

Charter Institute at Erskine Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2021 | time 11:00 a.m. | Meeting location Via Zoom conference call

Chair Dr. Rob Gustafson

Members in Attendance

Stu Rodman
Rev. Tony Foster
Dr. Tom Hellams
Martin O'Connor
Gordon Query
Mrs. Beth Gustafson (11:10 AM)

Attendees from Charter Institute at Erskine

Cameron Runyan (CEO)
Vamshi Rudrapati (Director)
Sarah Timmons

Other attendees from the Charter Institute at Erskine included: Mr. John Li, Ms. Haley Perez, Mrs. Christy Junkins, Mrs. Paula Gray, Mrs. Ciera Bing, Ms. Emma Shealy, Ms. Sarah Shealy, Mr. Robbie Anderson, Ms. Ashley Epperson, Ms. Elizabeth Riberdy, Ms. Grace Rubenzer, Ms. Kirby Jerry, Mrs. Sonja Bradford, Ms. Kusuma Buddhiraju, and Mr. Jason Jones.

Dr. Gustafson called the meeting to order at 11:01 AM and welcomed new Board Member, Mr. Gordon Query.

The invocation was delivered by Dr. Gustafson.

Mrs. Paula Gray called the roll and a quorum was present.

Adoption of the Agenda for the January 20, 2021, Meeting

Mr. Rodman moved to approve the agenda for January 20, 2021, as presented.

Mr. O'Connor seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Approval of the Minutes for the November 18, 2020, Meeting

Dr. Hellams moved to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2020, meeting, as presented.

Rev. Foster seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Executive Session for discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements

Mr. Query moved to go into Executive Session for discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rodman and the Board went into Executive Session at 11:10 AM.

The Board returned to Open Session at 11:36 AM. No action was taken during the Executive Session.

Action Items

Brashier Middle College Amendments	Presenter: Christy Junkins
Mrs. Junkins presented the Brashier Middle College Amendments and explained the reason for the amendments is to clean up the charter. Mrs. Junkins highlighted several changes. Mr. Runyan added that staff recommendation is for approval of the amendments.	

Dr. Hellams moved to approve the Brashier Middle College amendments as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Query and carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Lowcountry Connections Academy Replication Application

Presenter: Kirby Jerry

Ms. Karen Duquette from Pearson introduced herself and turned the presentation over to Committee Members, Dr. Kizzi S. Gibson, President; Mr. Adam Hall, Vice-President; and Mr. Gary Prince, Treasurer. An additional member, Ms. Ashley Newton, Secretary, was unable to attend. The presentation was followed by a question and answer session.

Ms. Kirby Jerry reported on the staff recommendation for approval and explained how the budget request for the next school year will not change because the students will come from SC Connections Academy. Mr. Runyan added that there has been a high virtual enrollment demand and the demand continues to grow. The replication will preserve the high quality of instruction.

After discussion, Mr. O'Connor moved to approve the Lowcountry Connections Academy Replication Application.

Mr. Rodman seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Dual Application Policy

Presenter: Cameron Runyan

Mr. Runyan explained the Dual Application Policy and stated the purpose is to establish a policy prohibiting potential groups from applying to more than one authorizer at a time. They may complete letters of intent for more than one authorizer but may only turn in one application to one authorizer. The policy is a joint effort of both the Charter Institute at Erskine and the SC Public Charter School District and their board unanimously adopted the policy last week.

Mr. Rodman moved to approve the Dual Application Policy. Dr. Hellams seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

2021 Board Meeting Schedule

Presenter: Dr. Gustafson

Dr. Gustafson presented the 2021 Board Meeting Schedule.

Mr. Rodman moved to approve the 2021 Board Meeting Schedule. The motion was seconded by Mr. Query and carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Information Items

Financial Report

Presenter: John Li

Mr. Li presented the Statement of Revenues and Balance Sheet reports and the current student enrollment report and reviewed both for the Board.

Rev. Foster commended Mr. Runyan and the entire team for working with the SC Public Charter School District and added that it blesses him to see this connection.

Public Comments

No public comments were submitted for this meeting.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Runyan reported on the following:

- Budget Update – the Institute estimated the number of students for the next school year and submitted a budget request to the legislators and the Governor's office. The Institute worked with the SC Public Charter School District on a joint request harmonized between the two organizations and testified twice together to the Education Oversight Committee and the Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee. Positive feedback has been received from members of the General Assembly for the joint presentations.
- Federal Grants – the Institute had previously received approximately five million dollars in federal grant monies. This year the amount has increased to over thirty-two million dollars driven mostly by COVID-19. A receipt must be turned in for all money spent and staff will have to reconcile every single receipt that comes in. Staff will be working hard on the distribution of these funds and reconciling all data.
- Data Meetings – data meetings are being conducted with all schools to review what is happening in their classrooms and where improvements are needed.
- School Visits – Mr. Runyan and Mr. Rudrapati will visit and meet with every school and their boards starting next week.
- SCASA – staff members from the Institute will be presenting at meetings for the South Carolina Association of School Administrators (SCASA) to help and support all school districts in South Carolina.
- Charter School Enrollment – Mr. Runyan presented maps of South Carolina showing where students in both virtual and brick and mortar charter schools are located in different zip codes throughout the state and shared a chart showing the growth and/or decline in enrollment of each district in the state. Enrollment for the Charter Institute at Erskine grew 57.88%.
- Sad News – Mr. Runyan stated that while the Institute has benefited with enrollment growth due to COVID-19, the Institute has also been impacted negatively and sadly. Royal Live Oaks Academy's Board Chair, Dr. Rob McBrayer, lost his wife to COVID-19 and a Kindergarten teacher from Virtus Academy, Mrs. Marlene Evans, also passed away this past weekend due to COVID-19. Institute staff is at Virtus Academy to assist with their needs and has also delivered a meal to Dr. McBrayer.
- Leaders Conference – the Institute is hosting a Leaders Conference in Columbia at the Columbia Convention Center on February 17, 2021. Board members were encouraged to attend if possible. A conference of this type has never been done before with the level of speakers that will be at the conference. Precautions are being taken due to COVID.
- Celebration – Mr. Rudrapati welcomed his second baby Monday, January 18, 2021. Her name is Ava.

Dr. Gustafson expressed his congratulations to Mr. Rudrapati.

Adjournment

As there was no further business, Mr. Query moved for adjournment.

Dr. Hellams seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned by acclamation.

The meeting adjourned at 1:01 PM.