



The Exploris School

The Exploris School Board Regular Monthly Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday May 22, 2025 at 4:30 PM EDT

Location

The Exploris School: Elementary Campus
17 S Swain St, Raleigh, NC 27601, USA
5th Grade Classroom

Agenda

| | Purpose | Presenter | Time |
|---|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| I. Opening Items | | | 4:30 PM |
| A. Record Attendance | | Edward Buchan | 1 m |
| B. Call the Meeting to Order | | Steven Darroch | 1 m |
| C. Approve Minutes | Approve Minutes | Edward Buchan | 2 m |
| Approve minutes for The Exploris School Board Regular Monthly Meeting on April 24, 2025 | | | |
| D. Public Comment | | Steven Darroch | 15 m |
| PUBLIC COMMENT | | | |

| | Purpose | Presenter | Time |
|-----------|---|-------------|------|
| | <p>Fifteen minutes will be allocated on the agenda for public input at each meeting. Additional time may be added at the discretion of the Chair.</p> <p>Public comment may be oral, in person, or in written form to be read by the Chair. Public comment is limited to no more than 3 minutes per person. It is recommended that public comment be written out and provided to the board following the three minutes to ensure the entire message is heard by the board.</p> <p>Each speaker will clearly state their full name and county of residence.</p> <p>All public comment should be factual and should not include personally identifiable information of students or personnel in order to maintain confidentiality. Speakers should avoid using names of students or staff and maintain confidentiality and privacy standards.</p> <p>All public comments will be taken under advisement by the Board, but will not elicit an immediate written or spoken response. The names of persons providing public comment and a brief summary of topics or input will be included in the meeting minutes published.</p> <p>A response will be provided to the stakeholder within seven (7) days. Those providing public comment are asked to provide in writing (either in person or via email to board@exploris.org) their contact information including name, County of residence, and address (either email or postal, whichever is preferred).</p> <p>Specific issues about a particular student or teacher should be addressed to the elementary or middle school director, rather than the Board of Directors.</p> | | |
| E. | Board Development | Josh Corbat | 10 m |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine Board Member availability for the Board Retreat for the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th Saturday in September • Working with IES or other partner to move our Strategic Vision forward (see attached draft generated from feedback at the January Board Retreat) | | |

II. Committee Reports

4:59 PM

- The Board oversees the membership and work of each Committee.

- | | Purpose | Presenter | Time |
|--|---------|-----------|------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committees present their latest minutes and action items to the Board. The Board makes all official decisions regarding Committee recommendations. | | | |

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|-----------|---------|------|--------------|------|
| A. | Finance | Vote | Koren Morgan | 10 m |
|-----------|---------|------|--------------|------|

- Monthly Financial Reports
- Vote: Annual Budget Revision
- Vote: Audit Engagement Letter

| | | | | |
|-----------|------------------------|---------|--------------|------|
| B. | Educational Excellence | Discuss | Eric Grunden | 10 m |
|-----------|------------------------|---------|--------------|------|

<https://www.beautiful.ai/player/-OQiNB1p-7eInMQLP5CB/Education-Excellence-Committee-Meeting-Exceptional-Childrens-Dept-5825>

Educational Excellence presentation on EC program at Exploris from May 8th 2025

| | | | | |
|-----------|------------|-----|---------------|------|
| C. | Governance | FYI | Deborah Brown | 10 m |
|-----------|------------|-----|---------------|------|

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|-----------|----------------------------------|-----|----------------|-----|
| D. | Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | FYI | Crystal Harden | 5 m |
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| E. | Director Evaluation & Support | Discuss | Steven Darroch | 5 m |
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| F. | Facilities | FYI | Josh Corbat | 10 m |
|-----------|------------|-----|-------------|------|

- Updates on Facilities Project

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|-----------|--------|-----|------------|------|
| G. | Kaizen | FYI | Tasha Void | 10 m |
|-----------|--------|-----|------------|------|

- Kaizen leaders will give an update to the Board.

III. The Exploris Foundation 5:59 PM

- The Exploris Foundation Board will give an update on their latest efforts.

| | | | | |
|-----------|-------------------|-----|--------------|-----|
| A. | Foundation Update | FYI | Susan Singer | 5 m |
|-----------|-------------------|-----|--------------|-----|

IV. The Exploris Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) 6:04 PM

The Exploris PTO leadership will give an update on their latest efforts.

| | Purpose | Presenter | Time |
|---|---------|------------------|----------------|
| A. PTO Update | FYI | Stacey Carothers | 5 m |
| V. Meeting Items | | | 6:09 PM |
| A. Directors Report | FYI | Josh Corbat | 10 m |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Report & Updates (The Directors Report will not be made verbally during meetings. Please review the written report prior to the meeting. We will answer questions and provide critical updates and vote on any requested items.) • Implementation of new Student Device Damage Protection Plan | | | |
| B. Board Business | Vote | Steven Darroch | 10 m |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Discussions • Vote: Proposal from IES for Strategic Planning support | | | |
| VI. Closed Session | | | 6:29 PM |
| A. Facilities & Legal Items | Discuss | Josh Corbat | 5 m |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates on Facilities • Updates on Personnel • Updates on any Open Legal Items | | | |
| VII. Closing Items | | | 6:34 PM |
| A. Adjourn Meeting | Vote | | |

Coversheet

Approve Minutes

Section: I. Opening Items
Item: C. Approve Minutes
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:

Related Material:

Minutes for The Exploris School Board Regular Monthly Meeting on April 24, 2025

DOC042425-04242025190110.pdf

Response to public comments at 4_24_25 Board Meeting (1).pdf

APPROVED



The Exploris School

Minutes

The Exploris School Board Regular Monthly Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday April 24, 2025 at 4:30 PM

Location

The Exploris School: Elementary Campus
17 S Swain St, Raleigh, NC 27601, USA
5th Grade Classroom

Directors Present

C. Harden, E. Buchan, E. Grunden (remote), S. Darroch, S. Scipione, S. Singer, V. Hicks-Harris (remote), W. McLamb

Directors Absent

G. Bayo, P. President, S. Riley, T. Void

Ex Officio Members Present

E. Burton, J. Corbat

Non Voting Members Present

E. Burton, J. Corbat

Guests Present

K. Morgan

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

S. Darroch called a meeting of the board of directors of The Exploris School to order on Thursday Apr 24, 2025 at 4:34 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

E. Buchan made a motion to approve the minutes from The Exploris School Board Regular Monthly Meeting on 03-27-25.

E. Grunden seconded the motion.

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

D. Public Comment

Susan Singer requested that more time is allotted to public comment in excess of the traditional 15 minutes. Mr. Darroch granted this request.

Abby Burka - provided comments regarding conditions of facilities and janitorial services. Also indicated that school leadership has not been responsive. Asked for an independent review of the leadership structure and create a transparent budget process.

Andrea Wise - complained about lack of program funding. Asked for the following: Fund utilization report, biannual financial report and the development of a multiyear business plan

Shawn (parent of former student) - reported his son was bullied at Exploris and the issue was not addressed by the teacher and school leadership. This issue led him to remove his son from the school.

Andrea Merkle (sp?) - expressed concern about the overall trajectory of the school. Cited loss of teachers and families.

Brittany Ruter - asked how decisions are made and suggested a new process is needed. Identified the Governance Committee as needing a new structure and member composition.

Shannon Hardy - former instructor described her experience at Exploris and indicated she

Anna Thiesson - asked the board to take several steps to improve overall performance.

James Michael - parent of 6th grader. Pleased with overall school experience but hopes the facility conditions and communication are improved.

Kenneth Ball - overall pleased with the school but hopes improvements can be made.

Kira Keoboth - cited her previous concerns that her and other parents had identified. Reported 5 items they cited have not been properly addressed.

E. Board Development

No update available.

II. Committee Reports

A. Governance

Mr. Darroch indicated 2 board member candidates have been offered a tour.

E. Buchan made a motion to Accept Dr. Crystal Harden to the board.

S. Scipione seconded the motion.

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

B. Finance

Koren provided the update on the budget. Indicated revenues have increased enough to no longer need a \$65K fund transfer. The revenues are also adequate to meet all employee compensation needs. The School Foundation requested \$22K to cover predevelopment charges for new facility.

Susan Singer asked for easier to understand financial reports.

S. Singer made a motion to table budget amendment to the next Finance meeting (May 22).

W. McLamb seconded the motion.

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

C. Educational Excellence

Josh summarized the latest educational benchmark data, and overall positive trends.

D. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Dr. Harden will be moving this committee forward.

E. Director Evaluation & Support

Mr. Darroch discussed evaluation process.

F. Facilities

Josh provided the update. Described the process of working with COR on the TIA for the Kindly St. property and the traffic management plans were accepted. Susan Singer asked if we are still evaluating other sites. Josh indicated we are still looking at a "B site".

Susan Singer pointed out we cannot truly start fundraising until a site has been formally selected. Josh continued that Rosewood is continuing to further evaluate the "B site".

Susan Singer asked if there was a volunteer to help manage this process and Josh indicated he does have some assistance in this area.

G. Kaizen

Shanwa - Kaizen has broken up into separate working teams including data management and survey information.

Scheduled an EOY retreat.

III. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

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

Respectfully Submitted,
E. Buchan

Speaker 6: Closing Statement

Wake County

Drive in Raleigh

My name is Andrea Merkel. Do you know what I love about Exploris? I love that when I walk into the K-2 building, there is the sweetest blonde haired girl from kindergarten who greets me with a big hug. Every time. You know what I also love? Hearing students shout from down the hall, ^{hello} "Hey, Albert's mom!" or "Hey, ~~Lucy's mom!~~" ^{when they see me,} Or hearing my favorite front desk person scream, "Merkel's!" every afternoon in Carpool. Yep. I'm here a lot. I volunteer. I sub. Why?

Because I have loved this place since before I had children. ^{And I love being a part of it.}

I love this place because of its reputation. It's a place students, teachers, and parents are proud to be part of. A place where real learning happens through community partnerships and hands-on experiences. Teachers are empowered to be creative and are supported. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share their own expertise. Community Circle is ~~packed and held outdoors, full of joy~~ ^{full of joy} and connection. ^{chose} And I want to be here. ^{full with parents, celebrating students}

~~the school I thought brought my children to. It's not. It's changed. And~~ ^I ~~there are not enough hugs or shout outs to overlook the differences from the~~ ^{the bridging school}

That's the school I ~~thought~~ brought my children to. It's not. It's changed. And there are not enough hugs or shout outs to overlook the differences from the original Exploris vision. And like these other parents who have spoken today, ^{along with} ~~and so~~ many others, I have shown up again and again only to be disappointed or ignored. And I've finally realized, Exploris is at a breaking point—not because of one issue, but because the systems holding this school together are no longer working.

If you tell me you're trying and doing the best you can. Then do better. Because it's not good enough. Our donations are unaccounted for. Your losing families. You're losing staff. We are all tired of wishing and waiting for one of you to fix it. Put your pride aside and admit this is more than you can handle. Because let's face it—you're not just hurting us. You're hurting the very students ^{who you're} ~~were~~ supposed to be **empowering to improve our world.**

Feeling confident that our children are happy, safe and nurtured at school is an **expectation**. Knowing that our teachers are supported and given a safe and healthy work environment to teach our children in, is an **expectation**. Not a luxury. ^{and} Those are basic responsibilities of the board members and school leaders, ^{and} and you are not meeting those expectations.

Exploris is losing funding, partnerships, innovative teachers, and extraordinary families—because of structural failures within its administration and board.

So today, I'm not ~~just~~ asking for change—I'm demanding it. I'm ~~also~~ submitting a clear 90-day action plan ~~for your review~~. *And to help with these changes starting with removal of the current leadership team from closed sessions during board meetings*

This isn't a complete solution—but it's a place to start. Without these changes, families and staff will continue to leave, and the school's reputation will continue to decline. *board meetings*

Exploris has already lost much of its identity and core values. Without decisive action, it risks losing its charter.

Exploris is worth fighting for—but more importantly, it's worth working together for.

Let's shift from reactivity to restoration—through effective leadership, transparent planning, and true community collaboration.

Thank you.

THE END

Community-Proposed 90-Day Plan for Structural Reform at Exploris

Immediate Actions (By May 2025)

Remove Current Leadership from Closed Board Sessions

- Ensure all closed sessions of the board are held without current school leadership present, to promote open discussion and accountability.

Initiate Exceptional Children (EC) Program Reform

- Designate the Exceptional Children (EC) Director as a full-time, standalone leadership role to provide focused oversight and support for EC programming. Ethan may continue to serve as the LEA representative for IEP meetings, while the EC Director assumes responsibility for day-to-day leadership of the EC program.
- Launch a comprehensive review of all IEPs, available resources, and student support needs to ensure compliance, quality, and individualized implementation.
- Initiate a preliminary audit of past and current parent grievances related to EC services to assess systemic gaps and improve accountability.
- Establish regular feedback surveys to assess EC Program effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
 - Anonymous Faculty/Staff feedback surveys
 - Parent/Guardian feedback surveys

Rebuild Governance and Oversight

- Revisit board committee structures to ensure independence from school administration.
- Reinstate and relaunch the 2023 Director Evaluation and Support Committee, including board, staff, and parent representation.
- Clarify board roles, decision-making authority, and oversight responsibilities in alignment with bylaws.
- Begin regular board updates to the public, summarizing strategic goals, leadership performance, and budget priorities.

Initiate Transparency Measures

- Launch a public feedback survey to identify top concerns around facilities, operations, and programming.
- Host community listening sessions (with a neutral facilitator) to gather staff and parent input.
- Publish updated summaries of leadership roles, decision-making protocols, and upcoming initiatives.
- Reinstate structured forums for ongoing dialogue—such as Q&As, surveys, and town halls.

Mid-Term Actions (By August 2025)

Evaluate and Redesign Leadership Structure

- Conduct an independent review of the current 3-director model: assess role clarity, workload, and internal communication.
- Set clear performance benchmarks and establish a recurring board-led leadership evaluation process.
- Define and publicly document decision-making authorities and accountability measures.

Strengthen Internal Operations

- Launch an independent HR department to ensure neutrality and legal compliance in staff support.
- Review climate and exit survey data to identify key trends and retention risks.
- Reinstate standing board committees with community input: Facilities, Finance, Governance, Academic Oversight, and Community Engagement.

Improve Communication Systems

- Designate a communications lead.
- Update and streamline the school website and consolidate messaging platforms to ensure consistent, accessible communication.

Begin Facilities Planning

- Develop and share a timeline for maintenance and repairs at both campuses, informed by parent/staff feedback and site audits.

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Initiate Transparency Measures

Long-Term Actions (By End of FQ3 2025)

Rebuild and Sustain Exceptional Children Services

- Conduct a full reevaluation of EC-related staffing and funding allocations, including support staff and resource needs, to align with actual student and programmatic demands.
- Develop and implement a required training program for all staff on supporting neurodiverse learners, including proper implementation of IEPs and Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIPs).
- Establish a clear, confidential, and trackable process for submitting and addressing EC-related grievances, with regular oversight from board-appointed staff and parent advocates.
- Ensure public reporting on EC program effectiveness, including compliance metrics and family feedback, as part of broader accountability measures.

Restore Financial Transparency

- Publish a two-year breakdown of Annual Fund spending, including balances and allocations.
- Define public fundraising goals and connect them to tangible outcomes.
- Implement a financial transparency policy outlining how donations are tracked, allocated, and reported annually.

Release a Community-Driven Strategic Plan

- Reaffirm the Exploris mission and vision with input from staff, families, and students.
- Set measurable goals for enrollment recovery, staff retention, and academic performance.
- Address compliance in IEP and EC services, as well as equity and inclusion efforts.
- Include annual, anonymous leadership evaluations with a public feedback loop.

Public Comment: Meeting April 24, 2025

I would like to request a personal response to my public comment delivered on 4/24/25. The last time I spoke I was lumped into a group response and I do not find this acceptable. You may contact me at gautcher@gmail.com to reply to me personally. I would like to formally request a response within the 7 days allotted to board according to our bylaws.

Thank you for your time,

Sara Gautcher

Wake County Resident

My name is Sara Gautcher, and I'm speaking today as a parent of 3 kids here at the elementary school, an active volunteer, and a substitute teacher at both campuses. I am here to let you know that the lack of transparency and poor leadership over the last few years has not gone unnoticed by families, by staff, or by our community. The data I will present shows a steep and quick decline in our school as a whole. As a Raleigh native I applied for my kids to attend Exploris because I had always heard of its amazing reputation. Unfortunately I have found that the reputation of The Exploris School and the current reality of The Exploris School are very different.

Exploris was once known for its innovation and strong academics, but it is no longer viewed as reputable. Families who have left actively discourage new ones from applying, and past teachers are doing the same.

According to rankings from the SchoolDigger website, the Elementary school has declined significantly. We have dropped from being ranked in the 96th percentile in 2016 to currently being in the 35 percentile. We went from being ranked 54th out of 1,424 schools in the Raleigh area to being ranked 945th just last year.

Our school's performance score has fallen from a B (83) in 2018 to a C (61) in 2024. Academic growth has declined from 83.5% in 2022 (meeting growth) to just 65.7% this year—not meeting growth.

Arguably the most significant indicator of our declining reputation is the drop in enrollment numbers—from 641 applicants last year to just 584 this year. In 2019, there were over 1,000 applicants. More families are pulling students mid-year because of dissatisfaction with their experience at Exploris. Additionally, enrollment is suffering so significantly, some grades are being overenrolled to accommodate our school enrollment requirements needed for funding. This is particularly concerning in the 1st grade classroom where there are 39 children. North Carolina law G.S. 115C-301 requires public schools to maintain a 1:16 ratio for core instruction in the 1st grade. The Exploris 1st grade class is so large they are at risk of running a 1:19 ratio if at any point a teacher or teaching partner is absent and a substitute teacher is not provided, which has happened this year. Over-enrolling grades to the point of risking non-compliance with student-to-staff ratios is not a sustainable solution—it merely masks a deeper, systemic issue.

Explorations and field experiences—once core to the Exploris identity—have been significantly cut back, even as the board claims that Annual Fund donations have increased. Parents are starting to wonder where the money is going. Are the funds being mishandled and we don't know due to lack of transparency or is our reputation in this downtown community so poor that businesses don't want to partner with Exploris anymore? Maybe it is both.

This isn't sustainable. This is not acceptable. Families are walking away—and with them, goes the community that made Exploris strong.

We are still here. But our belief in this school is no longer enough. We need structural, visible action—because we too are running out of reasons to stay.

Thank you.

Exploris Board Statement – Brittany

My name is Brittany and I am a parent at Exploris. As you've already heard tonight, families are feeling disconnected from the decisions that shape their daily experience at this school. So, I'd like to talk to you today about governance—and how the board can be a powerful force for bridging that gap.

The Exploris Board holds a unique and essential role: to provide oversight, uphold the school's mission, and ensure responsiveness to the community. That responsibility matters now more than ever, as trust continues to erode and serious questions about leadership, priorities, and accountability remain unanswered.

First, I want to acknowledge the new board members who have stepped into this work with thoughtfulness and a willingness to ask difficult but necessary questions—especially around leadership evaluation and financial transparency. These are not easy conversations, but they are long overdue because many families have been asking these questions.

We want to know:

How is school leadership evaluated?

How are strategic and financial decisions made and communicated?

What systems exist to ensure transparency and accountability between governance and administration?

Right now, the answers are unclear.

At Exploris, families are instructed to bring concerns to the leadership team. If those concerns are not elevated internally, they go nowhere.

Public comment is allowed, but we are discouraged from contacting board members directly. In a school where trust is already strained, this process doesn't feel like governance—it feels like gatekeeping.

The system overseeing it is fundamentally flawed. The Governance Committee is currently led by a school employee. That alone presents a conflict of interest. When administrators sit on governance committees or shape oversight processes, it becomes impossible to distinguish operations from accountability. That's not a personal criticism—it's a structural problem. Healthy organizations draw clear lines, protect against conflicts, and ensure independent review.

In addition, board meetings frequently appear directed by administration. Meeting minutes and agendas are often delayed or incomplete, limiting public visibility and potentially violating NC Open Meetings Law.

New committees are suggested, but not fully implemented. Much like the Director Evaluation and Support Committee in 2022-2023. Governance isn't easy. It requires time, commitment, and integrity. But if this board truly wants to restore trust and lead this school forward, it must step more fully into its role.

We're asking the board to take these immediate steps:

1. Fill empty board seats and committee chair positions
2. Reinstate the Director Evaluation Committee and follow through on implementation
3. Ensure no school employees serve on governance committees
3. Revisit bylaws and committee structures to reinforce board independence

4. Establish clear public protocols for documenting and following up on community concerns
5. Share strategic and financial decisions in a transparent, accessible format
6. Increase board visibility and direct engagement with staff and families

Good governance keeps operations and oversight separate. It builds trust, not bottlenecks. It ensures families have a place to raise concerns—and a system that will actually respond.

The questions being asked by new board members are a critical step forward. But what comes next—how those questions are answered—will define the future of this school.

We're ready to be part of that work. We hope the board is too.

Thank you.

Hi, my name is Andrea and I have children in 4th and 3rd grade here. Even before our oldest was born, we hoped our children would attend Exploris. We believed in its mission and the learning environment it promised. When our oldest was accepted for Kindergarten, we were thrilled - it felt like the beginning of something truly meaningful for our family and our children's future. We've been part of the Exploris community ever since, bringing that same hope and commitment every step of the way.

In the beginning, I was proud to be part of the Exploris family. But lately, I've grown more concerned. Families are being asked to give more and yet we have little understanding of where those contributions are going.

This year, the 3rd grade Nutcracker field trip - despite being funded well in advance by parents - was nearly canceled at the door due to non-payment. Teachers, parents, and students were left scrambling while we waited for ~1hr outside in the cold. That kind of disruption erodes trust, especially when families are already unclear about how Annual Fund donations are being used or how program and facility budgets are prioritized.

We're told the Annual Fund has increased significantly. And yet, we see:

- Explorations scaled back
- Field experiences nearly canceled
- Parents donating time and money just to maintain basic classroom and bathroom standards
- Visible deterioration at both campuses, despite repeated volunteer efforts

So I'll ask the simple question no one seems willing to answer: Where is the money going?

There are no public reports. No regular updates. No financial roadmap for families to reference. Without transparency, confusion grows—and so does mistrust.

If Exploris wants continued support from families, it has to start with honesty, visibility, and partnership. Parents are not just donors. We're stakeholders.

The Exploris charter calls for fiscal transparency, strategic planning, and community accountability. These are not optional. They are obligations.

To rebuild trust, we're asking for three specific actions:

1. Biannual Financial Snapshots
 - Show how donations, grants, and major spending are allocated
 - Tie spending to academic and operational goals
2. A Published Multi-Year Strategic Plan
 - Include enrollment targets, staffing, and program expansion goals
 - Provide measurable benchmarks, updated twice a year
3. A Fund Utilization Report
 - Connect Annual Fund contributions to specific outcomes
 - Share before-and-after impact families can see and understand

Because right now, we're being asked to fund a school we no longer recognize—and that's a hard sell for any family deciding whether to stay.

You can't build trust behind closed doors and you can't keep asking for support without showing us what that support is building.

Thank you.



April 30, 2025

Re: Response to public comments at 4/24/25 Board Meeting

Exploris Parents and Members of our Community:

First, thank you for the time and effort you put into making your voices heard through formal public comment. I very much appreciate your energy and passion and the reflection that it's generated. I love seeing learners of all ages empowered to change the world. As an Exploris dad, it's great to see other parents model our shared value of social justice for our kids. Your vulnerability, courage, and passion for the well-being of your children and the future of Exploris were palpable even for those joining us through a screen.

I'm a temporary steward of this role. Some of you may have heard me say that I intend to leave what I find in better shape than how I found it: there is real work to do. There is also a more than 25 year history of work to build on—much of which has been referred to in the written materials you shared. It's part of my role to make sure that there are structures in place to address legitimate concerns. This response is one of those structures.

What we do – you, our community, me—that's the *is* in Exploris. We're at a watershed period not only at Exploris as we work to make our next home in Raleigh a reality, but also for the world around us. Never before has volatility and uncertainty demanded as much from growing leaders. We must all sharpen our tools and apply them to the pursuit of excellence and continual improvement.

I want to address themes about lack of due diligence, access, transparency or compliance. While there is improvement that can be made - particularly in terms of awareness, there is a long, documented history of board oversight, continual questioning and engagement of independent financial, operational and state audits—from our transactions to our culture, to the IEP process and beyond. Much work has been done to verify compliance and identify gaps. That said, additional demonstrable action is needed.

We are currently in the scoping process with an independent organization to support the refresh of our strategic plan—an exercise that will involve input from our families, teachers, leadership, and the board. The aim is to ratify and implement a refreshed strategy by the start of next school year. At the same time, we are actively seeking board representation from the real estate development community to provide closer, in-house oversight over the complexities of our building project. We will also discuss what additional steps are appropriate to extend the cultural evaluation work done that informed our current model.



I am thankful for the help and proud to work with my colleagues on the Exploris school board. We're diversely experienced professionals who care deeply about our kids and families and the impact of decisions and actions on them. We also thoughtfully engage experts to fill recognized gaps. I'm grateful for the support of our teachers, staff and leaders. I'm also thankful for you. The broad perspective we all bring means that when we all work as one, we can't help but make Exploris better together.

Know also that the board will discuss and adopt measures to increase both effectiveness and efficiency. Much of this work will be done through channels like the PTO, the Foundation, and Board Committees. I invite you to help operate and improve these structures to achieve the promise of Exploris.

Below is an itemized response to the written items shared via public comment last Thursday. It's one route to the appropriate, respectful, and fact-based discussions required about the nature of quality and the vision for improving the texture of Exploris.

Truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SD", followed by a long horizontal line.

Steven Darroch
Exploris School Board Chair



| Commenter | Essence of comments | Response |
|-------------|--|---|
| Abby Burka | No written comments received | Thank you for your public comments. Please see detailed responses throughout |
| Andrea Wise | <p>Families asked to give more/little understanding of where going</p> <p>3rd grade Nutcracker field trip - nearly canceled at the door; scrambling and waiting for ~1hr in the cold</p> <p>Annual fund - Where is the money going?</p> <p>Exploris Charter calls for fiscal transparency, strategic planning, and community accountability - not optional/obligations</p> <p>Asking for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Biannual Financial Snapshots - grants/donations/major spending tied to academic and operational goals 2. Multi-year strategic plan 3. Fund utilization report <p>You can't build trust behind closed doors - and can't keep asking for support without showing us what that support is building</p> | <p>Exploris Charter</p> <p>Strategic Plan</p> <p>Practices of fiscal transparency, strategic planning and community accountability are absolutely part of what we actively do across the structures in place though our charter outlines requirements in Section 8 which refers to Financial and Governance Warnings.</p> <p>Although financial reports are available upon request, at our next monthly Finance Committee meeting we will confirm (1) that the monthly financial report reviewed by the board is published and available on the public portal, (2) ways to make it clearer/easier for families to view and understand the budget.</p> |



| Commenter | Essence of comments | Response |
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| | | <p>As well, note that we recently included the role of Foundation Chair on the Board in order to increase visibility and ease interoperability. We will refer the goal of better linkage and clarity on donations and fund utilization to the Exploris Foundation.</p> <p>We do have a strategic plan and as mentioned are currently working with an external group to facilitate refresh as noted above. The board will also request the Exploris Foundation to include their strategic plan as input to that process.</p> |



| | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| Sara Gaucher | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of transparency and poor leadership and quick decline. Reputation and current reality are very different - once known for innovation and strong academics - no longer viewed as reputable. 2. School digger website - 96th percentile 2016 versus 35th percentile. 54th out of 1427 to 945 3. Schools performance score fallen from B in 18 to C in 24. Academic growth has declined from 83.5% in 2022 to 65.7% this year - not meeting growth 4. Indicator of declining reputation - drop in enrollment numbers from 641 applicants to 684 applicants In 2019 there are over 1000. 5. 1st grade 39 children - GS 115C-301 requires 1:16 ratio 6. Explorations and field experiences significantly cut back and annual fund allocations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First, these opinions are disheartening and are not taken into consideration lightly. I urge you to engage in one of the paths for stepping into the work that's described and that yet been launched. 2. School Digger.com does seem to have good data driven info and provides additional perspective not currently a part of what the board uses. It does not seem to reflect our current numbers on F&R students or school diversity and only uses one testing metric-- state EOGs/EOCs, where Exploris also uses the nationally normed NWEA MAP testing 3 times a year for benchmark and summative testing-- those results are shared with parents but public websites like these do not have access, nor do they ask for them. The other metric not here that we've focused on is overall arc of a student's progress over time at Exploris. While an individual grade might show test scores below grade level, as a student (and sub groups and cohorts) progress through the program, those numbers climb through middle school, ending with strong results in 8th grade, suggesting the overall positive impact of an Exploris education. |
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| | | |
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| | | <p>3. The Academic Excellence committee is board led and digs into details and data on performance and growth then regularly updates the board. We have previously and recently discussed the school report card grade and will refer further the inquiry to and request recommended action to that committee.</p> <p>4. Application numbers have dropped and that issue is something the board and management are actively monitoring and working on. Though there is a potential downstream impact, that is not the equivalent of enrollment.</p> <p>5. Those are not the numbers most recently reported in terms of 1st grade students. The board is requesting confirmation and is also exploring the ratio.</p> <p>6. Explorations and field experiences are a management function and grants/funding is a Foundation responsibility; these should be addressed at that level. However, the board will seek an update. Please see comments above for additional actions.</p> <p>Exploris Family & Student Handbook</p> <p>Your request for a personal response is noted. The 7 day response practice is a norm that is articulated in</p> |
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| | | |
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| | | <p>our regular board agenda and a timeline is suggested in our handbook in order to assure there is a response. Please note that this is not specifically addressed in our bylaws.</p> |
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| Commenter | Essence of comments | Response |
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| Andrea Merkel | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Difference from original Exploris Vision 2. Shown up again and again to be disappointed or ignored; Exploris is at a breaking point because systems holding school together are no longer working 3. Do better because it's not good enough 4. Donations unaccounted for 5. Losing family 6. Losing staff 7. Feeling confident that children are happy, safe and nurtured is expectation. Knowing that teacher are supported and given a safe and healthy work environment is expectation - you are not meeting those expectations 8. 90 day action plan: Immediate (may 2025) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. All closed sessions without school leadership b. EC reform - EC director as full time, standalone leadership role; Ethan as LEA rep EC Director assumes responsibility for day to day leader c. Comprehensive review of all IEPs, resources and support needs - | <p>Thank you for providing a detailed listing of actions. We take under advisement. It's clear that you have a grasp on a number of the initiatives and operations that the board, leadership, the foundation, and our kaizen team work on regularly. Some of these have been in consistent operation, some are infeasible or have purposely not been adopted. In any case, we note and are taking into consideration, but are not yet able to commit to the suggested timeframes.</p> <p>It is apparent that there is a need to clarify what is in place at Exploris and where these items should be taken up for more detailed work and conversation. Our board is a governance and oversight board. We delegate management to leadership and oversee that leadership operates in accordance with our adopted direction.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Exploris Vision is Empowering Learners to Improve Our World - I'm unaware of another one 2. Your point of view is noted. Please see full response. |



| Commenter | Essence of comments | Response |
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| | <p>compliance/quality/individual implementation</p> <p>d. Prelim audit past and current EC grievances - assess systemic gaps and accountability</p> <p>e. Regular feedback surveys on effectiveness including anonymous faculty/staff feedback</p> <p>f. Parent/guardian feedback surveys</p> <p>i. Rebuild governance and oversight</p> <p>g. Committee structure to ensure independence from administration</p> <p>h. Reinstate and relaunch 2023 Evaluation and Support Committee 0 board staff and parent reps</p> <p>i. Clarify board roles, decision making authority, oversight responsibilities in alignment with bylaws</p> | <p>3. Agreed – in fact the word kaizen means continuous improvement. We can all do better. Many of us seek to.</p> <p>4. Donations are absolutely accounted for, segregation of duties is world class for an organization of this size and we have had clean audits for as long as I'm aware. Please see actions noted above in terms of working to make these items clearer.</p> <p>5. This issue is highly important to the board (especially in the current environment) and we monitor at both the management and the board level and discuss at most board meetings.</p> <p>6. See 5</p> <p>7. Confidence in these items can and should be improved upon through more/regular communication – there is a broad and difficult to address claim here about expectations, but please see notes above about structures and routes for addressing concerns.</p> <p>8. Comments on suggested plan</p> <p>a. Closed sessions are defined by general statutes and for limited/specific purposes. When there are discussions</p> |



| Commenter | Essence of comments | Response |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> j. Regular board updated to public, summarizing strategic goals, leadership performance, budget priorities k. Initiate Transparency Measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Public feedback survey re concerns on facilities, operations and programming ii. Community listening sessions with neutral facilitator to gather staff and parent input iii. Summaries of leadership roles, decision making protocols and upcoming priorities iv. Reinstate structured forums for ongoing dialog such as Q&As, surveys, town halls | <p>about performance management – specifically about school leaders, they are excused from those sessions. They are essential to all other closed sessions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. This request has not been recommended or considered by the board. We will refer the question to our management team. c. IEPs are management function. Exploris EC department is regularly monitored and audited every five years by DPI, most recently this past January. The board will request a refreshed update from them through the Educational /Ed Excellence Committee at the May Board Meeting d. Note that EC disputes are governed at the state level and the process can be referenced here: https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/exceptional-children/dispute-resolution |



| Commenter | Essence of comments | Response |
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| | <p>Mid-Term Actions (By August 2025)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Evaluate and Redesign Leadership Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Conduct an independent review of current 3-director model; asses role clarity, workload, and internal communication b. Set clear performance benchmarks and establish a recurring board-led leadership evaluation process c. Define and publicly document decision-making authorities and accountability measures 10. Strengthen Internal Operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Launch an independent HR department to ensure neutrality and legal compliance in staff support b. Review climate and exit survey data to identify key trends and retention risks c. Reinstate standing board committees with community input: Facilities, Finance, Governance, Academic Oversight, and Community Engagement 11. Improve Communication systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Designate a communications lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Note that there are ES and MS representatives on the Board and the Kaizen team has a specific survey sub team. These leaders have and will be consulted. f. Note e. above and that the PTO mission is to support teachers/students and has a voting seat on the board. g. These are in place and adequate segregation exists. Further policies are in place regarding nepotism. Note that there is a Governance Committee separate from a Grievance Committee. The Grievance Committee is board members only and meets only if a formal grievance is filed. Governance helps with compliance with all state and federal laws, like last year's SB 49 new regulations and school handbooks, code of conduct, etc. Without administrators involved in that work it would be really tough to develop effective compliance and policies because most board members would not have detailed insights into the day |



| Commenter | Essence of comments | Response |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Update and streamline the school website and consolidate messaging platforms to ensure consistent, accessible communication. 12. Begin Facilities Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop and hare a timeline for maintenance and repairs at both campuses, informed by parent/staff feedback and site audits Long-Term Actions (By end of FQ3 2025) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Rebuild and sustain Exceptional Children Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Conduct a full reevaluation of of EC-related staffing and funding allocations, including support staff and resource needs, to align with actual student and programmatic demands b. Develop and implement a required training program for all staff on supporting neurodiverse learners, including proper implementation of IEPs and Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIPs) c. Establish a clear, confidential, and traceable process for submitting and addressing EC-related grievance, with | <p>to day classrooms and what policies have needed clarification or modification-- we keep a running list of that so we can examine each year. Nothing is changed without a public board vote, though, so this is just the boots-on-the-ground work and institutional knowledge. Previously we always had parents on this committee, too, but no one has volunteered for awhile now after past members' kids graduated from Exploris.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> h. Designed and goals received/updated from Directors. Formal piece pending for current year (Steven, Eric, Stacey) – I think also voted on by the Board: Director Evaluation and Support - which is based on NC Standards for Administrators i. Please see bylaws and roles of board officers – j. That is regularly done at the board meetings. The board will evaluate performance and means to improve, |



| Commenter | Essence of comments | Response |
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| | <p>regular oversight from board-appointed staff and parent advocates</p> <p>d. Ensure public reporting on EC program effectiveness, including compliance metrics and family feedback, as part of broader accountability measures.</p> <p>14. Restore Financial Transparency</p> <p>a. Publish a two-year breakdown of Annual Funding spending, including balances and allocations.</p> <p>b. Define publish fundraising goals and connect them to tangible outcomes</p> <p>c. Implement a financial transparency policy outlining how donations are tracked, allocated, and reported annually.</p> <p>15. Release a community-driven strategic plan</p> <p>a. Reaffirm the Exploris mission and vision with input from staff, families, and students</p> <p>b. Set measurable goals for enrollment recovery, staff retention, and academic performance</p> <p>c. Address compliance in EIP and EC services, as well as equity and inclusion efforts.</p> | <p>especially going into capital campaign mode</p> <p>k. See above for lanes of each entity, historically there has been a culture committee – we can evaluate and also recognize the need for greater involvement of community in committees – there's a path for involvement and doing the work identified/yet to be.</p> <p>9. Leadership Structure</p> <p>a. Please be aware that this model was developed after a year long Climate and Culture Committee comprised of Board members, parents, and teachers created it, under the guidance of an independent 3rd party consulting firm. It has been in existence for three years now and we work with independent consultants to strengthen the team and reflect (and modify) the model annually. The leadership team holds work sessions and reflection sessions with our</p> |



| Commenter | Essence of comments | Response |
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| | <p>d. Include annual, anonymous leadership evaluations with a public feedback loop.</p> | <p>School Improvement Coach and through Peaceful Schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. See 8 h above c. Please see public documentation throughout including handbook <p>10. Internal Operations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. There are well established norms for HR, including routes to address grievances independently. We further contract with an independent HR provider and habitually refer cases to them for independent investigation and advice. b. Some of this is already in place, but also good point to connect these data c. Governance, Finance, Facilities and Academic Excellence are operational and meet regularly and actively invite community involvement. We're actively seeking to improve these and welcome relevant, quality recommendations. <p>11. Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Noted and should be considered. Historically comms is PTO for |



| Commenter | Essence of comments | Response |
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| | | <p>external, leadership and teachers for internal – we can revisit</p> <p>b. Noted and will be considered/likely referred to PTO</p> <p>12. Facilities -</p> <p>a. Acknowledged that Facilities Committee can be strengthened for these areas and we're actively recruiting for a board member to chair</p> <p>13. EC</p> <p>a. Please note that audit and oversight is performed annually by the state</p> <p>b. Thank you for the input, we will discuss in Educational Excellence</p> <p>c. There exists a specific EC grievance through the state DPI EC department.</p> <p>d. Note privacy concerns although each individual family already has access to full annual IEP reviews, 3 year required reevaluations, as well as transition meetings and access to the IEP team on request.</p> <p>14. Financial Transparency</p> <p>a. Note that this item will be referred to both Finance Committee and Exploris</p> |



| Commenter | Essence of comments | Response |
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| | | <p>Foundation. While these items have been reviewed and audited, we will seek to clarify and improve access as appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Will refer this item to Exploris Foundation, who has purview over fundraising c. Will refer this item to Exploris Foundation, who has purview over fundraising <p>15. Strategic plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Note above steps re strategic planning to include relevant stakeholders b. Noted as reasonable goals that should be articulated and amplified. c. Compliance audits occur and findings are addressed/followed up on internally and by auditors. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion audit has occurred, committee is approved by board with plans to make it operational during next school year. |



| Commenter | Essence of comments | Response |
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| | | <div>d. Improvement on 360 feedback is an ongoing effort and the point is considered.</div> |



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| <p>Brittany Reuter</p> | <p>Families feel disconnected from decisions - governance - oversight board; trust erode serious questions about leadership, priorities and accountability remain unanswered. How is school leadership evaluated? How are strategic and financial decisions made and communicated - what systems exist to ensure transparency and accountability between governance and administration - now unclear. Elevation of concerns - discouraged from contacting board members directly - doesn't feel like governance, feels like gatekeeping Request to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fill empty board seats and committee chair positions 2. reinstate director evaluation committee and follow through on implementation, 3. ensure no school employees serve on governance committees, 4. revisit bylaws and committee structures to reinforce board independence 5. Establish clear public protocols for documenting and following up on community concerns 6. Share strategic and financial decisions in a transparent, accessible format 7. Increase board visibility and direct engagement with staff and families 8. Good governance keeps operations and oversight separate. Builds trust, not bottlenecks - families | <p>Family & Student Handbook</p> <p>Structure for addressing issues overall including up to and including alerting the board of board related issues.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There aren't 'empty' seats – The Board is composed of a broad range of highly skilled and credentialed members with relevant professional certifications and education including multiple Ph.D's and CPAs, government leaders, a PMP and Risk Management and Governance professional, professional marketer. We are actively recruiting for an attorney with educational background and for a developer/real estate professional and look for their impact in our committees. 2. Noted that it can be improved, but it does exist 3. There is considered rationale for having school employees on the Governance Committee. School employee involvement is important for consultative purposes - they do not lead them, nor do they vote. The committees bring motions or information to the board who votes to adopt once considered. |
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have a place to raise concerns and a system that will actually respond

4. The board maintains independence and each member asserts to it/submits those to annual audit
5. Refer to public comment section of each agenda
6. All financial materials are available and audited by an independent auditor. As well, we are evaluating means for increasing accessibility and clarifying for families where it makes sense.
7. Thank you for this perspective.



| Commenter | Essence of comments | Response |
|---------------|------------------------------|---|
| Shannon Hardy | No written comments received | Thank you for your public comments. Please see throughout for detailed responses. |
| Anna Thiessen | No written comments received | Thank you for your public comments. Please see throughout for detailed responses. |
| James Michael | No written comments received | Thank you for your public comments. Please see throughout for detailed responses. |
| Kenneth Baugh | No written comments received | Thank you for your public comments. Please see throughout for detailed responses. |
| Kira Kroboth | No written comments received | Thank you for your public comments. Please see throughout for detailed responses. |



Coversheet

Board Development

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Section: | I. Opening Items |
| Item: | E. Board Development |
| Purpose: | FYI |
| Submitted by: | |
| Related Material: | DRAFT Exploris 5 Year Strategic Vision (1).pdf |



NOTE: This draft is based on feedback from the Exploris Board Retreat in Jan. 2025. It needs feedback from staff and families as we create a vision for the next 5 years.

DRAFT The Exploris School 5 Year Strategic Vision Statement DRAFT

The Exploris School will be a nationally recognized model of innovative education, where academic excellence, community connection, and teacher leadership work together to empower students to thrive as lifelong learners and engaged citizens who make a difference both around the corner and around the world. By aligning our legacy of excellence with forward-thinking strategies, Exploris will be positioned as a beacon of 21st-century education and the top charter school in North Carolina.

Academic Excellence & Innovation

Goal: Achieve top-tier academic outcomes while serving as a hub for pedagogical innovation

- **Objective 1:** Implement research-backed innovative teaching methods (e.g., project-based learning, co-teaching, experiential learning and digital learning) to foster critical thinking and collaboration
 - Strategy:** Train 100% of teachers in at least three innovative methods by Year 2, with annual workshops led by in-house experts
- **Objective 2:** Develop a "Lab School" program where educators nationwide observe and co-design lessons.
 - Strategy:** Partner with similar schools statewide and with local universities and education networks to host exchanges and residencies and publish case studies
- **Metrics for Academic Excellence & Innovation**
 - 95% of students meet or exceed grade-level standards in core subjects by Year 5.
 - Exploris hosts 10+ external educator cohorts annually by Year 3

Personalized Learning & Community Connections

Goal: Maintain a 1:19 teacher-student ratio to ensure individualized support and deepen family engagement.



The Exploris™ School
Empowering Learners To Improve Our World

- **Objective 1:** Strengthen advisory systems where each student has a dedicated crew teacher tracking academic/social growth and each family has an individual connection to a school staff member through their student's crew teacher
 - **Strategy:** Implement Responsive Classroom techniques, including Morning Meeting
 - **Strategy:** Use weekly class newsletters and digital portfolios to document progress and share updates with families
 - **Strategy:** Offer at least one community event per month where families are invited to connect to the school staff and administration through events like coffee chats, book talks, panel discussions, etc. Offer these events at different times of day, days of the week, and different modalities (in person and virtual) to maximize participation for families with varying schedules.
 - **Strategy:** Increase staff confidence with effective use of AI tools to personalize learning through professional development, resource development, and impactful implementation
 - **Strategy:** Apply for the NC Digital Learning Grant or similar programs to secure funding for technology and training
- **Objective 2 Publicize a "Classroom Without Walls"** initiative that markets our integrated outdoor and experiential learning, local partnerships, and virtual & in-person global exchanges
 - **Strategy:** Social media campaigns, press releases, and outreach that share narratives, pictures, and videos of our events
 - **Strategy:** Allocate _____% of annual budgets to fund field experiences, community projects & service learning, and technology for virtual collaborations
- **Metrics for Personalized Learning & Community Connections**
 - 100% of families report feeling "connected" to the school via annual surveys.
 - 80% of student projects incorporate real-world problem-solving by Year 3
 - 100% of new staff trained in Responsive Classroom and 100% of returning staff receive refresher courses for
 - 100% of staff receive training in impactful ways to use AI tools to personalize learning through use of technology like differentiating reading passage levels, creating target tutorials, and responsive assessment by Year 3

Teacher Leadership & Staff Sustainability

Goal: Attract and retain top-tier educators through competitive compensation, leadership opportunities, and creative autonomy.

- **Objective 1:** Offer salaries at or above district averages and performance-based incentives for innovation and leadership



- **Strategy:** Secure grants and allocate funds to support salary boosts and classroom technology
- **Objective 2:** Create a one-pager of the non-monetary benefits of being an Exploris Teacher to be used in recruitment and hiring conversations
 - **Strategy:** gather “soft benefit” data like additional planning time, work flexibility, creative freedoms to create the document
 - **Strategy:** gather anecdotal stories and quotes from staff of the benefits of working at Exploris
 - **Strategy:** create a recruitment video for reaching candidates
- **Objective 3:** Implement a "Teacherpreneur" model where staff lead specialized programs (e.g., Kaizen, STEM labs, arts integration) and mentor peers
 - **Strategy:** Provide ____% of contracted time for collaborative planning, staff leadership work, and professional development
 - **Strategy:** Develop a handbook or menu of examples and opportunities for teacher leadership
- **Metrics for Teacher Leadership & Staff Sustainability:**
 - 75% of staff are considered “Highly Qualified” by Year 3
 - 90% teacher retention rate by Year 3.
 - 75% of teachers lead at least one schoolwide initiative annually

Become a Recognized Ambassador for Best Educational Practices

Goal: Share proven strategies with the broader education community through publications, conferences, and partnerships.

- **Objective 1:** Publish an annual "Innovation Playbook" detailing successful programs and student outcomes
 - Strategy: design a tool for collecting yearlong data
 - Strategy: choose a publishing tool/website
 - Strategy: create a task force or sub committee of Educational Excellence to spearhead this work
- **Objective 2:** Host a national symposium and showcase on small-school innovation, featuring student-led demonstrations and staff presentations
 - Strategy: Identify a local partnership that can serve as sponsorship or host, such as NC State
 - Strategy: create a task force or sub committee to plan this event
- **Objective 3:** Staff Presentations at local, regional, state, and national conferences
 - Strategy: create a clearinghouse of events and dates that staff can easily access
 - Strategy: provide sub coverage and release time for planning and presenting
- **Objective 4:** Increase partnerships and exchanges with other schools



- Strategy: maintain current partnerships and shared events like professional learning days
- Strategy: identify at least 2 new in state school partners and one new international partner for potential teacher and student exchanges
- Objective 5: Apply for State and National Awards to increase visibility for our programming
 - Strategy: Create a task force or sub committee to research and complete applications for programs like WRAL Viewer's Choice, NCMLE Schools to Watch,
- **Metrics for Becoming a Recognized Ambassador for Best Educational Practices**
 - 300+ educator downloads of the Playbook by Year 3
 - Establish partnerships with 5+ new school partnership for educator visits, student and teacher exchanges, and
 - Host our own symposium by year 4
 - Lead presentations at 5+ conferences by year 3 and increase to at least 3 presentations annually by year 5

Facilities & Stewardship

Goal: Create & Sustain state-of-the-art facilities and resources to support dynamic learning environments and programs

- **Objective 1:** Choose final location for new k-8 building and all partnerships and permits to begin construction or retrofit
 - Strategy: Use current partnerships and the Facilities Committee to meet benchmarks and finalize recommendations
- **Objective 2:** Secure funding
 - Strategy: research and maximize bond financing
 - Strategy: Capital Development Campaign
- **Objective 2:** Design classrooms as flexible learning studios with modular furniture and cutting-edge technology
- **Objective 3:** Create a sustainability fund to ensure long-term financial stability for maintenance and innovation projects
- **Metrics for Facilities & Stewardship:**
 - 100% of classrooms upgraded by Year 2.
 - 75% of annual grants dedicated to program expansion[1][7].

Year 1 Priorities

1. Securing site and funding for new building



2. Recruitment
quality staff

3. Improving
on statewide tests by 10%

and retention of high

student performance

Citations:

[1]

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[2]

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[4]

<https://piogroup.net/blog/20-innovative-teaching-methods-with-examples-how-to-implement-in-education-process>

[5] <https://educationonline.ku.edu/community/developing-effective-school-leadership>

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[7]

<https://publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Charter-Schools-and-ESSER-case-studies-09232022.pdf>

[8]

<https://www.bayardpublicschools.org/vimages/shared/vnews/stories/4ea6d056bde40/BayardPublicSchoolsStrategicPlan.pdf>

[9] <https://www.butler53.com/about/strategic-plan>

[10] <https://www.wcpss.net/strategic-plan>

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[13] <https://www2.vbschools.com/compass/2020/content/pdfs/Compass2025.pdf>

[14] <https://nationalcharterschools.org/strategic-planning-in-action/>

[15] <https://thoughtexchange.com/blog/strategic-planning-in-education-3-keys-to-success/>

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The Exploris™ School
Empowering Learners To Improve Our World

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Coversheet

Finance

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Section: | II. Committee Reports |
| Item: | A. Finance |
| Purpose: | Vote |
| Submitted by: | |
| Related Material: | The_Exploris_School-__Audit_Engagement_Letter_2024.pdf Bank Account Balances 2025.04 - Exploris.pdf 03. Board Report 2025.04 - Exploris.pdf FY25 Budget Revision for Board Approval 5_22_25.pdf 05. Income Statement 2025.04 - Exploris.pdf 06. Balance Sheet 2025.04 - Exploris.pdf |



May 9, 2025

To the Board of Directors
The Exploris School

We are pleased to confirm our understanding of the services we are to provide for The Exploris School for the year ended June 30, 2025.

Audit Scope and Objectives

We will audit the financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the aggregate discretely presented component units, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information, including the disclosures, which collectively comprise the basic financial statements, of The Exploris School as of and for the year ended June 30, 2025. Accounting standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP) provide for certain required supplementary information (RSI), such as management's discussion and analysis (MD&A), to supplement The Exploris School's basic financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. As part of our engagement, we will apply certain limited procedures to The Exploris School's RSI in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). These limited procedures will consist of inquiries of management regarding the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We will not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient appropriate evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance. The following RSI is required by GAAP and will be subjected to certain limited procedures, but will not be audited:

1) Management's Discussion and Analysis.

We have also been engaged to report on supplementary information other than RSI that accompanies The Exploris School's financial statements. We will subject the following supplementary information to the auditing procedures applied in our audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with GAAS, and we will provide an opinion on it in relation to the financial statements as a whole in a report combined with our auditors' report on the financial statements.

1) Schedule of Expenditures of Federal and State Awards.

2) Statements of Revenue, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance – Budget and Actual

The objectives of our audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions about whether your financial statements are fairly presented, in all material respects, in conformity with GAAP, and report on the fairness of the supplementary information referred to in the second paragraph when considered in relation to the financial statements as a whole. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements, including omissions, can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood

The Exploris School
May 9, 2025
Page 2

that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment of a reasonable user made based on the financial statements. The objectives also include reporting on:

- Internal control over financial reporting and compliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and award agreements, noncompliance with which could have a material effect on the financial statements in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*.
- Internal control over compliance related to major programs and an opinion (or disclaimer of opinion) on compliance with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of federal awards that could have a direct and material effect on each major program in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and Title 2 U.S. *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance).

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements and Single Audit

We will conduct our audit in accordance with GAAS; the standards for financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996; and the provisions of the Uniform Guidance, and will include tests of accounting records, a determination of major program(s) in accordance with Uniform Guidance, and other procedures we consider necessary to enable us to express such opinions. As part of an audit in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards*, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.

We will evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management. We will also evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and determine whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation. We will plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement, whether from (1) errors, (2) fraudulent financial reporting, (3) misappropriation of assets, or (4) violations of laws or governmental regulations that are attributable to the government or to acts by management or employees acting on behalf of the government. Because the determination of waste and abuse is subjective, *Government Auditing Standards* do not expect auditors to perform specific procedures to detect waste or abuse in financial audits nor do they expect auditors to provide reasonable assurance of detecting waste or abuse.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, combined with the inherent limitations of internal control, and because we will not perform a detailed examination of all transactions, there is an unavoidable risk that some material misstatements or noncompliance may not be detected by us, even though the audit is properly planned and performed in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards*. In addition, an audit is not designed to detect immaterial misstatements or violations of laws or governmental regulations that do not have a direct and material effect on the financial statements or on major programs. However, we will inform the appropriate level of management of any material errors, any fraudulent financial reporting, or misappropriation of assets that come to our attention. We will also inform the appropriate level of management of any violations of laws or governmental regulations that come to our attention, unless clearly inconsequential. We will include such matters in the reports required for a Single Audit. Our responsibility as auditors is limited to the period covered by our audit and does not extend to any later periods for which we are not engaged as auditors.

We will also conclude, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the government's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

Our procedures will include tests of documentary evidence supporting the transactions recorded in the accounts, tests of the physical existence of inventories, and direct confirmation of receivables and certain assets and liabilities by correspondence with selected individuals, funding sources, creditors, and financial institutions. We will also request written representations from your attorneys as part of the engagement.

We have identified the following significant risks of material misstatement as part of our audit planning:

- Management override of controls
- Revenue recognition
- Noncompliance with major programs identified as part of the Single Audit

The Exploris School
May 9, 2025
Page 3

We may, from time to time and depending on the circumstances, use third-party service providers in serving your account. We may share confidential information about you with these service providers but remain committed to maintaining the confidentiality and security of your information. Accordingly, we maintain internal policies, procedures, and safeguards to protect the confidentiality of your personal information. In addition, we will secure confidentiality agreements with all service providers to maintain the confidentiality of your information and we will take reasonable precautions to determine that they have appropriate procedures in place to prevent the unauthorized release of your confidential information to others. In the event that we are unable to secure an appropriate confidentiality agreement, you will be asked to provide your consent prior to the sharing of your confidential information with the third-party service provider. Furthermore, we will remain responsible for the work provided by any such third-party service providers.

Our audit of financial statements does not relieve you of your responsibilities.

Audit Procedures—Internal Control

We will obtain an understanding of the government and its environment, including the system of internal control, sufficient to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to error or fraud, and to design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks and obtain evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinions. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentation, or the override of internal control. Tests of controls may be performed to test the effectiveness of certain controls that we consider relevant to preventing and detecting errors and fraud that are material to the financial statements and to preventing and detecting misstatements resulting from illegal acts and other noncompliance matters that have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. Our tests, if performed, will be less in scope than would be necessary to render an opinion on internal control and, accordingly, no opinion will be expressed in our report on internal control issued pursuant to *Government Auditing Standards*.

As required by the Uniform Guidance, we will perform tests of controls over compliance to evaluate the effectiveness of the design and operation of controls that we consider relevant to preventing or detecting material noncompliance with compliance requirements applicable to each major federal award program. However, our tests will be less in scope than would be necessary to render an opinion on those controls and, accordingly, no opinion will be expressed in our report on internal control issued pursuant to the Uniform Guidance.

An audit is not designed to provide assurance on internal control or to identify significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. Accordingly, we will express no such opinion. However, during the audit, we will communicate to management and those charged with governance internal control related matters that are required to be communicated under AICPA professional standards, *Government Auditing Standards*, and the Uniform Guidance.

Audit Procedures—Compliance

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement, we will perform tests of The Exploris School's compliance with provisions of applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and agreements, including grant agreements. However, the objective of those procedures will not be to provide an opinion on overall compliance, and we will not express such an opinion in our report on compliance issued pursuant to *Government Auditing Standards*.

The Uniform Guidance requires that we also plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the auditee has complied with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of federal awards applicable to major programs. Our procedures will consist of tests of transactions and other applicable procedures described in the *OMB Compliance Supplement* for the types of compliance requirements that could have a direct and material effect on each of The Exploris School's major programs. For federal programs that are included in the Compliance Supplement, our compliance and internal control procedures will relate to the compliance requirements that the Compliance Supplement identifies as being subject to audit. The purpose of these procedures will be to express an opinion on The Exploris School's compliance with requirements applicable to each of its major programs in our report on compliance issued pursuant to the Uniform Guidance.

Other Services

We will also assist in preparing the financial statements, schedule of expenditures of federal and state awards, and related notes of The Exploris School in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and the Uniform Guidance based on information provided by you. These nonaudit services do not constitute an audit under *Government Auditing Standards* and such services will not be conducted in

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Page 4

accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*. We will perform the services in accordance with applicable professional standards. The other services are limited to the financial statements, schedule of expenditures of federal awards, and related notes services previously defined. We, in our sole professional judgment, reserve the right to refuse to perform any procedure or take any action that could be construed as assuming management responsibilities.

We will also prepare the Organization's federal information return for the year ended June 30, 2025 based on information provided by you. We will perform the services in accordance with applicable professional standards, including the Statements on Standards for Tax Services issued by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. We, in our sole professional judgment, reserve the right to refuse to perform any procedure or take any action that could be construed as assuming management responsibilities. We will advise management with regard to tax positions taken in the preparation of the tax return, but management must make all decisions with regard to those matters.

You agree to assume all management responsibilities for the financial statements, schedule of expenditures of federal and state awards, and related notes, and any other nonaudit services we provide. You will be required to acknowledge in the management representation letter our assistance with preparation of the financial statements, the schedule of expenditures of federal awards, and related notes and that you have reviewed and approved the financial statements, the schedule of expenditures of federal awards, and related notes prior to their issuance and have accepted responsibility for them. Further, you agree to oversee the nonaudit services by designating an individual, preferably from senior management, with suitable skill, knowledge, or experience; evaluate the adequacy and results of those services; and accept responsibility for them.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements and Single Audit

Our audit will be conducted on the basis that you acknowledge and understand your responsibility for (1) designing, implementing, establishing, and maintaining effective internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, including internal controls over federal awards, and for evaluating and monitoring ongoing activities to help ensure that appropriate goals and objectives are met; (2) following laws and regulations; (3) ensuring that there is reasonable assurance that government programs are administered in compliance with compliance requirements; and (4) ensuring that management and financial information is reliable and properly reported. Management is also responsible for implementing systems designed to achieve compliance with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements. You are also responsible for the selection and application of accounting principles; for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements, schedule of expenditures of federal awards, and all accompanying information in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; and for compliance with applicable laws and regulations (including federal statutes), rules, and the provisions of contracts and grant agreements (including award agreements). Your responsibilities also include identifying significant contractor relationships in which the contractor has responsibility for program compliance and for the accuracy and completeness of that information.

You are also responsible for making drafts of financial statements, schedule of expenditures of federal awards, all financial records, and related information available to us and for the accuracy and completeness of that information (including information from outside of the general and subsidiary ledgers). You are also responsible for providing us with (1) access to all information of which you are aware that is relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements, such as records, documentation, identification of all related parties and all related-party relationships and transactions, and other matters; (2) access to personnel, accounts, books, records, supporting documentation, and other information as needed to perform an audit under the Uniform Guidance; (3) additional information that we may request for the purpose of the audit; and (4) unrestricted access to persons within the government from whom we determine it necessary to obtain audit evidence. At the conclusion of our audit, we will require certain written representations from you about the financial statements; schedule of expenditures of federal awards; federal award programs; compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements; and related matters.

Your responsibilities include adjusting the financial statements to correct material misstatements and confirming to us in the management representation letter that the effects of any uncorrected misstatements aggregated by us during the current engagement and pertaining to the latest period presented are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements of each opinion unit taken as a whole.

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You are responsible for the design and implementation of programs and controls to prevent and detect fraud, and for informing us about all known or suspected fraud affecting the government involving (1) management, (2) employees who have significant roles in internal control, and (3) others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements. Your responsibilities include informing us of your knowledge of any allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the government received in communications from employees, former employees, grantors, regulators, or others. In addition, you are responsible for identifying and ensuring that the government complies with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, agreements, and grants. You are also responsible for taking timely and appropriate steps to remedy fraud and noncompliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements that we report. Additionally, as required by the Uniform Guidance, it is management's responsibility to evaluate and monitor noncompliance with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of federal awards; take prompt action when instances of noncompliance are identified including noncompliance identified in audit findings; promptly follow up and take corrective action on reported audit findings; and prepare a summary schedule of prior audit findings and a separate corrective action plan. The summary schedule of prior audit findings should be available for our review on June 30, 2025.

You are responsible for identifying all federal awards received and understanding and complying with the compliance requirements and for the preparation of the schedule of expenditures of federal awards (including notes and noncash assistance received, and COVID-19-related concepts, such as lost revenues, if applicable) in conformity with the Uniform Guidance. You agree to include our report on the schedule of expenditures of federal awards in any document that contains, and indicates that we have reported on, the schedule of expenditures of federal awards. You also agree to [include the audited financial statements with any presentation of the schedule of expenditures of federal awards that includes our report thereon OR make the audited financial statements readily available to intended users of the schedule of expenditures of federal awards no later than the date the schedule of expenditures of federal awards is issued with our report thereon]. Your responsibilities include acknowledging to us in the written representation letter that (1) you are responsible for presentation of the schedule of expenditures of federal awards in accordance with the Uniform Guidance; (2) you believe the schedule of expenditures of federal awards, including its form and content, is stated fairly in accordance with the Uniform Guidance; (3) the methods of measurement or presentation have not changed from those used in the prior period (or, if they have changed, the reasons for such changes); and (4) you have disclosed to us any significant assumptions or interpretations underlying the measurement or presentation of the schedule of expenditures of federal awards.

You are also responsible for the preparation of the other supplementary information, which we have been engaged to report on, in conformity with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). You agree to include our report on the supplementary information in any document that contains, and indicates that we have reported on, the supplementary information. You also agree to [include the audited financial statements with any presentation of the supplementary information that includes our report thereon OR make the audited financial statements readily available to users of the supplementary information no later than the date the supplementary information is issued with our report thereon]. Your responsibilities include acknowledging to us in the written representation letter that (1) you are responsible for presentation of the supplementary information in accordance with GAAP; (2) you believe the supplementary information, including its form and content, is fairly presented in accordance with GAAP; (3) the methods of measurement or presentation have not changed from those used in the prior period (or, if they have changed, the reasons for such changes); and (4) you have disclosed to us any significant assumptions or interpretations underlying the measurement or presentation of the supplementary information.

Management is responsible for establishing and maintaining a process for tracking the status of audit findings and recommendations. Management is also responsible for identifying and providing report copies of previous financial audits, attestation engagements, performance audits, or other studies related to the objectives discussed in the Audit Scope and Objectives section of this letter. This responsibility includes relaying to us corrective actions taken to address significant findings and recommendations resulting from those audits, attestation engagements, performance audits, or studies. You are also responsible for providing management's views on our current findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as well as your planned corrective actions for the report, and for the timing and format for providing that information.

Engagement Administration, Fees, and Other

We understand that your employees will prepare all cash, accounts receivable, or other confirmations we request and will locate any documents selected by us for testing.

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May 9, 2025
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At the conclusion of the engagement, we will complete the appropriate sections of the Data Collection Form that summarizes our audit findings. It is management's responsibility to electronically submit the reporting package (including financial statements, schedule of expenditures of federal awards, summary schedule of prior audit findings, auditor's reports, and corrective action plan) along with the Data Collection Form to the federal audit clearinghouse. We will coordinate with you the electronic submission and certification. The Data Collection Form and the reporting package must be submitted within the earlier of 30 calendar days after receipt of the auditor's reports or nine months after the end of the audit period.

We will provide copies of our reports to The Exploris School; however, management is responsible for distribution of the reports and the financial statements. Unless restricted by law or regulation, or containing privileged and confidential information, copies of our reports are to be made available for public inspection.

The audit documentation for this engagement is the property of Thomas Judy & Tucker, P.A. and constitutes confidential information. However, subject to applicable laws and regulations, audit documentation and appropriate individuals will be made available upon request and in a timely manner to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction or its designee, a federal agency providing direct or indirect funding, or the U.S. Government Accountability Office for purposes of a quality review of the audit, to resolve audit findings, or to carry out oversight responsibilities. We will notify you of any such request. If requested, access to such audit documentation will be provided under the supervision of Thomas Judy & Tucker, P.A. personnel. Furthermore, upon request, we may provide copies of selected audit documentation to the aforementioned parties. These parties may intend, or decide, to distribute the copies or information contained therein to others, including other governmental agencies.

The audit documentation for this engagement will be retained for a minimum of five years after the report release date or for any additional period requested by the LGC or the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. If we are aware that a federal awarding agency, pass-through entity, or auditee is contesting an audit finding, we will contact the party(ies) contesting the audit finding for guidance prior to destroying the audit documentation.

Amanda P. Habich, CPA, is the engagement partner and is responsible for supervising the engagement and signing the reports or authorizing another individual to sign them. We expect to begin our audit on approximately August 2025 and to issue our reports no later than October 31, 2025.

Our estimated fee for the audit and financial statement preparation will be \$22,000 and for the tax return will be \$3,750. Our invoices for these fees will be rendered each month as work progresses and are payable on presentation. In accordance with our firm policies, work may be suspended if your account becomes 60 days or more overdue and may not be resumed until your account is paid in full. If we elect to terminate our services for nonpayment, our engagement will be deemed to have been completed upon written notification of termination, even if we have not completed our report. You will be obligated to compensate us for all time expended and to reimburse us for all out-of-pocket costs through the date of termination. The above fee is based on anticipated cooperation from your personnel and the assumption that unexpected circumstances will not be encountered during the engagement. If significant additional time is necessary, we will keep you informed of any problems we encounter and our fees will be adjusted accordingly.

No indebtedness of any kind, incurred or created by The Exploris School shall constitute an indebtedness of the State or its political subdivisions and no indebtedness of The Exploris School shall involve or be secured by the faith, credit or taxing power of the State or its political subdivisions.

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Page 7

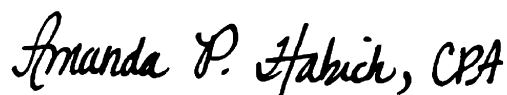
Reporting

We will issue written reports upon completion of our Single Audit. Our reports will be addressed to the board of directors of The Exploris School. Circumstances may arise in which our report may differ from its expected form and content based on the results of our audit. Depending on the nature of these circumstances, it may be necessary for us to modify our opinions, add a separate section, or add an emphasis-of-matter or other-matter paragraph to our auditor's report, or if necessary, withdraw from this engagement. If our opinions are other than unmodified, we will discuss the reasons with you in advance. If, for any reason, we are unable to complete the audit or are unable to form or have not formed opinions, we may decline to express opinions or issue reports, or we may withdraw from this engagement.

The *Government Auditing Standards* report on internal control over financial reporting and on compliance and other matters will state that (1) the purpose of the report is solely to describe the scope of testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control or on compliance, and (2) the report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the entity's internal control and compliance. The Uniform Guidance report on internal control over compliance will state that the purpose of the report on internal control over compliance is solely to describe the scope of testing of internal control over compliance and the results of that testing based on the requirements of the Uniform Guidance. Both reports will state that the report is not suitable for any other purpose.

We appreciate the opportunity to be of service to The Exploris School and believe this letter accurately summarizes the significant terms of our engagement. If you have any questions, please let us know. If you agree with the terms of our engagement as described in this letter, please sign the attached copy and return it to us.

Very truly yours,
Thomas Judy & Tucker, P.A.



Amanda P. Habich

RESPONSE:

This letter correctly sets forth the understanding of The Exploris School.

Management signature: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Governance signature: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

| | |
|---|----------------|
| 4/30/2025 Account Balances | |
| | |
| Bank Account | Balance |
| The Exploris School Checking | \$1,430,672.76 |
| The Exploris School Reserves | \$1,587,907.03 |
| The Exploris School Foundation-Annual Fund | \$85,078.16 |
| The Exploris School Foundation-Capital Campaign | \$227,683.53 |

| THE EXPLORIS SCHOOL | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Budget Analysis Report (Reconciled) | | | | | | | |
| Fiscal Year: 2025 - April | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | 83.3% of the year |
| Account | Budget | Period Activity | YTD Activity | Remaining Budget | % Used | EOY Projection | Notes |
| Revenues | | | | | | | |
| ▶ STATE REVENUE | 3,206,670.00 | 113,779.30 | 3,084,803.00 | 121,866.70 | 96.2 | 3,601,659.51 | |
| ▶ LOCAL REVENUE | 1,645,475.00 | 148,723.20 | 1,307,982.00 | 337,493.00 | 79.49 | 1,593,543.24 | |
| ▶ NCACCESS GRANT REVENUE | 100,000.00 | 0.00 | 138,240.90 | (38,240.90) | 138.24 | 138,240.90 | |
| ▶ FEDERAL REVENUE | 133,919.00 | 12,411.23 | 148,563.50 | (14,644.50) | 110.94 | 159,234.00 | |
| ▶ FOUNDATION REVENUE | 174,000.00 | 0.00 | 252,488.30 | (78,488.30) | 145.11 | 247,683.53 | |
| ▶ B&A CARE REVENUE | 96,000.00 | 0.00 | 50,188.39 | 45,811.61 | 52.28 | 96,000.00 | |
| ▶ REVENUE - ACTIVITIES | 0.00 | 24,522.75 | 153,068.20 | (153,068.00) | *** | 0.00 | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Revenues | 5,356,064.00 | 299,436.50 | 5,135,335.00 | 220,729.30 | 95.88 | 5,836,361.18 | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Account | Budget | Period Activity | YTD Activity | Remaining Budget | % Used | EOY Projection | Notes |
| Expenses | | | | | | | |
| ▶ SALARIES AND BONUSES | 3,196,263.00 | 269,420.30 | 2,604,621.00 | 591,641.60 | 81.49 | 3,201,009.00 | |
| ▶ BENEFITS | 660,954.10 | 58,557.87 | 514,644.10 | 146,310.10 | 77.86 | 660,848.39 | |
| ▶ BOOKS AND SUPPLIES | 69,033.00 | 2,090.49 | 42,049.50 | 26,983.50 | 60.91 | 56,146.17 | |
| ▶ TECHNOLOGY | 100,860.00 | 4,668.47 | 92,239.51 | 8,620.49 | 91.45 | 106,835.00 | |
| ▶ NON-CAP EQUIPMENT & LEASES | 18,000.00 | 1,675.85 | 14,164.07 | 3,835.93 | 78.69 | 17,000.00 | |
| ▶ CONTRACTED STUDENT SERVICES | 165,000.00 | 31,344.72 | 191,102.00 | (26,102.00) | 115.82 | 296,201.84 | |
| ▶ FIELD TRIPS/ACTIVITIES | 16,750.00 | 11,228.19 | 171,184.20 | (154,434.00) | *** | 22,106.00 | |
| ▶ ADMIN SERVICES | 320,400.00 | 22,889.77 | 332,542.50 | (12,142.50) | 103.79 | 410,800.00 | |
| ▶ INSURANCES | 39,900.00 | 0.00 | 45,935.00 | (6,035.00) | 115.13 | 49,298.00 | |
| ▶ FACILITIES | 576,640.00 | 52,945.82 | 466,783.90 | 109,856.10 | 80.95 | 689,531.00 | |
| ▶ B&A CARE | 68,409.86 | 5,513.21 | 40,309.46 | 28,100.40 | 58.92 | 61,754.86 | |
| ▶ CLUBS | 1,600.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1,600.00 | 0 | 2,459.68 | |
| ▶ VARIOUS GRANTS - NCACCESS | 100,000.00 | 0.00 | 135,864.00 | (35,864.00) | 135.86 | 138,240.89 | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Expenses | 5,333,810.00 | 460,334.70 | 4,651,970.00 | 681,840.30 | 87.22 | 5,712,230.83 | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Surplus/(DEFICIT) | 22,254.12 | (160,898.00) | 483,365.10 | (461,111.00) | | 124,130.35 | |
| | 0.42% | | | | | 2.13% | |

| Draft FY25 Budget Revision for Board Approval 5/22/25 | | | | |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Account | Revised Budget | Difference | % Difference | Original Budget |
| Revenues | | | | |
| ► STATE REVENUE | 3,601,659.51 | 394,989.51 | 12.32% | 3,206,670.00 |
| Rev - Charter Schools - 036 | 3,421,396.00 | 229,924.00 | 7.20% | 3,191,472.00 |
| Rev - Summer Reading- 016 | 14,797.51 | (400.49) | -2.64% | 15,198.00 |
| Rev - School Safety Grant - 040 | 129,266.00 | 129,266.00 | | |
| Rev - Special State Reserve - 089 | 36,200.00 | 36,200.00 | | |
| ► LOCAL REVENUE | 1,593,068.24 | (52,406.76) | -3.18% | 1,645,475.00 |
| Fund Balance Allocation - 3rd Grade Field Exp. | 363.00 | 363.00 | | |
| Fund Balance Allocation - 4th Grade Field Exp. | 143.00 | 143.00 | | |
| Fund Balance Allocation - 5th Grade Instr. Suppl. | | (475.00) | -100.00% | 475.00 |
| Fund Balance Allocation - 8th Grade Field Exp. | 1,100.00 | 1,100.00 | | |
| Fund Balance Allocation - 8th Grade Field Exp. Booster | 3,750.00 | 3,750.00 | | |
| Fund Balance Allocation - Girls on the Run c/o | 1,459.68 | (140.32) | -8.77% | 1,600.00 |
| Fund Balance Allocation - Go Grant Garden Funds c/o | 2,328.29 | 2,328.29 | | |
| Fund Balance Allocation - Pendo Art Fund | 1,661.18 | (338.82) | -16.94% | 2,000.00 |
| Fund Balance Allocation - Prep for DECR Grant Fund | | (65,000.00) | -100.00% | 65,000.00 |
| Fund Balance Allocation - School Safety Grant | | (18,000.00) | -100.00% | 18,000.00 |
| Interest Income | 6,000.00 | 2,000.00 | 50.00% | 4,000.00 |
| Lunch Program | 14,201.84 | 14,201.84 | | |
| Rev - Active Minds | 1,000.00 | 1,000.00 | | |
| Rev - Chatham County Schools | | (3,400.00) | -100.00% | 3,400.00 |
| Rev - Contributions | 61.25 | (4,938.75) | -98.78% | 5,000.00 |
| Rev - Durham County Schools | 10,000.00 | 2,000.00 | 25.00% | 8,000.00 |
| Rev - Johnston County Schools | 39,000.00 | 9,000.00 | 30.00% | 30,000.00 |
| Rev - Sales Tax | 8,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 8,000.00 |
| Rev - Wake County Schools | 1,500,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 1,500,000.00 |
| Rev - Wilson County Schools | 4,000.00 | 4,000.00 | | |
| ► NCACCESS GRANT REVENUE | 138,240.90 | 38,240.90 | 38.24% | 100,000.00 |
| Rev - NCACCESS 160 | 138,240.90 | 38,240.90 | 38.24% | 100,000.00 |
| ► FEDERAL REVENUE | 159,234.00 | 25,315.00 | 18.90% | 133,919.00 |
| Rev PRC 050 - IASA Title 1 Basic Programs | 65,347.00 | 21,057.00 | 47.54% | 44,290.00 |
| Rev PRC 060 - IDEA VI-B | 92,387.00 | 2,758.00 | 3.08% | 89,629.00 |
| Rev PRC 118 - IDEA VI-B Special NeedsAsst | 1,500.00 | 1,500.00 | | |
| ► FOUNDATION REVENUE | 247,683.53 | 73,683.53 | 42.35% | 174,000.00 |
| Rev - Foundation Reimbursement Annual Fund Expenss | 20,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 20,000.00 |
| Rev - Foundation Reimbursement Foundation Expenses | 227,683.53 | 73,683.53 | 47.85% | 154,000.00 |

| Draft FY25 Budget Revision for Board Approval 5/22/25 | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Account | Revised Budget | Difference | % Difference | Original Budget |
| ► B&A CARE REVENUE | 96,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 96,000.00 |
| Revenue - Before and After School | 96,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 96,000.00 |
| ► REVENUE - ACTIVITIES | 0.00 | 0.00 | | 0.00 |
| | | | | |
| Revenues | 5,835,886.18 | 479,822.18 | 8.96% | 5,356,064.00 |
| | | | | |
| Account | Revised Budget | Difference | % Difference | Original Budget |
| Expenses | | | | |
| ► SALARIES AND BONUSES | 3,201,009.00 | 4,746.10 | 0.15% | 3,196,262.90 |
| Salary - Administration & Student Support | 663,607.00 | (67,350.90) | -9.21% | 730,957.90 |
| Salary - EC Teacher | 342,280.00 | (7,418.00) | -2.12% | 349,698.00 |
| Salary - EC Teaching Partner | 36,200.00 | 36,200.00 | | |
| Salary - PRC 016 Summer Reading | 12,390.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 12,390.00 |
| Salary - Substitute | 45,000.00 | 5,000.00 | 12.50% | 40,000.00 |
| Salary - Teacher | 1,935,282.00 | 40,795.00 | 2.15% | 1,894,487.00 |
| Salary - Teacher Assistant | 166,250.00 | (2,480.00) | -1.47% | 168,730.00 |
| ► BENEFITS | 660,848.39 | (105.71) | -0.02% | 660,954.10 |
| Dental Insurance | 4,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 4,000.00 |
| Hospitalization/Medical Insurance | 325,500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 325,500.00 |
| Long and Short Term Disability Insurance | 18,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 18,000.00 |
| Retirement (401-k) | 65,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 65,000.00 |
| Social Security | 240,348.39 | (1,105.71) | -0.46% | 241,454.10 |
| Unemployment | 8,000.00 | 1,000.00 | 14.29% | 7,000.00 |
| ► BOOKS AND SUPPLIES | 55,671.17 | (13,361.83) | -19.36% | 69,033.00 |
| Art - Elementary | 750.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 750.00 |
| Art - Middle | 750.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 750.00 |
| Board of Directors Supplies | 8,500.00 | (500.00) | -5.56% | 9,000.00 |
| Connected World - Elementary | 500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 500.00 |
| Connected World - Middle | 500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 500.00 |
| Counselor | 1,000.00 | 500.00 | 100.00% | 500.00 |
| EC Instructional Supplies | 1,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 1,000.00 |
| Health Supplies | 2,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 2,000.00 |
| Instructional Supplies | 6,050.00 | 3,050.00 | 101.67% | 3,000.00 |
| Instructional Supplies - 1st Grade | 500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 500.00 |
| Instructional Supplies - 2nd Grade | 500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 500.00 |

| Draft FY25 Budget Revision for Board Approval 5/22/25 | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Account | Revised Budget | Difference | % Difference | Original Budget |
| Instructional Supplies - 3rd Grade | 500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 500.00 |
| Instructional Supplies - 4th Grade | 500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 500.00 |
| Instructional Supplies - 5th Grade | 750.00 | (475.00) | -38.78% | 1,225.00 |
| Instructional Supplies - 6th Grade | 1,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 1,000.00 |
| Instructional Supplies - 7th Grade | 1,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 1,000.00 |
| Instructional Supplies - 8th Grade | 1,250.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 1,250.00 |
| Intervention | 500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 500.00 |
| Kindergarten | 500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 500.00 |
| Memberships | 2,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 2,000.00 |
| Movement - Elementary | 500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 500.00 |
| Music | 500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 500.00 |
| NC Go Grant - Garden | 2,328.29 | 2,328.29 | | |
| Office Food Purchases | 1,000.00 | (1,000.00) | -50.00% | 2,000.00 |
| Office Supplies | 5,000.00 | 1,000.00 | 25.00% | 4,000.00 |
| Pendo Art Fund | 1,661.18 | (338.82) | -16.94% | 2,000.00 |
| Poe Center | 1,900.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 1,900.00 |
| Postage | 850.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 850.00 |
| PRC 016 Instructional Supplies | 2,430.28 | (377.72) | -13.45% | 2,808.00 |
| Sales Tax Expense | 8,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 8,000.00 |
| School Safety Fund - Balance Allocation | 451.42 | (17,548.58) | -97.49% | 18,000.00 |
| Seminar | 500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 500.00 |
| Wellness - Middle | 500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 500.00 |
| ► TECHNOLOGY | 106,835.00 | 5,975.00 | 5.92% | 100,860.00 |
| Instructional Software | 33,500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 33,500.00 |
| Instructional Technology | 2,000.00 | (3,000.00) | -60.00% | 5,000.00 |
| Internet Services | 1,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 1,000.00 |
| IT Contracted Services | 47,560.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 47,560.00 |
| Non-Cap Computer Hardware | 3,000.00 | 1,000.00 | 50.00% | 2,000.00 |
| Office Software and Services | 5,000.00 | 500.00 | 11.11% | 4,500.00 |
| School Connectivity (ERate) | 7,300.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 7,300.00 |
| SEL/Survey Software PRC 040 | 7,475.00 | 7,475.00 | | |
| ► NON-CAP EQUIPMENT & LEASES | 17,000.00 | (1,000.00) | -5.56% | 18,000.00 |
| Instructional Equipment | 500.00 | (500.00) | -50.00% | 1,000.00 |
| Office Equipment | 500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 500.00 |
| Reproduction Costs | 16,000.00 | (500.00) | -3.03% | 16,500.00 |
| ► CONTRACTED STUDENT SERVICES | 296,201.84 | 131,201.84 | 79.52% | 165,000.00 |

| Draft FY25 Budget Revision for Board Approval 5/22/25 | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Account | Revised Budget | Difference | % Difference | Original Budget |
| F & R Lunch | 45,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 45,000.00 |
| Lunch Program | 14,201.84 | 14,201.84 | | |
| OT Services | 45,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 45,000.00 |
| Other Services | 115,000.00 | 105,000.00 | 1050.00% | 10,000.00 |
| Psychological Services | 35,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 35,000.00 |
| Speech Services | 42,000.00 | 12,000.00 | 40.00% | 30,000.00 |
| ► FIELD TRIPS/ACTIVITIES | 22,106.00 | 5,356.00 | 31.98% | 16,750.00 |
| Field Trips - German Exchange | 3,500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 3,500.00 |
| Field Trips - Grade 3 | 363.00 | 363.00 | | |
| Field Trips - Grade 4 | 143.00 | 143.00 | | |
| Field Trips - Grade 6 Scholarship | 1,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 1,000.00 |
| Field Trips - Grade 7 Scholarship | 2,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 2,000.00 |
| Field Trips - Grade 8 | 4,850.00 | 4,850.00 | | |
| Field Trips - Grade 8 Scholarship | 5,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 5,000.00 |
| Field Trips - Japan Exchange | 3,500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 3,500.00 |
| Scholarships 00-01 | 250.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 250.00 |
| Scholarships 02-03 | 500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 500.00 |
| Scholarships 04-05 | 1,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 1,000.00 |
| ► ADMIN SERVICES | 419,800.00 | 99,400.00 | 31.02% | 320,400.00 |
| Advertising | 2,700.00 | 2,700.00 | | |
| Audit & Tax Services | 21,500.00 | 1,500.00 | 7.50% | 20,000.00 |
| Bank Fees | 1,900.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 1,900.00 |
| Financial Services | 53,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 53,000.00 |
| Foundation Expenses - Capital Account | 249,500.00 | 95,500.00 | 62.01% | 154,000.00 |
| Foundation Expenses - Annual Fund | 20,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 20,000.00 |
| Human Resources | 15,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 15,000.00 |
| Legal Services | 5,000.00 | (10,000.00) | -66.67% | 15,000.00 |
| PRC 118 Professional Development Expenses | 1,500.00 | 1,500.00 | | |
| Professional Development | 8,000.00 | (2,000.00) | -20.00% | 10,000.00 |
| PTO Expenses | 200.00 | 200.00 | | |
| Strategic Planning Services | 9,000.00 | 9,000.00 | | |
| Student Information Services | 32,500.00 | 1,000.00 | 3.17% | 31,500.00 |
| ► INSURANCES | 49,298.00 | 9,398.00 | 23.55% | 39,900.00 |
| General Liability and Commercial Umbrella | 28,114.00 | 4,614.00 | 19.63% | 23,500.00 |
| International Travel Insurance | 2,500.00 | (500.00) | -16.67% | 3,000.00 |
| Student Accident Insurance | 2,684.00 | 1,284.00 | 91.71% | 1,400.00 |

| Draft FY25 Budget Revision for Board Approval 5/22/25 | | | | |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Account | Revised Budget | Difference | % Difference | Original Budget |
| Workers Compensation | 16,000.00 | 4,000.00 | 33.33% | 12,000.00 |
| ► FACILITIES | 689,531.00 | 112,891.00 | 19.58% | 576,640.00 |
| Building Rent | 283,600.00 | (16,400.00) | -5.47% | 300,000.00 |
| Building Repairs & Maintenance | 8,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 8,000.00 |
| Building Supplies & Materials | 2,500.00 | 1,000.00 | 66.67% | 1,500.00 |
| Contracted Custodial Services | 50,000.00 | 5,000.00 | 11.11% | 45,000.00 |
| Contracted Landscaping | 5,200.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 5,200.00 |
| Contracted Pest Control | 1,500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 1,500.00 |
| Custodial Supplies & Materials | 11,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 11,000.00 |
| Electricity - New Bern | 23,000.00 | (2,000.00) | -8.00% | 25,000.00 |
| Fire Inspection Fees | 4,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 4,000.00 |
| Land Lease - New Bern | 73,500.00 | 1,500.00 | 2.08% | 72,000.00 |
| Modular Lease | 85,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 85,000.00 |
| Parking: Hillsborough St. | 5,040.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 5,040.00 |
| School Safety Equipment PRC 040 | 121,791.00 | 121,791.00 | | |
| Security Monitoring | 6,500.00 | 1,500.00 | 30.00% | 5,000.00 |
| Telephone | 2,400.00 | 500.00 | 26.32% | 1,900.00 |
| Water and Sewer | 6,500.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 6,500.00 |
| ► B&A CARE | 61,754.86 | (6,655.00) | -9.73% | 68,409.86 |
| B&A Care Supplies | 2,000.00 | 500.00 | 33.33% | 1,500.00 |
| Salary - B&A Care | 55,000.00 | (7,155.00) | -11.51% | 62,155.00 |
| Social Security - B&A Care | 4,754.86 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 4,754.86 |
| ► CLUBS | 2,459.68 | 859.68 | 53.73% | 1,600.00 |
| Active Minds | 1,000.00 | 1,000.00 | | |
| Girls On The Run Club | 1,459.68 | (140.32) | -8.77% | 1,600.00 |
| ► NCACCESS GRANT | 138,240.89 | 38,240.89 | 38.24% | 100,000.00 |
| | | | | |
| Expenses | 5,720,755.83 | 386,945.97 | 7.25% | 5,333,809.86 |
| | | | | |
| Surplus/(DEFICIT) | 115,130.35 | 92,876.23 | | 22,254.12 |
| | 1.97% | | | 0.42% |

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THE EXPLORIS SCHOOL**Income Statement****Fiscal Year: 2025 Month: April****Include Fund(s): 1X, 2X, 30, 33, 34, 35, 3X, 5X**

| Fund | Beg. Balance | MTD Actual | YTD Actual |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Fund 1X | | | |
| Revenue Total: | 2,971,024.06 | 113,779.28 | 3,084,803.34 |
| Expense Total: | 3,078,642.68 | 8,168.09 | 3,086,810.77 |
| Change in Fund 1X Balance: | (107,618.62) | 105,611.19 | (2,007.43) |
| Fund 2X | | | |
| Revenue Total: | 1,529,724.50 | 169,612.18 | 1,699,336.68 |
| Expense Total: | 795,476.12 | 432,452.62 | 1,227,928.74 |
| Change in Fund 2X Balance: | 734,248.38 | (262,840.44) | 471,407.94 |
| Fund 30 | | | |
| Revenue Total: | 138,240.89 | 0.00 | 138,240.89 |
| Expense Total: | 138,240.89 | 0.00 | 138,240.89 |
| Change in Fund 30 Balance: | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Fund 33 | | | |
| Revenue Total: | 450.00 | 0.00 | 450.00 |
| Expense Total: | 450.00 | 0.00 | 450.00 |
| Change in Fund 33 Balance: | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Fund 34 | | | |
| Revenue Total: | 137.14 | 340.40 | 477.54 |
| Expense Total: | 137.14 | 394.40 | 531.54 |
| Change in Fund 34 Balance: | 0.00 | (54.00) | (54.00) |
| Fund 35 | | | |
| Revenue Total: | 135,565.17 | 12,070.83 | 147,636.00 |
| Expense Total: | 143,850.12 | 13,785.88 | 157,636.00 |

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THE EXPLORIS SCHOOL**Income Statement****Fiscal Year: 2025 Month: April****Include Fund(s): 1X, 2X, 30, 33, 34, 35, 3X, 5X**

| Fund | Beg. Balance | MTD Actual | YTD Actual |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Fund 35 | | | |
| Change in Fund 35 Balance: | (8,284.95) | (1,715.05) | (10,000.00) |
| Fund 3X | | | |
| Revenue Total: | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Change in Fund 3X Balance: | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Fund 5X | | | |
| Revenue Total: | 60,756.45 | 3,633.78 | 64,390.23 |
| Expense Total: | 34,837.96 | 5,533.70 | 40,371.66 |
| Change in Fund 5X Balance: | 25,918.49 | (1,899.92) | 24,018.57 |

Fund 1X - State Funds

Fund 2X - Local Funds

Fund 3X - Federal Funds

Fund 5X - Multiple Enterprise Fund (Before & After School Program)

Balance Sheet

Fiscal Year: 2025 | Fiscal Month: April
Include Funds: All

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Assets | | |
| 1X.10100.0000.00000.00000.000.0 0.000.00000 | Cash OP FCIT 6528 | (2,566.64) |
| 2X.10100.0000.00000.00000.000.0 0.000.00000 | Cash OP FCIT 6528 | 823,749.02 |
| 2X.10110.0000.00000.00000.000.0 0.000.00000 | Cash - Reserve | 1,587,907.03 |
| 2X.16110.0000.00000.00000.000.0 0.000.00000 | Security Deposit | 15,658.00 |
| 30.10100.0000.00000.00000.000.00 .000.00000 | Cash OP FCIT 6528 | (129,766.42) |
| 31.10100.0000.00000.00000.000.00 .000.00000 | Cash OP FCIT 6528 | (9,859.00) |
| 33.10100.0000.00000.00000.000.00 .000.00000 | Cash OP FCIT 6528 | (450.00) |
| 34.10100.0000.00000.00000.000.00 .000.00000 | Cash OP FCIT 6528 | (191.14) |
| 35.10100.0000.00000.00000.000.00 .000.00000 | Cash OP FCIT 6528 | (140,350.60) |
| 3X.10100.0000.00000.00000.000.0 0.000.00000 | Cash OP FCIT 6528 | 270,138.36 |
| 5X.10100.0000.00000.00000.000.0 0.000.00000 | Cash OP FCIT 6528 | 483,882.19 |
| TOTAL Assets: | | 2,898,150.80 |
| Liabilities | | |
| 1X.22780.0000.00000.00000.000.0 0.000.00000 | EEs' Other Ins. Deductions | (437.71) |
| 1X.22990.0000.00000.00000.000.0 0.000.00000 | ER'S MATCH | (121.50) |
| 2X.22820.0000.00000.00000.000.0 0.000.00000 | EEs' Flex Spending Deductions | (8,238.56) |
| 35.22780.0000.00000.00000.000.00 .000.00000 | EEs' Other Ins. Deductions | 1,254.43 |
| 35.22990.0000.00000.00000.000.00 .000.00000 | ER's Match | 1,934.86 |
| 3X.22780.0000.00000.00000.000.0 0.000.00000 | EEs' Other Ins. Deductions | (1,254.47) |
| 3X.22990.0000.00000.00000.000.0 0.000.00000 | ER'S MATCH | (2,359.62) |
| 5X.22780.0000.00000.00000.000.0 0.000.00000 | EEs' Other Ins. Deductions | (415.89) |
| 5X.22990.0000.00000.00000.000.0 0.000.00000 | ER'S MATCH | (45.00) |
| TOTAL Liabilities: | | (9,683.46) |
| Reserves and Equity | | |
| 2X.29600.0000.00000.00000.000.0 0.000.00000 | Fund Equity | 1,964,144.67 |
| 5X.29600.0000.00000.00000.000.0 0.000.00000 | Fund Equity | 460,324.51 |
| TOTAL Reserves and Equity: | | 2,424,469.18 |

THE EXPLORIS SCHOOL

Balance Sheet

Fiscal Year: 2025 | Fiscal Month: April
Include Funds: All

NET GAIN (LOSS): 483,365.08

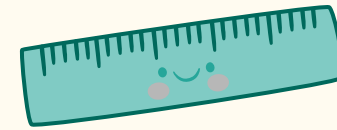
TOTAL LIABILITIES / RESERVES / INCOME: 2,898,150.80

- Fund 1X - State Funds
- Fund 2X - Local Funds
- Fund 3X - Federal Funds
- Fund 5X - Multiple Enterprise Fund (Before & After School Program)

Coversheet

Governance

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Section: | II. Committee Reports |
| Item: | C. Governance |
| Purpose: | FYI |
| Submitted by: | |
| Related Material: | Governance Meeting May 20th 2025.pdf |



May 20, 2025

Governance Committee

Agenda



01

Introduction

Call to order
Approve Minutes
Overview of Governance work at
Exploris

02

Legislative Overview

Update on applicable state
and federal policies

03

Board Development

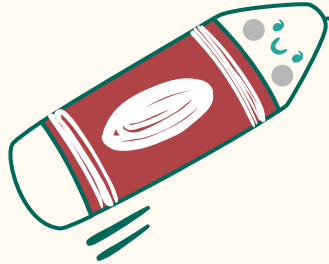
Retreat Dates
Candidates

04

Handbook Review

Items from the running list

Welcome Guests!



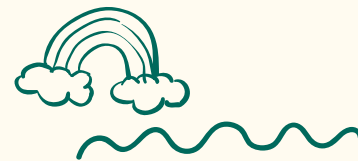
Please Mute

Help us focus on the order of business in the agenda by leaving all devices on mute



Use the chat!

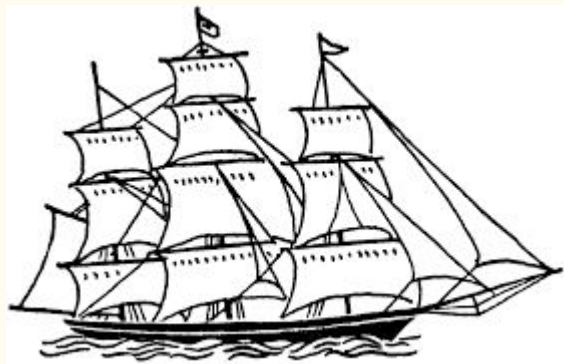
Please use the chat feature for any comments or questions. We will do our best to respond, as time allows or follow up after



Board Basics

How does a public charter school board serve the school?

Governance vs Management



Do the ship
and its cargo
arrive safely to
the harbor?

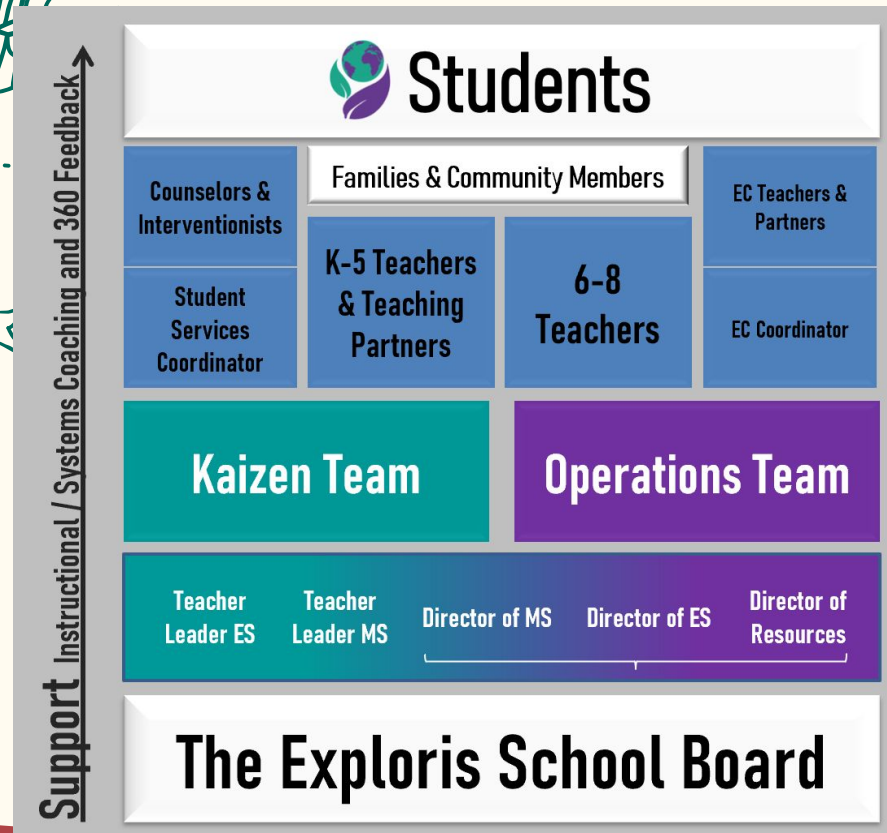
Consider the old-time Charter Ship:

Charter company:

- owns the ship
- sets its direction & mission
- hires a captain

Captain:

- hires the crew
- charts the course
- makes adjustments on the journey

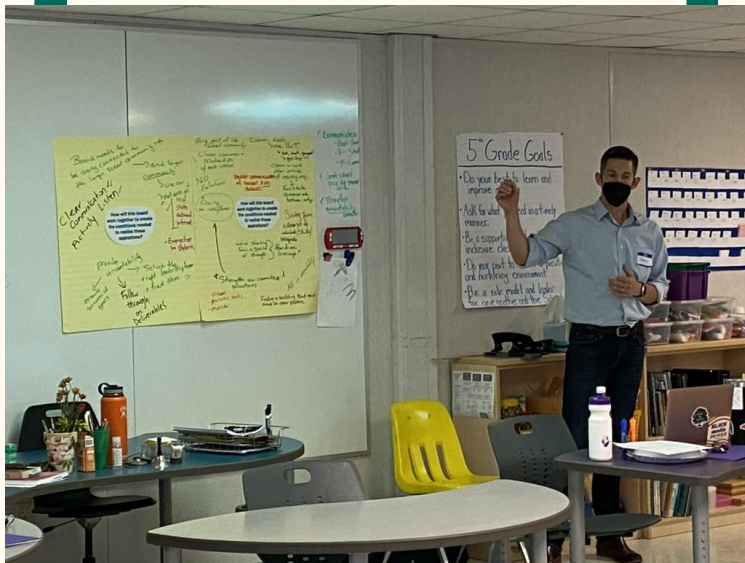


Collaborative Leadership Model

Design of the Partnership

| The Board | The Administration |
|--|--|
| ENDS (results) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why?• What?• How Much? | MEANS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How?• When?• Where?• Who? |
| Mission <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vision• Goals• Policies | Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategies• Action Plans• Procedures |
| Monitor <ul style="list-style-type: none">• VOTE! | Implement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• RECOMMEND |

Retrieved from Cornell-Feist, Marci. Charter Schools Trustees Guide.



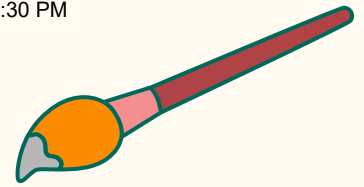
Vision & Plan

- **Strategic Vision** is developed by the Board
- **School Improvement Plan** is developed by Kaizen, and then approved by the Board
 - **Vision**= Where we want to go
 - **SIP**= roadmap to get there



Board Member Responsibilities

1. Ensure the state board-approved mission is the guiding focus of the school
2. Properly manage and be accountable for the public funds allotted to your school
3. Each month critically review the financial statements of the school and formally approve needed changes to line items
4. Develop and uphold charter school policies which are lawful, fair, and provide protection for all of the school's constituents. In general, the board guides policies and the administrator creates procedures.
5. Ensure that students are learning and meeting the academic performance criteria set by your charter, and the school is adhering to its State Board Approved Educational Plan.



More Board Member Responsibilities!

6. Ensure the school is abiding by the North Carolina state law for Charter Schools (GS115C-238.29) The law includes specific requirements for: Teacher Licensure, Student admissions, Charter renewal, Background checks for all employees, Criminal History checks through the SBI for all personnel & board members responsible for fiscal management.
7. Formally approve the hiring or dismissal of any teacher or staff member who were recommended by the lead administrator or hiring committee.
8. Hire, supervise, and evaluate the charter school lead administrator/s

Kaizen



- From the Japanese term for “Continuous Improvement”
- Made up of elected representatives from grade band levels and departments on each campus (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, EC, GA, Teaching Partners, Operations, New Staff, plus Counseling and Administration)
- Led by the elected **Teacher Leaders** from each campus
 - Stipended position that joins the Directors for faculty input on assorted decisions
 - Share a voting Board position (alternate attendance)
 - Design and lead the agenda for the monthly Kaizen meetings

The Exploris Foundation

The charitable organization that supports the school



- Under management by the Board but operates as its own 5013c
- Annual Fund for operating budget items plus Capital Campaign for Facilities
- Chair is an ex-officio member of the school board



The Exploris PTO

Our Mission:

The Exploris Parent Teacher Organization is dedicated to supporting our teachers, supporting our students and building our school community.



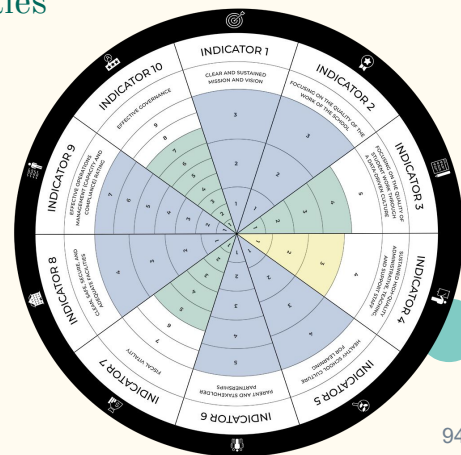
- Non-profit organization of family members that supports the school
- Budget comes partially from the Foundation
- PTO President is an ex-officio member of the school board

10 Indicators of Charter School Success



1. Clear and Sustained Mission & Vision
2. Focusing on the Quality of the Work of the School
3. Focusing on the Quality of Student Work Through a Data-Driven Culture
4. Sustained High Quality Administrative, Teaching, and Support Staff
5. Healthy School Culture for Learning
6. Parent and Stakeholder Partnerships
7. Fiscal Vitality
8. Clean, Safe, Secure, and Adequate Facilities
9. Effective Operations Management
10. Effective Governance (Board)

This assessment tool was developed by Tom Miller, previous Exploris Board Chair!



Board Committees

Advisory vs Governing

Current Exploris Board Committees



Facilities

New building
plan

Current facilities
maintenance

Finance

Monthly oversight

Budget and revisions

Audit and taxes

Educational Excellence

Data driven progress
reports

Curriculum

Assessment

DEI

Re-formed;
previously worked
on weighted lottery
and school culture

Governance

Compliance with state
and federal policy

Local school policies
(handbooks)

Board support

Ad Hoc

As needed for
specific topics

Director Evaluation & Support

Reviewing
administrative goals
and feedback,
professional
development

Grievance

Standing committee of
Board members only;
convenes if a formal
grievance is filed

Governance Committee 101

What Does the Governance Committee Do?

- Track state and federal legislation and policy changes
- Make recommendations to assure compliance
- Track yearly issues for possible needs for clarification, modification
- Collect and review credentials for potential board members
- Plan Board training and annual retreat

Who is on Governance Committee?

- Board members
- School leadership
- Staff reps
- Family reps (volunteers needed!)

What's New in Education Policy?

A brief update on recent and current legislation at the state and federal levels & how they might impact us here at Exploris



Legislative Updates & Exploris



Follow up to the Title VI Certification from last month:

A federal court in Maryland has issued a preliminary injunction against the Department of Education, essentially preventing them from enforcing the certification that schools were required to sign this month. For now, this means that the DOE cannot enforce that certification and or withhold funds to public schools pursuant to that certification. It also puts on hold the **False Claims Act** use as a tool against public schools in this context.

Legislative Updates, cont. 2

- **Superintendent Green** has finished a long series of “Mo Wants to Know” listening sessions for schools and educators. Deb represented Exploris at a special session for charter schools, and advocated for the need for public charters to have access to facilities funding, more EC support and resources, and higher pay for teachers to be able to attract and retain quality educators
- **House Bill 773** would reform school performance grades, creating more of a portfolio system of measurements rather than just EOG scores. This model is similar to what was championed by former State Superintendent Catherine Truitt
- **Designated Carry: HB 93** would allow a designated person to carry a gun on school property (separate from an active or retired law enforcement officer

Legislative Updates, cont. 3

- The State Board of Education gave permission for the state Department of Public Instruction to develop **new K-12 math standards** (after having given approval last May to develop new K-12 English language arts standards) New ELA standards could go into effect in 26-27, while new math would be expected for 27-28. Recommendations are for fewer standards at grade levels but deeper levels of mastery
- A new report shows NC has dropped further in national average of teacher pay, although BT pay has improved

Legislative Updates, continued 4



- **From NCAPCS:** *“The NC Senate budget proposal contains charter-related provisions in the budget; this signals the legislature’s continued commitment to integrating charter schools as full partners in the state’s public education system. From equitable funding and enhanced flexibility to clearer oversight and expanded authority, these changes support both operational excellence and student-centered innovation in North Carolina’s charter sector.”*



- The House Committee on Education - K-12 will meet on Tuesday, May 6. The agenda includes discussion of **H556 2025 Charter Schools Review Board Omnibus.**

Legislative Updates, continued 5



House Bill 959 – Social Media Literacy in Schools

- Summary: Requires local boards to create policies limiting inappropriate technology use
- Bans TikTok on school-owned devices and networks
- Requires school boards to restrict classroom access to social media (unless used for instruction)
- Adds mental health-focused education on the negative impacts of social media.

Exploris Middle School addresses this issues in our Seminar, Connected World, and Crew programs. ES addresses them as the need arises





Legislative Updates, continued 6

House Bill 981 – Local School Open Enrollment (passed the House)

- Summary: Initially allowed broader intra-district public school choice, now converted to a study bill. Intent is to explore how more LEAs can implement open enrollment across district schools.

Implications for Charter Schools:

- Charters already operate with open enrollment, but if LEAs adopt similar models, it could increase competition—especially for specialized programs.
- However, it may also validate the charter model and provide an opening for partnerships or shared services and funding

Legislative Updates, continued 7



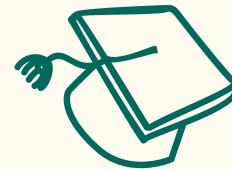
House Bill 415 – Math Graduation Requirement Overhaul

- Summary: Revamps the traditional math sequence by eliminating the requirement for Math 3 (which includes introductory calculus), citing misalignment with most college and career paths.
- Proposes greater flexibility in satisfying 3rd and 4th math credits—e.g., computer science or career-aligned math like accounting, statistics, or drafting.
- Offers a "Foundations of Math" path for students not proficient in Math 1 by 9th grade.

Implications for Charter Schools:

- Could provide curricular flexibility for charters focused on CTE, workforce readiness, or alternative learning models.
- Might help charters better serve struggling math learners with tailored pacing.
- However, college-prep charters may need to preserve advanced math options (Math 3+) to maintain competitiveness for students applying out-of-state.
-

NCAPCS Counsel Updates



From NCAPCS Counsel Lisa Gordon Stella:

“A recent issue has emerged regarding the use of exclusion by charter schools. As a result, it is strongly recommended that charters consider making a non-material revision to their charter and sending such amendment to the Office of Charter Schools. **Charter Schools who do not file such an amendment** may face legal challenges if they use exclusion.”

Recommended amendment language: *[School name] utilizes exclusion as a disciplinary consequence under its code of conduct and abides by the due process required under N.C.G.S. § 115C-218.60 and its Charter Agreement. Procedures by which students can be excluded from the charter school are outlined in the school’s discipline policies and code of conduct.*

Committee Question: Details on next slide!

Details

§ 115C-218.60. Student discipline. The school is subject to and shall comply with Article 27 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes, except that a charter school may also exclude a student from the charter school and return that student to another school in the local school administrative unit in accordance with the terms of its charter after due process.

- This is separate from “expulsion” for disciplinary reasons that might also occur in a traditional public school
- This is a provision used **if your charter has certain criteria for admission and continued enrollment**, like meeting a certain GPA, behavior goals, attendance, participation, etc
- Exploris does not have language of this kind in our current charter or handbooks; closest we come is language around expected participation in field experiences

Committee Question: Does Governance Committee want to bring this recommendation to the Board for discussion and possible vote/action?

CSRB (Charter Schools Review Board) Update

- Reversed a decision on a charter school closure after demonstrated compliance and action plans
- Ten new charters are in ready-to-open mode for this fall (including one in Wake and one in Durham) More than 1,500 students have enrolled or been offered seats at 10 new North Carolina charter schools expected to open this fall.
- 5 new charter applications for Wake Co. have been submitted
- Reviewed 7 public charters identified as continuously low performing (D or F grades for three consecutive years) and issued action plans to address improvements
- Discussed HB 566, the “Charter School Omnibus Bill,” which would expand CSRB authority if passed (currently in committee)



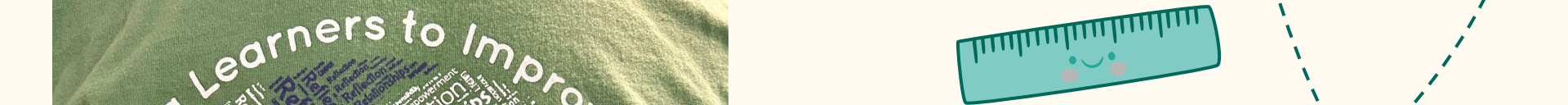


Supreme Court



SCOTUS heard arguments on Wed. April 30th in a case involving a proposed Catholic Charter school. This case could provide for or reject public charter schools that have a religious focus or affiliation

- **Basic plaintiff argument:** other non profit groups are allowed to form charters around philosophies & approaches, so denying this one is a form of religious discrimination
- **Basic defense argument:** separation of church and state; government should not fund a religious school



Board Development



Updates & Review



Annual Board Retreat

- **Survey for dates** (2nd, 3rd, or 4th Saturday in September)
- **Design Agenda**
 - onboarding/training
 - Team building
 - Strategic Planning



Current Board Strengths & Needs






| Name | Strengths |
|--------------------------|--|
| Steven Darroch, Chair | Finance, IT, risk management, strategic planning |
| Eric Grunden, vice chair | Education, Administration, Science |
| Ed Buchan, secretary | City Planning, engineering, infrastructure |
| William Lamb, treasurer | Finance, taxes |
| Geoff Bayo | Finance, taxes |

| Name | Strengths |
|--|--|
| Stacey Carothers Ex officio, PTO | Business, strategic planning, management |
| Dr. Valencia Hick-Harris | Education, STEM |
| Dr. Crystal Harden | Education, STEM |
| Tasha Void & Shawna Scipione | Ex-officio Kaizen (share one vote) |
| Susan Singer Ex officio, Foundation | Marketing, media planning |
| Additional strengths desired: | Educational Policy, Education Law, Construction, Real Estate |

Board Applicants (running list)



| Name | Resume | Strengths | Questions | Next Steps? |
|--|-------------------------------|--|-----------|--|
| Malcolm Alexander  | <u>Resume</u> | Business & Tech, AI, Team Management | | Toured school; recommend to Board? |
| Meredith Nelson  | <u>Resume</u> | Non-profit boards, business consulting | | Toured school; recommend to Board? |
| Richard Averitte  | <u>Resume</u> | Non-profit boards, marketing, brand identity | | |
| | | | | |

Handbook, Bylaws & Policy Discussions



Process:

- We keep a running list based on actual situations we encounter
 - Policies that were non-specific or unclear
 - Issues for which we had no policy
 - New legislation
- All can contribute
- Bring to Governance to discuss a few at each meeting
- Handbook additions done in “editing mode” to track changes
- Final drafts brought to Board each year for approval before new school year begins

Current Items to Discuss



| Handbook | Description |
|----------|---|
| Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Requesting crew changes (process, notification, etc)● Clarify floating holiday & consider HR recommendations |
| Family | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Clarify educational absences and rationale for the policy● Clarify what a “remote learning” day might look like/expectations/etc● Start Code of Conduct review: research other schools with restorative practices and look at ways to update ours to better reflect that approach |





Thank You!



Coversheet

Kaizen

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Section: | II. Committee Reports |
| Item: | G. Kaizen |
| Purpose: | FYI |
| Submitted by: | |
| Related Material: | BOARD DRAFT SIP Summary 2024-2028 (1).pdf |

DRAFT STRATEGIC VISION AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN At-A-Glance – Fall 2024-Spring 2028



The Exploris School is a diverse learning community that engages students in a challenging, relevant, relationship-based education. Through experiential, project-based learning we empower students to foster a just and sustainable world.

Our Strategic Vision is to improve these outcomes:

Strategic Vision: Our school improvement plan will reduce barriers to success such as socio-economic factors so that:

- Students are empowered to be lifelong learners
- Disparities in student outcomes are eliminated among subgroups
- Students are safe and socially, emotionally, and physically healthy
- Students are engaged in their learning and school community

We will attain these outcomes by shifting our practices around these school improvement areas:

School Improvement Plan

Target #1

Improve quality and relevance of academic experiences

Target #2

Create safe, engaging, and inclusive school environments

Target #3

Transition to a permanent location for a K-8 program

Target #4

Increase stakeholder satisfaction with school communications and engagement opportunities

Which will result in measurable progress toward these objectives.

Key Indicators for School Improvement Plan

1. Improve EOG Reading Proficiency by at least 5% in each grade-level ([Historical EOG Data](#))
2. Exceed expected student growth on the EOG in math as a school according to EVASS. ([23-24 Growth Data](#))
3. Track [Field Experiences](#) (for connection & relevancy)

1. Finalize and promote the [Exploris Equity Statement](#)
2. Grow staff capacity to productively resolve conflict through Peaceful Schools training and Crucial Conversations Study Teams.
3. Establish the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.

1. Establish and strengthen systems for maintenance of our existing facilities.
2. Communicate the progress of the New Facility Project at least monthly to all stakeholders.
- 3.

- 1.
2. Identify at least 3 additional funding streams to support ongoing student services. (i.e., [Great Schools NC](#))

SIP Target 1: Improve quality and relevance of academic experiences

1. Improve EOG Reading Proficiency by at least 5% in each grade-level ([Historical EOG Data](#)) by spring of 2026
 - a. Pilot NC Check-ins for Tested Grade Levels, 3-8: At least 2 grade levels pilot the NC Reading Check-in
 - i. Identify [reading NCSCOS](#) in which students test the lowest in and create targeted spiral review in core instruction.
 - ii. Students will complete at least 2 NC Check-ins to build student familiarity with testing and to create an adapted EOG.
 - b. Create a school-wide testing schedule that offers re-testing opportunities for students who do not test proficient on a reading EOG
 - c. Improve the Schoolwide Spring Benchmark score by 10% on informational texts when compared to the internal Fall Benchmark from the beginning of the year. (Students consistently scoring lower on informational text on Benchmarks.)
 - d. Meet or exceed expected growth on EOG testing according to EVAAS, at each grade level
2. Meet expected student growth on the EOG in math as a school according to EVAAS. ([23-24 Growth Data](#))
 - a. Implement NC Check-Ins for grades 3-8 and use performance data to design targeted instruction for improving EOG proficiency
 - b. Create a school-wide testing schedule that offers re-testing opportunities for students who do not test proficient on a math EOG
 - c. Improve the Schoolwide Spring Benchmark score by 10% when compared to the internal Fall Benchmark from the beginning of the year.
 - d. Meet or exceed expected growth on EOG testing according to EVAAS, at each grade level
3. Track [Field Experiences, Service Learning and Explorations](#)
 - a. Document connection & relevancy to NCSCOS
 - i. Ensure wide range of projects, standards, and products across grade levels
 - ii. Revise projects that repeat topics or do not strongly connect to standards
 - b. Create school wide expectations for final products and/or showcase events
 - c. Provide professional development on creating curriculum in these areas connecting to NCSCOS.
 - i. Analyze survey data from staff on effectiveness of professional development on experiential learning
 - ii. Identify any emerging or ongoing areas of need for training
4. Improve fidelity of the MTSS process
 - a. Examine students in Intervention: Investigate further on response to intervention
 - i. How many are growing? If they are not closing the gap at the rate needed then what?
 - ii. Students receiving intervention in the classroom? Tier II
 - iii. Establish an MTSS team
 - b. Hold PLC meetings to promote cross-grade level collaboration to focus on promoting project-based learning while still differentiating and filling gaps on foundational skills

SIP Target 2: Create safe, engaging, and inclusive school environments

1. Finalize and promote the [Exploris Equity Statement](#)
 - a. Take to board for approval
 - b. Engage more families to identify barriers and create connections
 - i. Share with school community as part of a family survey
 - ii. Develop family connection activities such as parent nights, community programs, and book studies to promote the equity statement and the family engagement policy; build upon dinner dialogues/coffee with counselors
2. Grow staff capacity to productively resolve conflict through Peaceful Schools training and Crucial Conversations Study Teams through schoolwide professional development
 - a. Peaceful school restorative conversation for small group and one-on-one to repair relationships/harm among staff
 - b. Conduct a follow up survey to the trust survey from spring of 2024 to measure changes in perceptions among staff.
 - c. Groups of students identified by staff: Data from this activity will be used to address inclusion and equity
3. Create Professional Development and onboarding activities that build capacity for veteran teachers and new staff to implement Responsive Classroom practices
4. Maintain or Increase retention rates for staff and students by 10% by spring of
5. Establish the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
 - a. Recruit membership, a Board chair, and develop a charter and meeting schedule
 - b. Create tools and instruments to gather and measure community perceptions of belonging and safety
 - c. review SEL data on a yearly basis to identify areas improvement
6. Update and revise The Exploris School Crisis Plan to reflect current best practices

SIP Target #3: Transition to a permanent location for a K-8 program

1. Establish and strengthen systems for maintenance of our existing facilities.
2. Communicate the progress of the New Facility Project at least monthly to all stakeholders,
3. Continue key partnerships and ongoing work in city planning, financing, and development
4. Build a 3-year student and family recruitment plan in preparation for expanding the elementary school with the opening of the new facility in the 26/27 SY.
5. In partnership with the Exploris Foundation, Conduct a robust and targeted Capital Campaign
6. Create pathways for feedback from all stakeholders in key areas where choices will be made, including size of student population, classroom layouts, etc.
7. Ensure that future spaces will serve equitable outcomes in creating a K-8 facility that has:
 - a. Spaces to meet the needs of differentiated learning
 - b. Intervention and EC spaces
 - c. Combining K-8 staff

SIP Target 4 - Increase stakeholder satisfaction with school communications and engagement opportunities

1. Analyze and Improve community outreach, access, and communication systems
 - a. identify sources of data and data collection
 - b. Examine data on how Exploris communicates with current stakeholders & how stakeholders communicate with Exploris
 - c. Analyze Exploris's "brand" in the community at large and develop campaigns to clarify and expand our brand and image
2. Conduct a communications assessment survey
 - a. Panorama or other tool: find out from current families what communications tools they regularly access
 - b. Analyze our social media presence and plan ways to measure and maximize impact
3. Analyze previous outreach activities for impact and revise/redesign for greater impact
 - a. Analyze our ROI on methods like paid radio ads, targeted social media, personal contacts, etc
 - b. Develop a marketing plan for both increased applications and recruitment for families
 - c. Develop a marketing plan for increasing applications to any staff openings to help provide a larger pool of quality applicants who can strengthen our progress towards goals



DATA SOURCES FOR TARGET AREAS

Our strategic plan will improve these outcomes:

Equitable Outcomes for All Students

- Students are empowered to be lifelong learners
- Disparities in student outcomes are eliminated among subgroups
- Students are safe and socially, emotionally, and physically healthy
- Students are engaged in their learning and school community



Data Sources

1. [EOY Education Excellence Data](#)
2. Improve instruction through [differentiated PD Plan](#)
3. Strengthen alignment with Standard Course of Study and preparation for EOGs through [NC Check-In Pilot](#)
4. [Field Experiences Tracker](#) (for connection & relevancy)

1. [TWC Survey results](#) on safety and well-being
2. [Internal Trust Survey Results](#) (Spring 2024)
3. [RISE Equity Audit Presentation](#)
4. 3 PD Days and Restorative work through Peaceful Schools

1. [TWC Survey results on current facilities](#)
2. What can be improved?
3. New facility what can be communicated?

1. [Conduct a Community Landscape](#) to assess the strengths, gaps, and need of the school.
2. Can [Panorama](#) be this tool? Or do we only have the SEL Survey for Students?

Coversheet

Directors Report

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Section: | V. Meeting Items |
| Item: | A. Directors Report |
| Purpose: | FYI |
| Submitted by: | |
| Related Material: | May 2025 Exploris Leadership Team Board Report (1).pdf |



The Exploris School

Directors Report

To: Board Members

From: Ethan, Josh, & Deb

Re: Monthly Board Report

Date: May 22, 2025

The following information is provided to the Board of Directors:

Enrollment

| Grade Level | Number for Full Enrollment | Target Crew Sizes | Current Enrollment | 2025-2026 Applications | 2024-2025 Applications as of 5/23/24 |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Kindergarten | 34 | 17 | 30 | 164 | 155 |
| 1 st Grade | 36 | 18 | 39 | 67 | 62 |
| 2 nd Grade | 38 | 19 | 31 | 42 | 52 |
| 3 rd Grade | 38 | 19 | 36 | 54 | 76 |
| 4 th Grade | 38 | 19 | 38 | 50 | 60 |
| 5 th Grade | 38 | 19 | 39 | 55 | 61 |
| 6 th Grade | 76 | 19 | 72 | 141 | 140 |
| 7 th Grade | 76 | 19 | 75 | 40 | 46 |
| 8 th Grade | 76 | 19 | 78 | 31 | 38 |
| Total | 450 | | 439 | 644 | 690 |

Student Support Team Report

| Month | In School Suspension # students / # days | Out of School Suspension # students / # days | Major referrals that did not result in suspension # students / # referrals | Minor Behavior Referrals # students / # referrals |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|
| August | ES: 0/0 MS: 0/0 | ES: 0/0 MS: 0/0 | ES: 0/0 MS: 0/0 | ES: 3/3 MS: 0/0 |
| September | ES: 0/0 MS: 4/2.5 | ES: 1/1.5 MS: 1/1 | ES: 19/14 MS: 12/9 | ES: 100/50* (50 minor referrals by one staff member) MS: 14/10 |
| October | ES: 1/1 MS: 5/2 | ES: 2/2 MS: 2/1 | ES: 23/14 MS: 11/7 | ES: 21/34 MS: 26/22 |
| November | ES: 5/5 MS: 6/8 | ES: 2/2 MS: 5/6.5 | ES: 24/36 MS: 12/14 | ES: 30/48 MS: 31/52 |
| December | ES: 2/2 | ES: 1/2 | ES: 18/31 | ES: 21/27 |

| | MS: totals above are for Nov. and Dec. combined | MS: totals above are for Nov. and Dec. combined | MS: totals above are for Nov. and Dec. combined | MS: totals above are for Nov. and Dec. combined |
|----------|---|---|---|---|
| January | ES:0/0 MS: 0/0 | ES: 0/0 MS: 0/0 | ES: 6/9 MS: 2/3 | ES: 5/5 MS: 1/1 |
| February | ES: 2/2 MS:10/9 | ES: 1/1 MS:0/0 | ES:15/10 MS:30/19 | ES: 17/13 MS:13/12 |
| March | ES: 0/0 MS: 3/3 | ES: 1/ .5 MS: 0/0 | ES: 11/21 MS: 6/14 | ES: 22/26 MS: 12/14 |
| April | ES: 1/1 MS: 3/3 | ES: 0/0 MS: 1/2 | ES: 4/6 MS: 15/21 | ES: 5/8 MS: 11/17 |
| May | ES: 1/1 MS:5/5 | ES: 0/0 MS: 3/3 | ES: 3/3 MS:7/7 | ES: 3/4 MS: 19/21 |
| June | | | | |

Campus Updates

- Outward Bound was very successful, and we have been enjoying the stories from the students and staff about their adventures and victories. As we see each year, there are many anecdotes of personal challenges that were overcome and increases in confidence and friendships. Nearly every student who attended also spoke about their experiences at Outward Bound as part of their passage portfolios. Special thank yous to our staff members who attended or who worked flexible positions that week so that others could go. Although each year there are a few students who do not attend due to medical or other personal reasons, this year we had an unusually high number of students who opted out just because they did not want to go. We are looking at ways to return this capstone trip to an event that all 8th graders participate in, and will continue our early communications, outreach from program alumni, parent information sessions, etc.
- The DC trip was also very successful, and included many opportunities for team building and visiting major museums including the Smithsonian, The National Museum of African American History and Culture, Holocaust Memorial Museum, and activities like Planet Word (an interactive puzzle room) and seeing the monuments at night.
- 6th grade visited the beach and had a full day science program with Carolina Ocean Studies
- 5th grade spent three days at Camp Hanes in hands-on and team building projects connected to their science curriculum
- 3rd grade participated in the "Island and Sound Exploration" program on the *Island Explorer*, a 62-foot 115 passenger vessel located in Carolina Beach, and traveled through the Myrtle Grove Sound and the Intracoastal Waterway before landing on Masonboro Island to explore the diverse biology of the beach, marsh and tidal creeks.
- We completed an [analysis of the "Indicators of Trust" survey](#) (based on the work of Elena Aguilar) from Feb. of 2024 and December of this school year. The results show some positive trends in places like feeling appreciated and receiving feedback with colleagues and admin, and some areas still for action steps like communication norms and gossip.
- Congratulations to Mariah Perry, who was elected by staff to be the next Kaizen rep for the middle school campus. Mariah will take over from Tasha Void, whose two year term ends this spring. We thank Tasha for her leadership, insights, and work on behalf of the school for the past two years.
- The five person leadership team met with the consultants from Peaceful Schools to review the feedback from the staff community circle discussions that were hosted on April 18th. We analyzed trends and themes in the comments and identified some potential action steps based on the feedback.

- Peaceful Schools also led a collaborative discussion at the elementary school on May 14th to look at plus-deltas for the elementary Friday programming, including Community Circle, Service-Learning, and Explorations. An ad hoc committee is working with the suggestions and feedback to find consensus on any updates or revisions to the current programming and schedule.
- The Middle School campus held our end of the year staff reflection circle at our campus specific meeting on May 14th. We looked at the year long initiatives to focus on bringing the Exploris Core Values more upfront in daily discussions and on creating a culture of reading throughout this school year. Staff members shared successes, memories, and reflections as well as positive shout outs for student accomplishments and appreciation for each other's work.
- Josh has created the annual testing plan and we are ready for the state End of Grade exams, including the plan for separate setting accommodations and how to use the spaces at both campuses.
- Josh and Koren are working on the offer letters for staff for the 25-26 school year. Some of the work is dependent on completing the budgeting process for next year so we know how many positions we can support and what levels of salary will be offered. Since the state has advised public charter schools to "budget flat" we expect to maintain current rates of pay and reflect any state salary increases.
- Kaizen has continued to meet in subgroups. The FAM-S survey, analysis, and suggestions for next steps was completed, the survey team has been working on a 360 survey using Panorama tools for families and the Exploris community, and the SIP group has finalized a draft of the SIP for the next 1-2 years (included in the board packet for review.) Kaizen is also planning a retreat on one of the post-testing teacher workdays for reflection, onboarding new members, and goal setting.
- A comprehensive survey of our staff was conducted to help determine requests and needs for professional development for the upcoming school year. Leah Ruto, our Instructional Coach, met with all teams during PLCs in the last few weeks to review the results. We will begin outlining specifics and calendar items in the early summer for next year's PD.
- PLC meetings (Professional Learning Community) have focused on intervention data and targeted needs, especially heading into the end of the school year. Intervention schedules have been adjusted and lessons delivered by classroom teachers, Leah, and our interventions team.
- As Exploris, along with the rest of the state, transitions away from Powerschool and into using Infinite Campus, we are working on plans for how to best manage and communicate about that transition. Josh has been our lead on the required training, spending two days earlier this year in intensive work on the new system. Part of our summer work will be as a leadership team and student support team looking at the changes that will be rolled out with this new system and our plan to prepare both staff and families.

Community Events

- End of year trimester portfolio conferences for all grades have concluded, including the 8th grade Passage Portfolios. It is always wonderful to see the growth and impact in these culminating presentations and to see students, families, former teachers, and community members in attendance. Many students and family members spoke highly of how the unique opportunities in an Exploris education had positively impacted them and the skills and confidence they will carry with them into high school.
- The counseling team held its final Dinner Dialogues of the year at the Transfer Food Hall ballroom on Wed. May 14th. During the program they presented an overview of the Social and Emotional Learning programs from the year as well as family support programs, including our food pantry and Peer Advocates program.

- The annual elementary campus Fields of Fun was rescheduled for Tuesday, May 20th due to rain on the original date. Students will have the chance to participate in stations with assorted games and activities and treats throughout the day.
- We are organizing a community book club for families and staff over the summer, using the book, [The Anxious Generation](#). Board members are also welcome to participate! We are currently working on dates and formats and different ways to help more people be able to participate.
- After reviewing the applications and using our rubric, our next staff leader for the Shinonome exchange has been selected, and congratulations to Alexandra van Dorsten. Alexandra will join Jill Hemingway, who is the current lead, on the planning and trip for the 25-26 exchange and then will serve as the lead teacher for the program for the 26-27 school year.
- The Girls on the Run program is conducting a fundraiser project for the SPCA. Special thanks to Jessica Roberts for leading this program.
- Jessie Francese, 8th grade Humanities teacher, was selected for the NC State [CIDRE](#) (Cultural Investigations and Digital Representations) program through NC State and will travel to Copenhagen this summer. She will be building a project comparing the Danish sustainability efforts with those in the United States.
- Deb was awarded the NC Education Policy Fellowship (EPFP) and will join the 2025-2026 cohort. NC EPFP is the only statewide program of its kind that focuses on leadership and professional development in the context of education policy. Each new class continues the trend of accomplished and motivated participants, rich in its members' range of experiences, both professionally and personally. Fellows come from public schools and district offices, higher education, community colleges, state agencies, and a diverse array of education organizations across North Carolina. The program is designed for fellows to learn about education policy issues and perspectives that they don't typically encounter in their daily work so that they can be more informed, rounded contributors to the critical debates that shape education in NC and beyond. Fellows increase their awareness of how public policy is made, learn who the key players are, and become more confident and involved in the policymaking process. Deb hopes to use her participation in this cohort to advocate for public charter schools like Exploris and specifically for issues of fair funding and facilities funding for public charters.
- We are organizing our annual summer programs, which include:
 - Kindergarten readiness program
 - Elementary Read to Achieve Camp
 - Orientation for rising 6th graders. This will be 2-3 half day sessions where students are invited to participate in a mini version of the Exploris school day and begin to meet their classmates and teachers and participate in a small collaborative group project. Families are also invited to stay during these orientation days for an informal Q&A with Deb. This will be our third year offering this program, and has been very well received in the past with about 75% of the incoming 6th grade class participating.
- Deb submitted a proposal for the NCMLE (North Carolina Association for Middle Level Education) that will highlight the program at Exploris for the NCMLE's fall journal and has been notified that we have been selected for publication. She will work with the team to write the full draft and gather pictures and release forms for the journal.
- Our proposal to present at the annual North Carolina Association for Public Charter Schools' annual summer conference has been accepted. Deb & Josh will present at the conference in Wilmington in July on charter school advocacy.

Human Resources Update

| Staff Departures | | |
|------------------|----------|-------|
| Name | Position | Notes |
| None | | |
| | | |
| | | |

| New Hires for Approval | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Name | Position | Notes |
| Aideen Lambe | 6th Crew Math/Science | Aideen has already joined as a long term sub replacing Orane Allen, and has been a great addition. We intend to offer a contract for the 25-26 school year. Resume Aideen Lambe |
| | | |
| | | |

| Internal Position Changes | | |
|---------------------------|----------|-------|
| Name | Position | Notes |
| None | | |
| | | |
| | | |

| Current & Anticipated Vacancies for 24-25 School Year | | |
|---|--|--|
| None | | |

Important Dates (Board Attendance Requested)

- 8th Grade Graduation Friday June 6th 9:00am Raleigh Rose Garden

Coversheet

Board Business

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Section: | V. Meeting Items |
| Item: | B. Board Business |
| Purpose: | Vote |
| Submitted by: | |
| Related Material: | IES_Proposal_052025.pdf |

THIS CONTRACT EXPIRES 120 DAYS FROM RECEIPT BY SPONSOR IF NOT EXECUTED.

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Engineering, Industry Expansion Solutions
SERVICE AGREEMENT**

SA NUMBER 012125 OPPORTUNITY NUMBER 205543 Date May 20, 2025

THIS SERVICE AGREEMENT (the "Agreement") entered by and between North Carolina State University on behalf of its College of Engineering, Industry Expansion Solutions/North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership ("NC STATE"), and Exploris Charter Schools ("SPONSOR").

WHEREAS, NC State wishes to supply services to Sponsor; and,

WHEREAS, the services contemplated herein are of mutual interest and benefit to NC STATE and SPONSOR, and will further the instructional, research, and public service objectives of NC STATE in a manner consistent with its status as a public educational institution; and,

WHEREAS, SPONSOR desires to provide funding in support of the services entitled **Strategic Plan update, Virtual interviews of Stakeholders, 1day on site facilitation of Board Review, and support.**

NOW, THEREFORE, in exchange of the mutual promises contained herein, and for other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, NC State and Sponsor agree as follows:

1. **Scope of Services.** NC STATE agrees to supply Sponsor with the services described in **Exhibit A** (the "Services"), attached hereto and incorporated by reference as if fully set forth herein.
2. **Term.** NC State shall commence providing the services on 6/15/2025 (the "Start Date"), and shall terminate on 8/15/2025 (the "End Date").
3. **Payment.** In consideration of the Services provided pursuant to this Agreement, Sponsor shall pay NC State **\$8,000**. Payment shall be made by check payable to **NC State/Industry Expansion Solutions**. Invoices shall be payable on receipt by Sponsor and will be transmitted electronically to:

NAME Steven Darroch
TITLE Board Chair
EMAIL sdarroch@exploris.org

Sponsor shall make payment according to the following schedule:

Payment in Full, on or prior to the Start Date.

4. **Project Manager**. NC State shall provide the Services under the supervision of Robert Crew, who shall serve as the Project Manager. If for any reason the Project Manager shall be unable to continue to serve, a successor acceptable to both parties shall be chosen. The Project Manager and Sponsor shall not enter a consulting arrangement with each other on the subject of the Services or this Agreement during the Term, according to the Conflict of Interest Policies of NC State.

5. **Intellectual Property**. Neither party transfers by operation of this Agreement any intellectual property rights owned by either party now or hereafter acquired in connection with its performance under this Agreement. Should any invention potential arise during the Term, the parties shall execute a sponsored project agreement ("SPA").

6. **Communications Content**. NC State shall have the right to promote the Services provided to Sponsor in order to highlight NC State's ability to offer education and technical assistance. Sponsor will approve content prior to public release.

7. **Independent Contractor**. Nothing herein is intended or shall be construed to establish any agency, partnership, or joint venture between Sponsor and NC State.

8. **Termination**. This Agreement may be terminated by either party upon thirty (30) days' written notice to the other party. Upon termination, Sponsor shall reimburse NC State for all costs and non-cancellable commitments incurred by NC State's provision of the Services prior to the date of termination, not to exceed the total commitment specified in Paragraph 3 of this Agreement.

9. **Indemnification**. Sponsor shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless NC State, its Trustees, officers, agents, and employees from all loss, cost, and expense in connection with or arising out of any liability or claim of liability for injury or damages to persons or property sustained or claimed to have been sustained by anyone whomsoever, by reason of the performance of this Agreement, or by any act or omission of the Sponsor or any of its officers, agents, employees, guests, patrons, or invitees.

10. **Tort Claims Act**. NC State's liability for bodily injury, property damage or any other matter sounding in tort is determined in accordance with the provisions, procedures, and limits of the North Carolina Tort Claims Act, N.C.G.S. §143-291, et seq., and NC State's assertion of sovereign immunity.

11. **Notices.** All notices shall be hand delivered, sent by private overnight mail service, or sent by registered or certified U.S. mail and addressed to the party to receive such notice at the address given below, or such other address as may hereafter be designated by notice in writing:

If to NC State:
Industry Expansion Solutions
North Carolina State University
Attn: Executive Director
Campus Box 7902
Raleigh, NC 27695-7902

If to Sponsor:
Steven Darroch
Board Chair

,

12. **Force Majeure.** Neither party shall be deemed to be in default of its obligations hereunder if and so long as it is prevented from performing such obligations by an act of war, hostile foreign action, nuclear explosion, earthquake, hurricane, tornado, or other catastrophic natural event or act of God.

13. **Entire Agreement.** This Agreement contains the entire agreement of the parties and there are no representations, inducements or other provisions other than those expressed herein. All changes, additions or deletions to this Agreement shall be in writing and executed by the authorized representatives of both parties.

14. **Access to Persons and Records.** The State or NC State auditor may audit the records of Sponsor during and after the term of this Agreement to verify accounts and data affecting fees or performance in accordance with North Carolina General Statutes §143-49.9 and §147-64.7.

15. **Governing Law.** This Agreement and the rights and obligations of the parties hereto shall be interpreted, construed and enforced in accordance with the laws of the State of North Carolina, and the exclusive venue for any legal proceedings arising from or incident to this Agreement shall be the state courts sitting in Wake County, North Carolina.

16. **Severability.** Should any non-material provision of this Agreement be declared illegal, void, or unenforceable under North Carolina law, or shall be considered severable, the Agreement shall remain in force and be binding upon the parties hereto as though the said provision had never been included.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the parties have executed this AGREEMENT in duplicate originals, one of which is retained by each of the parties, effective the day and year first written above.

NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

Recommended by:



Name: Robert Crew
Title: Project Manager
Date: May 20, 2025

Authorized by:



Executive Director (or Designee)
Industry Expansion Solutions
NC State University Box 7902
Raleigh, NC 27695-7902
919-515-5430
Date: May 20, 2025

Attachment (s)

SPONSOR

By: _____

Name: Steven Darroch
Title: Board Chair

Date _____

The Client acknowledges that NC State University Industry Expansion Solutions is an affiliate of the NIST/MEP (Manufacturing Extension Partnership) program and the Client will be requested to participate in surveys and other evaluation processes associated with the affiliate organization in reporting and evaluation of the program's effectiveness. Information collected includes, but may not be limited to, quantified numbers for sales increases, sales retained, cost savings or avoidances, investments in plant/equipment, workforce development, jobs created and/or jobs retained. Information collected for reporting to government agencies will be reported as summary statistics only.

Name of person who will complete the survey: Steven Darroch



Industry Expansion Solutions

EXHIBIT A

May 20, 2025

Opportunity Description/Name: Strategic Plan update, Virtual interviews of Stakeholders, 1day on site facilitation of Board Review, and support
Opportunity Number: 205543

Steven Darroch
Board Chair
Exploris Charter Schools

,

Dear Steven Darroch:

This confirms our earlier discussions, and is a proposed Scope of Services by North Carolina State University/Industry Expansion Solutions (IES), to provide Exploris Charter Schools with a Strategic Plan update, Virtual interviews of Stakeholders, 1day on site facilitation of Board Review, and support

Project Scope & Deliverables:

Project Details:

- Develop Interview questions with Exploris input,
- Perform Virtual interviews with Exploris recommended stake holders
- Josh Corbat to address students and teachers input
- Compiling a report of findings
- Preparing and facilitating a one day on site Strategic Plan review by the Board and key stakeholders.
- Available for questions post Board Review on final new Strategic Plan

Project Schedule:

This project will be scheduled during June –August of 2025 on mutually acceptable dates.

If start and end dates are specified in the Service Agreement, our improvement specialists will place these dates 'on hold.' The dates of delivery will remain on hold for up to three weeks after receipt of this agreement. 'On hold' delivery dates are subject to be released if the agreement remains unsigned. Once the agreement is signed, your project will be added to our delivery schedule. Preparation requirements for this project are listed under "Responsibilities."

Resources:

An Improvement Specialist Bill Iacovelli from NC State University's IES will lead this workshop. Robert Crew will serve as project manager.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the services provided, please reach out to me, your Regional Manager, or you can reach out to Mr. Tim Kelly - Assistant Director of Customer Care and Professional Learning (919-515-8683; tim_kelly@ncsu.edu). We are dedicated to delivering the highest level of service and will promptly address any concerns to ensure the successful achievement of your objectives.

Fees:

Payment terms are described in the Service Agreement included in this proposal package. This fee of \$8,000 includes the cost of reports, facilitation, and instructor travel.

Responsibilities:

Exploris Charter Schools is responsible for:

- Identifying the Stakeholders for the Virtual interviews, coordinating the scheduling of the interviews with Bill
- Josh Corbat to provide the students and teachers interviews
- Scheduling the off-site Key Stakeholders meeting with Bill, and providing the facility and any required breaks or meals if required

NC State is responsible for:

- Qualified and experienced instructional staff
- All teaching aids, such as workbooks and handouts for participants
- Performing the interviews and generating a report of the findings
- Facilitating the on-site one day new Strategic Plan development with Exploris Leadership
- Being available post Strategic Plan development for final review of document.

Benefits of Working with NC State University:

The objective of NC State University's Extension programs is to improve the competitiveness of business and industry. We have been helping companies improve their operations and processes for over 60 years. We are a State-wide resource of over 75 professionals that include leaders, engineers and educators and we are part of the national network of Manufacturing Extension Partnerships (MEP). Our specialized experts each have over 15 years of private industry experience. Additionally, we have significant engineering research, design resources and student talent available through the University. Our primary focus and measure of success is the economic impact of our services as reported by our clients. And we are personal stakeholders in the economic future of Manufacturing in the United States. Many of our Specialists live in or near the community where your business is located.

Our success is measured by your success. Our staff can visit you and work with your employees on a regular basis on this and other projects.

Enclosed is a copy of a Service Agreement for this project. The agreement contains the

project cost and terms of payment. If this proposal and service agreement meet your approval, please sign the service agreements in the area labeled "Sponsor."
Please scan and e-mail the signed Service Agreement to me at the e-mail below.

We look forward to working with you on this very important project and supporting the needs of local North Carolina industry. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Crew". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert Crew
Assistant Director of Eastern Client and Market Development
NC State University Industry Expansion Solutions
919-830-2941
robert_crew@ncsu.edu
www.ies.ncsu.edu