

Minutes of the North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board

Remote

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

Friday August 11, 2023

10AM

Attendance – CSAB Members	
Dr. Terry Stoops (nonvoting)- Absent Dr. Rita Haire Dr. John Eldridge Alex Quigley Hilda Parlér Dr. Shelly Shope	Eric Sanchez- left at noon Bruce Friend Dave Machado Todd Godbey Dr. Bartley Danielsen- Absent Stephen Gay- left at noon
Attendance – Other	
<i>Office of Charter Schools</i> Ashley Baquero, Director Joseph Letterio, Consultant- Absent Nicky Niewinski, Consultant Jenna Cook, Consultant Melanie Rackley, Consultant Brandi Gill, Consultant Megan Carter, Consultant Natasha Norrins, Consultant Davida Robinson, NC ACCESS Barbara O’Neal, NC ACCESS- Absent	<i>Attorney General</i> Allison Schafer- Absent

Livestream Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcn-eEAIfNQ>

Call To Order

Pledge of Allegiance: Bruce Friend

Mission and Ethics Statement: Bruce Friend

- Mission and Ethics Statement

Approval of the Agenda and June Special Called Minutes

Motion: Hilda Parlér moved for approval of June Special Called Minutes

Second: Rita Haire

Vote: Unanimous

Passed

Failed

Review and Recommendation of School Improvement Plans- Ms. Jenna Cook, OCS Consultant

Ms. Cook reviews the stipulations required by the State Board of Education for the 4 schools presented.

- **Paul R. Brown Leadership Academy (09A)- Dr. Jason Wray, Ms. Price, Mr. McCoy**
 - Shares data. Yesterday we found out we did meet growth expectations.
 - Review of the school improvement plan as submitted.
 - Shares current academic improvement results based on strategies already implemented over last 18 months.
 - Increase in ADM reflective of community support for school.
 - Shares improvement in board support and engagement as compared to 9 months ago.
 - Reviews PD plan as submitted.
- **Board Comments:**
 - Ms. Parlér- applauded the plan.
 - Mr. Machado- What grade span do you serve? Answer: 6-12
 - Mr. Friend- Teacher training: why wait until November for instructional strategies training? Any thought to doing it earlier? Answer: Ongoing, we've been doing this for the last 18 months. Ongoing daily. Mr. Friend- What has been the average staff absenteeism. Answer: Small staff. 7 teachers in the building, when 1 is absent then everything has to change. We have seen challenges over the last 12 months.
 - Ms. Parlér - Can you confirm training was done June 22 and July 27? Answer: I can confirm.
 - Dr. Shope- Regarding ongoing PD, daily for teacher training. Talk to me about follow-up. Is there any follow-up between trainings on the plan? 3 listed are totally different topics. What's the follow-up? Answer: PD 2 days every month. We had to have a 3-year plan, so we stretched them out. We do train 2 days every month on those topics in plan and look for implementation during classroom walkthroughs.
 - Dr. Haire- I commend you on your hard work on this plan. Looking at data submitted in 2019 the school was struggling then. The strategy at that time was to have staff involved in data analysis. I don't see that in this current plan. Do you see that as a need now? Are they using data well? Answer: 2019 was done before me. Since I've arrived there has been a new plan. Rita- So you didn't follow that plan? Answer: No ma'am. Why would I follow a plan that wasn't successful? Dr. Haire- Where do you think you stand as far as your staff using data to grow students, to inform instruction. Answer: Data presented from 22-23 shows. I came from a school that was failing and I'm using the same playbook that was successful in my previous school. Dr. Haire- How long have you been at Paul R. Brown? Answer: January 2022. You can see the results since I've arrived.
 - Mr. Friend- Reminds CSAB members of voting requirements today. If we have changes, we can put that in motion.

Discussion:

- Dr. Shope- I appreciate hearing Dr. Wray's explanation. Would have loved to have seen monthly/quarterly follow-up included. Based on this plan it looks like they are only training teachers once per year. I'm concerned. Like what I'm seeing with board plan. Seems so much heavier than the teacher plan and if you're going to see changes in instruction I would have liked to see more. Maybe I just needed to see that listed out a bit more for teacher training.

Motion: John Eldridge motioned to approve Paul R. Brown Leadership Academy's 3- year School Improvement Plan per SBE stipulations as written.

Second: Hilda Parlér

Dr. Haire- I have a wide range of numbers for enrollment. What is the number today? Ms. Baquero- 127, 117, 121 for the last 3 years. Dr. Haire- 120 range is a good number. Series of non-compliance issues historically. Are all these resolved? Answer: No open compliance issues. They are working with the school of business to resolve some issues. Dr. Haire- You feel good about the movement there? Answer: Yes. We are keeping a close eye on stipulation schools and close contact with DPI departments. Dr. Haire- Met growth this year and that is 4 out of 7 years and consistently rated F. Hopefully he's turning the tide. I would support the motion today.

Mr. Quigley- abstained

- Passed Failed

- **Rocky Mountain Preparatory (64A)- Mr. Grapley, Board Chair. Dr. Collins-Interim HOS presenting.**
 - Mr. Grapley- Here not to defend or justify LP status. Humbly acknowledge with utmost seriousness. The aim is not to make excuses but delineate plans to turn things around. It started this week with new leadership and accountability. The board has taken a detailed look into the lack of academic performance. Transparency of leadership needs to be improved. New leadership is committed to transparency and concrete operational plans to follow with fidelity. We have, and will, ensure the budget supports the plan. The board will track progress along the way. Bank balance this morning over 2 million. We have the resources. Outside consultant to ensure we are doing the plan. As a board, we acknowledge that at times we trusted leadership to share relevant information. We now have processes in place to monitor improvement.
 - Dr. Collins- We must meet or exceed growth for 23-24. 2 psychotherapists to serve the population. Academic coaches to serve all grade levels. Planning sessions that are data driven. (Reviews plan as submitted) 2 weeks of staff development, Get better faster implementation and best practices in the classroom. Instructional coaches are provided to support teachers. Mentors assigned to BTs. Tiered teacher observations weekly. Classroom walkthroughs daily. AVID strategies are being reinforced in classrooms. Added AVID team leads for best practices. Small group instructors, interventionists. After school tutoring, Saturday Academy. Utilize Relay practices with fidelity. Curriculum and pacing guides provided to teachers. Academic progress monitored weekly and shared with board bi-weekly. Will fully participate in NC ACCESS programming. Word this year is "fidelity". Culture of accountability, communication.

- Discussion:
 - Mr. Friend- Trainings identified but no dates, particularly with board training. Can you address this? Answer: July 31 was the first training for board. Other training will be discussed and voted on August 14. Mr. Friend- Given that you've hired an interim HOS, the plan submitted today, did you get feedback from new HOS? Did you inherit this plan? Answer: Previous leadership presented a plan the day before resignation. This is an inherited plan, not to say it's a bad plan. Dr. Collins or board wasn't afforded opportunity to review and have input. Mr. Friend- When did the resignation take place? Answer: July 21 resignation received. The board was over trusting. Mr. Friend- Is the plan that Dr. Collins will see through this plan for the school year? Answer: Correct for board to consider that. Take a hat off to Dr. Collins on the way she stepped in. Can't promise she

is going to be head of school, but the board is pleased with Dr. Collins so far. Mr. Friend-School can't have any compliance warnings over the next 3 years. Letter from DPI this week concerning audit of money and how money was spent. Required to deal with this in months ahead. Can you address briefly? Answer: When I got that letter my mouth dropped. We've never had compliance issues in the past. Was shock to us. We are aware. The plan to address is to work immediately with our accounting partners, Charter Success, under whom this troublesome allotment of funds was done. Acadia, lawyer. Will do whatever is necessary to resolve.

- Mr. Machado- Is it appropriate for new leadership to review and submit later or comfortable with plan?
- Dr. Eldridge- That's my question also. I know it's a living breathing document. Also gives time to work on financial. Answer: If that could be arranged that would be helpful. It's not that we're unhappy with the plan. It needs to be implemented with fidelity immediately. Dr. Eldridge- Have you experienced turnover of staff or board since departure of Executive Director? Answer: 1 board member retired. Potential new board member Monday night. Staff- much of middle management did not stay through the year. Change implementation will keep that management in place. Staff were eager and excited on the first day back. Always looking for strong talent. Dr. Eldridge- Prior conversations, staff buy-in, staff review and feedback. Mr. Machado's question is a good one. Answer: I believe we are starting strong and believe staff will execute. Some flexibility will be appreciated.
- Mr. Friend- Suggestion to give more time, looking at stipulations. Does say we can make recommendations, could be doable to have them come back.
- Dr. Haire- How long have you been with RMP? Answer: 2019. Dr. Haire- 4 years. Things have to change, too trusting. Does that sound right? 20 budget issues, troublesome is a light term. If you have CPA, it is difficult to know how this could happen. Agree things have to change. When school came in 2020- 2 directors in 3 years. 3 directors in the last 4-5 years. What is this attributed too? Needs to be addressed. Answer: Confess that I was new on board as the change took place for the most recent leadership. Can't speak to earlier than that. Dr. Haire- This is part of the problem that needs to be solved. 2019-2020 when school came before us. There were conflicting goals. What is the position now for RMP. Answer: Previous leadership did something that was wise, growing high school with own students and not bringing in new students for high school. We had to make a hard decision to limit the population to get teachers in the classroom. 300 on the wait list. Dr. Haire- Who's been handling bookkeeping? Has there been a lot of turnover? Answer: That is the case. Partners- CSP let go and brought on Acadia. Internally, turnover in accounting department.
- Mr. Gay- How long with Acadia? Answer: 1 year. Better relationship. Mr. Gay- Native of Rocky Mount. Y'all have a long way to go to get back to what you were. 25 years old and you shouldn't have these problems. Fix it or we're going to close you. Answer: Candor is helpful. Agree with you.
- Ms. Parlér- More than saying you will serve them well. Actions speak louder than words. If they come back, we need to have specifics on the plan. I have reservations. Come back in September, we have a lot going on. A lot to consider.
- Dr. Eldridge- Documented riff between school leadership and board. Needs to be addressed in board leadership plan. How is the board included? I find it surprising that in August the board finds \$800,000 in debt. One more sign. Board and leadership not on same page, impacts staff. Limited amount of time.
- Mr. Friend: Does the board have committees? Finance committee meeting with school? I do find it surprising that the board doesn't know about this financial situation. Answer: Was and am in touch with Acadia. Voiced that exact concern. Lack of communication

- between leadership and board and transparency. I will personally be involved with Acadia. Mr. Friend: If you don't have one, establish committees that meets regularly.
- Dr. Haire- 2019. Two 3-year renewals. Did they get a 5-year at that time? This is the 4th 3-year. When school continually gets 3-year means school can't get it together. Hope you have the stamina and will for school to make change you're talking about. Need strong leadership that can do that. Critical. Answer: I agree and not planning on retiring from board.
 - Mr. Friend- Letter from DPI gives to November. If we're going to ask for a revised plan might want to address finance as one of the goals.
 - Dr. Edridge- When did the compliance issue timeline start?
 - Mr. Friend- I don't think this is financial non-compliance yet. That would come if they can't address concerns.
 - Dr. Eldridge- When did noncompliance component become effective? Ms. Baquero- When SBE did this one of the schools was already in noncompliance. We will monitor plans closely and schools will come back to you throughout the year to report. If this financial concern isn't resolved, we will let you know.
 - Mr. Friend- Stipulation says no warning or noncompliance. If they are in noncompliance at end of school year, is it immediate revocation? I think we put them on notice today. I think they 've heard us loud and clear. Finances, leadership, academics. I think they're on a yearly renewal.
 - Dr. Eldridge- I'm not comfortable approving right now because of new leadership. What does the legal say? Ms. Baquero- As long as there is a motion to come back for approval it should be fine.

Motion: John Eldridge motioned to bring Rocky Mountain Preparatory back for September meeting to present revised 3- year School Improvement Plan per SBE stipulations.

Second: Mr. Friend

Discussion:

- Ms. Parlér- Can we guarantee that it will be completed by September?
- Ms. Baquero: September 11 and 12 meeting dates. Answer:- yes. We'll have it complete.
- Mr. Friend- Heard us deliberate about PRBL, might want to look at that as you revise.
- Ms. Baquero- For the record, Mr. Quigley will abstain from all of these votes because he has just joined CSAB.
- Dr. Haire- You and the board have self-paced training due in October and I would recommend you get into that immediately.

Sanchez recuses, conflict of interest.

- Passed Failed

- **Monroe Charter Academy (90D)-**
 - Dr. Ford- reviews plan as submitted.
 - Ms. Parlér- No board training on the plan which is required. Why not? And how many members are on the board? Answer: Partnering with firm to train them. 7 on board. Ms. Parlér- 1 year out of 3-year PD plan completed. Why are years 2 and 3 not completed. Answer: Leadership training in year 1 will continue in year 2 and 3. Ongoing professional development. Ms. Parlér- You do know this has to be put in writing. Where is training for Go Math? Answer: Will happen monthly during staff meetings. Science-using consultant to help with that. Ms. Parlér- AIMS conference, you won't know what

- is being offered so why would you include that if you don't know if it will be applicable?
Answer: Based it on last year's offerings.
- Mr. Friend- Going to a conference is good for staff and leadership but don't always know what is offered so may not be helpful. CKLA training- Have they not already done that?
Answer: Do it every year. Mr. Friend- When I look at goals and strategies, it seems like basic school 101 to me. Were those things not taking place until now? Answer: No. They were taking place. That has been our focus.
 - Mr. Machado- Real concern that plan is not complete. Reflects lack of urgency. I'm concerned that they didn't go through trouble to complete the 3-year plan. Answer: I was out with major surgery, so it was a challenge to collaborate with leadership during recovery. If I can have an opportunity to update the plan and submit it for approval.
 - Mr. Friend- This doesn't even pass the first bullet point of the stipulation. It has to be a 3-year plan and as pointed out doesn't include the board.
 - Dr. Haire- I agree. It's minimal.
 - Dr. Eldridge- It's not adequate and the stipulation we're given was to approve or make modifications. It's almost like we're stuck to have to write 2 more years for the school to have the improvement plan to move forward. Looks like it was done in a couple of days. Students? Answer: I can assure you it was not done in a couple of days. Dr. Eldridge- How many students do you have in total? Answer. 163, 26 highest, K is 20. Dr. Eldridge- Maybe I'm reading this wrong, but it says for reading proficiency 3rd grade is going to go from 26% to 35%. That sounds like 1 student, maybe 2 going from non-proficient to proficient. Am I reading that wrong?
 - Mr. Friend- If we don't approve of the plan today what happens? Ms. Baquero- Couple of options. Ask to come back with a revised plan in September. Include required changes in motion. My understanding- SBE did this with intent of renewing for 3 years with CSAB input on improvement plan.
 - Dr. Eldridge- The previous school was asked to come back because they had a completed plan and not everybody that was going to be at the table was given an opportunity to comment on the plan. This plan is representative of why they have been recommended for a 3-year renewal. The amount of effort that's gone into this gives a picture of why they're maybe in the situation they're in academically. We're not asking them to modify their plan. We're asking them to complete the plan.
 - Mr. Friend- If they did come back in September with a 3-year plan that the state board insisted upon, it also includes what the board training's going to be. At some point they're going to have to present something. We're not voting to send recommendation to state board for non-renewal.
 - Dr. Haire- Did someone confirm that the training for August 2nd and 3rd did take place?
Answer: Yes, it did take place. Dr. Haire- How many teachers were trained? Answer: 18.
 - Dr. Shope- I know your school is rather new but it seemed that when you were talking about the plan everything was continued from previous years. Is there anything new that you could include in the next plan? I hear it's the same thing and clearly that didn't work. What was the thought process? Answer: The new training that we have for this year is through the instructional leadership cohort. Will help us know how to have those crucial conversations with teachers and also to really look at the data in detail and provide constructive feedback to where they can make changes. That will be new. Dr. Shope- That's training for leadership but not for teachers, correct? Answer: That is correct.
 - Dr. Haire- The piece that Dr. Ford just mentioned is not in the professional development plan. Who would return, which teachers would they train. It's all incomplete.

Motion: Hilda Parlér motioned to not approve Monroe Charter Academy's 3- year School Improvement Plan per SBE stipulations as presented.

Second: Bruce Friend

Discussion:

- Dr. Haire- Is the board chair online? Answer: Yes. I'm listening. Dr. Haire- Do you have anything to add to this discussion? Answer: I haven't made any comments, and this would be my only contribution. Dr. Ford briefly mentioned that she had been in surgery and trying to do this all from home as she feels up to it. Not an excuse, just information you probably need to know.
- Mr. Friend- I appreciate that information and I certainly appreciate the work Dr. Ford put in even when she was at home. It shouldn't fall on her shoulders alone, though. This is a school improvement plan that the board owns and every member of the leadership team. This shouldn't fall on Dr. Ford's shoulders alone.
- Dr. Eldridge- Ashley were you ever contacted to ask for an extension to turn this in? Ms. Baquero- I don't believe so. Dr. Eldridge- How long have they had to write this plan? Ms. Cook- Plans were given to schools at the end of April. They were given these templates at the end of April. Dr. Eldridge- I'm sorry that there's been any kind of medical issue or anything but the sense of urgency that the board and the school should have felt when the state board gives a lifeline. I don't know if there is an excuse for how poorly this is written. I would have thought this would be more polished and something the school could map out and see where they are going. It's a 1-year plan, it's incomplete and there is really no connection between different things that are being done. I am confused about the alternative. Now you've got a month to go back and do something that you've had months to complete already? Answer: I definitely understand your concern. I would like to ask if the board could give us until September. I know it's no excuse and our first renewal. My first time being in a position to create a plan of this magnitude with the board. Dr. Eldridge- Thank you for that. Moving forward, regardless, we're all here to support you and try and help to make sure that your students are successful, and you guys experience the success you're hoping for. The Office of Charter Schools had other schools that had to do this plan and they reached out multiple times to get feedback. Regardless of what happens after today, I would say use any resources you have, whether partnering with other schools or someone else who has been down this road and get the support you need because at the end of the day, this is really about the students getting the support they need.
- Dr. Haire- Does the school still use Eddie Goodall Consulting, and do they consult academically? Answer: No. Dr. Haire- Another question about the number of students. It's another one of those cases where we have a great variance. Want to confirm they did grow?
- Mr. Friend- There is the logical question of what happens next because motion is not about inviting them back. Answer: Ms. Baquero- I would have to confirm with legal and get back to you.
- Mr. Gay- Could we revise the motion?
- Ms. Parlér- I will not revise my motion.
- Dr. Ford- We start school on Monday, and I know our plan is not up to par from the feedback received but as far as EVAAS growth we have met growth 2 years in a row so we are moving in the right direction.
- Mr. Friend- The motion is not being rescinded but that doesn't preclude you or anyone else from making another motion if someone is so inclined to do so.

Mr. Machado- opposed.

- Passed 6:1 Failed

Motion: Dave Machado motioned to not approve Monroe Charter Academy’s 3- year School Improvement Plan per SBE stipulations as presented and return in September with revisions.

Second: Stephen Gay

Discussion:

- Dr. Eldridge- When you read what the state board has directed and I’m not sure that was what they’ve asked to happen. I’m ok with giving them one more chance to present the plan even though they've had 4 or 5 months to get this in. We need to have a stellar plan.
- Dr. Shope- Do we have a choice to bring them back? We’re not saying to revoke the charter, so I think we have to bring them back.
- Ms. Baquero- In any event I think they will have to come back in September.
- Dr. Eldridge- If we wait for the state board to meet this puts us off another month.
- Mr. Machado- The state board will ask us to come back with another recommendation. Unfortunately, we’re giving Monroe an underserved lifeline, but I don’t know what other choices we have. If this motion passes, and they come back with another plan, it better be an awfully good one.
- Mr. Friend- The state board will see that we rejected this plan and if this motion passes one of the things we want to have clarity on is if they come back in September is the state board going to give us direction or expectations if this doesn’t pass in September. I do think it was important for everyone here today and reading the minutes that this plan was not sufficient.
- Dr. Haire- Are there other board members present? Answer: No. Dr. Haire- No other board members present. So, Monroe dropped the ball on this. We have Dr. Ford and the board chair and 18 teachers in training, and no one could put together a plan and school starts on Monday. What is the enrollment right now? Answer: 163. Dr. Haire- That's confirmed with all completed paperwork? Answer: That is confirmed with all completed paperwork and all students in PowerSchool.

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Hilda Parlér: opposed

- Passed Failed

- **Apprentice Academy High School of NC (90F)-**

- Dr. Ross HOS- Based on everything I’ve heard so far; I will lead off by saying I did not put the full plan for 3 years based on my interpretation. This is ongoing. None of what we’re doing here is one and done. In retrospect, I should have filled out the paperwork as requested. Assure you all training is research based. We do have a grant that will help pay for this plan so that is not a concern. Dr. Ross presents plan as submitted.
- Mr. Friend- Reiterate that the very first stipulation was to submit a 3-year plan. This is not a 3-year plan. Even the template has years 2 and 3. They’re there for a reason.
- Mr. Machado- This is very disappointing again. When the state board sends out a directive, the school’s lifeline is at stake. There’s not a sense of urgency to submit a good plan on time.

- Dr. Haire- I ditto that with Dave.
- Ms. Parlér- Ditto.
- Mr. Friend- We all have schools that open next week, and we spent our entire morning, and we had 4 schools present. Two didn't even do the first bullet on the checklist.
- Dr. Eldridge- The Office of Charter School staff has been trying to get all this stuff pulled together and I appreciate the OCS staff, Ashley, her crew for trying to direct folks and getting this done so that we could be all organized and get everything moving forward today. My apologies to them for having to pull together incomplete work.

Motion: Hilda Parlér **motioned to not approve Apprentice Academy High School of NC's 3-year School Improvement Plan per SBE stipulations.**

Second: Bruce Friend

- Passed Failed

Motion: John Eldridge **motioned to bring back Apprentice Academy High School in October with a complete plan of NC's 3- year School Improvement Plan per SBE stipulations.**

Second: Dave Machado

Hilda Parlér: nay

- Passed Failed

- Mr. Machado- Would you entertain a change to October? We have so much work to do in September.
- Dr. Eldridge- I'm just concerned that it'll be 3 months into the school year, and we haven't approved the school improvement plan. I'll go ahead and modify for October, but my hope is that while we're doing that everything that's down here is carried out and done like it needs to be done.
- Dr. Haire- I noticed the board chair is on the line and we haven't heard anything from him. Would he like to contribute anything before we make a decision? He's muted. If he has nothing to say but thought he should add to this discussion. I'm very uncomfortable. We have Dr. Ross and he's the only person we've heard from. Do you have a board? Dr. Ross- He was on here so I'm not sure what happened. Dr. Haire- Mr. Ross, do you single-handedly handle this plan? Answer: No. All staff, admin team are involved. I made a wrong interpretation. To think this is not a good plan I would argue all of this is research based and as long as it's done with fidelity it will work. Our lead consultant, every school she's worked with that has followed her plan has improved in one year. I take full responsibility for not putting this out for 3 years. Dr. Haire- I appreciate that. But the plan is lean and the school representation is also lean. I think the sense of urgency should have some involvement and show that people are engaged that this is critical for the school's future. I want you to be successful, but you have to have buy in from your school family, from your supporters. I'm not seeing that.
- Mr. Friend- Was this plan shared with the board before submission? Dr. Ross- Yes. Board chair- I'm here. Ensuring that we focus on driving the board to get all their training in addition to the school. Over emphasizing the requirement for the board to get continually more involved with the school administration and the operations. I meet with Barry regularly. We put together the retreat for the board and we're still actively recruiting board members. We continue every month to go over the requirements of the state as well as our own goals and our mission. We've had our issues with needing to relocate which has caused some of our attention to move away from the school. We see no reason why we can't meet all the requirements.

Approved 9.11.23

- Mr. Friend- Let's never forget that the charter is owned by the board. Mr. Ross cannot carry this on his own or his staff.
- Dr. Ross- Is the issue that you don't agree with our training plan or that we didn't fill out the plan as expected.
- Mr. Friend- For me it's because it's not complete.
- Dr. Eldridge- I'm with you on who you're using for literacy and math. If you're working with them, it's a good group of folks. If you're going to stick with those guys for a few years, their focus is going to be different each year as you see improvement. Sitting down with them and saying okay, year 1 what are we going to do, year 2 what's it going to look like, year 3. You can shape your plan over the 3 years as opposed to just putting down coaches. What's the literacy focus? What's the focus you want? They'll help you lay out a 3-year plan. It's a living and breathing document and you make edits.

Motion to adjourn – John Eldridge

Second – Bruce Friend

Adjourned- 12:45