



Endeavor Board Meeting Agenda: April 23, 2024

7:00 PM in the Auditorium and via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85926333534?pwd=UIYwTzRFdYrb0dJK28zZkoxQzgvUT09>

Present:

Board Member	Position	Committee	Term Start	Term Ending	Present
Jaclyn Parks Start: 4/8/2019	Member	CDC (Chair)	7/1/2022	6/30/2025	Yes
Katrina Caseldine Start: 3/1/2023	Member	Governance	7/1/2022	6/30/2025	Yes
Tracy DeMarco Start: 6/15/2017	Secretary	Governance (Chair)	7/1/2023	6/30/2026	Yes
Kristen Walsh Start: 3/1/2023	Member	Governance	7/1/2023	6/30/2026	Yes
David Roy Start: 2/23/2021	Member	Finance	7/1/2023	6/30/2026	Yes
Alyssa Ruth Start: 3/15/2022	Member	CDC	7/1/2021	6/30/2024	Yes
Israa Kanfoud Start: 6/12/2018	Treasurer	Finance (Chair)	7/1/2021	6/30/2024	Yes
Dustin Embrey Start: 2/23/2021	Chair	--	7/1/2021	6/30/2024	Yes
Heather Flynt Start: 3/1/2023	Member	Finance	7/1/2021	6/30/2024	Yes

Call to Order:

Dustin Embrey

- Dustin Embrey called the meeting to order at 7:07 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 April 23, 2023 Agenda. Dustin Embrey seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously.

Foundation Board Update:

Paul DeMarco

- Paul DeMarco explained that the purpose of the Foundation Board is to serve as caretaker of the ECS facility. The biggest issue the Foundation Board deals with is working out kinks in new building. The Foundation Board works with Marina and Christi on an ongoing basis to determine what issues we have.
- The Foundation Board is also working with the stakeholder group to develop Campus Improvement Plan. The Foundation Board has engaged McAdams, a landscape architecture firm to help develop proposed improvements to the exterior of school. Wrap aesthetic goals with physical problems.

PAWS Update:

Lori D'Elia

- Lori D'Elia gave a brief update on recent events and activities supported by PAWS. Lori reported that PAWS hosted a staff luncheon on April 1, 2024. Lend-a-PAW took place on April 14th. Lori reported that there was good attendance at the event and the group was able to accomplish everything on the list. On May 3rd, PAWS will be hosting a breakfast for ECS staff with 8th grade parents. Finally, PAWS will be hosting a weeklong donation drive for the Giving Tree on May 6-11.

5-Year Plan Scheduling Committee Update:

Amy Wilson & Brittni Doyle

- On behalf of the Scheduling Committee, Amy Wilson, Brittni Doyle, and Tracy DeMarco presented the final recommendations of the Scheduling Committee, which are as follows:
 1. *Digital Scheduling Tools*
 - a. In Fall 2024, consider and conduct a preliminary trial of the following digital scheduling tools: (1) Infinite Campus; (2) Docendo Zen; (3) DM Schedules; and (4) Rediker.
 - b. Assess the advantages and disadvantages of tools (2)-(4) as compared to Infinite Campus, which will be offered free to all Wake County schools in 2025-26.
 - c. By December 30, 2024, recommend a digital scheduling tool for use in developing the 2025-26 ECS schedule.
 2. *Elementary (K-5) Scheduling*
 - a. To the extent possible, prioritize the following principles in developing the daily schedule for grades K-5:
 - i. Uninterrupted literacy block (K/1 in morning);
 - a. Common intervention time within grade levels where possible;
 - ii. Protected daily planning time; and
 - iii. Longer block time.
 - b. Consider whether feasible to shorten lunch and lengthen recess in some or all grades
 3. *Middle School (6-8) Scheduling*
 - a. To the extent possible, prioritize the following principles in developing the daily schedule for grades 6-8:
 - i. Teacher planning periods 5 days/week (M-F);
 - ii. Consistent schedule 5 days/week (M-F);

- a. Lengthen class period time to approximately 60 minutes;
- iii. Decrease morning meeting time to 15 minutes 5 days/week.
- iv. Adjust lunch and recess schedules to allow more flexibility for students.

Committee Updates:

- Finance Committee **Israa Kanfoud**
 - Israa Kanfoud reported that ECS is track to hit the 2023-24 budget target, and the Finance Committee has a good line of sight to be able to pay a bonus to staff this year. Because there is always significant spend at the end of the school year, the Finance Committee will not be able to confirm the final bonus number until end of May.
 - The Finance Committee is also working to finalize the 2024-25 budget. The group met with Molly Blanchard and Christi Whiteside yesterday to work on the draft. Like always, the Board strives to bridge the gap to the Wake County salary scale as much as possible without endangering the fiscal health and performance of the school. Currently looking to bridge gap and stay within 95% of WCPSS salary for next year.
 - **Israa Kanfoud moved to approve payment of \$12,494.63 to Strategic Security Solutions for security cameras. Dustin Embrey seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously.**

- Governance Committee **Tracy DeMarco**
 - Tracy DeMarco reported that the Governance Committee continues to work on review of ECS Policies. The Committee anticipates a potential revision to the Admissions Policy over the summer. Tracy also explained that the U.S. Department of Education recently finalized its new Title IX Regulations. Consequently, ECS – like all other schools nationally – will need to make some updates to its Title IX Policy. The Governance will work with ECS’s outside counsel to ensure compliance.

- Community Development Committee **Jaclyn Parks**
 - Becky Catlett reported that ECS is 46% of way to the Annual Fund goal of \$250k. She noted that 50 generous families are giving on a monthly basis. Stride for the Pride kick-off is ongoing and 42% of students are already registered.
 - Becky reported that ECS is approximately \$15k ahead of where we were at this point last year.

Director’s Update:

Christi Whiteside

- ECS had another fantastic Say Something Week planned by our fantastic counselors with the help of Student Council.
- Thanks to the many local first responders who came to campus during Say Something Week!
- Enrichment Expo and Book Fair was held in March. ECS had great family attendance with great reports from everyone there! Thanks for the Enrichment and Elective teachers, PAWS, and Ms Doyle for overseeing the ECS part of the event.
- NJHS application window opened for eligible candidates. Selected students will be tapped this Friday.

- Great Closing Ceremony for Middle School to end quarter three. The highlight was a sneak preview of The Little Mermaid Jr. We got to see a scene, and it was so good! Grab your tickets when they go on sale!
- ECS held two teacher workdays in April to plan a strong ending for this year, and start planning for next year.
- ECS started fourth quarter with our middle school Opening Ceremony.
- ECS also announced our 8th grade Legacy Lion contest winner - Harper Hedrick whose art is now permanently on display in our front lobby.
- The staff School Improvement Team, Culture Committee and Leadership Teams have met this quarter and determined a school theme for next year - Dream big...Aim High.
- They are now working at ways to tie that theme to academic rigor and an SEL focus back on our Core Values: respect, responsibility, resilience, and relationships.

5-Year Strategic Plan:

Dustin Embrey

- Dustin Embrey provided a brief overview of the ECS 5-Year Plan Initiative 1.1, which involves implementing a comprehensive review and realignment of ECS's current faculty and staff, leveraging our talent pool and supporting the individual aspirations of all school employees.
- Tracy DeMarco reviewed the timeline of the Board's engagement of GROW Associates, subsequent development of the ECS 5-Year Plan, and completion of Initiative 1.1. She explained that the Board launched the work of preparing the 5-Year Plan in response to consistent feedback from teachers, parents, and staff (supported by the deep work of the CDC committee in Feb. 2023 roundtables) that clearly identified the need for a neutral, refreshed look at all aspects of ECS.
- Fully vetted all identified qualified candidates and selected a highly-qualified, education-focused consulting firm
 - Gaby, GROW's leader, is a former school principal, former school leader, strategic consultant, and was without question the right person to advise the Board throughout this process.
- Negotiated an extensive engagement with a broad scope of work that included a deep dive into all aspects of school (organizational structure, curricular offerings, community satisfaction, financing and budget, board governance, leadership, etc), recommendations for the Board's consideration, assistance implementing those recommendations, and professional development guidance for ECS leadership and the Board.
- Services provided were extensive and encompassed 1982 hours from GROW on the project plus several hundreds of hours of Board's volunteer time.
- The Board has kept the community informed of its work throughout. Announced engagement, included in interviews over the summer, 10 Board Meetings from engagement to present, Community Town Hall, and other emailed Community Announcements. The process included the following:
 - The Board discussed this specific process and its work at 10 Board Meetings after engaging Grow in June, August, September, October, November, December, January (2 meetings), February, and March.
 - April-May 2023 (and earlier) - Board discussed process of engaging a consultant. Defined scope, researched and identified candidates, and solicited proposals from all identified candidates.
 - June 5, 2023 - Board scheduled interviews of 3 candidates (GROW, Leaders Building Leaders, and the Sester Group). LBL dropped out on very short

notice. Board reviewed materials and submissions from both GROW and The Sester Group. Board conducted additional research to ensure no other candidates were viable and should be considered.

- June 16, 2023 - GROW engagement was approved by the Board. Contract was negotiated the next week and work began swiftly
- June 28, 2023 - Board Strategic Plan Kick Off Call with GROW
- July 13, 2023 - GROW engagement announced to ECS Community
- Summer 2023 - substantial GROW and Board work to make initial recommendations, including:
 - Document collection and review
 - Development of interview criteria and questions
 - Conducting stakeholder interviews and teacher round tables
 - Multiple days spent in-person on campus
- September 7-8: 2-day Board meetings to review GROW Recommendations and Findings
- October – November: Board works on revisions and development of 5 year plan
- November 2023: Board approves 5-year Plan
- December 5: Staff Town Hall
- January 10: Community Town Hall
- January 25, 2024: Community Announcement of 5-year plan and Committee solicitation
- [Execution of Initiative 1.1]
- March 12, 2024 - All Hands Staff Meeting to finalize Initiative 1.1
- Katrina Caseldine explained the process for speaking and asking questions during the unique Q&A session. She set expectations for respectful engagement across the community.
- Christi Whiteside provided an overview of the new ECS organizational structure that will be implemented for the 2024-25 school year.
- **Tracy DeMarco moved to approve the Revised ECS Organizational Structure. Dustin Embrey seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously.**

Q&A

- Whitney. Heard Christi say that STEAM is integrated into curriculum. Is the same true for science and social studies?
 - Katrina Caseldine: yes. Phenomenal skill set of teachers who are skilled at hands-on learning and STEAM-based practices. All of our practices in science, social studies, and STEAM are exceeding national best practices.
- Lena Sharon. Been at ECS since very first day. What was the cost to Grow?
 - Broken into 2 phase
- Christianna Campbell. Spanish – not having any exposure in ES and MS. Not having. Being in research triangle park, why a consulting firm in Texas. Any financial benefit.
 - KC. We as a Board spent a lot of time researching. To get the level of work that we did for \$22.5 an hour is a remarkably low cost. Zero financial incentive.
 - DE. I worked with her in TX when she was leader of school. She began a consulting . We were collectively disappointed that the group.
- Wendy. 7th grader. Using the same teachers for elementary and electives. Are teachers going to adapt to grade levels.

- They already serve all grades. To help their schedules and to help make sure they have appropriate planning time. We do have new group supporting k/1 enrichment.
 - We come from another charter school. It started out great and turned out to be a hot mess. Changes come with growing pains, but only thing constant is change. Going to have great school.
- Jacob Grew. Came tonight because there might be some fireworks. What information do you have about what that curriculum will be.
 - CW. Looking at portrait of a graduate skills. Opportunity to teach students how to do those things in the context of exploration – e.g. science, a historic event. We want it to be open because we want the person in that role to develop it. Is there a core syllabus for electives. Some of our
 - KC. As a board, we approve the hiring of every individual at our public board meetings.
- Erin Thompson. Thank you to Christi and Board. With consolidation of writing and reading in the middle school.
 - Highlight teachers receiving lower salaries than wake county to work here.
- What is reason for removing STEAM.
 - KC. Throughout the process. Charter says we are a school with a fine arts focus. It was important to take a hard look at the charter.
- Concerning is timeline. Families have a choice between Endeavor and other children. Applications are closed in December, January. Implementation of this phase.
 - KC. This process needed time to unfold. We announced it to the staff. There will be no delay in the implementation of the
- Joe Sana. Step-daughter in K. How does drama and discovery help students over the steam. You all continue to say the same line of sustaining the school for years to come.
 - CW: one of our charter focuses is arts. Tremendous amount of evidence on the benefits of arts education for students. We want whole-child, well-rounded students. That doesn't mean there is not tremendous benefit from STEAM. What was our commitment to the state in our charter. STEAM has aspects that we tiptoe into in our other core classes. Won't be the same, but we don't completely lose those aspects. Every kid values things differently.
 - JS: They are able to sign up as an extra-curricular activity that doesn't have to be.
 - [unknown]. Just because we don't have a STEAM class, does not mean that the rest of the school isn't incorporating these concepts.
 - KC: our athletic director is taking on an additional role with the goal of developing after school programming. We hope to be able to offer a STEAM club, a robotics club to offer extra opportunities outside
- [unknown] Excited to see that recess is not going away in MS. Great that its staying, sounds like PRIDE time is going away.
 - KC: what was presented was a shorter lunch and recess block. What will be shortened is lunch. Recess is staying the same. Students will be given the opportunity to use the time.
 - [unknown] PRIDE time. Electives will be 5 days a week.
 - CW: decision has not been made. Considered a form of recess that is not offered in most MS. They will still have 2 electives per semester. Only change is will be 5 days per week.

- Heather. 2 kids and first year parent. Do not agree with removal of Spanish or STEAM. Work in global role and disservice to not know Spanish. What is implementation plan of when elective classes will be rolled out.
 - CW: I wouldn't agree that we've had this plan for a while. Rolling things out as quickly as possible. Made decision to wait until meet the teacher for middle schoolers to sign up for electives.
 - Heather. Could you clarify where the \$50k came from for this study.
 - IK: Because this came up a couple times. If you invested in 2 companies and one of them has an R&D budget and one that doesn't – which one would you choose? The one with R&D because they are looking to the future. So as part of last year's budget, we did include \$30k as part of the GROW investment. Last year, we did have an opportunity to offset the cost by moving some of our cash to an interest-bearing account. If you're not improving, you're falling behind. I look at every invoice, every cost. We criticize it as much as we can, but that is part of the strategy of the school, we have to carve out a piece .
 - Heather. I maintain a budget at work and I just want to make sure there is transparency to the families about where their money is going.
- [unknown]. English is not my first language. We moved 4 years ago. Kids left ESL program in less than 3 mo. I appreciate school. We moved to school because of additional education. Want to say how sad it is that we have to choose between business and education. I'm worried. We have a choice. Frustrated that it's possible we have to make this kind of decision.
 - KC. I agree with you completely that these are really hard decisions. We would love to provide everything. Really sad that we don't have more funding.
- [unknown] I can see you've created a lot of space for fine arts to continue being a hero. How do we ensure that teaching remains rigorous. Heard concerns that teachers don't have teaching background.
 - CW: We are investing in people we know and believe in.
- Jessica Miller. 4th and 1st grader. Talked about teachers and how everyone here is underpaid. What makes teachers want to stay here.
 - IK: Charter schools funded differently from public. No money for facility creates a gap. We have a mortgage to pay on this building and the old building. That's why we always have a gap. That gap is bridged through fundraising and rental income and small areas we can control. Doesn't bridge the whole gap. Operate based on the budget we have. We are able to offer teachers a retirement plan, which most charter schools aren't able to do. Most charter schools offer 401k. Significant expense.
 - AR: Want to acknowledge PAWS. They are a huge part of teacher retention to make them feel supported throughout the year. Constantly advocating for teachers at school. Also familial environment that school creates.
 - CW: Our class size is a benefit. Our families who all chose this school, but all invested enough in education to go through the effort to apply. Families that care about their students' learning – big advantage to our teachers. Our staff is wonderful to be around.
 - Michelle Fitzpatrick: I've been teaching for 27 years in two states. I've taught 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade. I'm still here despite taking a pay cut after moving from an excellent school – heritage middle. The people here make a huge difference. When people here talk about bonuses. Between \$500-\$1,000. Teachers in this

building are some of the most highly qualified group of individuals. Been a lot of tears, a lot of frustration, but we appreciate that the ECS community stay positive because we are waking up every morning and coming to work for your children.

- Elizabeth Mahoney. 4 kids. Started here when school started. Been through ebbs and lows. Thing that I came to say is not what I'm going to say. I sat in corner and listened to what was going on. 2 things I heard (1) funding; and (2) Board transparency. They can't help the funding they don't get. We have to talk to the state about getting charters more money. The second part. When you don't know how someone got from point A to point B, you make things up. I never saw a survey to parents about what was important. People feeling like they were left out and not included in what was doing. Need to be straightforward with the parents about what will happen. We will be less likely to come in here with
 - AR. Want to acknowledge that a Tuesday night meeting once a month is not available to everyone. I want to make sure that everyone knows we are here every month and we want to make sure we transparent. Parent community doesn't engage with us on a regular basis. Notes are compiled into minutes and published to website. You can read our historical minutes. Those are publicly available to you. You can revisit that, and you're always welcome to reach out to us with questions. A lot of this is so dry. Sometimes it may feel like we are communicating and it's not breaking all the way through. I invite you to go to Board page on website.
- Heidi Bray. I felt like there wasn't transparency. When you're going to have big curriculum changes and take away wonderful offerings. Alison Hester is iconic with her science and she does the coolest things for kids. In this whole process, her expertise is being lost. There wasn't an option for her. Take this new position that's not science based or nothing. Board should have worked with her to keep her and make it work. Teacher turnover is the highest rate it's been in the last 20 years. I just feel like in this process, the teachers were not valued properly. Had NDAs placed in front of them and weren't supposed to talk about it for a number of days. Board treated teachers poorly in delivering news. Defies logic to remove STEAM, science, and foreign language. If you look at the website, shows the ECS lion that says "we learn by doing." What says we learn by doing better than science and team. The arts are amazing, I love the arts. These teachers are fantastic, but we shouldn't be ignoring the sciences. I know there are monetary constraints, but need to find a way. Website picture of Alison Hester with students doing an experiment. Disconnect of learning by doing and cutting science and STEAM.
 - HB: what new instruction is being offered?
 - KC: explorations. CCs that can focus 100% of their time
- [unknown]. You guys said it's already been decided. Why come if there's no conversation. How do we get to the meeting where our input will be considered.
 - KC: This strategic plan were first plan
- [unknown]. How do I know which board meeting is going to address topics I care about?
 - AR: come
- Lori D'Elia. President of PAWS. 4th grader, 2nd grader, and rising K. When I started as PAWS president, we found out that the systems were broken. Things weren't working to the best of our ability. I wanted to say thank you to the Board because you have been unwavering of your support of PAWS. When you say thank you to PAWS, you're saying thank you to the Board and thank you to Christi. We're all working together.

- [unknown online]. Will there be opportunities for after school clubs in ES to bridge gap.
 - CW: our hope is that we will have those offerings.
 - AR: reminder that this is a 5-year plan. Long-term goals that things we weren't able to fit into the core school day, will be offered in other ways.
- Susan [online]. Couple of questions. Current teachers have gotten students really excited about science and STEAM. Engineer so science is extremely important to me. How do you plan to get students excited if this is rolled into core classes.
 - CW: it has been an honor and privilege to have science and social studies as enrichment over the last couple of years. Teachers will go back to what they were doing before. Will move forward. We have expertise in those subjects in other classrooms in our building.
- Susan [online]. Seems like a lot of parents are upset at the loss of STEAM where the explorations enrichment class can be replaced with STEAM again.
 - CW: I think there's a tremendous opportunity for that explorations position to carry forward STEAM.
- Susan [onlin]. We were rated #1 public school in Middle School last year. If it wasn't broke, why are we fixing it.
 - CW: There were portions that were very broke. I'm glad it was not apparent to students or parents. But to our staff, there were pieces that were very broken. We need to support our staff.
- Rich [online]. Thank you for protecting and advancing teacher pay. Question is we're heading into 2025, we are huge supporters of the arts. Seems like the parent body of the school believes that removing STEAM is moving the school backward. Why not combine music and drama together and retain STEAM as an option for students.
 - CW: While drama and music complement each other, they are wildly different skill sets. I think incorporating STEAM principles into explorations class is the way forward.
 - AR: when you step back from STEAM the class, we have all of the elements in our core classes. While there isn't a specific course with that title, the concepts are still there and robust.
- [unknown]. Why can't Alison Hester keep her science class. We cut off our right arm losing Hester. She's the backbone. Heartbreaking to lose her.
 - CW: Can't speak about personnel matters.
- [unknown]. Is there anything parents can do to influence how this course is developed. Would they be able to decide to focus strongly on STEAM?
 - CW: Anyone with a passion could incorporate those concepts
- Logan. Don't believe Dustin disclosed his association with Ken Keohane.

Adjournment:

Dustin Embrey

Dustin Embrey adjourned the meeting at 10:38 p.m.