

ECU Community School Advisory Board
May 14, 2020
9:00 a.m. – 9:54 a.m.
VIRTUALLY on Microsoft Teams

Presiding: Dr. Chris Locklear, ECU Community School Advisory Board Chair

Board Members in Attendance: Dr. Kristin Gehsmann, Ms. Bonnie Glass, Dr. Africa Hands, Dr. Elizabeth Hodge, Dr. Ethan Lenker, Mr. Robert Moore, Dr. Art Rouse, and Dr. Alana Zambone

University Counsel in Attendance: Ms. Meagan Kiser

Guests in Attendance: Ms. Tracy Cole, Mr. Scott Gomez, Ms. Meagan Thornton, and Mr. Rick Yakubowski

Special Guests in Attendance: Ms. Jennifer Sieg, reporter for *The East Carolinian*

Board Members Absent from Meeting: Mr. Max Joyner

Call to Order: Dr. Chris Locklear called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and thanked everyone for their attendance. He reviewed the rules for meeting online, noting that all voting would have to be done via roll call. Dr. Locklear welcomed the new members and guests in attendance. He noted that he, Dr. Elizabeth Hodge, and Dr. Alana Zambone had all been reappointed to serve another term and will not be able to serve again after this term ends. A roll call for attendance was performed to verify that there was a quorum at the meeting. The quorum was established, so the meeting began.

Approval of the Minutes: Dr. Locklear called for a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Dr. Elizabeth Hodge made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Dr. Ethan Lenker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously via roll call vote.

Approval of the Agenda: Dr. Locklear asked if there was a motion to approve the agenda. Dr. Alana Zambone made a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Bonnie Glass seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously via roll call vote.

Public Expression: None.

Updates to the Board

- A. Community School Operational Update: Dr. Art Rouse shared that there are not any updates with operations.
- B. Personnel Report: Ms. Tracy Cole welcomed Paula Speight, the new teaching assistant for grades 3-5. She reported that she has talked to all employees and projects 100% teacher retention rate for the coming school year. Ms. Cole also highlighted that the teachers at the Community School are active learners: one recently earned a PhD, another earned a Master's in Education, and three more have applied to ECU for advanced degree programs. When they complete their degrees, two thirds of the faculty of the Community School will have earned

graduate degrees. Dr. Locklear commended Tracy for her leadership in promoting and supporting continued learning among her faculty.

- C. Finance Report: Mr. Rick Yakubowski explained that current year funding had been sent out via email, including year-to-date net funding received and expenses spent through the end of April. He noted that the Community School is still receiving federal funding, which is being pulled into the proper accounts. While he had previously projected that the budget would break even for the year, Mr. Yakubowski currently expected a net positive gain of \$46,446 for the year. He stated that he also included several documents related to CARES funding for Covid-19, related to House bill 1043. He anticipated that the Community School should receive approximately \$45,000 for expenses related to Covid-19. Mr. Yakubowski is meeting with Ms. Cole to work on mapping prospective funding and how to budget those amounts. He expects that the money will be used on summer learning, technology, and remote learning related to Covid-19. Dr. Locklear thanked Mr. Yakubowski for his report and asked that there be a report on the spending plan at the next meeting. Dr. Zambone asked if the Covid-19 funding is in lieu of Title I or in addition. Mr. Yakubowski responded that it was additional funding. She asked if the bill had been approved, and he noted that it had been approved by the Governor on Monday. Dr. Hodge asked if there are criteria for how to allocate the spending. Mr. Yakubowski stated that he was planning to meet with Ms. Cole to discuss which areas are in high need. He is also reviewing the legislation and the specific earmarks to be sure what ECUCS qualifies for and how to use the funding for those earmarks. He has been meeting with Dr. Laura Bilbro-Berry, Executive Director of Lab Schools for the State, for additional guidance in planning the distribution of funding.
- D. Legal Report: Ms. Meagan Kiser explained that she is only offering an informational update at this time. The Department of Public Instruction has issued a final ruling about Title IX, which impacts practice and policy. Her office is currently assessing the changes that need to be made in order to be in compliance with the updates to Title IX. Ms. Kiser offered one example: the new rules require that administrators formally investigate complaints with increased record-keeping, and the person investigating cannot be the same person who decides if the student is responsible. Her office will review the current rules and update them if necessary. Dr. Locklear noted that the next meeting is set for August 13th; work will need to be done at the next meeting to update policies in order to be in compliance by the August deadline.
- E. Principal Report: Ms. Tracy Cole shared the Principal's Report. Ms. Cole noted that life had changed drastically since the February meeting: the building was closed on March 16th; however, the Community School continued with full operations. The staff created packets for students on Monday and distributed those packets on Wednesday. The staff also served meals to students and families via drive-through pick-up. Teaching and meal distribution continued, and the staff worked to assess families with need and established resources to help them. The staff performed weekly home visits and check-ins to ensure that scholars and families were okay: all 109 scholars and their families were accounted for and were doing well. The staff met with local churches to gain assistance in providing food for families. The staff also worked to meet the social-emotional needs of the scholars and their families with the help of Dr. Angela Lamson and her two graduate students who provided counseling. The IHC team is working on a re-entry plan for scholars and staff to support everyone and the trauma they have had to deal with during this time. The school transitioned to remote learning, and the staff worked with the IT Department of the College of Education to provide devices and help to those families who did

not have devices and/or internet connections. Ms. Cole noted that the staff continued to have weekly staff meetings with updates from each department. The Community School continues to offer speech services and other services for students with disabilities virtually. Dr. Kristin Gehsmann has helped institute a new reading program that included a survey of families' needs for books. As a result, families will receive new books this week. Dr. Locklear thanked Ms. Cole for the update, noting it was the most encouraging update he has heard lately. He thanked Ms. Cole and her entire staff for their hard work. Dr. Locklear also thanked Dr. Lenker and Pitt County Schools for their extraordinary support. Ms. Cole continued with an update on the curriculum. Dr. Gehsmann has initiated a school-wide literacy improvement plan. All teachers are on board with providing high quality reading instruction, and the entire team is working on trying to fund this plan. Dr. Geshmann is fortunate to have access to colleagues in the publishing field, so the school is receiving research-based assessment to identify where students need assistance. Harcourt is providing reading instruction valued at approximately \$400,000, and Savis is providing print and digital materials for teaching phonics and vocabulary. The Community School has also purchased consumables with COE funds for additional phonics instruction. Dr. Gehsmann commended Ms. Cole and her entire staff, noting their extraordinary dedication. Dr. Locklear thanked Dr. Gehsmann and Ms. Cole. Mr. Robert Moore thanked Ms. Cole for the incredible job she has done and asked if there is any planning for adding additional instructional time next year to make up any deficits due to remote learning. Ms. Cole thanked Mr. Moore for his question and noted that it has already been discussed. She noted that the school year for the Community School goes several weeks longer than most other schools, and her staff intends to use that time to assess gaps in learning and meet them where they are to help them recover. Ms. Cole is working with Dr. Malinda Pennington and Mr. Yakubowski on plans for building in additional instructional time.

Discussion Items – None

Action Items – Require Board Action

- A. Approval of 2020-2021 Community School Calendar—Dr. Locklear noted that the calendar for the new school year had been updated and needed to be approved. Ms. Cole explained that the North Carolina General Assembly made specific requirements about the calendar for all schools for the new year, including a new, earlier start date of August 17th. Mr. Moore asked if other adjustments need to be made. Ms. Cole responded that there are other adjustments still being worked out in order to align with Pitt County Schools for transportation and nutrition needs. She noted that when PCS solidifies their new school calendar, ECUCS will follow. Dr. Locklear suggested a motion to approve the current calendar as presented with the understanding that adjustments will need to be made in the future. Ms. Cole emphasized that the calendar needed to be approved so that it can be shared with parents; they need to know the new start date. Dr. Lenker noted that PCS is currently updating its calendar and plans to have a completed draft today to be approved by its Board next Monday. Mr. Moore expressed his pleasure that PCS and ECUCS are working diligently to make sure that students receive everything they need. Dr. Locklear asked if there was a motion to approve the calendar. Dr. Alana Zambone made a motion to approve the calendar as presented with the understanding that adjustments would need to be made in the future. Mr. Robert Moore seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously via roll call vote.

- B. Election of 2020-2021 Officers—Dr. Locklear reminded the members of the Board that the bylaws state that the Board is required to elect officers every year and that roll call voting is required for a virtual meeting such as this one. The Board must elect a Chair and Vice-Chair, while a Secretary is an optional position based on need. Each officer elected must receive the majority of the votes cast. Dr. Locklear asked for nominations for Chair of the Board. Mr. Moore called for a motion to elect Dr. Locklear as the Chair of the Board for 2020-2021. Dr. Zambone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously via roll call vote, and Dr. Chris Locklear was elected as Board Chair for the new year. Dr. Locklear asked for nominations for Vice-Chair of the Board. Dr. Lenker called for a motion to elect Dr. Rouse as the Vice-Chair of the Board for 2020-2021. Dr. Hodge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously via roll call vote, and Dr. Art Rouse was elected as Board Vice-Chair for the new year. Dr. Locklear noted that there was not currently a need to elect a Secretary as Mr. Scott Gomez was doing well at taking care of Board business, so there would not be an election for Secretary this year.

Closing Comments: Dr. Locklear asked if there were any other comments. Mr. Moore thanked the previous leadership of the Board and expressed his pleasure with the new leadership under Dr. Locklear and Dr. Rouse. Mr. Moore also thanked Dr. Lenker for all the great work that Pitt County Schools is doing. Dr. Locklear reminded everyone that the next meeting is scheduled for August 13th and hoped that it could be held face-to-face.

Dr. Locklear adjourned the meeting at 9:54 a.m.

Next meeting: August 13, 2020, 9:00 a.m., Location TBD