

**Community School of Digital and Visual Arts  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes (Special Planning Session)**

**Date:** May 4, 2024

**Location:** Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

**Time:** 4:00pm

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Joe Battle at 4:00pm.

**CSDVA Board Members In Attendance:**

Bonnie Hauser

Tommy McNiell

Kathy Everett-Perry

Toni Hall

**Others In Attendance**

**I. Call to Order & Agenda Review**

The meeting was called to order with an overview of key agenda items:

- Career & Technical Education (CTE) program and charter renewal planning
- Vendor performance, including Acadia North Star and auditor selection
- Budget concerns and financial reporting gaps

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**II. Financial Services Vendor: Acadia North Star / Prestige School Solutions**

**I. Background & Transition Issues**

- Acadia North Star, long-time financial and compliance partner, was acquired by Prestige School Solutions.
- Following the transition, responsiveness has significantly declined; no updated budget has been received despite repeated requests.
- Key staff (e.g., Gretchen Hughes) have been unresponsive; communication breakdowns noted.

**II. Operational Impacts**

- Current bank balance (~\$110,000) is insufficient for payroll projections.
- ESSER funds remain unallocated, affecting financial clarity and planning.
- Staff have reported a shift in tone and reduced support since the transition.

**III. Concerns & Considerations**

- Questions were raised about potential misalignment between Prestige’s values and the school’s mission as a majority-minority institution.

#### **IV. Actions & Recommendations**

- Draft and send a formal service request letter (including Q3 report, cash flow analysis, and payroll information) without mentioning the planned RFP.
  - Begin RFP process after June 30 to explore alternative vendors (e.g., Charter Success Partners).
  - Ensure grant compliance and entitlement services are part of RFP requirements.
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#### **V. III. Auditor Selection**

- Current auditor, Petway Mills, is exiting the charter school space.
  - A list of qualified firms was shared (including firms with charter and nonprofit experience).
  - Action: Solicit proposals from at least three firms, request references, and review cost estimates. Selection to be finalized by end of May.
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#### **VI. IV. CTE Program & Charter Renewal**

##### **• Program Overview & Strategic Intent**

- Dr. Cooper is leading integration of a Career & Technical Education (CTE) program to complement the school’s digital and visual arts focus.
- The CTE framework aligns with Article 10 and General Assembly workforce goals.
- The program supports both college-bound and career-ready pathways, with an emphasis on early exposure (starting in 3rd grade by 2025).

#### **VII. Community & Student Engagement**

- Strategic partnerships established with NC State and NCCU.
- A well-received Career Exploration Institute was hosted in March, featuring a range of professionals (e.g., photographers, barbers, engineers).

#### **VIII. Board Discussion Highlights**

- Strong support for student exposure to alternative careers, with an emphasis on arts-integrated technical fields (e.g., architecture, production design, engineering).
- Recognition that this initiative enhances the current mission and provides students broader post-secondary options.
- Program is already included in Dr. Cooper’s existing contract and the charter renewal strategy.

## IX. Next Steps

- Dr. Cooper will formally present the CTE implementation plan at the **June 6 board meeting**.
  - Mr. Adeniyi will be invited to co-present to provide administrative alignment and endorsement.
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## X. V. Personnel Update

- Mr. Johnson is currently hospitalized.
  - Mr. Adeniyi is managing day-to-day operations in his absence.
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## XI. Summary of Action Items

- **Financial Vendor:**
    - Send formal service request letter to Acadia North Star.
    - Initiate RFP process for FY24–25 vendor transition.
  - **Audit:**
    - Solicit bids from three firms and present results to the board by end of May.
  - **CTE Program:**
    - Schedule Dr. Cooper’s presentation for June 6 board meeting.
    - Continue internal coordination to align the program with charter renewal.
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## XII. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 5:30p.m. with agreement to follow up urgently on budget matters and schedule the CTE presentation in the next meeting.