

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: The Exploris School's Proposal to Amend Its Lottery Policy

Policy Implications:

- ☐ Constitution _____
- ☒ General Statute #115C-218.45
- ☒ SBE Policy #CHTR-014
- ☐ SBE Policy Amendment
- ☐ SBE Policy (New)
- ☐ Other _____

Presenter(s): Ms. Ashley Baquero (Consultant, Office of Charter Schools)

Description:

The Exploris School (Exploris) is one of the state's first charter schools, opening in 1997. Exploris has over twenty years' experience with high academic performance and innovative global and project-based curriculum. The school believes that with its record of success, strong financial footing, and clear mission and vision it will be able to effectively implement a priority lottery to improve socioeconomic diversity at Exploris.

Exploris states that research demonstrates that charter schools can contribute to school segregation if they do not take active steps to address diversity and reduce barriers to access for students of all backgrounds. Exploris also recognizes that a diverse student body positively impacts all students, increasing their cognitive, social, and emotional skills while preparing them to be engaged citizens in our increasingly diverse society. Local and statewide comparison data reveal that Exploris has significant gaps in both socioeconomic and racial diversity relative to traditional and charter schools across the state and in Wake County. **As a result, the school seeks to amend its charter to allow for a priority lottery for Economically Disadvantaged students.**

General statute §115-218.45(g1) states, "If a procedure for a weighted lottery reflecting the mission of the school has been approved by the State Board as part of the charter, and a lottery is needed under subsection (h) of this section, the lottery shall be conducted according to the procedure in the charter." State Board Policy CHTR-014 requires State Board approval for specific material revisions to a charter application.

Exploris seeks approval from the State Board to implement a weighted lottery that would add "Children whose families are considered Economically Disadvantaged" to the list of statutory approved lottery priorities (children of staff, children of board members, and siblings of currently enrolled students) already used by the school.

The mission of the Exploris School states, "Exploris is a learning community that engages students in rigorous, relevant, relationship-based education. This is done through experiential, project-based learning that empowers students to build a connected, just, and sustainable world." Exploris's desire to implement a weighted lottery considers its mission knowing that students are best equipped to build a connected and just world when working with a diverse range of peers.

The school has outlined annual targeted percentages of Economically Disadvantaged students with the goal to reach 25% of students meeting Economically Disadvantaged criteria by the school year 2023-2024. Economically Disadvantaged will be defined using the national Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) criteria.

With each lottery, the Executive Director will work to identify the number of FRL to make available per grade level in order to balance students admitted across grade levels, total seats available, school resources, and planned annual target. Families will have to opportunity to complete an optional form, separate from their lottery application, where they can offer family income information in order to determine if they are FRL eligible for purposes of the priority lottery. This supplemental form will ask applicants to consent to verify status as FRL eligible by Exploris staff and will state that no information will be retained beyond eligibility status.

The school recognizes that transportation shall not be a burden for students wishing to attend Exploris. The Board and school administration will work annually to identify transportation options for students.

Attachments:

Amendment documentation submitted by the Exploris School.

Input Process:

The Exploris School Board of Directors/School Administration; The Office of Charter Schools.

Stakeholders:

Parents and students of the Exploris School; potential students and community members.

Timeline For Action:

For discussion and recommendation at the September 2018 CSAB meeting; recommendation to SBE in October 2018.



July 25, 2018

Dave Machado, Director
Office of Charter Schools
6303 Mail Service Center
Raleigh NC 27699-6303
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Dear Mr. Machado,

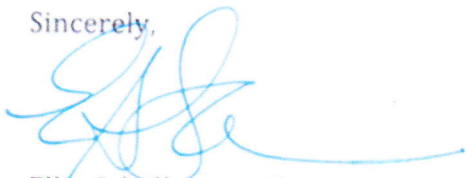
Enclosed please find requisite materials for our proposal to amend our charter and lottery policy to institute a priority lottery to improve socioeconomic diversity at The Exploris School. With over 20 years of experience and history, we feel confident that Exploris's legacy, strong financial footing, award-winning curricula and educators, and clear mission and vision will enable us to integrate this new approach effectively.

Research demonstrates that charter schools can contribute to school segregation if they do not take active steps to address diversity and reduce barriers to access for students of all backgrounds. A diverse student body positively impacts all students, increasing their cognitive, social, and emotional skills while preparing them to be engaged citizens in our increasingly diverse society. Local and statewide comparison data reveal that (while we do manifest religious and cultural diversity to an extent) Exploris has significant gaps in both socioeconomic and racial diversity relative to traditional and charter schools across the state and in Wake. Beginning in 2014, the Exploris Board's Educational Excellence Committee has worked in partnership with Exploris staff and administration to study and address the lack of diversity at the school. While some progress has been made, the data reveal that that there is still critical work to be done to achieve the goal of making Exploris a more diverse school. A priority lottery will enable us to more intentionally do this work.


We are including in this proposal to you:

1. Revision to Charter language
2. Proposed revision to lottery policy
3. Copy of the board minutes recording the board's adoption of the new policy and charter revision (7/24/18) - in draft form because they will not be formally approved until our August Board meeting.

Sincerely,



Elle Schollmeyer, Executive Director



Tom Miller, Board Chair

REVISION TO CHARTER Enrollment section HIGHLIGHTED:

7. Enrollment

7.1 Admission and enrollment of students shall be as prescribed by the Charter School Act. Failure to adhere to the lottery requirements set forth in G.S. 115C- 218.45 is grounds for termination of this Charter. 2

7.1 A - Lottery policy shall follow the Priority Lottery Guidelines as outlined on our website under ENROLLMENT and LOTTERY POLICY. Lottery priorities will include priority for children of full time employees, siblings of current students, board members, and economically disadvantaged students (in this order).

The Exploris School
Lottery Policy, Revisions HIGHLIGHTED.
(Policy Code: STUDENTS 3010)

Lottery Selection

As required by G.S. 115C-218.45(h): During each period of enrollment, the charter school shall enroll an eligible student who submits a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. If there are more applications than spaces, the available spaces will be awarded by public lottery. Once enrolled, students are not required to reapply in subsequent enrollment periods; however, students who are placed on the waiting list must reapply for the lottery in subsequent school years.

Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, a charter school may refuse admission to any student who has been expelled or suspended from a public school under G.S. 115C-390.5 through G.S.115C-390.11 until the period of suspension or expulsion has expired.

Enrollment Application Time Period

Requested applications for the upcoming school are available on the school's website, and can be mailed or electronically sent upon request, beginning in November through the time the lottery enrollment closes the first Friday of February of the proceeding school year. Any applications received after the close of business on the first Friday in February will be placed on the waiting list in order of receipt.

Lottery Process

Applications for enrollment will be made available from November through February. All applications must be received by the first Friday in February in order to be considered for the school's lottery. The Lottery is conducted on the first Friday of March. The date and location are made public so that anyone may attend. The lottery is conducted by an impartial third party firm in accordance with state standards and school priorities. Following the lottery, parents are notified of their acceptance. Upon filling all the available positions, the lottery continues through the entire pool of applicants to establish a waiting list.

Any student receiving a seat either through the initial lottery or through the wait list will have a limited time to accept or decline the seat and, if offered the seat prior to the first day of school, must be present beginning the first day of school. The school will make reasonable efforts to contact students' families who are not in school at the start of the school day on the first day of school via phone and email. If after 24 hours the family does not respond or attend, then the seat may be offered to the next student on the waitlist.

Should a parent decline a spot, the open position will be offered to the next chronological applicant on the waiting list and these guidelines will apply.

Outlined below are the time limitations to accept or decline a seat:

- From date of posting lottery results until June 1: 1 week to accept or decline a seat for the next school year
- From June 2 - to the first day of the new school year: 48 hours to accept or decline a seat for the upcoming school year
- After the first day of a current school year: 48 hours to accept or decline a seat for the current school year

Lottery Preference

The charter school shall not discriminate against any student on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual identity, gender, gender identity or expression, or disability. Except as otherwise provided by law or the mission of the school as set out in the charter, the school shall not limit admission to students on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or athletic ability.

Siblings of already enrolled students, children of all full-time employees, children of the school's Board of Directors, and applicants who are Economically Disadvantaged will receive priority enrollment in the following manner:

Lottery Priorities

Children of current staff and siblings are given priority over children of board members and students who are considered Economically Disadvantaged. Should a full-time staff member be hired after the annual lottery has occurred, space will be made available for said staff member's children for the upcoming school year. Children of Board members are given the next preference followed by students whose families qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch. If there more applicants than spaces, the available spaces will be awarded by public lottery with priority in the following order:

1. Children of current eligible staff
2. Siblings of currently enrolled students
3. Children of current Board members
4. Children whose families are considered Economically Disadvantaged
5. All other applicants.

Siblings: It is the intent of Exploris to support whole families and create school community. All families with siblings of currently enrolled students must submit an application. Siblings of enrolled students will receive priority for admission during the lottery process if their applications are received by the designated deadline.

- If siblings apply for admission to a charter school for the upcoming school year and a lottery is needed under G.S. 115C-238.29F(g)(6), the charter school will enter one surname into the lottery to represent all of the siblings applying at the same time. If

the surname of the siblings is selected, then all of the siblings shall be admitted to the extent that space is available and does not exceed the grade level capacity. Should the sibling's requested grade level be full, the sibling's name will receive priority status on the waiting list.

- If multiple birth siblings apply for admission to a charter school and a lottery is needed under G.S. 115C-238.29F(g)(6), the charter school shall may enter one surname into the lottery to represent all of the multiple birth siblings. If the surname of the multiple birth siblings is selected, then all of the multiple birth siblings shall be admitted.

Employees and Board of Directors: Exploris will limit to no more than 15% of the school's total enrollment priority admission to children of full-time employees and the charter school's Board of Directors.

Economically Disadvantaged Students: Exploris will institute a priority lottery for remaining available seats in order to achieve 25% of our students meeting the "Economically Disadvantaged" (ED) criteria, defined by meeting national Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) criteria, by the school year 2023-2024. We will achieve this by meeting the following interim goals:

<u>ACADEMIC YEAR</u>	<u>Target ED %</u>
2018-2019	0%
2019-2020	up to 10%
2020-2021	up to 15%
2022-2023	up to 25%
2023-2024	up to 25%

- With each lottery, the Executive Director will work to identify number of FRL seats to make available per grade level in order to balance students admitted across grade levels, total seats available, school resources, and planned annual target.
- Families will have the opportunity to complete an optional form, separate from their lottery application, where they can offer family income information in order to determine if they are FRL eligible for the purposes of the priority lottery. This supplemental form will ask applicants to consent to verify status as FRL eligible by Exploris staff, and will state that no specific information will be obtained beyond eligibility status and that the information will not be retained.

Transportation

Board and school administration will work annually to identify transportation opportunities for children.

Legal Reference: Article 14A of Chapter 115C, G.S. 115C-218

Adopted: 11/19/13

Revised: 7/24/18

DRAFT



The Exploris School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday July 24, 2018 at 4:30 PM

Location

The Exploris School - Middle School

Directors Present

B. Kingery, C. Hutchens, C. Jones, J. Frawley, K. Byars-Nichols, K. Furr, K. Johnson, K. Von Weihe, M. Mitchell-Neal, T. Kingsberry, T. Miller

Directors Absent

G. Burnette, L. Perry Lawless

Directors Arrived Late

K. Byars-Nichols

Guests Present

T. Guyer

I. Opening Items**A. Record Attendance and Guests****B. Call the Meeting to Order**

T. Miller called a meeting of the board of directors of The Exploris School to order on Tuesday Jul 24, 2018 @ 4:33 PM at The Exploris School - Middle School.

C. Approve Minutes

B. Kingery made a motion to approve minutes from the Board Meeting on 06-19-18.

C. Jones seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Governance Development

A. Why are we here?

Welcome new board members:

- Theo Kingsberry
- Katie Johnson
- George Burnette (absent tonight)
- Kimberly Harris (Tammie Guyer is attending for Kimberly tonight): PTO

Each board member took 60 seconds to share WHY they are a member, their roles here at Exploris and what they would like to see one year from today.
K. Byars-Nichols arrived late.
T. Guyer arrived late.

B. Board Culture Discussion

Tom reminded everyone that The Exploris School lives by its values. As leaders in the organization it is our responsibility to know them, understand them and live them as representatives of The Exploris School. It is important to understand which each Core Value looks like, sounds like and feels like during our meetings. As a reminder, our core values are: curiosity, reflection, craftsmanship, engagement, collaboration, relationships, connections to nature, social empowerment, innovation and balance. Tom divided board members into groups of 2 or 3 to discuss what the values mean to them.

Tom urged us to think about these two sets of questions:

1. What will parents see in this school 5 years from now? Do you know what your role is and how to fulfill it?
2. Who in your network can your recruit to replace you? What is your succession plan?

III. Board Committees

A. Purpose, Goals and Schedule

Each board committee will provide a short synopsis of the charge of their committee for the 2018-2019 year, announce their schedule and recruit members.

- Camesha Jones: Governance
- Keely Byars-Nichols: Educational Excellence
- Christine Hutchens: Finance
- Kim Von Weihe: Development
- Bob Kingery: Facilities
- Jessica Frawley: Grievance

B. Board on Track Training

Keely announced that Board on Track training will be REQUIRED of all committee chairs and is optional, but encouraged, for all board members (as we are all expected to be ready to chair committees if needed). Keely will facilitate training. Details TBA.

IV. Executive Director Report

A. Academic/ Personnel / Operations

ACADEMIC: EOG Comparative Summary and preliminary results for 2018 were provided for Board review. The data will be discussed with staff at the opening of school so that improvement goals can be developed.

PERSONNEL:

- Recommend that the Board accept the resignation of Instructional Technology Specialist, Chris Blacker, effective 6/19/18.
- Recommend that the Board accept the resignation of Marg Rush elementary Music Teacher.
- Recommend that the Board approve the use of Joyner Consulting for IT. Services to ensure continuity of IT Services and evaluate the cost / benefits of utilizing an IT consultant in lieu of hiring an IT employee.

Recommend that the Board approves the following new hires:

- Michele Butterworth - EC Teaching Partner - Elementary
- Ashley Moser - 1st Grade Teacher

Teacher Working Conditions Survey attached for review. The survey results will be reviewed with all staff at the opening of school so that team goals for improvement can be created.

OPERATIONS: Board Approval is requested for the 2018-2019 Personnel Handbook and Parent / Student Handbook. Renovations, security, and enrollment update provided in packet for Board reference. Elementary School will be piloting a new lunch program with Spicy Green Gourmet, managed by school administration. Middle School will continue to use My Hot Lunch Box, managed by the PTO.

K. Byars-Nichols made a motion to approve proposed personnel changes.

K. Furr seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

K. Byars-Nichols made a motion to approve 1) Parent/Student Handbook and 2) Personnel Handbook revisions as proposed.

T. Kingsberry seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

The board asked Ellie to check with our lawyer to see if we should have Handbooks vetted by a lawyer in the future.

V. Finance

A. Finance Update

2017-2018

The Finance committee has worked with Charter Success to analyze our monthly budget variance reports and project the latest for end of year activity. There are June bills that have come in during July and still need to be finalized in the end of year accounting. At this time, the 2017-2018 end of year surplus is estimated to be \$56,669.70. The balance sheet and income statement along with the YTD budget are attached for your review.

2018-2019

Budget impact The Wake County 2018-2019 per pupil state rate is \$5,233.73, which is a 3.23% increase over the 17-18 rate. Revenue projections were flat in the 18-19 budget and did not include this increase.

Capital Campaign/ Foundation

Input from the Board is needed to recommend a replacement for The School Foundation Chair position since Cal Cunningham completed his tenure in June. Final statistics revealed that 83 % of all Exploris families have contributed to the capital campaign.

Foundation Account Balance as of 6/30/18: \$477,226.63. Parent contribution rate is 83%. We still need a school appointed person.

VI. Governance

A. Policy Updates (Conflict of Interest and Nepotism)

The current Nepotism Policy and Conflict of Interest do not meet the state policies. The governance committee drafted revised policies in order to meet state guidelines.

Keely moved to approve the revised **nepotism** policy, as proposed. Theo seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Camesha moved to approve the revised **conflict of interest** policy, as proposed. Kelly seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. Educational Excellence

A. Revised Priority Lottery Proposal

K. Byars-Nichols made a motion to approve the revised policy as proposed with the following amendment: three day wait period to accept after school begins to 24 HOURS.

K. Furr seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

The revisions were made as a result of suggestions from Office of Charter school review of our proposal. It will be re-submitted to OCS as revised. According to OCS, we are still on track for adoption of the new policy by October.

VIII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

Ellie will update up on the Strategic Plan and upcoming needed revisions in August.

Also in August:

- We will also discuss the Center for Innovation and Learning.
- Recommendation for the Foundation Board.
- A possible update on Lottery Policy and next meeting (as a board member may need to attend at the advisory board).

B. Kingery made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

K. Furr seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
K. Byars-Nichols

Mission and Core Values

Exploris is a learning community that engages students in a rigorous, relevant, relationship-based education. This is done through experiential, project-based learning that empowers students to build a connected, just and sustainable world.

Vision

Exploris will be a catalyst for solving present and future problems across the street and around the world.

Core Values

Exploris is a school founded on the principles of global education. According to David Selby and Graham Pike, international leaders in this approach, global education is based upon “the interconnectedness of communities, lands, and peoples, the interrelatedness of all social, cultural and natural phenomena, links between past, present, and future, and the complementary nature of the cognitive, affective, physical and spiritual dimensions of the human being. It addresses issues of development, equity, peace, social and environmental justice, and environmental sustainability. It encompasses the personal, the local, the national, and the planetary. Along with these principles, its approach to teaching and learning is experiential, interactive, children-centered, democratic, convivial, participatory, and change-oriented.”

Exploris’s articulation of its core values ground the school in this global approach. These values are:

CURIOSITY- True knowledge does not occur without curiosity. Students are empowered to ask questions about the world around them and to explore possible answers.

REFLECTION- In an ever-changing world of new ideas, the importance of reflecting on one’s thinking and the thinking of others cannot be underestimated. Exploris values the creation of time to slow down, to reflect, and to build connections.

CRAFTSMANSHIP– Producing an exemplary product is challenging. It takes attention to detail, grit, perseverance, revision, and tenacity. It takes a growth mindset and a dedication to competing with one’s own personal best.

ENGAGEMENT- People learn best when they are exposed to meaningful, complex issues that are applicable to their own lives. Teachers engage students in current, relevant issues by solving authentic problems that are being addressed beyond the four walls of the school building. Student work is tangibly connected not only to the local community, but also to other regions of the world and to past and future events.

COLLABORATION- Learning is a democratic process that is enhanced through the sharing of different perspectives and life experiences. Collaboration results in a tapestry of learners who know they can depend on each other and work together in almost any situation. With collaboration, the end product is deeper, and Exploris students experience a collective sense of accomplishment and ownership.

RELATIONSHIPS- A nurturing school environment is one where students are encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with their teachers, parents, peers, and community. With a keen

understanding of the unique development of the age group that they teach, teachers are intentional about the structures and relationship-building activities that they design.

CONNECTIONS TO NATURE- When students witness the power and elements of the natural world through adventure and stewardship, they begin to view themselves as just one species within a larger system.

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT- Students realize that they have the power to change how their world works. They know how to navigate public systems, lobby public officials, and present their research and opinions as responsible citizens.

INNOVATION- In a constantly changing world, the ability to approach challenges in a new way is vital. Exploris teachers and students design projects that encourage divergent thinking, creativity, ideation, and risk-taking.

BALANCE- To be fully human, students must be healthy in mind, in body, and in spirit. Emphasis on students' physical and emotional health prepare them for the mental challenges necessary in achieving total success in school.