



## **Endeavor Board Minutes: June 21, 2010**

### **Call to Order:**

**DJ Hill**

The regular meeting of the Endeavor Board of Directors was called to order at 7:58 pm on June 21, 2010 by DJ Hill in Endeavor's multi-purpose room.

### **Present:**

DJ Hill, Larry Woolard, Christian Nechyba, Margaret Holder, Steve McAdams, Christi Whiteside, Andy Kristianson, Helen Harris, Lisa Springle

### **Introduction:**

**DJ Hill**

DJ Hill asked for all board members to introduce themselves given the large audience. Introductions of all board members were made. DJ Hill also provided a brief background on individual board members for the benefit of the audience.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

**Christian Nechyba**

Christian Nechyba asked for approval of minutes from the May board meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved.

### **Board Telephone Conference Disclosure:**

**Andy Kristianson**

Andy Kristianson stated that the board had a telephone meeting on the timing of contract decisions for the coming year on the Thursday prior to this meeting. As this telephone conference involved personnel decisions requiring a timely decision, the standard two-week public meeting notice was not given.

### **PAWS Update:**

**Kim Bennett**

Kim Bennett, PAWS president for the 2010-11 school year, stated that Karin Reed had provided her with a PAWS report for the final meeting of this school year, but was not able to attend this board session. A meeting had taken place concerning the volunteerism task force. The group will be sending out a survey to assess volunteer capacity in the future. Karin Reed will work with Steve Santana to do an electronic survey over the summer trackout. They will work on an initial tabulation of data, then launch a second survey that will break down where volunteers prefer to work. Issues that would need to be tackled include volunteer training for parents with direct student oversight, lunch coverage, carpool, and an increased efforts to recognize volunteers. DJ Hill stated that PAWS involvement is critical to the school's success, and expressed his heartfelt thanks. Christian Nechyba presented a plaque to the 2009-10 PAWS board for all its efforts on behalf of the school. Helen Harris asked about the planning for the end of year party. Kim Bennett stated that about 400 people (adults and children) had responded to date. The end of year PAWS picnic would be this Saturday from 4-6 pm at Blue Jay Point.

### **Athletics Update:**

**Lori Tolson**

Lori Tolson thanked the Board on behalf of the Pride boosters for all its support. She stated that the athletics program had been a great experience for kids and families this year. She also thanked PAWS for its generous donation. She stated that the boosters greatly appreciated board support of the athletics program. The program had provided a full year of competition in four sports and fielded 17 teams. About 100 students had participated. The program was strong and would continue to explore fundraising opportunities. She stated that the seed money from the Board expressed its confidence in the sports program. Christian Nechyba presented a plaque to the Pride boosters in recognition for their organization of a professional, high-quality extracurricular sports program with a core of committed volunteers. DJ Hill also expressed the Board's gratitude for the level of organization and professionalism in the athletics program. He added that stakeholder leaders would continue to meet monthly in order to put leaders of major school programs in a room together, not to make major decisions, but to facilitate communication and go through schedules, priorities, fundraising, etc.

### **Endeavor Foundation**

**Steve Santana  
Scott Mathers**

Steve Santana stated that he had three updates from the Endeavor Foundation. First, the selection process for an architect had begun. The Foundation was looking at a few land sites, and had reviewed responses from 13 architects. The design team was narrowing this down to two architects, and hoped to complete this process in the next 4-6 weeks. Second, a letter of intent had been signed with the Wake County Basketball Association. As a new school, Endeavor wanted to be committed to the community around us, and to develop different community touch points. The Wake County Basketball Association would like to build three gyms for Endeavor's permanent facility in one large field house. Discussions about management of such a facility were in progress also. Steve Santana thanked DJ Hill for pulling the letter of intent together.

Scott Mathers stated that the capital campaign team had met with 40 families, sent out 33 pledge cards, and that 13 pledge cards had been returned thus far. The announcement regarding information sessions went out to the broader Endeavor community in Tuesday folders. More than 60 families had responded with an interest in attending an informational session. A teacher's presentation would be held on July 22 during teacher's workdays. The public phase of the campaign will kick off after the private phase. Lisa Kristianson would be heading up the public phase. The capital campaign was also considering other events, such as a grandparent event. Meetings thus far had been upbeat and encouraging. Participation from all would be encouraged.

DJ Hill stated that there were three main missions for the school's new building: (1) an academic design that reflects learn by doing and that provided some thought to what the future of schools should look like; (2) sustainability which reflects where we need to be as a community (minimize damage to the environment, an ecologically responsible structure; a recent study concluded that such a building could be created for 1.6% more start up costs, but tremendous long-term gains); (3) building a school with private-public partnerships, which recognized the fiduciary responsibility of the school to manage assets for the benefit of the community (the Wake County Basketball Association partnership is the first example of this).

### **Enrichment Update**

**Tamara Santana**

Tamara Santana stated that the Enrichment program had enrolled 806 kids in 16 classes and 14 camps, awarded 128 discounts worth \$1935, and paid about \$30,000 in salaries to instructors. In addition to Endeavor students, 30 students from 16 outside schools had enrolled. Partnerships had been developed with Bricks for Kids (Lego robotics, 3 classes), Wonderful Science (dinosaur program for elementary students), and Nascar Nation. A computer skills class, an improv class, a newspaper class, a class for student council (Student Pride), a parent education program (Conscious Connections for Kids on August 17, 24, 31) would all be offered. Tamara Santana added that the program would be switching to quickbooks for electronic record keeping/receipts.

DJ Hill stated that he would love to see more outside student enrollment, as this was an introduction to Endeavor for students from many other schools. He thanked Tamara Santana for the great job she had done with the Enrichment Program.

### **Guidance Counselor Position**

**Lisa Springle**

Lisa Springle stated that there had been support for a guidance counselor position at both the faculty and parent level, and that with some creative thinking about space constraints in the building, office space could be created for a guidance position. She moved for board approval of a 50% guidance counselor position. Margaret Holder asked which grade levels would be served by this guidance counselor. Christian Nechyba stated that this would be for all grade levels. Christi Whiteside stated that a guidance counselor could also be helpful in the implementation of anti-bullying program, student counseling following any possible traumatic events, etc.. The 50% guidance counselor position was unanimously approved.

Lisa Springle continued that faculty surveys had indicated a desire for increased professional development opportunities, and that the board wanted to really work to give teachers the professional development they wanted. For the coming school year, the board had increased the budget for continuing education and professional development by 200%. This would provide \$20,000 per year for the next 3 years (totaling \$60,000). The Board and administration would work through how to disseminate this benefit to the teachers. This significant increase in the professional development budget would give teachers a lot of new opportunities. In summary, Lisa Springle moved to increase the professional development budget to \$20,000 per year for 3 years, totaling \$60,000 over 3 years. The motion was unanimously approved, with an abstention from Christi Whiteside.

### **Treasurer's Report**

**Larry Woolard**

Larry Woolard provided a Treasurer's Report. Current balances are: \$225,000 in a new Regions Money Market account, \$202,423 in a Bank of America account, and \$476,790 in the school's operating account at First Citizens Bank. Payroll will come out of the First Citizens account, so operating cash is on hand for the beginning of the next school year. He stated that the school's secure financial position was due to everyone's hard work. The school was required to turn in a balanced budget based on state and county revenues. The school would have revenue from one additional class in the coming year, but would also be adding two new positions and increasing the technology position, which would lead to an overall spending increase of \$70,000. The current budget calls for \$2 million in state revenues. At the county level, the school was expected to lose \$70,000 for next year.

Margaret Holder stated that the school had ended with an approximate \$320,000 surplus last year and an approximate \$400,000 surplus this year, totaling about \$720,000. The Board had previously committed \$120,000 per year to the Endeavor Foundation. She proposed that \$480,000 of the current surplus be pledged to meet the commitment to the Foundation for the first four years of the school's existence (2008-2012) to be set aside for capital outfit. She also suggested that \$200,000 of the first two years' surplus be set aside as an operating reserve. Both proposals were unanimously approved.

DJ Hill stated that he had asked Acadia how many schools they had encountered that had been able to achieve this kind of operating surplus. Acadia had responded that out of 35 charter schools with whom they had worked, they have not encountered such a surplus during the launch of a new school. He stated that the credit for this goes to the administration who manage resources for the school and to parents who selflessly give their time. The proposed budget for the 2010-11 school year was unanimously approved by the board.

Helen Harris stated that some of what would be done with this budget included the purchase of a second mobile computer lab of 20 computers, as the first lab had received such positive feedback from the faculty. Teachers had also asked for United Streaming (Discovery Channel), which would be purchased for the school. New computers were being purchased for teachers coming into the school. There had been interest in grading/attendance software, and the school was looking at several vendors for this. This would also include an opportunity to see grades online, and might be established by third or fourth quarter of the coming school year.

Steve McAdams stated that the move to a second mobile computer lab would allow the fine arts teachers to have more room, and would also create space for a guidance counselor office.

DJ Hill thanked the technology committee for helping to make this happen. Melissa Bonsted would also be increased to 4 day per week as technology coordinator.

### **Preliminary EOG Report**

**Maija McAdams**

Maija McAdams provided a preliminary EOG report. She stated that information for grades 3-5 was more complete because grades 6-8 had taken retakes until recently. Grade 3 showed 100% reading proficiency, and 98.1% math proficiency (100% after retest of one child). 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade preliminary math and reading scores were also reviewed, and all proficiency rates were above 90% except 7th grade reading. However, this and other middle school proficiency rates were preliminary, and expected to increase after retakes. Margaret Holder asked what the levels meant in layman's terms. Maija McAdams stated that Level III was passing, Level IV was beyond passing, and Levels I and II were not passing. Christian Nechyba asked how these numbers compared to last year. Maija McAdams stated that the numbers were generally better. She stated that there was growth in grades 3-5, but that she couldn't comment on grades 6-8 yet, as the data was still preliminary. Andy Kristianson stated that it was the intention of representatives from the Board to meet with DPI after EOG results were finalized in August, and sit down with scores and budget numbers, and get a report card from them. This had also been done last year, and DPI had been very pleased with the school's performance. Lori Tolson asked if there was any way to get a breakdown on how many students performed at Levels I, II, III, and IV. Maija McAdams stated that this breakdown would be available on the NC report card once the data had been finalized in the fall. Helen Harris asked if we could make this data public when results were finalized. DJ Hill stated that when the final data was compiled, it could be posted on the school website.

### **Parent Survey Review**

**Christian Nechyba**

Christian Nechyba provided a summary of results from this year's parent surveys. This summary was created by the personnel committee of the board following two months of scoring and analysis. A total of 238 surveys were completed and analyzed. Questions were rated on a scale of 1 to 5 : (5 = Very satisfied; 4 = Satisfied; 3 = Neutral; 2= Dissatisfied; 1 = Very dissatisfied). The following questions asked parents to evaluate Endeavor's global performance:

<u>Question:</u>	<u>Score:</u>
(1) How satisfied are you with your child's overall performance at ECS?	4.5
(2) Overall, how satisfied area you with Endeavor Charter School?	4.44

89.5% of respondents would recommend Endeavor to other parents (2.1% would not recommend, 7.5% don't know). 84.1% of respondents intended to keep their child at Endeavor as long as the school served students their child's age (1.2% intended to move their child from Endeavor, 13% did not know). A significant proportion of the 13% "do not know" respondents stated as the reason for their response that they were not sure if they would keep their child at Endeavor for high school.

He stated that numerical responses to almost all questions on this survey showed a mean school wide score between 4 and 5 (satisfied to very satisfied). This included 30 questions pertaining to curriculum, communication, academics, administration, staff, board, athletics, and enrichment. The only exceptions to this were mean scores for 3 questions pertaining to school facilities (3.4), school calendar/track (3.8), and community outreach (3.8), which ranked between 3.4 and 3.8 (neutral to satisfied).

The Board of Directors has provided a detailed analysis of both numerical data and parent comments as it pertains to curriculum and staff to the administration and feedback from this analysis will be provided to the staff by the administration. An analysis of data as it pertains to the extracurricular athletics and enrichment programs will be provided by the Board to the Pride Boosters and the Enrichment Coordinator.

A summary of the school's top 10 perceived strengths include:

- (1) Parent involvement & support
- (2) Dedicated & engaged staff
- (3) Small class size
- (4) Field trips that enhance the curriculum
- (5) Commitment to experiential learning
- (6) Strong sense of school community
- (7) Caring & nurturing environment
- (8) Strong support of students from teachers and administration
- (9) Academic program
- (10) Athletic program

He stated that Endeavor's top 10 perceived opportunities for improvement from the surveys (as well as planned board action on each point) are as follows:

<u>Opportunity:</u>	<u>Board Action:</u>
(1) Facilities	Endeavor Foundation has initiated a capital campaign for expanded permanent facility. Continued attention to safety and cleanliness of current leased facility will be given.
(2) High School Expansion	Board has committed to high school expansion beginning one year after move to permanent facility.
(3) Volunteerism	Board and administration are working to address volunteer orientation, volunteer expectations, and best use of volunteer resources. School will begin to provide funding for volunteer background checks.
(4) Community outreach/diversity	Many community service projects this year. Board will delegate to administration to continue to develop Endeavor's vision for community outreach and diversity in curriculum. Diversity goals can also be addressed through enrichment programs. Student population diversity is somewhat constrained by lottery admissions process,

at least until school expansion to a permanent facility.

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| (5) Technology          | Board considering increase in funding and availability of technology coordinator staff position in coming school year to drive application of technology in classrooms. Second mobile computer lab being added, as well as many new in-class technologies (partially funded thanks to PAWS support). More computer workstations in classroom next year. Increased teacher technology training also in progress. |
| (6) Guidance counselor  | Board is considering approval of a part-time guidance counselor position for next year. Opportunity to address behavioral, social, and bullying issues.   |
| (7) Foreign language    | Added to middle school curriculum as core subject next year (Spanish).  |
| (8) Rigorous curriculum | Survey feedback on perceived areas of strength and areas of need have been provided to administration for review. Curriculum coordinators to provide periodic updates to board on how charter goals are implemented through curriculum.   |
| (9) Safety              | Manual of safety and emergency procedures has been revised and updated. These procedures will be clearly communicated not only to staff but to parent volunteers.   |
| (10) Athletics          | Board has created a full time athletic director position. Middle school physical education electives to be offered next year. Increased visibility of athletics program on school website will be provided.   |

DJ Hill added that although the surveys had been time consuming to fill out and analyze, that this was worth every second. He stated that every member of the Board values parental input on school performance.

### **Public Forum**

### **DJ Hill**

DJ Hill opened the Board meeting for public comment. He stated that the number of individuals in the room was a testament to the school, and was what made the school great. He stated that one of the significant strengths of the school was its engaged parent population. He asked all individuals to introduced themselves before making remarks.

April Lee was the first parent to speak, and she took the opportunity both to explain the large public presence at the meeting and to offer her support of Ms. Schnars. Ms. Lee read from a

prepared speech, which was provided to the Board and is attached as Appendix A to these minutes.

DJ Hill thanked Ms. Lee for her comments, and Christian Nechyba asked Ms. Lee for a copy of her comments to append to the meeting minutes.

Jim Dotson proceeded to express comments in support of Mrs. Schnars, and emphasized the importance of choosing the right teachers for our students. He expressed a desire to understand the process of teacher reviews.

There were a number of middle-school students present at the meeting, and 8 of them spoke in support of Ms. Schnars during the public comments period. At Christian Nechyba's suggestion, and by agreement of all present, it was determined that the students would not be identified by name in the meeting minutes.

Marcie Akers expressed support for Ms. Goodman's progress as a teacher this year. She also expressed her belief that Mrs. Schnars was an excellent teacher and had made a difference in her child's life, as well as her disappointment in the non-renewal of Mrs. Schnars' contract. Lori and Steven Katzenstein made comments in support of Mrs. Schnars' ability to connect with students. Harry Kaplan stated that Mrs. Schnars had been an inspiring science teacher, and stated that he was concerned whether the process of teacher review was fair.

DJ Hill asked for Board comments at this point. He said that there were extraordinarily talented people on the Board and in stakeholder groups. He stated that this was not a decision that was made without consultation with the Board; the personnel chair, the corporate governance chair, and the Board chair, had all been involved, and both outside counsel had been consulted on this decision. He said that one of the challenges you face in a personnel issue, is that two duties are involved. He stated that one of the duties we have as a Board is the duty of confidentiality. It would be inappropriate for the Board to violate a staff member's right to privacy. We are not in a perfect situation, he said, because the same information that is available to the Board is not available to parents.

Jennifer Wolborsky asked if any Board members had a child who had been taught by Mrs. Schnars. The Board indicated that no board member had a child in Mrs. Schnars' class. Jim Force asked what the review process was for teachers, and how decisions were made about their performance. Harry Kaplan stated that this could be discussed without violating confidentiality.

DJ Hill stated that administrators can speak to the general process, but not about the specifics of one teacher's review. He stated that the Board had conducted a thorough review of its legal rights and responsibilities, and its fiduciary responsibility as an employer in accordance with DPI regulations. A substantive review had occurred on this issue with a third party. He stated that he fully believed that nobody here wanted a bad outcome.

Steve McAdams stated that, in terms of the general process, teachers were observed frequently, using both formal observations and informal drop-ins. Once tenure is achieved, the state didn't not require as many observations. However, charter schools don't recognize tenure. Everyone is on a one-year contract. Generally, many observations are made, written, and documented in various settings.

Jim Force asked if teachers receive written reviews and if this decision was a decision made on the basis of something that happened in a review. Andy Kristianson stated that the Board would not answer any specific questions on Mrs. Schnars. Cindy Pleasant asked if teachers had been through a formal process with specific goals that are periodically reviewed.

DJ Hill again stated that the administration could not discuss details of one teacher's situation. However, he stated that any employee in any employment situation has multiple standards they must uphold.

Sharon Lewin asked if a personnel review process was in place for administration. DJ Hill stated that personnel reviews for the administrative team were conducted by the current Board chair, the personnel chair, and the corporate governance chair. Paula Foster thanked the Board for all they had done for this school and stated that she trusts the Board's decision.

DJ Hill stated that on any issue there is no lack of willingness on the part of any member of the Board to express a dissenting opinion. He stated that the Board recruited to look for talent, expertise or a unique professional viewpoint so that as best we can blind spots were minimized.

Margaret Holder suggested that the Board clarify how it works, especially how the corporate governance committee works and how the personnel committee works. Andy Kristianson stated that he was the corporate governance chair. He stated that his job was to make sure that we as a Board have policies/procedures in place to make sure we are following due process in how we conduct decisions overarching everything that the Board does, and that we make sure we have policies in place appropriate to a school our size. Lisa Springle stated that she was the personnel chair and stated that the personnel committee was responsible for making sure appropriate policies and procedures for staff were available, that surveys of parents and faculty were conducted annually and led to appropriate action, that staff grievances were addressed appropriately, and that staff benefits were reviewed. Certain personnel questions were handled by the personnel chair, the corporate governance chair and the Board chair to maximize confidentiality. Margaret Holder stated that she trusted her colleagues and the decisions they made.

Tom Werk asked if this decision was something that could be re-evaluated.

DJ Hill stated that it was critical for the Board to consider parent feedback. He moved that the Board go into closed session at the end of the public meeting to discuss personnel issues. The decisions from the closed session would be made public. The Board voted unanimously in support of this motion.

Susan Digornimo asked if we were members of the North Carolina Alliance of Charter Schools, and DJ Hill responded that we were and that three Board members were attending the upcoming charter school conference. She also expressed a desire for a written evaluation process for administration and staff. Heather Reifschneider and Susie Masten also asked about details of the staff review process.

Christi Whiteside stated that teacher observation forms and evaluations were being used, and as of next year there was a state required evaluation tool which would also be implemented. She stated that this had been a transition year for the school's observation process. Because of this, she said, all tenured teachers were not formally observed this year. All ILTs were formally observed following the state requirements. The new tool was very data driven, and she stated that the administration was very excited about this. She added that teachers had an individual growth plan that they establish for themselves, but that not every teacher had a specific list of goals.

DJ Hill thanked the students for the comments and stated that he really appreciated the passion of all who spoke. He stated that he hoped we could disagree about specific decisions and still maintain this level of input.

Andy Kristianson stated that the Board could not promise a decision directly after the end of the closed session tonight.



An audience member asked about conflicts of interest given the relationship of the members of the administrative team. DJ Hill stated that this had been discussed extensively with DPI and external counsel, and that 13 compensating controls had been put in place to mitigate conflicts of interest. He stated that the Board strongly believed that the school had benefited greatly because of the relationship, since the administrative team "lived and breathed" the school, even after hours. He stated that the Board had gone to extraordinary lengths to make sure compensating controls are in place, and that external members of the Board frequently asked to meet without administrators present when any potential conflict of interest existed.

Helen Harris stated that hiring and firing decisions were made by administration. The Board, personnel, and corporate governance chairs were consulted to insure that policies were followed.

DJ Hill called for a short recess at 10:20 pm. The Board reconvened in public session at 10:45 pm.

### **Staff Board Position**

### **Andy Kristianson**

Andy Kristianson stated that the staff board position had recently opened. This position was initially held by Christi Whiteside, who had been extremely helpful in guiding the Board on how the school was set up under its charter and what the school's vision was. Christi Whiteside had decided to step down from her board position. He stated that he was really grateful for her time on board. Christian Nechyba stated that Christi Whiteside had, as a school founder and visionary, been the heart and soul of Endeavor. He stated that she had provided unique and immensely valuable contributions as a Board member, and had provided unique guidance the Board repeatedly during the founding and initial two years of the school. He presented her with a plaque of recognition for her service to the school as a Board member. DJ Hill stated that his family's decision to join Endeavor was based on Christi Whiteside's articulation of the school's mission, and that he had never been disappointed in her performance since that time.

Andy Kristianson stated that one year remained in the current staff Board term. The position had been publicized to the Endeavor staff members, and two very good candidates submitted their names for consideration. The Board conducted interviews with both candidates after notice of the interview times had been publicized. Written ballots were submitted to every Board member except Steve McAdams and Christi Whiteside. All ballots would be signed. Vote results would be announced publically, and the minutes would reflect how each board member voted. The two candidates were Cindy Landwehr and Christine Northrup. The final vote was 5 votes for Christine Northrup and 2 votes for Cindy Landwehr.

Votes for Cindy Landwehr: Helen Harris, Margaret Holder

Votes for Christine Northrup: DJ Hill, Andy Kristianson, Christian Nechyba, Lisa Springle, Larry Woolard.

DJ Hill stated that the discussion at the interviews did not revolve around personalities, but on who would be the best fit for the Board. The Board had to weigh a candidate with very deep and respected experience and a candidate with the ability to touch every classroom in the school. He stated that both candidates were fantastic.

Andy Kristianson stated that the Board had been remiss several months ago when Joey House stepped off the Board. As the Board hadn't had an opportunity to formally thank him at that time, the Board wanted to thank him formally for all his work in getting the school off the ground. The Board expresses its thanks to Joey House and will present him with a token of its appreciation.

### **Launch Bonus**

### **Margaret Holder**

Margaret Holder stated that the Board, as part of the budget approved tonight, will award all teachers and staff who finish the school year at Endeavor this year with a launch bonus of \$1000 each. Andy Kristianson clarified that this decision was made fully by outside Board members, with no participation by inside directors (Steve McAdams or Christi Whiteside).

### **Public Forum (continued)**

### **DJ Hill**

DJ Hill asked for a few more comments from the audience before the Board adjourned into closed personnel session.

Victory Wise expressed support for Mrs. Schnars, and that she did not understand the reasons for the decision. Susan Force expressed support for Mrs. Schnars also.

DJ Hill stated that there were pieces of information that could not be publically disclosed, but that the breadth and depth of the discussion had been helpful.

Lori Watson asked if half the Board did not know the reasons for the decision, would these reasons be revealed to the rest of the Board. DJ Hill stated that they would be.

DJ Hill adjourned the public Board meeting at 11:07 pm, and the Board moved into closed session at that time. After review and discussion, the existing decision that was originally shared with some members of the Endeavor community by Ms. Schnars was upheld.

### **Appendix A: Comments from Mrs. April Lee**

My name is April Lee and I have three children here at Endeavor. Tonight I was asked to speak on behalf of the parents and students you see before you here tonight, as well as many other concerned parents and students that have signed letters and a petition who could not be here this evening. We would like to address the board in regards to what we see as a grave mistake in a personnel matter. It has become known that Mrs. Erica Schnars was asked to resign her position at Endeavor, and did not have her contract renewed for next year. The parents and students you see before you here tonight are here in protest of that decision. We feel this decision is not in the best interests of our children, the students of Endeavor. Mrs. Schnars is one of the best teachers my children have ever had - at this school or any other. She is extremely smart and dedicated to her students. The EOG test scores in science speak for themselves. She gives 110% every day, and expects no less from our children. She pushes them to be as exceptional as they can be. She helps them to expand their horizons, how to challenge themselves and each other. She makes whatever subject she is teaching fun and interesting, which makes them want to learn. She commands respect, and gives respect in return. In talking with a parent of a current 8<sup>th</sup> grade student she gave me a prime example of the effect Mrs. Schnars has had on these students: She said "Last year I would go into the classroom to cover lunch for the teachers. I would ask the boys to do something like 'please sit down' and in return they would reply 'make me.' It was intimidating to say the least. I dreaded volunteering in the classroom. This year is a complete turn around. I happily cover lunch duty for Mrs. Schnars because those same boys who challenged me last year, now listen and do as they are asked. These kids can and have come to her for help in subjects that she doesn't even teach. They trust her. They know they can talk to her and be regarded as the young adults they are trying to become. She has changed the lives of so many children at this school in a positive, meaningful way. She has helped them find the self confidence in themselves they didn't even know was there. She is an amazing role model for both young women and men alike. How lucky we are to have such a strong, intelligent,

dedicated female in our children's lives during the most emotionally and physically turbulent time in their development. She has made a difference. We, as parents of current and future middle school students here at Endeavor, implore you to realize what an enormous mistake not renewing the contract of such an extraordinary educator would be. I am sure the administration feels they are acting appropriately. However, running a school is as new of an experience to them as attending a start up school is for most of us as parents. Mistakes are bound to be made. The bigger picture must be considered. Let's try to correct these mistakes before the ramifications are irreversible and have a lasting negative impact on the reputation and the future of our school. We cannot continue to let amazing teachers such as Erica Schnars go, only to be replaced by mediocre teachers who are not "Endeavor Quality". We need to keep teachers like Mrs. Schnars who strive to make ECS the amazing learning environment that we know it can be. Our middle school students have gone through enough instability and upheaval in their educational careers already. Mr. McAdams is very fond of saying that ECS is the Best School In Raleigh. I believe that to be true...for now. If we continue down this path, I fear we will become just like the public schools we chose to leave: unexceptional institutions of instability. The Foundation is looking to the parents to fund the new building. The last I heard, they were looking for 1.2 million dollars. That is an enormous financial request of the Endeavor family's hard earned income that is not easily come by in these difficult economic times. We cannot in good conscience financially support a school without knowing that we have a Board of Directors and Administration who will not dismiss quality teachers without working together towards a compromise and solution to disagreements or personality differences. I'm sure as a parent of a student here at Endeavor, you feel the way we do - that our children deserve the best education possible. I am sure that's why you take time out of your work and family life to serve on this board. That's why we chose a charter school over the public schools - isn't it? That's all we are asking for - the best that education has to offer. The very nature of a charter school demands parental involvement. We chose Endeavor Charter School so that we could participate in our children's education as well as be heard and not be worried about being lost in the bureaucracy of the county public school system. Therefore, we respectfully ask that the Board renew Mrs. Schnars contract for the upcoming school year. We would also like to respectfully ask that the evaluation process for educators, administrators and staff at ECS be reviewed for compliance with the Department of Public Instruction and State Board of Education requirements. We would like to submit this petition for the Board's consideration signed by parents, students and concerned adults in the community in support of a contract for Mrs. Schnars. We would also like to submit these letters from students and parents alike that speak to the impact Mrs. Schnars has had on their lives, and the lives of their students. Lastly, I would like to thank the Board for giving us the opportunity to be heard on this matter.