

MEETING MINUTES 3-5-2025

ATTENDEES:

Brenda Robertson – Chair
Walter Martin – Vice Chair
Mark Fleming – Secretary
Steve Moody – Treasurer
Natalie Wright – Board Member
Marcia Simmons – Board Member
Tasha Parnell – NCVA – HS AA
Kelly Shanahan – NCVA- EL AA
Kristina Rodrigues – NCVA- MS AA/Interim HOS
Lea King – NCVA – AA
Stacey Bryant – NCVA – EC AA
Chad Long – K12
Scott Sides – K12
John Kramer – K12
Sara Struhs – Executive Director

At 5:37, having a quorum present, Brenda called the meeting to order.

Brenda asked for a motion to adopt the agenda and previous meeting minutes. Steve made the motion; Natalie seconded it; Brenda called for the vote: it was unanimous.

Brenda asked Steve to read the mission statement, which he did.

Brenda, recognizing there were no consent items, moved to the Head of School (HOS) update.

Kristina started with the enrollment numbers. Currently, we have 3379 students: 1395 in elementary school, 925 in middle school and 1059 in high school. As of 3-5-2025, we have 460 students who have applied to return next year. Kristina is asking Stride to break down the numbers to compare to last year. The school lottery will be held 4-11-2025.

Zoom school messenger has been turned on for LC's which the staff is happy to have as it will make communicating with LC's much easier – they will now be able to text them directly.

The science standards have changed this year and they have now rolled out with updates and check-ins for 1 and 2. The state was behind but the curriculum has been updated for science. ELA will be updated next year. Stride has updated the standards in their courses but we have not yet received them. We should get them in April. Once we receive them, we will do a deep dive to make sure they are aligned with the NC standards and next year they will be make sure the courses are all updated. Next year the state will begin looking at changes for Math. The NCVA teams have already begun working NCVA. MS and HS - grades 6, 7, and 8 have begun looking at what is working well and what is not and shared that information with the state representatives who are going over the feedback.

Planning for next year has begun. They are working on putting together the master boards. Tasha has hers ready and will send to the Academic Committee for review. Kristina has had a deep

conversation with Kelly to implement the least amount of disruption for changes to students in the coming weeks. Given the time of year, it is difficult to implement foundational changes, but they are looking to add two more classes for students: science and social studies. They will have a teaching class that ties into the asynchronous lessons once a week and hold one open office hour for students who would like to discuss the work for the week or ask questions about the content. Next year they will change the master board to have 4 live classes taught to all students next year. All master boards will be shared with the Academic Committee for approval once they are completed.

Regarding position openings: there are currently 5 open in MS – because they wish to move two teachers into other positions, there really are only 3 open at the moment. There are 2 open in HS one of which they have extended an offer to someone and are waiting for Stride to finish their due diligence. There are 4 data coach specialists needed – 3 are backfill positions and are waiting for finance to finish their alignment of salaries.

Brenda asked about the 8 openings and why they are still open since they were available in October. Kristina explained that the positions were created in October, but it takes at least a month to make them available, so the positions were not available until November. Brenda wanted to know why it takes so long. Kristina said the process of getting them approved goes through many hands and so Administrators need to stay on top of them. Many are currently sitting in Finance waiting for approval because they have so many and must make sure the salaries are aligned to the position. This takes a month to go through. Marcia asked about internally moving someone to another internal position wanting to make sure core subjects are being covered first before covering remediation positions. Kristina agreed. She said she has one teacher she would like to move to remediation but will not do that until later in the year to maintain continuity in the classroom and to make sure there is a teacher in all the core classes. She will hope to do this by the end of the year so they can begin planning for the following year knowing they have the right people in the right positions. Also, it is hard to find good candidates right now. Marcia agreed it is best to keep the core class staff in place. Kristina said she has moved a data coach to Kelly so there are no holes in the instruction: both Kelly and Tasha are desperately waiting on getting positions filled.

Brenda asked about the contractor that Kristina mentioned as she didn't realize we have contractors and wondered how many we have?

Kristina said this was an unusual case where the candidate was an NC certified teacher when she applied, but that her license was going to expire. When it expired, they gave her a contract treating her like a long-term substitute teacher. Then when the contract expired, they did not renew it.

Brenda stressed that all teachers need to be NC certified teachers and Kristina agreed explaining that is why she is waiting for the position to be filled now. Brenda thanked Kristina for her honesty.

Kristina moved on to tell the good news of the CTE development at NCVA. She said CTE is doing well and added the club, Skills USA, have a presentation from Jayla.

Jayla prepared and presented a 5 minute presentation to the board about how they have been growing their skills and also the growing their membership. She touched upon the following:

State Pumpkin Carving Contest: members carved pumpkins to represent different occupations. Eight members participated and Alexis G received 3rd prize.

Holiday Project: members created videos for holiday activities to share with others. One gave a demonstration on how to make a candy cane bouquet; one created a video message wishing a happy holiday season in multiple languages; one demonstrated painting holiday themed fingernails; and two read winter themed picture books for children to watch.

Jump into Stem Program – this was an opportunity for members to teach elementary students about different careers.

Career Exploration – the club was visited by professionals in a career fair setting giving students an inside look at different careers.

Skills USA Week – the chapter advertised and drew audiences to join Skills USA – the deployed multiple demonstrations to show skills they are learning. This was a good way to show other students what they are doing and learning and how to be a part of it.

State Competitions – two members have decided to participate in the state competition April 9-11. They completed their resumes and at the end of the conference, their chapter will be awarded the Chapter of Excellence for completing the 7 requirements for a quality chapter.

Brenda asked how many members they have in their chapter. Jayla said she believes there are 15 students now. Brenda thanked Jayla for the great presentation and job well done. Kristina also thanked Jayla for a great job. She explained this is the first year we have had the chapter and with the completion of the first year we will go to the next level and will expand the next year.

Natalie then asked a question about the interim changes to the elementary school. When implemented. Kristina wants to have the changes up and running next week and said Kelly is looking at it for implementation asap. Kelly said next week is a huge undertaking because she has not yet shared this with the staff and won't until Wednesday. She said they need time to prepare. She wants to give them at least a week because they need to learn content, create power points – there is a lot to be put into it and honestly, she thinks it will be the week of 17th before it is pushed out.

There were no more questions and so Brenda asked Chad to present the monthly bill. Chad said the present budget is for \$36.8m and to date we have spent \$33m. There will be a surplus of \$3.8 m this year. This month's invoice is \$1.2m; last month's bill was \$1.4m. There are no surprises to billing and will continue to go down as students withdraw.

Marcia asked about the situation with the credit cards wondering if we have worked out the increases in spending and have stability with the end of year rush coming up? Sara said she has been working with the bank – it has been slow but we are making progress and hope to have definitive answers next week. But we are in a good place to cover all needs. No stress on the system so we are able to do all we need to be doing.

Brenda recognizing there are no more questions for Chad, she asked Sara to give the Executive Director's report. Sara said before getting into the agenda items she has, she explained we were

supposed to have a vote on the audit report but there was a small question at the last minute and Chad asked that we postpone the vote so we may answer that question first and we will vote on in next month.

Sara said she is trying to do better on committees and so she has sent multiple emails to all of them to set up dates. She asked them to please respond to those emails as soon as possible. She said she had a conversation with Natalie regarding the Academic Committee and has had emails with Chris about the Governance Committee. Lots of emails, but they are important to get the meetings on the calendar. Also, Mark will be stepping down from the Academic Committee but will remain on the Governance Committee; and Walter will be added to the Academic Committee.

Sara said she followed up on the two administrative withdrawals that the board extended their probation for another 30 days. The student whose parent suggested needed an evaluation for an IEP has not been attending classes regularly. Stacey and her team have been looking into the concern about needing an IEP, but it appears the student is not a candidate. And it would be difficult to give him services because he does not attend school and that is how they are able to evaluate him and offer services. He is a strong candidate to be withdrawn and her recommendation is that our school is not the best match for him.

The second student with the social emotional challenges given her past crisis is attending classes but not participating at the level she should be. She is attending though and so we will have more conversation about her status as we get closer to the end of the 30 days.

Sara gave an update on the CD's. They are doing well and I talk monthly with Daniel Watkin. We have \$257k in the money market account and we could move \$250 of it into a CD if the board chooses. The money in the money market account is covered by FDIC up to \$2m so there is no pressure to move immediately, however, it will be a better investment if we do.

And lastly, Sara said she has reached out to David Hostetler for a preliminary conversation about how to create a foundation if the board chooses to do that. As soon as she has more information she will share it. She said David said it is a fairly easy process to do, but we will need to find a financial person to help with it. He is looking for recommendations for us.

Steve asked Stacey a question about the IEP candidate and if they had formally requested an evaluation because that would start the timeline. Stacey said she had sent documentation of diagnosis which does not start the timeline, but if they did put in the request in writing that they formally wanted the evaluation for an IEP and gave them specifics, the team would have met and that would have started the timeline. They did not do that. She did speak to the parent though and the mother explained he can't come to school and she said he would need to come to school to get the services needed. She did reach out to the mother though and explained everything to her. Marcia followed up asking if Stacey confirmed in writing to the mother after their conversation to show documentation that they had spoken. Steve agreed with Marcia and Stacey said she would confirm but always does so expects she did here – but she would double check.

Sara asked for any more questions and Steve asked if we needed to make a motion on the CD now or could we take it up under the votes. Brenda said we would take it up under the action items.

Brenda called for a motion to approve the monthly bill. Steve made the motion; Walter seconded it; Brenda called for the vote: it was unanimously approved.

Brenda called for a motion to defer the audit report until the next board meeting. Steve made the motion; Natalie seconded it; Brenda called for the vote: it was unanimously approved.

Brenda called for a motion to invest \$250k into a CD. Steve made the motion; Mark seconded it; Brenda called for the vote: it was unanimously approved.

Stacey said before adjourning that she did find the email communication to the mother about the student and discussing the IEP and stressing the need for the student to be in school.

Brenda thanked her and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mark made the motion; Brenda called for the vote: it was unanimously approved.