced the board members present.

- Mr. Friend asked what the school's connection is to Wake County.
 - Ms. Echaniz noted her time operating a school in Wake County and communications with other members of their team helped them identify an area of high growth that inspired them to choose Union County.
- Mr. Friend asked who 'We' is; and, Ms. Echaniz noted it was her other board members and the team with Somerset.
- Mr. Friend noted that the charter goes to the board of the school not the national company / EMO and asked if they had the opportunity to work with other CMO's / EMO's. Ms. Echaniz said that they did have the opportunity to work with other groups however their goals and values aligned with Sommerset.
 - Another board member (Reyna) and Ms. Echaniz said they both are only on this board. Ms. Echaniz – after getting a question from Mr. Quigley – noted they are not employees of Academica.
 - Mr. Quigley asked what services are provided by Academica and Ms. Echaniz said that Somerset will be with the CMO, and they'll contract with Academica for other services.
- Mr. Quigley asked why not duplicate her (Ms. Echaniz) school? Ms. Echaniz said that they wanted to expand their school to more students and noted that there are different rules in Florida and NC. She said also that her school doesn't have a grant to help boost their financials. Mr. Quigley noted that the board should know what is going into their budget.
- A principal in Florida and Ms. Fye noted they plan to operate without additional funding (independently) but also said they are fortunate to have this grant. Mr. Quigley asked if the money is guaranteed to come to NC and Ms. Fye said that it is based on the rules in the Federal Grant.
 - Mr. Quigley asked if there were plans for multiple schools in NC and Ms. Fye said she thinks there's only 1.
 - Mr. Quigley asked what they are getting for the \$225,000 in the budget for the EMO. Ms. Echaniz said that the entirety goes to Somerset and she and Mr. Quigley confirmed that Somerset would then get to contract with Academica.
 - Mr. Quigley again asked what they are getting for that significant portion in their budget, and Mr. Sanchez noted the Board chair needs to answer that not someone from the EMO. Ms. Echaniz answered they are going to get things like curriculum and services in other things such as transportation. Mr. Quigley and Ms. Echaniz continued hashing out what the question was exactly and after clarification from Mr. Quigley, Ms. Echaniz said that Somerset would provide support that the school didn't have and that they would be able to utilize the networks of schools to help theirs.
- Dr. Shope stated there are things mentioned (EC, Transportation, and others) that aren't in their budget.
 - Ms. Echaniz said they would need to do a needs assessment when they see what population that might be served. Ms. Gabby (another board member) noted that it would be needs based as well.
 - Mr. Quigley asked if they have money for an EC teacher but don't have one? Several board members noted that it was again needs based and that the money was placed in the specialty teachers budget sections.
 - Mr. Quigley asked about the elective teacher's section and Ms. Echaniz said that those would be for teachers that assist with other important things for students (Project-Based Learning, etc.)
- Mr. Quigley asked if they are going to contract out the EC teachers and went more into detail on the budget. Dr. Eldridge summarized that the question of 'what is the management company giving to the school' hasn't been answered.

- An online board member went over what was provided and they would work with professional development and contract out the other services. Mr. Quigley and Dr. Eldridge noted they have that in their budget twice if the CMO is contracting out for things they have listed out in their operating budget.
- Dr. Eldridge noted they will in fact have EC kids and they needed more clarity on the EC teacher concern.
- An online board member mentioned they will have legal staff on standby for potential conflict of interests.
- Mr. Quigley asked what company will be contracted with for legal services and Mr. Moreno went over the funding model based on the student noting it was hard if they had a smaller student population. Mr. Quigley and Mr. Moreno noted that the grant would cover the rest of the funds/fees/required costs.
- Mr. Quigley and Mr. Moreno went back and forth on this a bit more, however it ended with a question about whether Academica provides the services and Mr. Moreno said no.
- Mr. Sanchez asked why a CMO is paid to then contract with an EMO?
 - Mr. Moreno explained the relationship between the three parties. Mr. Sanchez asked what the specified services were. Ms. Fye noted that the CMO handles the academic side of things such as curriculum. Mr. Quigley asked what curriculum they use and Ms. Fye said they contract with a few textbook companies like iReady but bases the needs for certain subjects based on the community (For ELA/Math courses, etc...). Ms. Fye noted that they do have experts in multiple curriculums that they'll balance with the needs of the community/school.
- Mr. Sanchez asked again why they decided to give 16% of their budget to a management organization that is basically doing the things that the school could be doing themselves.
 - Ms. Echaniz said that it would be so that she can continue to run her school successfully and get help in areas she doesn't have expertise in.
 - Mr. Sanchez asked what the relationship is between her and the CMO and asked if anything came up between the two when drafting the contract. He asked what her thoughts on the termination clause was and Ms. Echaniz said they haven't had any issues with the group.
- Mr. Sanchez asked what the board members thought about how easy it would be to terminate the relationship with the CMO. Ms. Echaniz and Ms. Reyna stated they do have the right to terminate their relationship and they feel confident they will be able to separate if they use the right channels.
 - Mr. Sanchez noted some of the fees and other language in the contract and Ms. Reyna said despite this they still feel confident. Mr. Sanchez said that basically all that's left if they decide to leave is them and the desks.
- Mr. Quigley asked what the % low-income was for her school and Ms. Echaniz said that she served roughly 47% at her school. Mr. Quigley noted that they still don't have any busses or any other way of meeting that need.
- Dr. Fuller noted a few other matters with EDS and EC students and asked why they don't have a weighted lottery and other matters to help cater to those communities. Ms. Sarah noted that some might be a typo and that in the other areas of the application, they didn't make those same mistakes. She also stated they do plan to reach out to various demographics but in the end they can only choose from the people that apply to the school.
- Mr. Friend noted he is concerned about the number of board members, the location of their board members related to the area and the fact that they keep noting they are going to build their program based on the needs of the community – when in fact they don't have any board members from there. Ms. Reyna noted they have done online ads and they have seen interest but Mr. Friend asked again if they've done anything on the ground.

- Ms. Echaniz stated they do want to expand their board to increase the diversity of experience on the board and it is definitely in the plans to do community work in the future.
- Mr. Friend said that's good however they cannot base the application on the future and only base it off the board members that are present currently.
- Mr. Friend noted that the initial term to partner with the management company is a 15-year term. He said that is the longest he's ever seen based on experience. Dr. Eldridge stated that if they think they can run successfully after 7 years they are stuck with them for 8 years or must pay a lot more.
 - Ms. Parlér added there are other concerning aspects of the contract such as the triple-lease (having to pay all the property taxes, utilities, etc.)
 - Mr. Quigley and Mr. Sanchez asked who owns the lease and if there have been any conversations between the parties regarding associated development companies with/for the school. Ms. Echaniz stated they haven't found a facility yet, so they haven't had those conversations.
 - Dr. Fuller asked if Mr. Moreno's company assists with finding facilities and Mr. Moreno explained what his organization does and noted the board has an independent attorney/accountant to read through any contracts.
- Mr. Machado asked what their future plans are since they both run successful schools. Ms. Echaniz said that it is her long-term goal to run the Somerset school.
 - Mr. Machado – noting that the organization should have been more prepared not Ms. Echaniz – said that he doesn't think it's organic enough and that they went into this whole thing in reverse.
- Dr. Eldridge asked about 'AP for Elementary students. Ms. Echaniz said that it is a prep program that prepares students for taking AP courses when they are of age. Overall, it's meant for higher achieving kids.
- Mr. Sanchez asked why they partnered with a program that is not in the state when they have a school that has opened and learned the landscape. Ms. Echaniz said that her school didn't have the funds initially, so they partnered with someone that did. Dr. Eldridge confirmed this is something that must happen since he did the same thing when he went through the replication process.

Closing Remarks from the School Board

- Ms. Echaniz gave a closing remark. She noted they will serve the needs of the local community and uphold the high standards of the school and the community. She stated their network across the nation ensures funds go to bettering educational returns. She added they aren't just trying to open another school and want to better the community.

Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Dr. Eldridge explained the three choices of the CSRБ today.
- Mr. Friend thanked the board chair for standing behind the podium and answering tough questions well.
 - He noted there are times when he wishes his school had a partner (EMO/CMO) but he believes that in this particular case the management company is driving this application as opposed to the board driving this. He said that the curriculum looks solid, and it is successful, but he is tied up on the fact there are only 3 board members that don't have a connection to the community.

- Mr. Quigley asked what the timeline for the grant was and Ms. Fye said that they have a 5-year program with certain things slotted for certain years. Mr. Quigley said they could be able to revise but Ms. Fye noted it is difficult to work with the US Ed Department.
- Mr. Friend asked why they didn't open something up here in Wake County or a surrounding county here.
- Mr. Quigley said he wishes they replicated the program Ms. Echaniz recognized that the grant is dictating it must come to NC. He did say however that he is disappointed at the preparation of the board and the lack of planning for transportation, a weighted lottery, etc. Mr. Quigley recommended coming back next year with a stronger application.
- Dr. Eldridge stated it's nice when the board knows the answer as opposed to the board yielding to a partner at the management company for the answer. He also said that he sees this as another example of why a school needs to have legal counsel look at a contract before agreeing.
 - Ms. Parlér concurred.
 - Mr. Sanchez – citing certain clauses in the contract – said that it's almost impossible to get out and that the CMO is not turnkey since they have to contract out several of their services. He reiterated some of the numbers that were previously mentioned by other members and again said that he believes some of the things that the management company provides could be done themselves. He also said that he really wishes they looked at this when working with the management company.
- Dr. Fuller noted that Wesley Chapel has repeatedly denied expansions for housing developments and that this and other statistics made her want to see more of a community need.
- Mr. Machado agreed with his colleagues minus the accelerated application portion of Mr. Quigley's comments.
 - Mr. Sanchez noted they don't know if they partnered with the development company or if they just consulted outside with them.

Motion: Mr. Bruce Friend motioned to deny Somerset Preparatory Academy's charter application.

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

Discussion:

- None

Vote: Unanimous

- Passed Failed

Centerpoint Classical Academy & EMO: American Traditional Academies - Standard

Introduction

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

Opening Statement from the School Board

- Mr. Schneider introduced himself and the other members of the board. Each member came up and introduced themselves and gave their credentials and the reasons why they joined the board.
- Mr. Schneider noted that when the application was submitted in April, he has retired from his job at High Point and explained how this was beneficial for their proposed school. He also explained the importance of a classical education and why it is the best things for facing the new world students live in. He noted that he is concerned with the testimony provided yesterday about the management company but assured them that they are not having those same concerns. He did add that he would keep an open mind to make sure their school is strong.

Questions/Deliberations from CSRБ

- Ms. Hilda Parlér noted some items in the agreement that needed to be changed including facts that were ‘not facts’ and needed to be revised. Mr. Schneider said they would change that language.
- Mr. Friend asked about the work that’s been done so far that support is there in the community.
 - Mr. Maccoll mentioned they have done surveys in the community and are predicting that the massive economic factors in place plus the large waitlists on nearby charter schools will translate to demand for their school. He promised that they are going to be doing more marketing upon approval and that they have had community/parent meetings a few months ago.
- Mr. Machado – citing the incident yesterday – asked why they think they have a good partner / if they are concerned with the agreement. He also asked if it’s a relationship worth sustaining.
 - Mr. Schneider noted that ATA had agreements in place, and they were willing to end the relationship professionally and without harming the students. He said this gave him confidence on top of what he had already.
 - Mr. Maccoll noted his personal experience with the Executive Director of ATA. He said that she is fair but firm and has the experience needed and has the specialists to help build these schools. He said overall he strongly supports ATA.
- Mr. Machado asked what services the EMO will provide for the fee.
 - Ms. Frazier outlined the specific items the EMO will provide. She explained why this is important and noted that it is important to have an outside perspective to help fill gaps / needs that they can identify faster than the school. She did note that these items have been verified prior to today and added they will assist in transportation, nutrition, and other areas of the school. She also added they are going to be transparent and hold the management company accountable just like they are going to hold the school accountable.
 - She also added more about her opinion of the Executive Director and applauded the strength of this board.
- Dr. Fuller asked if working with the EMO is creating a degree of separation between parents that a locally run school wouldn’t have.
 - Mr. Maccoll stated the board is going to be responsible for the culture of the school in the community. He said they are going to be transparent and open to the public and cited his experiences with his children at another local charter school. He said it is also the board’s responsibility to hire people that are from that region to reflect the local culture and increase connections and ties to the area.
 - Mr. Schneider added that the Executive Director gave them the opportunity to access a large network of people she knew from the region and that gives more local control.
- Mr. Sanchez asked a contract-specific question.
 - Mr. Schneider said yes but added they are changing their contract to exempt certain donations/federal dollars coming in.

- Mr. Sanchez asked a clarification question on the fee and the amounts. Board members confirmed.
- Mr. Sanchez asked about the budget / management company's role in various areas like transportation and nutrition. A few board members explained that there is a \$4 per meal budgeted for students in need and they will partner with local businesses/companies in the community to provide the food.
 - Mr. Sanchez asked if she is going to be contracting out the services and a board member stated they would be able to review any recommended vendors/contractors before the company approves them.
 - Mr. Sanchez asked about recruitment and what it means. Mr. Maccoll went over various areas of recruitment that they would assist in.
 - Mr. Sanchez followed up by asking how involved the company would be in various professional development areas and Mr. Schneider explained the ways they would assist.
 - Mr. Sanchez asked if the school is paying for the management company's expertise to make decisions and contracting. Mr. Schneider said that sometimes that is what they're paying for, and other times a subject-matter expert/contractor will come in.
 - Mr. Sanchez and Ms. Frazier went back and forth on additional roles that the management company would do, and Ms. Frazier explained what the meaning of 'Back Office Support' meant.
 - Mr. Sanchez asked about the decision to work with ATA referencing the allegations from yesterday.
 - Ms. Frazier said that the lease in question was not an executed lease. She stated they would have the ability to propose changes to leases/documents if they saw fit. She also added they would consistently refer to legal counsel.
 - Mr. Sanchez asked what she meant by the leasing company. Ms. Frazier said that is in the draft lease and reassured the board they would have the flexibility to change things.
- Mr. Friend – referencing the previous applicants discussion – asked what their management companies' bandwidth is.
 - A representative of the EMO noted that her work with Acadia helps her provide the best services possible and that since she doesn't have the staff yet to handle it all in-house, she chooses the best group possible to make sure that the school receives the best services.
- Mr. Quigley asked what the EMO attributes the ~16% proficiency to at the school the company now used to run.
 - A representative of the EMO said that the first year of a school being open is tough and cited reasons why. She said that it takes about 3 years to get to where you want to go academically and noted that growth / proficiency is like local schools as opposed to the district overall. She said that she has learned a lot about this situation but couldn't comment much further on it.
- Mr. Quigley asked if they should be okay with less than 20% proficiency because it would take 3 years to get started?
 - A representative of the EMO said they shouldn't be okay with it and they're not okay with it. However, she reiterated that it is incredibly difficult for a charter school to do well based on certain factors.
 - Mr. Quigley noted that it would be helpful to get data on performance in year 1 by all schools run by an EMO.
 - Mr. Maccoll added that 20% should never be acceptable. He added that at his son's school they have already implemented triggers to prevent kids from falling behind. He said this is also the rationale behind wanting an EMO.
- Mr. Quigley asked if his son went to Revolution and if ATA was the leadership company and Mr. Maccoll responded saying that the executive director was the founder.

- Mr. Quigley added that if they are receiving kids from the district that are underperforming, they should see large growth. A representative of the EMO said that she wasn't trying to say that was the main argument but agreed with his rationale.
- Mr. Sanchez summarized that a school run by a leadership company that is in the bottom echelon of performance for schools in NC should ask themselves why they would want to contract with them.
 - A representative of the EMO noted that she agrees but can't comment more based on legal agreements she signed previously.
- Mr. Friend asked how many employees her company had and the number of schools up and running.
 - A representative of the EMO noted that Legacy was the first school up and running and that she had 3 employees. She and Mr. Friend went back and forth over who is the employer of the school's employees.
 - A representative of the EMO noted the relationship between the EMO and the board. Mr. Friend followed up with two specific scenarios (teacher and principal) and the representative of the EMO explained how input from the board was important to the decisions she made.
- Mr. Friend – referencing the interview from earlier – noted that this school would be paying nearly double per student (\$1400) than the school that was paying for the EMO and the contract with the CMO (the previous application).
 - A representative of the EMO said that she couldn't comment on other applications and then went over her credentials. She noted the successes of the various schools she is running and said that she is constantly refining her processes to make them better. She said that she can help get them a school – with board approval – and that is what it's all about.
- Mr. Sanchez cited an example of a former OCS employee and said that when compared to what he did after he left OCS it looks like the company is almost trying to do a money grab. He added that he thinks the value provided is a fraction of what they said has been done.
 - A representative of the EMO said that she has taken a regular salary almost half of the years and thanked Mr. Sanchez for not attacking her personally. She added that she has started schools independently but that it was incredibly difficult. She said this difficulty was what inspired her to start this EMO and gave examples of the types of people she helps. She said that if the board decides they don't want to work with the EMO they can go ahead and change their mind. She said she intends to work honorably within the contracts they've established but now she cannot do less than the 14% she charges currently. She said maybe later she could lower that 14% amount but based on the risk she is taking up front she believes 14% is fair.
- Mr. Friend asked the board if they are getting that amount of value (14%) from the EMO.
 - Mr. Schneider stated they do believe they are citing the experience they have and the value they bring to the board.
- Mr. Friend asked if the members of the board present here are planning to stay on the board or if anyone is being groomed for school leader.
 - Mr. Schneider stated they are looking for candidates for both school leader and board but said the EMO is helping them with both of these searches and that they are getting paid to do that.
- Mr. Quigley asked if there's an estimate on the amount the EMO will front for costs such as furniture and other things.
 - A representative of the EMO said she has worked with other vendors in the past and gives the board cash flow reports each month to help the board plan out how things work. She stated it is her group that helps manage all of that.

Closing Remarks from the School Board

- Mr. Schneider encouraged the board to look at the strength of the people before them today when making a decision. He said that the Legacy example is an example of how flexible the company is.
- Mr. Maccoll said that what the members of the CSRБ have done for kids cannot be measured and asked for two things: (1) to please not look at what happened yesterday as they are going to only focus on the future; and, (2) let them get to work as the 704 days till they are scheduled to open is going to come faster than they can imagine. He asked for the opportunity to give kids the teachers that inspired him when he was a child.

Deliberation from the CSRБ

- Dr. Fuller stated it is admirable what they want to do and the board members here are also doing the same thing. She added that even though there are seats doesn't mean they are translating to strong academic results. She said that although the action taken by the board member's son's school is admirable it is baseline and is done by the teacher not the EMO.
- Mr. Machado said that this board is committed and wants to own the charter. He said that amongst themselves they can discuss what the role of an EMO is. He said that he constantly argues that the charter belongs to the board and believes that this board is qualified and absolutely have demonstrated that they deserve this charter.
 - Ms. Parlér agreed and said that bottom line this is all about the children. She said that she has confidence this board will make it work and they shouldn't get in the way of giving students this choice.
- Mr. Quigley said he doesn't disagree with the board but will be voting against the proposal. He said that the management company that has been established doesn't have the data to back it up and he cited the previous discussion with the massive investment to the state from the federal government. He said that he has a lot of questions about the track record of the group citing the performance of the one school open and only having one in RTO.
- Mr. Sanchez stated he disagrees with the notion that it's just the board they are looking at. He said that every part of the application shows how every aspect of the school is going through the EMO. He said it's not an EMO they are hiring, they are hiring someone to go find the services that are being provided. He noted they did say it was a draft document and agreed that the board was strong. Overall, however, he said that the EMO is inserting itself in all aspects of their school/application that he would be voting against it.
- Mr. Friend asked OCS if there's any red flags with the school going through RTO. Ms. Baquero said the RTO process is beginning in September, so they don't have a report at this time.
 - Mr. Friend said that he agrees about the board strength and doesn't disagree with what Mr. Quigley said either. He stated that when compared to the board interviewed this morning this board is very different.
 - Mr. Sanchez asked how much it weighs in his (Mr. Friend's) mind when a school comes before them with an EMO.
 - Mr. Friend responded that whenever a board comes before them with an EMO, he lets the interview play out before determining whether to accept/deny. He said that it's just one data point that obviously can't be looked against but it's just one point.
 - Mr. Sanchez reiterated his point about the other school and said why don't they look at the other school and use that to gauge future growth of the EMO in the future.

Motion: Ms. Hilda Parlér motioned to approve Centerpoint Classical Academy's charter application and move them to the RTO Process.

Second: Mr. Dave Machado

Discussion:

- Mr. Quigley stated he doesn't understand why the board is signing onto a management company that has unproven track history.
- Ms. Parlér noted that the board has a right to have an EMO and that it takes a strong board to deal with an EMO. She cited her personal experience.
- Mr. Sanchez noted the allegations from yesterday and that is what we're putting more tax dollars towards.

Vote: 4-2 (Sanchez and Quigley against)

- Passed Failed

Director's Updates and Adjourn: Ms. Ashley Baquero, OCS Director

- Ms. Rackley went over the applications before the board in October.
- Ms. Baquero started off by giving administrative updates and noted some new rules/updates for current charter schools. She also gave some fall priorities for OCS in Fall 2024. She also touched on RTO Schools with a 2025 open and all the remote charter academies approved recently. She also announced Ms. Niewinski as the Assistant Director.

Motion to Adjourn: Mr. Eric Sanchez

Second: Ms. Hilda Parlér

2:04 pm