

Charter Institute at Erskine Meeting Minutes

April 19, 2023, | time 10:30 a.m. | Charter Institute at Erskine

Chair Dr. Steven Adamson

Members in Attendance

Mrs. Helen Taylor
Mr. Todd Carnes
Dr. Noel Brownlee
Dr. Gordon Query
Dr. Tony Foster
Mr. Stu Rodman
Dr. Steven Adamson

Members Absent

Attendees from Charter Institute at Erskine

Mr. Cameron Runyan (Superintendent)
Mr. Vamshi Rudrapati (Director)
Mr. John Li (Chief of Finance and Operations)
Dr. Bill Roach (Chief of Special Projects)
Ms. Janie Neeley (Director of Authorization)
Mrs. Kristin Olcott (Coordinator of Accountability)

Chairman Adamson called the meeting to order at 10:33 a.m.

Mr. Li 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.

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

Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda for the April 19, 2023, Board Meeting was approved by unanimous consent.

Executive Session

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

Dr. Query seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously.

The board entered executive session at 10:35 a.m.

The board resumed open session at 11:14 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the March 15, 2023, Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

Action Items

Willie Jeffries School of Excellence Charter Amendment Request
Mr. Li presented Willie Jeffries School of Excellence’s request for a one-year extension of the opening of the school.
Mr. Li then proposed the Institute’s recommendation to approve the amendment as requested by Willie Jeffries School of Excellence and delay the opening to August 2024. Dr. Foster made a motion to approve the amendment, as recommended by the Institute. The motion was seconded by Dr. Query and was approved unanimously by a voice vote.

Cherokee Charter Academy Charter Amendment Request
<p>Dr. Roach presented Cherokee Charter Academy's request for an amendment to their bylaws in regard to their board composition and write-in candidates.</p> <p>Dr. Roach proposed the Institute recommendation to approve the amendment as requested by Cherokee Charter Academy. Dr. Brownlee made a motion to approve the amendment, as recommended by the Institute. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rodman and approved unanimously by a voice vote.</p>
Greenwood Charter Academy Charter Amendment Request
<p>Ms. Neeley presented Greenwood Charter Academy's request to add sixth grade to the school opening phases scheduled for August 2023.</p> <p>Ms. Neeley proposed the Institute recommendation to approve the amendment as requested by Greenwood Charter Academy. Dr. Foster made a motion to approve the amendment, as recommended by the Institute. The motion was seconded by Dr. Query and approved by unanimous voice vote.</p>
Libertas Academy – Boiling Springs Charter Amendment Request
<p>Ms. Neeley presented Libertas Academy's request to add sixth grade for the school's opening in August 2023.</p> <p>Ms. Neeley proposed the Institute recommendation to approve the amendment to add sixth grade to the school's opening in the fall. Dr. Query made a motion to approve the amendment, as recommended by the Institute. The motion was seconded by Dr. Brownlee and approved unanimously by voice vote.</p>
Montessori School of Camden Charter Amendment Request
<p>Ms. Neeley presented the Montessori School of Camden's Board of Directors request for approval for a 2023 update to their Student Code of Contact policy.</p> <p>Ms. Neeley proposed the Institute recommendation to approve the amendment as requested by the Montessori School of Camden. Dr. Brownlee made a motion to approve the amendment, as recommended by the Institute. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rodman and approved by unanimous voice vote.</p>
Mater Clear Dot Academies Charter Application Hearing
<p>Ms. Olcott introduced herself as this year's leader of the charter application cycle. She thanked the board and applicant groups for dedicating their time and efforts to this process. Ms. Olcott went on to explain the format of the application hearings.</p> <p>Ms. Olcott presented an overview of the Mater Academies and Civica Charter Application and introduced the charter committee.</p> <p>The charter committee then gave their presentation before the board. This charter application is for five different locations – Mater Clear Dot Academy- Elmwood, Mater Clear Dot Academy- Northeast Columbia, Mater Clear Dot Academy- Columbia, Mater Clear Dot Academy- Conway, and Clear Dot Academy- Civica.</p> <p>Ms. Olcott proposed the Institute recommendation to approve the Mater Clear Dot Academy Elmwood Charter Application and conditionally approve the Mater Clear Dot Academy – Northeast Columbia, Mater Clear Dot Academy – Columbia, Mater Clear Dot Academy – Conway, and the Clear Dot Academy – Civica Charter Applications and requested that the planning committee work with the Institute to add the identified sections of the applications and submit additional documentation as requested by the Institute to meet all the State rules and regulations and Institute expectations.</p> <p>Dr. Brownlee made a motion to approve the Elmwood location and conditionally approve the four others, as recommended by the Institute. The motion was seconded by Dr. Query. Institute staff answered questions from the board to clarify prior to the vote. The charter was approved unanimously by a voice vote.</p>
Ashley River Academy Charter Application Hearing
<p>Ms. Olcott presented an overview of Ashley River Academy and introduced the charter committee.</p> <p>The charter committee then gave their presentation before the board.</p>

Ms. Olcott proposed the Institute recommendation to approve the Ashley River Academy Charter Application. Dr. Foster made a motion to approve the Ashley River Academy application, as recommended by the Institute. This motion was seconded by Mr. Rodman and approved unanimously by voice vote.

American Leadership Academies Charter Application Hearing

Ms. Olcott presented an overview of American Leadership Academy and introduced the charter committee. The charter committee then gave their presentation before the board.

Ms. Olcott then proposed the Institute recommendation to approve the American Leadership Academy – Rock Hill Application and conditionally approve the American Leadership Academy – Charleston Application, American Leadership Academy – Columbia Application, American Leadership Academy North Augusta Application, and the American Leadership Academy – Spartanburg Application and requested that the planning committee work with the Institute to address the identified sections of the application and submit all documentation as requested by the Institute to meet all State rules and regulations and Institute expectations.

Dr. Brownlee made a motion to approve the Rock Hill application and conditionally approve the other four locations, as recommended by the Institute. Dr Query seconded the motion. Mr. Carnes praised and congratulated the American Leadership Academy planning committee for their work at American Leadership Academy Lexington. The board then approved the applications unanimously by a voice vote.

Recess

The board entered recess at 12:18 p.m.

The board resumed at 12:30 p.m.

Action Items (continued)

Ascent Classical Academies Charter Application Hearing

Ms. Olcott presented an overview of Ascent Classical Academies and introduced the charter committee. The charter committee then gave their presentation before the board.

Ms. Olcott presented the Institute recommendation to approve the Ascent Classical Academy – Fort Mill Charter Application and to conditionally approve the Ascent Classical – Charleston, Ascent Classical – Lexington, and Ascent Classical – Greenville Charter Applications and requested that the planning committee work with the Institute to address the identified sections of the application and submit additional documentation as requested by the Institute to meet all State rules and regulations and Institute expectations.

Dr. Foster made a motion to approve the Fort Mill charter application and conditionally approve the three other locations, as recommended by the Institute. Ms. Taylor seconded the motion, and the board approved the applications unanimously by a voice vote.

Cogito Academy Charter Application Hearing

Ms. Olcott presented an overview of Cogito Academy and introduced the charter committee.

The charter committee then gave their presentation before the board. The planning committee listed multiple locations, however, the charter application is solely for Cogito Academy Lancaster. If Lancaster is approved, then the planning committee will work with the Institute to replicate the charter to open schools in Oconee County, Georgetown County, Anderson County, and Darlington County.

After answering questions from the board, Ms. Olcott presented the Institute recommendation to approve the Cogito Academy Charter Application. Mr. Rodman made a motion to approve the Cogito Academy charter application, as recommended by the Institute. Dr. Foster seconded the motion, and the board approved the application unanimously by a voice vote.

Ethos Academy Charter Application Hearing

Ms. Olcott presented an overview of Ethos Academy and introduced the charter committee.

The charter committee then gave their presentation before the board. Like Cogito Academy, if Ethos Academy's Kershaw County location were to be approved, they would replicate the charter to open schools in Florence County, Orangeburg County, Laurens County, and Newberry County.

After the questions, Ms. Olcott proposed the Institute recommendation to approve the Ethos Academy charter application. Dr. Foster made the motion to approve the charter, as recommended by the Institute. Dr. Query seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously by a voice vote.

Financial Management Policy

Mr. Li presented two additions to the Institute's financial management policy, which involved Fund Balance Requirements and School Appropriation and Bank Account.

Mr. Li then proposed the Institute recommendation to approve the revision to the Financial Management Policy. Dr. Query made the motion to approve the revision, as recommended by the Institute. Mrs. Taylor seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously by a voice vote.

Informational Items

Transfer Schools Update

Superintendent Runyan gave an update on the status of these transfer schools and noted the board involvement in these situations.

Financial Statements

Mr. Li presented the Statement of Revenue, Expenditure Report, and Net Position. Mr. Li reviewed these reports, which were included in the Board packet, for the Board. Dr. Adamson noted a slight discrepancy in the balance sheet and Mr. Li said that he would fix it and contact the board with the updated version.

Superintendent Updates

Superintendent Runyan noted this day as a "historic day in South Carolina" because of the actions of the board on this day. Superintendent Runyan said that the Institute board's decision to open this record number of new schools will most likely have an impact beyond his lifetime. Superintendent Runyan thanks the board and recognizes Ms. Olcott for leading the application cycle. He invited the board to the Banquet and briefly reflected on the Institute's fifth year anniversary. Finally, Superintendent Runyan provided an update on Teach Right USA and the growth that it continues to experience.

Public Comments

No requests for public comment were received.

Adjournment

Being that there was no further business, Chairman Adamson entertained a motion to adjourn.

Dr. Brownlee made the motion to adjourn.

Mr. Rodman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 1:43 p.m.