



Endeavor Board Meeting Agenda: August 4, 2020

7:00 PM in the Multi-Purpose Room*

Zoom Conference Log-in Info:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/78896118586?pwd=di9lK1JlUWJlNTk5SWIR6UFRaZlhidz09>

*Note: The Board conducted the August 4, 2020 meeting on campus in the multi-purpose room. The meeting was also broadcast via Zoom, accessible at the above link. Both in person and Zoom participants had an opportunity to participate in public comment.

Present:

Board Member	Position	Term Start	Term Ending	Present
Amy Tharrington Start: July 1, 2016	Member	July 1, 2019	June 30, 2022	Yes
Jaclyn Parks Start: April 8, 2019	Member	July 1, 2019	June 30, 2022	Yes
Bill Kroll Start: May 19, 2016	Chair	July 1, 2019	June 30, 2022	Yes
Tracy DeMarco Start: June 15, 2017	Secretary	July 1, 2017	June 30, 2020	Yes
Ashley Hicks Start: June 15, 2017	Member	July 1, 2017	June 30, 2020	Yes
Kim Keith Start: May 25, 2017	Vice-Chair	July 1, 2017	June 30, 2020	Yes
Nick Cerullo Start: March 19, 2018	Member	July 1, 2018	June 30, 2021	Yes
Israa Kanfoud Start: July 12, 2018	Treasurer	July 1, 2018	June 30, 2021	Yes
Open Start: July 12, 2018	Member	July 1, 2018	June 30, 2021	

Call to Order:

Bill Kroll

- Bill Kroll called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.
- Mission Statement: Endeavor Charter School’s mission is to engage K-8 students by integrating a challenging, hands-on academic program with multi-faceted fine arts courses in a familial environment.
- Vision 2018: Endeavor Charter School’s vision is a community of educators and families working together to graduate students who are motivated and curious, capable and confident, and prepared to make a positive impact on the world around them.

Approval of Agenda:

Tracy DeMarco

- Tracy DeMarco moved to approve the August 4, 2020 Agenda. Bill Kroll seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

Tracy DeMarco

- Tracy DeMarco moved to approve the July 2, 2020 Minutes and the July 14, 2020 Minutes. Ashley Hicks seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Reopening Discussion:

Board

- Bill Kroll introduced Nick Cerullo, and explained that Nick would deliver a short statement representing the Board's current position with respect to reopening the School.
- Nick began by welcoming everyone to the meeting and thanking the community for their involvement and participation in the last several Board meetings. Nick acknowledged that the last several Board meetings have included passionate discussions about how to move forward in light of the state's recommendations and ongoing health risks related to COVID-19. Nick noted that the Board's willingness to disagree and be vocal with each other is a product of how much each Board member cares about the well-being of the school community, but acknowledged that these discussion may appear to show that the Board is less united than it is in reality.
- Nick explained that the Board has made a concerted effort to come together and has prepared a plan for the way forward that is guided by the School's mission and its obligation as a school to present the children with the best education possible while protecting our community. Nick explained that the Board took time to hear from the ECS community - including teachers, staff, and parents – who expressed a variety of concerns and requests that the Board took very seriously. Nick acknowledged that while there is no perfect answer, the Board believes the School must take steps toward achieving the learning environment our community has come to expect. In particular, the Board believes that live instruction – whether online or in person – is critical for the kids to continue to develop academically. To that end, beginning August 17th all ECS teachers will be live teaching remotely from their Endeavor classrooms from at least 9am-12pm. It will safely allow for our teachers to deliver material while in the “old normal,” with the benefit of having easy access to the School's resources and foster further collaboration with their colleagues and leaders.
- Next, Nick announced that the School will be hiring a third party medical professional to visit our facility, review and comment on our return-to-school safety protocols, and share best practices based on the unique features of our school. The health and safety of our community is the first priority for the Board, and we believe having someone with medical expertise on our team will enable us to implement the best possible safety steps for our school.
- Once our expert is on board and our protocols vetted, Nick explained that the Board's next goal is to begin to bring students in the earliest age groups back to campus. Nick noted that younger students in Kindergarten, first grade, and even second grade are likely to have trouble remote learning even with the live, remote instruction by what the Board believes to be the best teachers in Wake County. Accordingly, the Board hopes to bring K-2 students back to the classroom sometime during first quarter. Grades 3-8, however, will remain in remote learning until the end of the first quarter. Nick explained that a staggered entry will allow the School to focus on providing the most effective and interactive remote

learning program for 3-8, while preparing the School to hold older students later in the semester.

- In summary, Nick explained that the Board believes this plan will allow the School to take a cautious step toward re-opening in as safe a manner as possible while providing the best possible remote education for on-line learners. Nick again thanked the community for the thoughtful emails and passionate comments it has shared with the Board. The Board is proud of ECS and looking forward to what we know will be a bright days ahead.
- *New Remote vs. Hybrid Election*
 - Christi Whiteside explained that in light of this new plan, ECS will be asking families to re-elect a choice for remote vs. hybrid in-person school for each child in the coming weeks. The School has prepared a new 20+ page handbook for families to review that explains both what the new school day is likely to look like as well as the health and safety protocols the school will be following to keep the community healthy. This document will be shared with families after it has been reviewed, vetted, and appropriately revised by the medical professional the Board will be hiring. Once families have had a chance to review this information, they will be asked to make a selection – 100% remote or hybrid instruction – for the 2020-2021 school year.
- *Emergency Sick Leave Policy*
 - Tracy DeMarco explained that, as it considered options for reopening, the Board has also prepared an Emergency Sick Leave Policy to address the concern that teachers and staff may need to be absent for extended periods of time due to quarantine requirements and other issues related to the pandemic. The new policy was prepared after researching applicable laws and leave policies being adopted by similarly situated businesses and school systems.
 - Tracy DeMarco moved to approve the Emergency Sick Leave Policy. Bill Kroll seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

- Tracy DeMarco began the public comment period by acknowledging that remote participants had raised many questions in the Zoom comment box. Tracy explained that many of those questions would be answered by the documents that will be shared with the ECS community about reopening.
- Maija McAdams began public comment by thanking the Board for its hard work coming into this Board meeting. She gave feedback from my team that the first four days of virtual learning were stressful at least in part because teachers were having trouble reaching some kids. Maija stated that the plan for morning block schedule is exciting to the 5th grade team, thinks it will be good development for the school.
- Katie Clemmons asked what criteria the Board would be using to determine when it is safe to return to campus. Tracy DeMarco explained that the Board looks to the governor and the Health Secretary to tell us when it can be safe to return to campus. These leaders are informed by a panel of experts from a range of disciplines, and we cannot recreate that expertise for our school, individually. In keeping with the governor's recommendation that school's may operate in Plan B, the Board believes it will be safe to return to ECS in person when we are able to ensure that the School can and will implement the requirements and recommendations set forth by NCDHHS, the CDC, and our individually-retained medical expert.

- Brad Ezzell stated that he has spent the last five months developing resources to be able to teach effectively from his home and asked why the Board would now be requiring teachers to teach from their classrooms. Nick Cerullo explained that the Board believes that teaching from the classroom will provide a sense of familiarity and normalcy to the students, and will also foster support and collaboration among colleagues to achieve the best possible remote learning program.
- Holly Heasley expressed her belief that the staff feels defeated by the Board's latest announcement and expressed concern that the Board was not treating teachers professionally. She voiced concern regarding the Board's offer to provide childcare for the school-aged children of staff members during hours when they must teach from campus. Holly did not believe it would be safe for her children to be on campus during this time, but stated that she did not have another option as a single mom. Amy Tharrington responded that, as a single mom, she understood the frustrations and concerns voiced by Holly, and noted that the abrupt change in learning had been difficult for everyone. She acknowledged and understood Holly's strong feelings on this subject, but noted that the Board has received other equally strong pleas for a more aggressive re-opening decision. Kim Keith acknowledged that the phased plan the Board has adopted will not please everyone. She confirmed insisted that the Board cares deeply about all members of its community, and the phased plan the Board has adopted is intended to serve as a cautious step forward. Kim noted that the decision to bring k-2 back first was made because so much of the learning in that age group is experiential and, for many students, it is not possible to have that experience at home. Finally, Kim noted that the onsite, school-funded childcare option was intended to make the transition back to school easier on teachers. Holly responded that if her kids return to school in this setting, it will be because she has no other option.
- Leslie Clark expressed concern that the Board's plan would not provide consistency for the students. While Leslie is in favor of coming back to school, she believed that the Board's decision to change the format of remote instruction effective August 17th is a "slam in the face" to teachers, and any subsequent change to in-person instruction would not provide the 2-4 weeks of notice the teachers asked for. Bill Kroll thanked Leslie for her comment and assured her that the Board understands these concerns. He asked for the staff and community to be flexible and fluid since it is impossible to know how and if the state guidance and knowledge of best practices will change in the future. Bill noted that the Board originally intended to begin on-campus classes for staff on August 10th, but adjusted the date to August 17th after hearing feedback from Christi Whiteside that the teachers needed more time to adjust. Nick Cerullo noted that the Board believes live instruction from the teachers is going to create consistency for the students over time. The decision was not something the Board arrived at either quickly or lightly.
- Anna Gaines thanked the Board for moving the on-campus start date for teachers to August 17 and also for the offer for onsite childcare. That said, she expressed concerns that her kindergartener would be successful in the onsite childcare setting and unable to do work from a desk. She next asked why staff was not allowed to see the Emergency Sick Leave Policy before it was approved. Tracy DeMarco explained that new policies are generally developed in committee and then presented to the full Board for vote. They are not generally published to the community before the Board votes. That said, Tracy explained that committee meetings are open to the community, and the Board encourages any member of the community interested in ECS policies to join a committee. Tracy also mentioned that policies can always be revised by a Board vote in the event a change is

needed. While the Board believes the new Emergency Sick Leave Policy is among the more generous policies we have seen from similar organizations, it is prepared to amend the policy should the need arise.

- Elizabeth Karsten stated that from a parent perspective, she believed her second grader would be better off in school. However, she asked the Board to comment on how it expected teachers to create a good environment for students if they are not comfortable being inside the school. Elizabeth expressed concern that a lot of the staff do not feel safe with the Board's plan. Bill Kroll responded that the Board has complete faith in the professionalism of our teachers. Kim Keith acknowledged these concerns and stated that one of the unfortunate things about a public forum is not all opinions come out. She explained that for every teacher and parent who expresses concern to the Board about returning to school, there's another who is upset that our students are not already back in the building, highlighting learning and developmental setbacks they have observed in their children and students with the lack of in-person instruction. The Board is doing the best it can to come up with a plan that addresses all of these concerns.
- Katie Clemmons stated that the Board's decision sends the message that teachers are not trusted to teach from home. She noted that her children have been in quarantine for 5 months, and would now be forced into unwanted exposure if they return to school. Katie asked the Board for data showing that teaching from the school is any better than teaching from her home. Bill Kroll acknowledged Katie's concerns and stated that teacher return to the classroom is step 1 in the Board's multi-phased plan to re-opening.
- Ashley Hicks stated that there were no more requests for public comment. She noted that the Board has recorded all of the questions raised in the Zoom chat and will prepare answers to circulate to the community. The Board's responses to these questions are attached to these minutes as Exhibit A.

Closed Session:

- Bill Kroll moved to go into closed session at 7:56 p.m. Ashley Hicks seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- Bill Kroll moved to go into open session at 9:08 p.m. Nick Cerullo seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment:

Bill Kroll moved to adjourn at 9:08 p.m. Kim Keith seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Bill Kroll

Answers to questions asked at the 8/4/2020 Board Meeting:

Medical Professional

- Has the medical professional been hired and will she/he check on the ventilation system?
- Will medical professionals check sinks? They shut off before the recommended hand washing time so students cannot properly wash hands with the current hallway sinks? Can faucets be changed to properly wash hands?
- Will the medical professional be consulted before a teacher is asked to be with children? I am concerned about K-2 having to come back sooner than all other grades. I am worried about my own health when I hear about the urgency of getting K-2 back in rooms.
- Shouldn't the medical professional come in before the staff children come back to the school. Are you not concerned about the staff children at all?

The medical professional will be looking at DHHS and CDC recommendations and requirements and giving recommendations on best practice for reentry and throughout the year. In addition we have already had our AC professional look at our ventilation system. Staff will not return to the building until a hired medical professional has been consulted and any needed facility upgrades are completed. Dr Sarah Lewis was on campus on Aug 11 and all recommendations were applied prior to sending out the final version of the ECS Return to Campus Family Plan. She will speak with staff in a faculty meeting in the next couple of weeks where staff will be able to presubmit questions.

Childcare

- What is the childcare going to look like for the staff children?
Based on the number needed and the guidelines provided by DHHS and CDC recommendations childcare will be structured in a safe environment. Childcare is up and running in 2 rooms with long-term ECS subs. Office staff are developing a schedule to offer students wiggle breaks.

New Sick Leave Policy

- Why can we not see documents tonight?
The Board generally does not vet new policies with the public before adopting them, although there may be some exceptions to this. Policies are generally developed in committees and presented to the full Board for final approval. As always, we invite any of our community to join a committee and participate in the policy development

process. The new Emergency Sick Leave Policy was developed after significant research into existing federal leave laws and policies that have been adopted by similarly situated businesses and schools, with the goal of offering maximum flexibility and protection for our staff while ensuring that the school's operational needs will continue to be met. Final documents will be shared with the community. The policies were included in the Staff Return to Campus Plan.

- Why commit for the whole year and not 1/2 of the year?
The survey was adjusted after the Board meeting to ask families to commit only for second quarter.
- Why k-2 all concentrated in one hallway and bathroom? Is there a way to separate classrooms into different hallways so they are not all concentrated in one hallway?
We are looking at options for best utilization of our building. Successful distancing can take several forms, including, among other things, staggered entry into the hallways, carpool, bathroom, etc.

Exposure Plan

- What is the plan for when someone tests positive?
Our preliminary safety protocols - including detailed plans for exposure, confirmed, and suspected cases - are set forth in the Endeavor Charter School Return to Campus Family Plan that went out to our community last week. This plan was reviewed by our medical consultant and, consequently, may be revised to comply with recommended best practices. We consider this to be a living document that will be periodically revised as recommendations from DHHS, the CDC, and/or our medical consultant evolve. In addition, we have hired a school nurse and she started on August 17th when staff returned to campus.
- Are there protocols in place for when teachers get sick or when families/grade levels have to quarantine for 14 days? *Yes, please refer to the Return to Campus Plan that was circulated on Friday.*
- Did you see the Thales student who tested positive?
Yes, we are diligently looking at updates regarding the reopening of schools both locally and nationally. There has been no information shared publicly about what Thales' safety protocol is therefore we are not able to speak to how it compares to our own planned procedures. It is important to note, however, that as a private school, Thales is not required to comply with either the requirements and recommendations that have been set forth by DHHS (including screening, distancing, face masks, cleaning, etc.) or the governor's order limiting classroom capacity. Our safety protocols will follow the state and CDC recommendations and be tailored to our specific school and community.

Details on K-2/School Day/What are we doing with my class?

- Will Kindergarten still have the option to remain remote after August?
Yes, K-2 students will have the option to remain in remote instruction after August.
- When K-2 comes back, will they come back full time?
That is under discussion, and the final decision will be based on results from the survey that was sent out last week and what our school can safely and effectively accommodate.
- So if the Governor says it's okay for schools to come back 50% why is only k-2 coming back why not all grades?
Bringing K-2 back allows teachers to provide the face to face and individualized instruction that younger students will need. It will be easier to implement social distancing and spacing throughout the school building.
- What is the plan for Fine Arts, Fitness, electives? We're shortening the day to 3 hours a day and that is offering our children a better education?
The day is not shortened, however, there will be a dedicated time frame for students to receive "live" remote instruction. Fine Arts, Fitness, and electives will be available throughout the school day. We recognize the additional time teachers spend in implementing a remote instructional plan and felt this timeline offered students a solid school day while also accommodating the increased demands on the staff.
- Has the possible NC peak changed from the end of September?
We are consistently following the guidelines and recommendations from our state leaders and how they may affect our programing. We are also closely following current trends in our state and county. This data is made publicly available on the DHHS website and is updated daily.. <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard/cases>.
- What about staff who don't feel comfortable coming on campus? Are there options for them?
We are working towards all staff returning to the building. We would like for staff to be back on campus starting August 17th, however, if you have a need for special considerations please let Christi know and she will address the considerations individually. In addition, ECS will provide reasonable accommodations to staff with underlying medical conditions that place them at higher risk for complications from COVID in compliance with federal law and as set forth in the Emergency Sick Leave Policy.

- Why does it matter if I am teaching from home or from school? It would be one thing if we had students coming in but nothing is changing. I am still zooming with my students.
As we look at this as a long term plan we recognize the need to create a professional environment, bringing our community of teachers together and working collaboratively as a team. This is the first step in our plan to return to a normal school day.
- I would like to know what data you have that says teaching 3 blocks from my classroom is better than best practices than teaching 3 blocks from my house? *We know that in person instruction is the highest quality instruction. Taking steps towards in person instruction is important for the reasons listed above- it creates a professional environment with access to your colleagues and the opportunity to work collaboratively as a team.*
- How is live instruction from my classroom any different than the live instruction I am doing at home? We have all spent countless hours creating and modifying resources so they would be effective to use digitally. I have created the teaching space in my home to be the same as what I have in the classroom.
We recognize that you all have made significant strides to create a learning environment conducive to the students inside your homes. We know that the school building provides resources and opportunities for grade levels to work together.
- When will you answer all of our questions once you've collected them. I emailed the Board almost 2 weeks ago and have yet to hear a response.
The Board is working hard to respond to all emails. We apologize that you have not received a response. The answers to all questions are posted here.
- So everyone gets choices but us?
We have surveyed all of our stakeholders and taken into consideration all of the comments, thoughts, and concerns to make a decision that meets the needs of our community. It is not possible to meet everyone's individual needs and yet the plan that we have proposed is one that we feel takes most needs into consideration.
- Why is the main concern not keeping teachers and their families safe while providing good teaching?
We at Endeavor Charter School care about our teachers and their families as we showed when we shut the school down based on state guidelines. Keeping our community - including teachers, students, and families - safe is the top priority for the school. We are taking every step at our disposal to ensure that our reopening protocols will comply or exceed the existing recommendations for a safe in person school environment.

- Can you comment on why this decision should be rushed this week, when Gov. Cooper guidance is imminent? Alternate suggestion would be to send this decision to next month's board meeting, after getting clarity from Gov. Cooper and your new medical expert. This would give time for thoughtful dialogue, planning and adjustment for all involved.

It has been voiced from many of you that the need for a plan is imperative. We recognize that guidance from our state leaders is constantly changing. We will continue to evaluate those recommendations and reevaluate our plan if necessary.

- Why can you all not share those specific plans you've been "working on?"
The Board and the Administration have been sharing plans along the way. For many weeks, we have been pouring over the feedback from all of our stakeholders- staff and parents- and the guidance from NC DHHS, NC DPI, the CDC and the Governor's office- As you can understand, there is a lot of information to include in the plans and it is continuing to change. Additionally many of the plans impact some teachers more than others and there is time needed to talk with those impacted prior to sharing the plans with the larger ECS staff and community.

- Will there be a survey sent to the staff about these plans?
The plans that have been made are based on the surveys that have been previously sent as well as the looking at the DHHS and CDC guidelines and recommendations.

- And there are plenty of K-2 that don't feel safe and you are not listening to us. How do you expect me to handle a kindergartener that is crying...or wants to hug...or is sick. If they are sick then I WILL GET SICK.
The ECS Board of Directors and Administration have listened to every single concern and comment. The reality is that the staff have concerns and feedback that contradict one another, as do the parents. The concerns and feedback represent every single side of the decision to return to school or not. Just because your individual concerns or those of the loudest voices do not seem to be represented in the proposed plan does not mean they weren't heard, it just means that the final decision does not align with your individual concerns. As to the second part of this question, we recognize that the school day and environment will look different than it has in the past. Teachers will have to weigh their response to children who are upset or need assistance and act in a way that they are comfortable responding. That is the reality that we are living in. Parents who are choosing to send their children to school understand this.

- Why are they not addressed before staff returns?
We are working to provide you with information about staff reentry. Staff were not asked to return to the building until a hired medical professional consulted and any needed suggestions were completed.

- Substitutes can prefer to sub for us virtually and get paid; we must be on campus or take a sick day...this is why we're doubting your trust for us.

There was a survey to subs to determine who is willing to sub in person and who is willing to sub virtually. The survey was sent prior to the decision to bring staff on campus. If staff are on campus in person, subs will be required to be on campus in person. The only way a sub can teach virtually is if the teacher they are subbing for is teaching virtually.

- Is there a feeling that teachers are not giving quality instruction while virtual learning? We as a Board do not feel like the quality of virtual instruction is as good as live instruction or in person instruction. Teachers teaching in their classrooms with all of the resources available to them in this building, next door to their colleagues and thought partners is better than teachers teaching at home. Instruction in every single subject every single day is better than schedules that do not deliver instruction in every subject every day. Delivering an academic experience that is as close to what ECS offered prior to COVID must be our goal.
- One of the questions I have wondered is of the parents that want their kids to come back, how many are working parents that are struggling to juggle work/school/sitters and how many could stay home with a parent or grandparent? I know there are probably legal "issues" giving working parents priority to come back but is it an option? Maybe the info can be gathered in the survey Christi was mentioning?
The surveys sent to families are in an attempt to gain as much information about their desired option; remote or in person, without infringing on their personal lives. Many families have and are encouraged to voice their concerns or suggestions.