

ECU Community School Advisory Board  
November 10, 2022  
9:01 a.m. – 10:06 a.m.  
Virtually on Teams

**Presiding:** Dr. Elizabeth Hodge, College of Education Assistant Dean

**Board Members in Attendance:** Dr. Kimberly Anderson, Dr. Kristin Gehsmann, Dr. Africa Hands, Dr. Ethan Lenker, Dr. Chris Locklear, Mr. Robert Moore, and Dr. Alana Zambone

**University Counsel in Attendance:** C.J. Click

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

**Special Guests in Attendance:** none

**Board Members Absent from Meeting:** Mr. Jeff Roberts and Dr. Art Rouse

**Call to Order:** Dr. Elizabeth Hodge called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. She thanked everyone for their participation and willingness to switch to a virtual only meeting on short notice.

**Approval of the Minutes:** Dr. Hodge called for a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Dr. Alana Zambone made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Mr. Robert Moore seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of the Agenda:** Dr. Hodge asked if there was a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Robert Moore made a motion to approve the agenda. Dr. Chris Locklear seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Public Expression:** None.

#### **Updates to the Board**

- A. Community School Operational Update: Dr. Hodge stated that the only update was regarding security. The entrance to the school had been updated to make it safer.
- B. Personnel Report: Ms. Cole noted that there had been two resignations since the last meeting. Two teaching assistants, Paula Williams and Jasmine Bullock, have both resigned. There are other vacancies: Curriculum Director, Nurse, Reading Specialist, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, 2 Teaching Assistants, Director of Integrated Health, and a Special Education Teaching Assistant. This reflects problems across the state with hiring and filling positions. Dr. Hodge asked if any of the positions that are open been posted. Ms. Cole responded that they have been posted, and she is working to get the positions filled. She offered thanks to Mr. Rick Yakubowski for streamlining the process for getting

positions posted without needing to go through the approval process again. The school now has standing positions that are always open and ready to be filled.

- C. Finance Report: Mr. Yakubowski presented the finance report. This report is the first snapshot of progress for the year regarding expenses. The budget is listed with expenses to date next to them. The State ADM is not yet accurate as we are still waiting on a report that is expected by the end of this month. The school has received \$60,000 so far this year, but we are expecting more than that. The allotments from the UNC Systems Office have increased from \$200,000 to \$280,000. They also increased the per student over 75 student enrollment from \$500 to \$800, so the school got an additional \$52,000. They also increased the allotment for the number of students with IEPs above 12%. The Community School has nearly 22% of its students with IEPs, so that gave the school an additional \$119,709. Total funding from the UNC System is \$451,709 this year. The ECU recurring funding is for the legislative increase in salaries that were made last year. ECU non-recurring is currently expensed at \$105,303. Total funding thus far is \$778,190. Expenses so far this year are about \$701,000. The school lost Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) status, which means the school no longer has access to PRC 105 in federal funding. Dr. Ethan Lenker asked for the amount of the total budget. Mr. Yakubowski said it was \$2,538,104. Mr. Moore noted that the school has already expensed nearly \$800,000 in just 3 months, so the school is on track to spend \$2.8 million by the end of the year if multiplied by 4. Mr. Yakubowski agreed that was the current burn rate on spending; however, he pointed out that there would be variance since there were so many positions that have not been filled. So, the expenses would not be that high. Dr. Lenker noted that the school is averaging \$21,000 per student. Mr. Yakubowski noted that the school must pay for services like Speech Language and Occupational Therapy as well as the counselor and social worker, so the cost per student is inflated. Dr. Lenker agreed that smaller schools tend to incur greater costs.
- D. Legal Report: Mr. C.J. Click shared that there was no legal update at this time.
- E. Principal Report: Ms. Tracy Cole shared the Principal's Report. Enrollment is currently 123. Mr. Gray and Ms. Pretlow wrote and received a grant to visit the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores. Each grant was \$1,250. So, the students and faculty will be taking a field trip to the aquarium soon. Faculty is still involved in LETRS training. Ms. Edwards, Ms. Pretlow, and Ms. LeBarre attended the Coaches Clinic for the NC Science Olympiad in early October. They are working with a team to compete in the Olympiad again this year. The school has a team attend the AIM Conference October 27-29. Ms. Hall, Ms. Dantzler-Cherry, Ms. James, and Ms. Cole all attended. Dr. Pennington and Ms. James presented at the NC Exceptional Children's Conference November 2-4. With respect to partnerships, the school is grateful to PCS for the new playground equipment that was installed recently. The Pirate Playgroup from ECU is working with the Communication Disorders Department to help kindergarten scholars with oral language development and literacy. The Pediatric Dental Club visits each week, modeling proper brushing and flossing techniques and teaching lessons on nutrition. The school is hosting AmeriCorps volunteers through the

Rural Education Institute. There are 3 teaching Corps members in the classrooms and 3 additional quarter-time Corps members assisting with literacy. The Science Education Department hosted family science night called "A Night at the Science Carnival" on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. 40% of families participated and 100% of the school's faculty and staff participated. The Literacy, English, and History Education Department continues to be instrumental in the literacy program. Dr. Kim Anderson works daily at the school. Dr. Ran Hu secured grant funding to support classroom libraries with texts that focus on Chinese Americans. The Library Studies Division under Dr. Rita Soulen has a graduate student who visits weekly to teach digital citizenship and instructional technology. Project based learning is being introduced, and students will complete three presentations this year. Occupational Therapy is conducting research on handwriting, with parental permission, to create a report of strategies on how to support the growth and development of the scholars. Marriage and Family Therapy has a doctoral student, under Dr. Angela Lamson, on campus to provide therapy sessions to individuals and families. ECU Nutrition will provide Thanksgiving baskets to 20 families, and the ECU Honors College is launching "Toys for Joy" to support the scholars for Christmas. Beast Philanthropy continues to conduct bi-weekly food distribution to the Community School and South Greenville Elementary families. The Pitt County Book Mobile visits the school 2-3 days per week so scholars can check out books. Parent Conference Night is November 10<sup>th</sup>. Red Ribbon Week is November 14-18. Virtual Awards Program for the 1<sup>st</sup> 9 weeks is November 18<sup>th</sup>. The UNC System Lab School Visit is November 29<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Locklear asked about the visit from the Systems Office. Ms. Cole explained that the visit is scheduled for 2 hours starting at 8:30 a.m. They have requested to visit classrooms, talk to Dean Rouse, and have asked for details about how the school is working on literacy. The school experienced a significant increase in literacy scores, so the Systems Office is interested in what made that possible. Mr. Moore asked about the CEP program for free and reduced meals. Ms. Cole stated that the social worker and counselor have been working to help families submit applications to the Nutrition program. 2 families have not applied, 7 families will have to pay, and all the rest are eligible for free and reduced meals. The school hopes to get CEP status back since all but 7 families are eligible. Mr. Moore asked about the 7 families who have to pay. Ms. Cole noted that ECU and the College of Education will be paying if those families are unable to pay. Dr. Lenker noted that the school needs to have 60-65%, so the school should have no problem getting CEP status again. Dr. Hodge asked if board members can help. Ms. Cole said that help is always needed and welcome since the school is missing faculty members.

### **Discussion Items**

#### **A. 2021-2022 North Carolina End-of-Grade Test Results**

Ms. Cole shared a PowerPoint presentation with the results from the End-of-Grade testing from last year. In Reading, 24.9% of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 54.5% of 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 20% of 5<sup>th</sup> grade were proficient. Last year, the total number of students proficient was only 13%. This year the total is 31%. Though there is still room for improvement; however, the school has improved a great deal. In Math, 50% of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 45.5% of 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and 70% of 5<sup>th</sup> grade were proficient. That is a total of 53.2% of all students tested. In Science, 50% of 5<sup>th</sup>

graders, the only grade tested, were proficient. Last year, only 1 fifth grader was proficient, so this is another big improvement. A study of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade cohort shows that their scores have improved from 36.4% to 45.5% in math and from 27.3% to 54.5% in reading. That same study done with the current 6<sup>th</sup> grade cohort shows giant increases: from 0.0% to 70% in math and from 9.1% to 20% in reading. The school's discipline data is also improving: the number of out of school suspensions, administrative conferences, and bus suspensions have all declined in the last 4 years. Ms. Cole attributed that to the work being done by the faculty and staff to set expectations for the scholars. The faculty and staff have worked hard to teach those expectations, model those expectations, correcting scholars who do not meet the expectations, and rewarding scholars who go beyond meeting those expectations. The school firmly believes that when students know what is expected of them, they will rise to that level of expectation. The decline in discipline has definitely contributed to helping create a culture for learning. Lastly, there is academic growth for the Community School. In 2017-2018, the school met expected growth despite having zero students pass the reading and math tests that year. In 2018-2019, 6.8% of students passed the reading and math tests, so there were positive gains made, and the school met expected growth. There was no testing in 2019-2020. In 2020-2021, 14% of students passed, but growth status was not calculated by the state due to the pandemic. In 2021-2022, the school met expected growth and exited CSI status because 42.6% of students passed reading and math tests. The school is on a positive trajectory, and it can be attributed to the support of board members, university partners, and community partners. Dr. Kim Anderson gave a shout out to Dr. Kristin Gehsmann for helping the school acquire phenomenal resources to help the staff with literacy. Mr. Moore noted that he has visited the school and could see firsthand the positive atmosphere and excellent security being provided. He commended the entire staff on the excellent test scores. Mr. Moore asked about plans for growth and adding more space for new classrooms. Ms. Cole noted that the plan is to continue growing and adding classrooms; however, there is currently no more space. Dr. Locklear noted that the problems are not just about space; there are also budgetary considerations that require conversations with ECU Financial leadership. Dr. Lenker noted that the current MOU is for one class per grade, and South Greenville Elementary is also growing. He suggested that Dean Rouse and Provost Koger need to discuss this issue because there is no more space at South Greenville.

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

A. Approve 2022-2023 Summer Program

Ms. Cole explained that this program gives scholars a second opportunity to take tests if they were not proficient on the first administration. The school has to submit a plan for how these tests will be administered. Dr. Chris Locklear asked if this is in keeping with prior practices. Ms. Cole said that it was. Dr. Locklear made a motion to approve the summer program. Mr. Robert Moore seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Approve ECUCS Adverse Weather Policy

Mr. C.J. Click noted that this policy was revised and discussed at a previous board meeting but was never formally approved. There should be two readings; however, the bylaws allow for exceptions. Mr. Click is requesting an exception so that it can be approved. Dr. Alana Zambone asked if any changes had been made since the last reading. Mr. Click said there had been no changes. Dr. Zambone asked if this policy aligns with PCS and ECU. Dr. Lenker said that it does align with Pitt County. Dr. Locklear noted that the operating principle has always been to align as closely with PCS as possible. Dr. Hodge called for a motion to approve the policy. Dr. Zambone made a motion to approve the ECUCS Adverse Weather Policy. Dr. Lenker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Closing Comments:** Dr. Hodge thanked Ms. Cole, Pitt County Schools, and the board members for their involvement. She noted that the achievement results are readily apparent. Mr. Moore shared that the Community School was featured in East Magazine. He also thanked the board, Pitt County Schools, Dr. Lenker, and Ms. Cole.

Dr. Hodge adjourned the meeting at 10:06 a.m.

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