

ECU Community School Advisory Board  
November 9, 2023  
9:00 a.m. – 9:46 a.m.  
Hybrid: Speight 203 and MS Teams

**Presiding:** Dr. Elizabeth Hodge, Chair

**Board Members in Attendance:** Dr. Kimberly Anderson, Dr. André Green, Dr. Ethan Lenker, Dr. Chris Locklear, Mr. Robert Moore, Dr. Rita Soulen, and Dr. Elizabeth Swaggerty, and Dr. Alana Zambone

**University Counsel in Attendance:** Mr. C.J. Click-Kimber and Ms. Toni Douglas

**Guests in Attendance:** Ms. Tracy Cole and Ms. Meagan Thornton

**Special Guests in Attendance:** Dr. Robin N. Coger, Provost

**Board Members Absent from Meeting:** Mr. Jeff Roberts

**Call to Order:** Dr. Elizabeth Hodge called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. She thanked everyone for their participation.

**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. Dr. Ethan Lenker 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. Zambone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Public Expression:** None.

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

- A. Community School Operational Update: Dr. Hodge shared that the Community School is working to recruit new personnel by partnering with NCDPI to post vacancies. In addition to posting on the ECU website, the school is posting vacancies on School Spring, NC Teach, and Indeed. Per legislation, the school can continue to accept students through the 20<sup>th</sup> day of school. Currently, the school has 117 scholars enrolled. The Greenville Fire/Rescue Department conducted a safety inspection on September 28<sup>th</sup>. Two classrooms require greater egress to the emergency exit windows, two pieces of furniture need to be removed from the hallway, and 2 classrooms in the modular unit have decorative curtains that require treatment with fire retardant. The Community School and South Greenville Elementary participated in a lock down drill on November 8<sup>th</sup>. Though the door to room 211 was unlocked and movement could be heard in room 408, the scholars and staff did

very well overall. The Community School will take part in a Federal Programs ESSER-GEER Monitoring visit on December 6<sup>th</sup>. This is required for all public schools to ensure that the use of Covid money is aligned to the school's submitted plan. Dean Green, Ms. Meagan Thornton, and Ms. Tracy Cole participated in a Pre-Monitoring Informational meeting on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, and documentation for the visit is due on November 29<sup>th</sup>.

- B. Personnel Report: Ms. Tracy Cole noted that there have not been any resignations since the last meeting. There are currently still 3 vacancies: the school nurse and 2 regular teacher assistants.
- C. Finance Report: Ms. Meagan Thornton reported that the school is on target for spending based on the budget that was submitted at the last meeting. She noted that there will be an increase in funding because the original calculations based on student enrollment were incorrect. The school receives \$280,000 and gets additional money for having more than 75 students; the Systems Office is still working on correcting those calculations. Dr. Hodge asked if the 75 students refers to ADM. Meagan responded that was correct. Dr. Zambone asked if the federal funding includes special education dollars. Meagan responded that special education dollars are included in the state and local ADM funding, and other special education funding like PRC 060 is included in the federal funds.
- D. Legal Report: Ms. Toni Douglas noted that she is working with Ms. Cole to finalize the MOU with Head Start, as required by legislation. Her office is also working through the school's obligations under the new parents' bill of rights legislation. The legislature has pushed back implementation until January, so there is still some breathing room on that. Ms. Douglas noted that her office will likely be asking the Advisory Board to make a recommendation to the Chancellor for some policy changes so that the school can be in full compliance. There will also be some updates to bylaws with regards to voting and board membership coming in the new year.
- E. Principal Report: Ms. Cole shared the Principal's Report. She shared the end of grade test results from last year that have been approved by the state board. Results in Reading were as follows: 3<sup>rd</sup> grade: 25%, 4<sup>th</sup> grade: 56.5%, 5<sup>th</sup> grade: 54.5%, and 43.1% for all grades. This is an increase from last year, which was 31%. Results in Math were as follows: 3<sup>rd</sup> grade: 50%, 4<sup>th</sup> grade: 47.8%, 5<sup>th</sup> grade: 72.7%, and 53.4% for all grades. The Science test is only administered in 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, so the results in Science are that 81.8% of 5<sup>th</sup> grades achieved proficiency. Ms. Cole also shared data about each cohort that have attended the Community School. The current 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in Pitt County Schools achieved 36.4% in Math and 27.3% in Reading in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 45.5% in Math and 54.5 in Reading in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and 72.7% in Math and 54.5% in Reading in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. There has clearly been improvement. The current 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in Pitt County Schools achieved 50% in Math and 47.8% in Reading in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and 47.8% in Math and 56.5% in Reading in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. These students had a long-term substitute last year in Math because the school had difficulty with hiring teachers. However, the forward movement in Reading is obvious. Ms. Cole explained that the school environment is instrumental in making the

school conducive to learning and improving test scores. So, she shared data related to discipline: 46 suspensions, 21 administrative conferences, and 30 bus suspensions in 2018-2019 to 9 suspensions, 9 administrative conferences, and 8 bus suspensions in 2022-2023. Ms. Cole attributes this improvement to teaching expectations to students throughout the year, rewarding them when they excel, and correcting them when they fall short of expectations. Ms. Cole also shared the school's academic growth: the school met expected growth with 0% achievement in 2017-2018; the school met expected growth with 6.8% achievement in 2018-2019; there were no assessments due to Covid in 2019-2020; growth was not calculated but achievement was 14% in 2020-2021; the school met expected growth with 42.6% achievement in 2021-2022; and the school met expected growth with 51% achievement in 2022-2023. In addition, the school exited Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) status in 2021-2022. This means that prior to that school year, the Community School performed in the bottom 5% of all schools receiving title one funds in North Carolina because of test scores. Moreover, the school's letter grade improved from D to a C, so the faculty, staff, and students are all excited about this improvement. Ms. Cole also attributes this to the partnerships that the school has developed with the university and across the community. Dr. Zambone offered congratulations for incredible improvement. Mr. Moore asked if there was data available to compare the Community School with South Greenville Elementary. Ms. Cole did not have that kind of information available to share. Dr. Lenker responded by explaining that South Greenville had the highest proficiency it has ever had in its history, but it did not meet expected growth. Dr. Ethan Lenker thanked Ms. Cole for her achievement in Math, as that will make a difference in middle schools. Dr. Robin Coger asked if there is any way to know if the effects of the Community School stay with our students when they become 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders. Ms. Cole explained that there is not currently a process for tracking that kind of data. Children and parents often reach back to staff members and share how they are doing; however, this is done voluntarily and informally. One of the next steps is for the Community School to adopt a formal method for tracking students when they move to Pitt County Schools. First quarter assessments have been administered, and there will be grade level meetings to discuss each scholar and his/her needs moving forward. The school has established a House System so that scholars can develop relationships with adults outside of their regular classroom teaching teams and grade levels. There was a reveal ceremony on October 31<sup>st</sup> with assistance from the ECU Lacrosse team. Each scholar was placed in one of the following 5 houses: Buccaneers, Swashbucklers, Iron Hooks, Peg Legs, and Patches. The school celebrated Homecoming during the week of October 16 through the 20<sup>th</sup> with a variety of activities. The school also celebrated Red Ribbon Week the week of October 23<sup>rd</sup> through the 27<sup>th</sup>, emphasizing remaining drug free. The entire school will take a field trip to the Marbles Kids Museum on November 16<sup>th</sup>. Family Science Night was October 26<sup>th</sup>, sponsored by the COE Science Education Department. 80 Scholars attended the event with the total attendance being 146. Parent Conference Night is today from 3-7 p.m. The first quarter awards program will be November 17<sup>th</sup>, and the school is preparing for the annual Thanksgiving food distribution that is coming up. Ms. Katie Edwards and Ms. Kenyada Pretlow attended the NC Science Olympiad Coaches Clinic in Raleigh on October 20-21 and expect to have another great

season. The COE Math Department is providing professional development on Vertical Alignment with the first 2 sessions that occurred on September 29<sup>th</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup>. Five members of the faculty and staff attended the NCDPI AIMS Conference October 9-11. Ms. Cissy James attended the Co-Teaching Conference on October 12-13. Dr. Malinda Pennington and Ms. James attended the NC Exceptional Children's Conference October 23-25. Ms. Cole presented to the National P-3 Center's 2023-2024 cohort about effective teaching on November 4<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Cole is scheduled to present with a team from the COE's Rural Education Institute at the National Forum to Advance Rural Education in Tennessee on November 15<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Tekicey Jones and Ms. Dora Ellison wrote and received a grant from the NC Aquarium: each received a grant for \$1,250 that will be used for a field trip to the aquarium on March 8<sup>th</sup>. ECU'S Pediatric Dental Club visits each week to teach lessons about proper brushing and good nutrition. The school is hosting 6 AmeriCorps members through the COE's Rural Education Institute: one in counseling, 2 in teaching, and 3 that are quarter time members. The COE's Living and Learning Community completed a campus clean-up on November 4<sup>th</sup>, and the ECU Honors College is launching "Toys for Joy" to support the scholars for Christmas. Dr. André Green asked what is needed to sustain what the school is doing and what is needed to take it to the next level. Ms. Cole responded that both the university and the college need to look at leadership for the Community School. Ms. Cole noted that she will be retiring in a few years, so there needs to be a plan for someone else, preferably 2 people, to come in and plan strategically for what needs to happen to take it to the next level. Dr. Kimberly Anderson also responded to Dr. Green's question by noting that the school needs additional funding, since the school lost significant funding when it was taken off CSI status. The Lookout Grant helped with funding the work that is being done, but there is still a significant lack of funding for all of the programs that have been put in place to create the success that school has had.

#### **Discussion Items – None**

#### **Action Items - None**

**Closing Comments:** Dr. Hodge thanked the new board members, Dr. Elizabeth Swaggerty and Dr. Rita Soulen, and asked them to introduce themselves. Dr. Swaggerty is the Chair of the Department of Literacy Studies, English Education, and History Education. She is a former reading teacher and a big fan of the Community School. Ms. Cole noted that Dr. Swaggerty and Dr. Anderson have been a tremendous blessing for the school. Dr. Anderson has had a practicum at the Community School that has been amazing; she directs 100 ECU students who work with Community School scholars in grades 3-5 on their reading on Fridays. Dr. Soulen is an assistant professor in Library Science in the College of Education and has been working with Ms. Cole for the past 3 years to provide media materials and training. She has been also providing professional development for the teachers on project-based learning. Ms. Cole noted that Dr. Soulen has provided many opportunities, such as having the scholars and staff meet a local author, connecting the school with a librarian at another school, and connecting the staff with the Teacher Resource Center. Dr. Soulen has also created a digital library, including e-books that are

interactive, which is available on the school's website. Dr. Zambone congratulated Ms. Cole and her staff on their outstanding progress, especially in their success with identifying needs and addressing them. Dr. Swaggerty expressed her excitement about learning more about what the school needs to continue the work it is doing and supporting in any way possible.

Dr. Hodge adjourned the meeting at 9:46 a.m.

Next meeting: February 8, 2023, 9:00 a.m., TBD