

## MEETING MINUTES

October 7, 2024

### ATTENDEES:

Walter Martin – Vice Chair  
Steven Peters – Treasurer  
Mark Fleming – Secretary  
Steve Moody – Board Member  
Chris Farrell – Board Member  
Katie Gomersall – HOS  
Scott Sides – VP K12  
Chad Long – Finance K12  
John Kramer – Finance K12  
Joseph Cugliari – Finance NCVA  
Chelsea Spiker – Teacher NCVA  
Sara Struhs – Executive Director

Sara called a quorum

Walter opened the meeting reminding everyone that Brenda is out of the country.

Walter asked for a motion to adopt the agenda and minutes from the previous meeting. Steve Peters made the motion; Steve Moody seconded it. Walter called for the vote: it was unanimous.

Walter asked for the HOS update

Katie started with the good news of Microsoft certification tests for PowerPoint were granted to NCVA. These certifications tests are free – we were given 110 by the state. We currently have 35 students preparing for this certification test and expect more to take it next semester.

Katie highlighted Komani Broder, a 4<sup>th</sup> grader who has published a book, “As Brave As You”. It is for sale on Amazon.

Katie gave an update on CTE happenings in our school:

- 1) The HS has a virtual internship for digital and social media ad production. There were several students who will take advantage of this next semester as well.
- 2) The new CTE teacher is has been working with 8<sup>th</sup> graders and elementary students to write news letters for their schools about CTE jobs and opportunities. The hope is the students will explore different opportunities in the CTE world and consider them as possible job options later in life.

The e-sports team is busy practicing and preparing for their first competition on 10/14. They have joined the Stride e-gaming league as well as two additional leagues. They will be competing 3 days per week and hoping to make it to the championship this year. Mr. Miller, their coach, believes they have a good chance of reaching that goal.

Alex Lemonade Stand is a volunteer opportunity for students in HS. The teacher advisor for the National Honors Society has asked those students to help her with the fundraising which will not only help the school, but will also help the students meet their volunteer requirements for the National Honors Society.

Finally Katie updated us on the affects Hurricane Helene is having on our school community. The day after the hurricane, they began working to track all the students from that area of the state. There was a school wide survey that went out to all NCVA students – 3600 – and 740 were able to respond. As of tonight, we are down to 140 students still not accounted for out of the 1122 students in the area. Katie and staff have begun creating a “critical list” which is a list of students who have been displaced from their residences; missing services (water, electricity, internet) and are expecting they will be with out some services for 1-2 months. This list will help each school: EL, MS, HS, to prepare to give these students more time and effort to get them back up to speed. Their missed days will be excused without penalty. Katie is hoping testing will be forgiven by the state so students may show they were taking the classes, but will have grace given for the testing. Still, preparations are being made to help students prepare for the EOC tests just in case the state does not make that exception.

The two concerns expressed to the social workers and teachers:

- 1) Currently, the most critical shortage is cash. Without ATM’s and card readers, most all of the economy is running on cash.
- 2) The desire to get students back to normal – back to classes. They are working on options for finding connectivity even if only for an hour or two each day.

Chris mentioned the need to examine how we may support them recognizing with the severely damaged infrastructure, it is hard to get help and supplies to them. Everyone was in agreement that we need to look forward and see what we should be doing in the long run. Walter suggested we think about this and have a more in-depth conversation at the Nov. Academic meeting.

Walter then asked for the Chad to discuss the bill.

Chad went over the bill:

- 1) There were no major changes since last months bill. We are projected to have a \$1.3M surplus. We are waiting for the growth funding payments and there is concern over when the legislature will make those payments, especially in light of the hurricane demands. This gives us a \$3m funding risk included in the projections. 2) The invoice was \$2.7M an increase from last month’s bill of \$1.8M. This was because of:
  - a) higher student curriculum charges as it includes both Aug and Sept charges based on the timing of how the billing data is pulled.
  - b) increases in the number of teacher access charges (this is the first month that this is charged).

Chad asked if there were any questions with the bill. There were none.

Chris asked if we could please see the financial models if we are not receiving the same enrollment numbers. Chad said he can do that.

Walter asked Sara to give the executive director’s report.

Sara explained that with the return to a D school, there has been concern among some of the board members as to what happened and how do we return to the C grade. Several members believe we should stop rolling enrollment and this will change our finances so it is important to make sure we balance those two goals. Sara explained the new funding model stressing that the state funds will be based on the Sept or Oct ADM – whichever is higher. Lowering enrollment would lower the LEA funding though since that funding is based on the actual ADM

of each month. She spoke with all members of the Academic Committee and given that Natalie and Brenda were not able to be at this meeting, they, along with Mark, agreed that we should continue with the next two enrollment dates (10/16 and 10/30) and have a more comprehensive conversation at the meeting in November. It is important we get all the information from K12 and have a healthy conversation about enrollment and budgeting. Chris Farrell asked that Chad run models to look at the different scenarios based on reducing budget.

Sara then introduced Chelsea Spiker who is the lead teacher for the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Chelsea said they are keeping the same goals, but are making changes as to how to achieve those goals:

- 1) Increasing reading scores: they have added new programs for the students across all grades and are focusing more on transitions between grade levels since this seems to be a challenge for many students.
- 2) Staff retention: they are increasing the number of Professional Development offerings individualizing many of them. They are taking a survey to better know the staff and their accomplishments. They are increasing efforts to raise the staff moral.
- 3) Improve schoolwide communications: working to make sure teachers are collaborative on notes, working together to better transition students from one grade level to the next, and improving LC contacts to make sure they are working smoothly and help them with any challenges they are having.

Steve Moody asked if the teachers have received the Science of Reading training. Chelsea said they have been trained on many of those programs under the science of reading and are working on including reading into more of the other classes. Katie said Letters, Gillihan, webinars to teaching standard, etc are pulled and shared with teachers as they become available.

Sara moved on to the questions around our surplus funding and asked Chris to talk to this issue. He said based on the finance committee meeting last week, he understands we are not at liberty to spend the money beyond for educational needs of our students, staff and school. He would like to remove from the policy identifying "students, staff and school" from the policy so we may look to a bigger cause, expressing concern for the people of WNC and how we could be helping them. But he asked that we continue this conversation in November when the full board will be present.

Sara reported that two new teachers have been hired: a HS counselor and an EL EC teacher.

Chris asked if Scott and the k12 team will be doing regression analysis. He would like to see a broad correlation of any and all data. And he asked if they would please have it available by 10/28 so board members may peruse it before the November meeting. Scott agreed and said they will get the information to us by the 28<sup>th</sup>. Steve Moody brought up the idea of students doing better the longer they stay with us. He would like to see data on classroom attendance with each teacher. Scott again reinforced they will look at everything and if they have more questions, they should relay them to me and I will pass them along. Scott did say that our EVAAS scores were very high – in the 80'S% and then this year we dropped significantly so he will have them look at each teacher so we may better understand what happened there.

Sara then reminded the board that we usually do the November board meeting before the academic meeting begins and asked if we will do that again this year? Mark said we should do it before the meeting and Walter and Steve Peters agreed. Chris made the case that we have so much to discuss at the meeting in November that we should wait and do the board meeting

on the following Monday, unless we can keep the meeting to be shorter than usual. All board members agreed we should keep it shorter than usual in order to dedicate more time to the academic meeting. Sara reminded them we would need to have a vote on that change.

Mark made the motion to move the meeting to 8:30 on November 2. Chris seconded the motion. Walter called for the vote: it was unanimously approved.

Walter then moved on to the other votes.

Walter asked for a motion to approve the monthly bill. Steve Moody made the motion. Steven Peters seconded the motion. Walter called for the vote: it was unanimously approved.

Walter asked for a motion to approve the SIP. Steve Moody made the motion. Mark seconded the motion. Walter called for the vote: it was unanimously approved.

Walter asked for a motion to adjourn. Mark made the motion. Chris seconded the motion. Walter called for the vote: it was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00pm