

Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2024

Attendees:

Brenda Robertson – Chair
Walter Martin – Vice Chair
Steven Peters – Treasurer
Mark Fleming – Secretary
Chris Farrell – Board Member
Natalie Wright – Board Member
Katie Gomersall – HOS
Stacey Bryant
Tasha Parnell – HS Principal
Laura Zuber – Administration
Lea King – Administration
Chad Long – K12
Eric Angeny – K12
Joseph Cugliari- K12
John Kramer – K12
Scott Sides – K12
Lenny Mc Allister – K12
Teresa Boardman – K12
Cande Killian Wood
Steve Moody
Sara Struhs – Executive Director

Having confirmed there was a quorum, the Board meeting was called to order at 5:00pm by Brenda Robertson. She asked for a motion to adopt the agenda and approve the previous meeting minutes. Mark made the motion; Walter seconded it. Brenda called for a vote: it was unanimous.

Brenda read the mission statement.

Sara confirmed that there was a consent item to approve hiring Torrey Annas (EL teacher). Brenda asked for a motion to approve the consent item. Walter made the motion; Steve seconded it. Brenda called for the vote. It was unanimous.

Brenda moved on to the discussion items.

Chad was asked to give his update on the November financial check in and the December bill.

Chad presented the financial statement for the ½ half of this scholastic year. We are sitting approximately 186 students above the budgeted enrollment. We are 1.5 million higher than the budget due to the bonuses given to all school staff and because of the increase in the number of teachers needed.

The surplus for the year to date is at a little less of \$600,000.00.

Walter asked if the LEA's were catching up with their payments. Chad explained that LEA's are responding and working on making payments.

Chad proceeded to explain our December bill with everything in order and there were no surprises.

Brenda asked for any questions for Chad – there were none and she moved on to ask Katie for the HOS update.

Katie said this was the first week back to school and it was a busy week. We added 100 new 9th and 10th graders!

Katie praised Sherrell Ezell-Branch who runs our elementary gifted and talented program. She was awarded the Modern Classroom Scholarship award for the work she is doing.

Katie said that the High School added a Pre-Calculus class this semester and we have 15 students registered for it.

NCVA was recipient of a certificate of award for "exceeding academic growth". This comes with an electronic badge that we will add to our website.

Katie told the Board that she is seeking NCAA approval to submit eligible athletes directly into the NCAA college clearinghouse. This will make it easier for our students to be regarded by NCAA collegiate programs in all NCAA colleges and universities. This is a lengthy process, but we have many athletes that could benefit from this, and it is good for our school to achieve this recognition.

Katie gave the most recent enrollment numbers:

- 1) We are currently 110 students over our previous cap and still have 500 on the waitlist.
- 2) We continue to add k-2 students.
- 3) We added 100 9th and 10th graders.

Katie wrapped up her presentation with the EOC testing results. Overall, we are slightly below last year in all subjects except ELA.

Katie explained that they are expecting better results with the spring testing and while it will be close, we are hoping to remain equal to last year.

Chris asked if the ELA EOC was measuring grammar and writing or was more literature based. Tasha said that all three are measured but is heavy on literature.

With no further questions for Katie, Brenda moved on to Scott for a presentation on the possibility of adding a second charter for an alternative education school. He brought two other experts with him: Lenny McAllister who works in new school development for K12 and Teresa Boardman who runs a similar school in Michigan and also works with the K12 marketing team for new alternative schools. Scott reminded the Board that this is the second meeting we have had to discuss this possibility and explained that the application will not be available until January 26th with a submission date of April 26th. This would be for a school to open in the school year 2025-26.

Chad presented a chart on staffing needs. There was discussion around this and Scott explained this is the beginning and we will look at everything as we move forward. He said K12 wants the Board to be comfortable and once we find that number they will see if it can work financially. He went on to say that Katie will see all the information and give critical feedback as well. .

Brenda asked if the only commonality between the schools would be Katie as the HOS. Scott said yes. Katie will oversee the school and its staff, and, other than some possible shared administrative services, there will be no co-mingling. Scott said that the financial breaking point was in the vicinity of 700 students to ensure we could have separate schools with separate staffs. Brenda emphasized that co-mingling is not good.

Chad said the funding would be similar to NCVA. They will use the same per student funding rates and the increases from the LEA funding. With 900 students we will have a budget of \$7.7million in funding for the school and it will be a surplus school in the first year.

Brenda asked again how the 900 number was chosen and Chad said he got the number from the marketing department.

Brenda asked about the marketing department and what they would be doing. Scott said they will provide the support for all the advertising, and they will work closely with the Board to communicate what we are doing and explain the importance of this alternative school. Once approved in April, marketing will begin in May.

Sara asked what the criteria is for the school. Scott said there is a list of criteria in the index of the presentation, and ultimately, the Board will decide what the criteria will be. Scott explain that parents choose the school for their students. There are parents who felt that their children were not ready to enter HS and thought this would give them the support that the need to be more successful. Scott said we can do more in this school than others based on the “richness of support”. Lenny also said that people on both sides of the legislative aisle come together on this issue because they all recognize the need for this kind of school. Teresa agreed and said that working with marketing over the last year they have been very successful. They do business to business marketing which has been very successful in offering another option for schooling for these students.

Sara asked what the relationship between NCVA and the new school would be – will students from NCVA be allowed to transfer to the new school if appropriate? Scott said this is a question of policy. There have been examples of schools doing this. If this is something the Board would like to do, they can work to create policies that would allow for it. Natalie believed that there would be something like this to continue to support our students at NCVA and make sure they are given every opportunity to succeed. Scott said it will depend on the Board set criteria and whether they meet those criteria, but it could be possible with the right policies in place.

Sara asked how we set the criteria? Scott said we would choose from the list. Sara asked how do we admit rising 9th graders if they have not yet been in HS and failed there? Teresa said that students who have been chronically absent and failing in the 8th grade were already set up to fail. Scott says that NC gives wide latitude for defining failure. Sara asked about the mental health issues as a requirement and how do we identify that and confirm

that. Teresa said that the mental health issues are identified before the student is identified as a potential student. They usually already have an IEP and come already identified.

Scott next presented an example of a typical day showing how there are up to 4 one-hour blocks for lessons and times throughout the day for counseling, credit recovery, social-emotional learning, and academic support. Brenda asked if the schedule would meet the criteria set by the legislature and Katie assure her that the students will have 6 hours minimum with lessons, support, and activities

Brenda asked if credit recovery meetings count toward the hours needed for academics and Katie assured her that any time spent in class or with counselors of any kind count toward the required time spent at school.

Brenda was concerned about hour long blocks thinking they are too long to hold the attention of the students. Teresa reminded her that the first 15-20 minutes of these times may be used for social emotional learning which is necessary for them to move on to the academics.

Lenny talked about the timeline. Natalie asked if it is doable given our timeline and Lenny and Scott reinforced that we have plenty of time.

Sara asked if we are due to open for the school year 2025-26 and we are supposed to be going through the charter renewal/change from pilot to charter school at the same time. Does that affect the timeline? If we are doing both, have they been in that situation before? Scott said yes, but that the state did not have the same rigor for the process as NC. He assured us that the team working on the new school is very good and they will be able to make sure all is in order for submission and will work with the Board to make sure they are comfortable. Lenny said NCVA tells a success story of its own in the renewal process and the new school will be telling a different story of possibility to meet a very real need in the state. He assured that the two teams with 2 major endeavors can be done during a parallel timeline.

Sara reminded everyone that we were running over by 10 minutes already and wanted to be respectful of everyone's evening. She asked if any Board members had any remaining questions for any of the three experts. Mark asked what happens if in the end the Board says no to the new school – what will K12 do? Scott said they could possibly find another board though he would prefer to continue working with this board.

Brenda asked the if there were any more questions. There were none.

Sara then said to the Board that she thinks the Board needs to decide if this is something we really want to do. She recommended that we get into it and see if we can be vested in it. If in the end, we find that it will be detrimental to NCVA, the Board will have been a great contributor to the next board that K12 will find to create this school. And if we find that we are interested and vested in it, we will already have begun the process. She suggested that Mark should ask around and see how it would be received. Mark agreed.

Chris asked Scott what he needs from us. Scott said he needs a signal to get people working. He said if we could build this together it would be great.

Brenda asked for a motion. Chris made the motion to continue to do exploration and ask Stride to do the next set of research for us so that we can be prepared to submit a charter application. Natalie seconded it. Brenda asked for further discussion – there was none. She called the vote. It was unanimous. Brenda said the motion carries and she hopes this gives Scott what he needs to move forward.

Brenda asked Sara for an update. Sara said that the Feb meeting is 2/5 and we will be at the Graylyn for the workshop 2/9-11. Mark asked if we could move the 2/5 meeting to 2/10 at 9:00am. Brenda said she would add it to the Action Items.

Sara moved on to the Parent Bill of Rights (PBR). She reminded them that she had sent it to them already for their review and asked if there were any questions. Chris asked Sara, Katie and Tasha if they had any concerns. Katie said no.

Sara said the next big thing will be the Parent Guide. We are currently waiting for DPI to provide the template for it and once we have that we will share it with the Board. Chris asked if any of the Board members had further questions about PBR. He felt that everything there ticked off the requirements. Natalie and Walter agreed. Sara moved to action items.

Brenda asked if anyone opposed approving the three action items. No one opposed this. Chris made the motion to approve all of them; Mark and Walter seconded. Brenda called the vote. The vote was unanimous.

Mark made a motion to adjourn – vote was unanimous.
The meeting ended at 6:30