

Dr. Tanya Turner  
Superintendent

Mr. James Bunch  
Assistant Superintendent

Perquimans County Schools  
P. O. Box 337  
Hertford, North Carolina 27944



Board of Education  
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August 30, 2021

Mr. Dave Machado, Director  
Office of Charter Schools  
NC Department of Public Instruction

Dear Mr. Machado:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an impact statement regarding the application for establishing the Elaine Riddick Charter School in Perquimans County.

After thoroughly reviewing both the application three years ago for the establishment of a fast-tracked Elaine Riddick Academy and the application submitted July, 2021 to establish a fast-tracked Elaine Riddick Charter School, the Perquimans County School Board fears that even more significant than the potential loss of up to one million dollars in funding over a five year period, the greatest impact of establishing the Elaine Riddick Charter School in our district will lead to the loss of learning gains and even regression of students who elect to enroll there.

Three years after requesting that the beginning date of their original application be expedited, the charter school still has not demonstrated its readiness to open. According to their current application, "Elaine Riddick Charter School was deemed not ready to open due to the status of its facility." If it has required more than three years to not even open their doors, we are concerned about their ability to create a learning environment in which students can learn, thrive, and gain academic competence within the next three years.

Torchlight Academy Schools LLC is listed both as a third party consultant or CSO and as the contracted management company of the Elaine Riddick Charter School. A review of Torchlight's performance data is alarming. Over the past six years, data reviewed show the average school performance grade of Torchlight Academy as 53 and the school earned 4 Cs, 1 D and 1 F. Five years of data for Three Rivers, also operated by Torchlight, the average performance grade was 34 including 2 Ds and 3 Fs. Comparatively, during this same time, Hertford Grammar School maintained an average school performance grade of 65.3 (nearly doubling the performance of Three Rivers) earning 4 Cs and 2 Bs. Central Elementary School, a K-2 school, is a feeder school to Hertford Grammar School.

The Board of Education of the Perquimans County Schools is very proud of our award-winning leadership and instructional teams at both the school and district levels. We humbly request that you thoroughly examine the data that demonstrates what students in our county already have and compare it to the track record and to the promises that Elaine Riddick purports to provide and deny their application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Anne White'.

Anne White, Ed.D.  
Board Chairperson