

ECU Community School Advisory Board  
November 18, 2021  
9:01 a.m. – 10:16 a.m.  
VIRTUALLY on Microsoft Teams

**Presiding:** Dr. Art Rouse, ECU Community School Advisory Board Chair

**Board Members in Attendance:** Dr. Kimberly Anderson, Dr. Kristin Gehsmann, Dr. Africa Hands, Dr. Elizabeth Hodge, Dr. Ethan Lenker, and Mr. Robert Moore

**University Counsel in Attendance:** Ms. Patrice Goldman

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

**Special Guests in Attendance:** none

**Board Members Absent from Meeting:** Dr. Chris Locklear, Mr. Jeff Roberts, and Dr. Alana Zambone

**Call to Order:** Dr. Art Rouse called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and thanked everyone for their attendance. The quorum required for business to be conducted was established, so the meeting began.

**Approval of the Minutes:** Dr. Rouse called for a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Mr. Robert Moore made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Dr. Elizabeth Hodge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously via roll call vote.

**Approval of the Agenda:** Dr. Rouse asked if there was a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Robert Moore made a motion to approve the agenda. Dr. Elizabeth Hodge 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 stated that there were no operational updates at this time.
- B. Personnel Report: Ms. Tracy Cole noted that there were 3 new hires: Ms. Michelle Carr, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher; Ms. Cissy James, Special Education teacher; and Ms. Monica Knight, Teacher Assistant. There are 2 employees on medical leave: Ms. Nedra Jones, School Counselor and Randi Finley, Teacher Assistant. There currently exists one vacancy for 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher, and there are searches being conducted for School Nurse, Special Education Teacher Assistant, and 3 Reading Specialists.
- C. Finance Report: Mr. Rick Yakubowski presented the finance report. The current budget includes expenses for the year-to-date through the end of October. In State and Local ADM, the school has expended \$419,106, with total expenditures totaling \$646,235 thus far, which is what was expected at this point, four months into the year. The school is budgeted to expend

\$1,869,263 by the end of the school year. This matches the expected funding that the Community School is expected to receive for this year. The new state budget that is heading to the Governor's office includes 3 million to support the 9 Lab Schools across the state. Thus, the Community school is expecting additional money from this addition to the new budget. ECU recurring supports 4 teacher assistant positions. As of this report, the Community School has not requested any of the ECU non-recurring funds listed; that typically happens later in the year when it is needed. Dr. Rouse asked if the new state budget includes raises for the faculty and staff of the Community School. Mr. Yakubowski explained that ECUCS teacher have received a one-time bonus since the school was not in operation the last time pay raises were installed. These bonuses come from DPI. Mr. Yakubowski has also asked if the state ADM will be increased to match the salary increases, but he has not yet received any clarification on that. Dr. Rouse emphasized that he wants to make sure that the Community School is not overlooked, as the Lab Schools have sometimes been overlooked in the past.

- D. Legal Report: Ms. Patrice Goldmon explained that there were no legal updates that are not already covered in other areas of the agenda. She offered to answer questions, but there were none.
- E. Principal Report: Ms. Tracy Cole shared the Principal's Report. There are currently 111 scholars enrolled at the school. The entire school body continues to work proactively to limit the spread of Covid-19. Since the start of the school year, there have only been 9 confirmed positive cases of Covid-19 among the students. The After School Tutorial program has started this week: scholars in 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades are receiving additional supports in Reading and Math. The teachers are all engaged in LETRS training, literacy training based on the Science of Reading. This training started in September, and the faculty is currently completing literacy modules leading up the follow-up training session in December. There was a calendar adjustment made throughout Pitt County that required that ECUCS change November 11<sup>th</sup> to a holiday and November 12<sup>th</sup> to an optional workday. Also, February 22<sup>nd</sup> will now be an early release day with the rest of the day for teacher planning. In school partnerships, Dr. Anderson has helped coordinate 3 volunteers through AmeriCorps who are assisting with the After School Tutorial program and also with the upcoming Science Olympiad. The ECU Science Education Department has helped the Community School launch its inaugural Science Olympiad team. Three faculty from ECUCS are attending the virtual Science Olympiad Coaches' Clinic to facilitate the school's participation in the Olympiad. ECU Science Education also sponsored Family STEM Night on November 4<sup>th</sup> for ECUCS and South Greenville, which was successful and well-attended. The ECU Honors College continues to serve as Reading Buddies and cultivating mentor relationships by providing art, music, and dance sessions with scholars. ECU Nutrition Sciences conducted a Thanksgiving Drive, collecting boxes to support 13 families. ECU Living and Learning Community conducted a campus clean-up on November 13<sup>th</sup>, picking up trash from the campus, cleaning high touch areas, and creating folder activities. Dr. Rouse thanked Ms. Cole for the report, noting that it is the highlight of the meeting.

#### **Discussion Items**

- A. Monthly review of face mask covering procedure  
Ms. Goldmon noted that the school is following guidance that comes from the state, which mandates that all schools must revisit these policies every month. Dr. Rouse and Ms. Cole meet monthly to review Covid data and all protocols. The decision has been made to continue requiring masks for all students, faculty, and visitors while inside the school building. This

follows with suggestions being made by local agencies as well, as it helps limit the spread of the virus.

B. 2021-2022 NC STAR Comprehensive School Improvement Plan

Ms. Cole explained that every school in the state is required to have an improvement plan. Due to low test scores, ECUCS is required to submit the NC STAR improvement plan. Ms. Cole explained the changes that have been made to this year's plan. Generally, the plan includes additional action steps in order to make each step more manageable. These changes were made with guidance from DPI on how to make improvements to the plan.

C. Update on Lab School Renewal for years 6-10

Ms. Cole explained that every Lab School in the state must apply for renewal every 5 years according to the legislation that established the Lab Schools. ECUCS and Western Carolina were the first two Lab Schools, so both must apply for renewal this year. ECUCS has been approved for renewal for another 5 years. In order to apply for renewal, the school had to supply information about what the school had done in the first 5 years. The school also had to project what is expected to happen in years 6-10. The projected plan is to increase enrollment by expanding to include 2 classrooms per grade level K-5. This expansion will then continue through grades 6-8 with the ultimate goal being 2 classrooms per grade level in grades K-8. This will require continued collaboration with PCS. Dr. Rouse noted that he and Ms. Cole had to present this plan to the Board of Governors, and Dr. Rouse applauded Ms. Cole's outstanding presentation of the school and its partnerships. The Board of Governors was very impressed. Dr. Rouse is currently working with Dr. Ethan Lenker on how to accomplish these plans for years 6-10, noting that PCS has been a great partner to the College of Education and the Community School. The plan is to expand to a middle school and, possibly, including ECUCS scholars in the Early College High School program as well. Mr. Moore asked for clarification for some of the detail of the report. Ms. Cole and Dr. Rouse answered his questions and explained the details of the plans more thoroughly.

D. NCDPI Comprehensive Needs Assessment Final Report

Ms. Cole explained that since the Community School has been identified as a CSI School (Comprehensive Support and Improvement), the school must submit to this report made by the state. The creation of this report required a 2-day visit by 4 reviewers from DPI with only one month's notice given. The reviewers observed all classrooms twice and met with teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders from ECU. The report consists of the following: Part 1 is the context of the school, Part 2 is an overview of what the school does well and what needs improving, and Part 3 is the primary findings of the reviewers related to the school's performance. The report highlights the partnerships that the school has developed to help students and families. The report also highlights that behavioral expectations are prioritized for learning. It also noted that the school has a resource-rich environment due to its various funding sources. In Part 3, the report highlights several areas of improvement. ECUCS needs to leverage leadership to improve instruction and to improve classroom monitoring in order to provide timely advice to faculty. ECUCS also needs a new plan for evaluating teachers that aligns more closely with the state requirements. The report noted several other areas that needed improvement as well. Since the report was finished, the Community School has participated in a virtual Bridge Meeting to analyze root causes, closely examine one area, and develop strategies for improvement. The next Bridge Meeting is December 1<sup>st</sup>. Dr. Kristin Gehsmann asked what is being done to support families with food and gifts for the holiday

season. Ms. Cole noted the food drive that was done by Nutrition Science for Thanksgiving. Additionally, hams and turkeys are being provided for families for Christmas through various donors. The school also maintains a food pantry that is being used to pack boxes for families for the holidays. The ECU Staff Senate is doing a coat and undergarment drive, and the students will receive a sweatshirt before the holiday break. Dr. Gehsmann asked about the literacy programs that were put in place. Ms. Cole stated that the school is still invested in both Reading Plus and Kids Read Now, with both programs already renewed for next year. It was noted that the school was not able to provide a gift of books to the students this year due to a funding shortage. There was an extensive discussion on how to remedy that problem. Several plans were discussed for ensuring that students could receive books before the holiday break to highlight the importance of reading and literacy. Plans were also discussed for ways to avoid future funding shortages. A plan was put in place to provide students with books before the holiday break.

#### **Action Items – Require Board Action**

A. 2020-2021 Summer Program

Ms. Cole explained that the state allows students to retake state mandated tests a 2<sup>nd</sup> time; however, they must receive summer enrichment before they can retake the tests. Thus, the Community School must submit a Summer Program that delineates that summer enrichment plan in order to be able to offer students retesting. This program being submitted for board approval is that enrichment plan to help any students who need to be able to take the tests again.

**Closing Comments:** Dr. Rouse asked if there were any closing comments. Mr. Moore thanked everyone involved in all the extra work that was done outside of work descriptions. He noted that the renewal report is very impressive and informative. He expressed the wish that media coverage of the Community School could be increased. Dr. Rouse thanked Mr. Moore for his continued advocacy. Several board members offered suggestions for publicizing the work that the Community School is doing. Dr. Rouse highlighted the significance of the name chosen for the Community School and thanked Dr. Lenker for his critical partnership.

Dr. Rouse adjourned the meeting at 10:16 a.m.

Next meeting: February 10, 2022, 9:00 a.m., location TBD