

Charter Institute at Erskine Meeting Minutes

April 20, 2022 | time 11:00 a.m. | Charter Institute at Erskine, 1201 Main Street, Columbia South Carolina 29201

Chair Dr. Steve Adamson

Members in Attendance
Mr. Stu Rodman
Mr. Martin O'Connor
Dr. Tony Foster
Mr. Todd Carnes

Members Absent
Dr. Noel Brownlee
Dr. Tom Hellams
Dr. Gordon Query

Attendees from Charter Institute at Erskine

Mr. Cameron Runyan (Superintendent)
Mr. Vamshi Rudrapati (Director)
Ms. Sarah Timmons (Counsel)
Ms. Christy Junkins (Chief of Authorization & Accountability)
Ms. Celina Patton (Chief of Student Services)
Ms. Kusuma Buddhiraju (Director of Data & Research)
Mr. John Li (Director of Finance)
Ms. Ashley Epperson (Asst. Director of Communications)
Ms. Katriel Rea (Legal and Policy Asst.)
Mr. Joe Bowers (Coordinator of Authorization)

Chairman Adamson called the meeting to order at 11:01 AM.

Mr. Joe Bowers announced that in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act, notice of this meeting and the agenda were posted and distributed to persons requesting notification.

The invocation was delivered by Dr. Foster.

Mr. Joe Bowers called the roll, and a quorum of the board was present.

Adoption of the Agenda for the April 20, 2022, Meeting

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

Executive Session

Mr. Rodman moved to enter executive session to discuss contractual matters.

Mr. O'Connor seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously.

The board entered executive session at 11:03 AM.

The board resumed open session at 11:21 AM with Chairman Adamson noting that this was the first in person board meeting in two years.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 16, 2022, Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

Presentations & Recognitions

Erskine Shared Services Initiative	Presenter: Supt. Cameron Runyan
Superintendent Runyan gave a brief history of the Institute to display how this new pilot program will support the mission and vision of the Institute. He gave an overview of the services that will be provided through the Shared Services Initiative.	

Mr. O'Connor commended the concept.

Superintendent Runyan also announced that Mike Sinclair will be joining the Institute as Deputy Superintendent of School Support. He noted Mr. Sinclair's extensive experience working in public education as the leader of Brashier Middle College, which is the highest performing open enrollment performing school in South Carolina and is an Institute Diamond School of Excellence.

Mr. Sinclair stood and thanked everyone for the opportunity.

Distinguished Administrator for Exceptional Students

Presenter: Ms. Celina Patton

Ms. Patton presented Ms. Brenda Coyle, Principal of Mevers School of Excellence, with the Distinguished Administrator for Exceptional Students Award which was originally presented to her at the last School Leaders Meeting.

Ms. Coyle thanked everyone. She said it has been a pleasure having the Institute, her EMO, and school board there as her families and support systems.

Dr. Stewart Weinberg, Board Chair of the Berkeley Charter Education Association, congratulated Ms. Coyle and thanked the Institute for being a wonderful resource to do what is best for kids.

Charter School Ambassador Recognition

Presenter: Ms. Ashley Epperson

Ms. Epperson gave a brief introduction and played videos from student ambassadors Christian De Walk, of Odyssey Online Learning, and Ainsley Crowe, of Cyber Academy of South Carolina. Both students expressed thanks to their schools and to the Institute in their videos.

She introduced the following student ambassadors present at the meeting:

- Teeb Al-Rubaiawi, 12th Grade at Odyssey Online Learning
- JT Sowell, 10th Grade at Gray Collegiate Academy
- Trinity Higgins, 11th Grade at Gray Collegiate Academy

Ms. Al-Rubaiawi thanked the board and Odyssey Online Learning. She talked about her experience and how flexible the school is. She started at Odyssey Online in 2020 and will be graduating in May of this year.

Mr. Sowell spoke in his prior experience being bullied in traditional public schools. He said the family environment at Gray Collegiate Academy has changed his life. He now has 13 college credits in the 10th grade. He concluded by thanking the board for their service.

Ms. Higgins spoke about attending traditional public schools from kindergarten through 8th grade. She said she will have 30 college credits before her senior year because of the dual enrollment at Gray Collegiate Academy. She concluded by thanking the board and her principal Dr. Newsome.

Action Items

Greenwood Charter Academy Amendment Request

Presenter: Ms. Katriel Rea

Ms. Rea presented a background on Greenville Charter Academy and their request to delay opening until the 2023-2024 School Year.

Mr. Jason Cole, of the Charter Planning Committee, was present via Zoom and stated the request to delay their opening by one year was due to supply chain issues.

Ms. Rea gave the staff recommendation to approve the amendment.

Mr. O'Connor made a motion to approve the amendment request from Greenwood Charter Academy to delay opening until the 2023-2024 School Year. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rodman and passed unanimously by a voice vote.

Rock Hill Preparatory Academy Amendment Request

Presenter: Ms. Katriel Rea

Ms. Rea presented a background on Rock Hill Preparatory Academy and their request to change locations.

Dr. Stewart Weinberg, Chair of the Board of Berkeley Charter Education Association, which holds the charter, stated that they wanted to change the location due to a recent donation of land off US Highway 301 close to Interstate 26 in Orangeburg.

Ms. Rea gave the staff recommendation to approve the amendment.

After brief questions from the board, Mr. Rodman made a motion to approve the amendment request from Rock Hill Preparatory Academy to move its location to Orangeburg, South Carolina. The motion was seconded by Dr. Foster and was approved unanimously by a voice vote.

Dr. Weinberg thanked the board for the approval.

Cherokee Charter Academy Amendment Request

Presenter: Mr. John Li

Mr. Li presented a background on Cherokee Charter Academy and their request to add 4K.

Mr. Jason Byrd, Cherokee Charter Academy School Director, was present and said there is a community interest and need to support adding two 4K classes.

After a brief period of questions from board members, Mr. Li gave the staff recommendation for approval of the amend request.

Mr. O'Connor made a motion to approve the amendment request from Cherokee Charter Academy to add 4K in the 2023-2024 School Year. The motion was seconded by Mr. Carnes and was approved unanimously by a voice vote.

Heron Virtual Academy of South Carolina Replication Application

Presenter: Ms. Christy Junkins

Ms. Junkins presented the background on Cyber Academy of South Carolina and their Heron Virtual Academy of South Carolina Replication Application.

Mr. David Crook, CEO of the school, spoke on the application to create a virtual Alternative Education Campus with a Career and Technology Education focus for grades 9-12.

After a brief period of questions from board members, Ms. Junkins gave the staff recommendation for approval of the application.

Mr. Carnes made a motion to approve the Heron Virtual Academy of South Carolina Replication Application. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rodman and was approved unanimously by a voice vote.

South Carolina Virtual Charter School Amendment Request

Presenter: Ms. Christy Junkins

Ms. Junkins presented the background on South Carolina Virtual Charter School and their request to employ faculty by means of yearly contracts instead of at-will employment agreements.

Dr. Cherry Daniel, CEO of the school, stated that the change was needed due to teachers leaving mid-year.

After a brief period of questions from board members, Ms. Junkins gave the staff recommendation for approval of the amendment request.

Mr. Rodman made a motion to approve the amendment request from South Carolina Virtual Charter School. The motion was seconded by Dr. Foster and was approved unanimously by a voice vote.

Royal Live Oaks Academy Charter Renewal

Presenter: Ms. K. Buddhiraju & Ms. C. Junkins

Ms. Buddhiraju presented on the background of Royal Live Oaks Academy highlighting the schools data and statistics as compared to the Jasper County School District and schools across the state.

Ms. Junkins gave an overview of the proposed changes to the charter in the renewal application.

Dr. Karen Wicks, the school leader, thanked her team, and her husband, Les Wicks, and gave highlights of the last 10 years of the school.

Mr. Les Wicks thanked everyone.

After a brief period of questions from board members, Ms. Junkins and Mr. Rudrapati gave the staff recommendation to approve the renewal.

Mr. O'Connor made a motion to approve Charter Renewal for Royal Live Oaks Academy. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rodman and was approved unanimously by a voice vote.

Libertas Academies Charter Application Hearing

Presenter: Ms. Katriel Rea

Ms. Rea first thanked Superintendent Runyan and Mr. Rudrapati for giving her the honor to lead this year's application cycle. She went on to give an overview of this year's cycle and gave an overview for the format of the application hearings.

Ms. Rea then presented an overview of the Libertas Academies Charter Application and introduced the charter committee.

The charter committee then gave their presentation before the board.

Ms. Rea then presented the strengths and weaknesses, noting that the planning committee had agreed to correct their bylaws to conform with state law. She then gave the staff recommendation for approval of the application.

After some questions, Mr. Rodman made a motion to approve the Libertas Academies Charter Application. The motion was seconded by Dr. Foster and was approved unanimously by a voice vote.

Summerville Academy Charter Application Hearing

Presenter: Ms. Katriel Rea

Ms. Rea presented an overview of the Summerville Academy Charter Application introduced the charter committee.

The charter committee then gave their presentation before the board.

Ms. Rea then presented the strengths, weaknesses, and gave the staff recommendation for approval of the application.

After some questions, Dr. Foster made a motion to approve the Summerville Academy Charter Application. The motion was seconded by Mr. O'Connor and was approved unanimously by a voice vote.

Information Items

Financial Report & Presentation

Presenter: Mr. John Li

Mr. Li presented the Balance Sheet and Statement of Revenue and Expenditure reports and the current student enrollment report and reviewed both for the Board, which were included in the board packet.

There were no questions from the board.

Superintendent's Comments

Superintendent Runyan deferred his comments to be respectful of everyone's time. He thanked the board for their service and staff for making this meeting happen.

Public Comments

No requests for comments were received.

Adjournment

Chairman Adamson echoed Superintendent Runyan's comments and being that there was no further business, entertained a motion to adjourn.

Dr. Foster made the motion to adjourn.

Mr. O'Connor seconded the motion, passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 1:42 PM.