Rooted School South Carolina

Rooted School South Carolina- Founding Committee Meeting

Published on September 15, 2026 at 10:38 PM EDT

Date and Time

Thursday September 17, 2026 at 6:00 PM EDT

Location

Virtual Via Zoom

This meeting is held in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (§30-4). The agenda was posted in accordance with applicable law.

Agenda

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
I.	**Opening Items**			**6:00 PM**
A.	Record Attendance		Felisa McDavid	1 m
B.	Call the Meeting to Order		Randall Jackson	
C.	Acknowledge Guest		Lalah Radney	5 m

Board meetings are open to the public, and members of the community are welcome to attend. Meetings include an opportunity for public comment in accordance with the Board's public comment procedures. Public attendance does not automatically provide an opportunity to participate in Board discussion or deliberation outside of the designated public comment period.

	Purpose	Presenter	Time

As part of C.R. Neal Academy’s ongoing development and accountability, representatives from our authorizer, fellowship partners, Rooted School Foundation, and other invited partners or guests may also attend meetings to observe, provide support, or share relevant updates. The presence of guests does not alter the Board’s responsibility for governance and decision-making.

II. Governance Foundational Documents — 6:06 PM

	Item	Purpose	Presenter	Time
A.	Vacant Positions	Discuss	Randall Jackson	5 m

One position open and vacant

Treasurer-

III. Consent Agenda — 6:11 PM

The Consent Agenda groups routine items for approval in a single motion, without separate discussion, so the Board's time is reserved for the substantive votes and updates later on this agenda. Any Trustee may request that an item be removed from the Consent Agenda before the vote; on that request, the Chair moves the item to its own place on the agenda for individual discussion and a separate vote, and the remaining Consent Agenda items are then voted as presented.

Motion: *That the Board approve the Consent Agenda as presented, comprising the minutes of the Founding Committee meeting held August 6, 2026, and Policies BEA, BEB, BEC, and BED as attached exhibits.*

Vote: Voice vote; roll call only on request.

	Item	Purpose	Presenter	Time
A.	Approve Minutes	Approve Minutes	Randall Jackson	1 m

Approve minutes for Rooted School South Carolina- Founding Committee Meeting on August 6, 2026

	Item	Purpose	Presenter	Time
B.	Adopt Policy BEA, Regular Board Meetings	Vote	Randall Jackson	1 m

	Purpose	Presenter	Time

Formalizes the Board's existing practice for regular meetings and aligns it with South Carolina's Freedom of Information Act and standard charter governance norms.

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
C.	Adopt Policy BEB, Special Board Meetings	Vote	Randall Jackson	1 m

Formalizes the Board's existing practice for special meetings and aligns it with FOIA and standard charter governance norms. Returned to this Consent Agenda because Item II.A, voted earlier on this agenda, corrects the Bylaws' special-meeting notice provision to the same 24-hour standard this policy uses, resolving the conflict that previously required this item to be considered separately.

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
D.	Adopt Policy BEC, Executive Sessions / Open Meetings	Vote	Randall Jackson	1 m

Formalizes the Board's existing practice for executive sessions and aligns it with FOIA and standard charter governance norms.

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
E.	Adopt Policy BED, Meeting Procedures	Vote	Randall Jackson	1 m

Formalizes the Board's existing general meeting procedures and aligns them with FOIA and standard charter governance norms.

IV. Board Development — 6:16 PM

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
A.	Adoption of Board Member Services Policy (Policy BI)	Vote	Randall Jackson	1 m

The Board is asked to adopt a new policy establishing board member services, covering onboarding, ongoing development, and support for sitting board members.

RESOLVED, that the Board hereby adopts Policy BI (Board Member Services), attached as an exhibit to this agenda, effective upon adoption.

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
B.	Adopt Board Training Schedule	Vote	Randall Jackson	

Approve the Board Training Schedule (September through December 2026) as an administrative record of the Committee's voluntary training plan under Policy BI and Procedure BI-R.
RESOLVED, that the Board of Rooted School South Carolina hereby approves the Board Training Schedule, September-December 2026, attached as Exhibit [X], as the record of training sessions to be delivered at the Board's three remaining 2026 regular meetings.

	Purpose	Presenter	Time

Oct 15, 2026 agenda item 1 (5:00-6:00 PM, before the 6:00 PM regular meeting)
Board Training: Tier 3, School-Specific Governance Onboarding. Topics: the Corporation's Bylaws (Articles IV, XIV, XV); Policy BEA, BEB, BEC, BED and Procedures BEA-R, BEB-R, BEC-R, BED-R; Conflict of Interest policy, once adopted; committee structure. Facilitator: Board Chair or the school's counsel.

Nov 19, 2026 agenda item 1 (5:00-6:00 PM, before the 6:00 PM regular meeting)
Board Training: Tier 1, Statutory Orientation, Part 1. Topics: policy development; personnel; school law; ethics. Facilitator: VUCIL or an SDE-approved provider, to be confirmed by October 2026.

Dec 17, 2026 agenda item 1 (5:00-6:00 PM, before the 6:00 PM regular meeting)
Board Training: Tier 1, Statutory Orientation, Part 2. Topics: instructional programs; school finance; community relations. Facilitator: VUCIL or an SDE-approved provider, to be confirmed by October 2026.

Each item is framed as training, not action, so no separate motion is needed at the November or December meetings unless the Board wants to formally record completion. If you want completion logged by resolution at each meeting rather than just in the Training Tracker, I can draft that language too.

V. Enrollment & Community Engagement Update — 6:17 PM

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
A. September 2026 Updates	Discuss	Andrea Black Evans	10 m

- **Applications:** Applications open **October 28, 2026**, with a goal of enrolling **260 founding scholars**—130 sixth graders and 130 ninth graders.
- **Pipeline: 266 prospective-family leads** currently in the enrollment pipeline, with continued focus on nurturing families from interest → application → enrollment.
- **Community Engagement:** Expanding visibility through community events, faith-based organizations, local partners, family outreach, and our **October 30 Fall Festival**, designed as one of prospective founding families' first experiences with C.R. Neal.
- **Immediate Focus:** Convert current interest into applications while continuing to grow the top of the funnel ahead of application launch

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
B.	Adopt Monthly Enrollment Targets	Vote	Steven Carney	5 m

Summary for the board packet:

Staff are bringing forward a founding-class enrollment target, recruitment funnel targets, a monthly recruitment and enrollment timeline, and the admissions structure for C.R. Neal Academy's first day of instruction in August 2027. The attached item sets a target of 260 students, describes the funnel that supports it from qualified leads through signed agreements, ties recruitment milestones to the same monthly cadence the school already reports to Voorhees against the Pre-Opening Evidence Tracker's benchmark gates, and sets out a tiered enrollment contingency so the board can see, in advance, what action is required at each level of shortfall against target. It does not ask the board to adopt a recruitment budget figure, which will come forward separately once reconciled.

Motion: *That the Board adopt a founding-class enrollment target of 260 students for C.R. Neal Academy's first day of instruction in August 2027 (130 students in grade 6 and 130 in grade 9), the associated recruitment and admissions funnel targets described in this item, an application window opening October 26, 2026 and closing no later than February 28, 2027 per the Executive Director's direction, and the monthly recruitment timeline described herein.*

Vote: Roll call recommended given S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-90(a)(3), which entitles any member to a by-member vote record on request; recording it by default avoids a mid-meeting procedural pause.

C.	Adopt Enrollment Policy and Procedure	Vote	Steven Carney	5 m

This is the first time an enrollment policy has come to the Board. Staff prepared a combined enrollment policy and procedures document and completed an internal compliance review against current South Carolina charter law (2026 Act No. 123, the Charter School Accountability Act) and Voorhees's pre-opening conditions EN-002 through EN-004 and VM-006. This review has not yet been performed by the school's outside counsel. A draft was also shared with VUCIL ahead of this meeting to keep the pre-opening conditions timeline on track. To follow standard South Carolina public charter school board practice of separately numbered Policy and Procedure documents, the draft has been split in two: Policy JBC, Enrollment states the board-level rule the school must follow (open enrollment and lottery, the four enrollment preferences and their statutory caps, and rights on withdrawal and appeal). Procedure JBC-R, Enrollment Procedures sets out how the Executive Director administers that rule (recruitment, application windows, lottery mechanics, waitlist management, and the Year One enrollment calendar). The Board votes to adopt Policy JBC, subject to review by outside counsel; Procedure JBC-R is delegated to the Executive Director to establish and later amend without further board action, provided it stays consistent with Policy JBC and applicable law. Policy JBC includes a fourth enrollment preference, for dependents of active-duty military personnel, that was not part of the school's approved charter application and is being adopted here for the first time.

Motion: *That the Board adopts Policy JBC, Enrollment, presented to the Board at this meeting, including the fourth enrollment preference for dependents of active-duty military personnel described in Section IV of that policy, which preference was not part of the school's approved charter application and is adopted here for the first time by this action, subject to review by the school's outside counsel; that the Board authorizes the Executive Director to finalize Policy JBC following that review, incorporating any changes counsel identifies as necessary, and to bring back to the Board for further action only those changes that are substantive rather than technical or conforming; that the Board delegates to the Executive Director the authority described in Policy JBC, Section VIII, to establish and administer Procedure JBC-R, Enrollment Procedures, without further Board action except as that section reserves to the Board; and that the Executive Director is authorized and directed to transmit Policy JBC together with Procedure JBC-R to Voorhees University Charter Institute of Learning as the enrollment procedures notice contemplated by pre-opening conditions EN-003, EN-004, and VM-006, once counsel review is complete.*

Vote: Roll call recommended, consistent with item V.B and S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-90(a)(3).

VI.	**Finance & Funding**			**6:37 PM**
	A. Update RSF CSP Funding Update	Discuss	Steven Carney	15 m

	Purpose	Presenter	Time

Steven, from RSF, will provide an update on the status of Rooted School Foundation's Charter Schools Program funding and what it does and does not cover for C.R. Neal's pre-opening year. The update covers where the federal grant stands today, which categories of pre-opening cost it can support, and the work underway to expand what it covers ahead of the August 2027 opening.

The board should come prepared to discuss its own role. CSP funds will not cover everything the school needs in order to open, particularly furniture, classroom technology, and instructional equipment. This is the point at which trustees should begin actively leveraging their networks, employer and faith partnerships, and community relationships toward private fundraising. A specific target will come to the board once the federal picture is settled, but the work of opening doors should start now.

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
B. Veris Engagement Letter	Vote	Lalah Radney	5 m

Engagement Letter Hyperlinked Here

- **Finance & Accounting Support:** Veris would provide C.R. Neal's core back-office finance functions, including internal controls, general ledger management, accounts payable, monthly reconciliations, payroll support, benefits/retirement remittances, and monthly financial reporting.
- **CFO & Board Support:** The engagement also includes CFO-level consultation, annual budget development, virtual attendance at Board meetings, QuickBooks access, and guidance on employee benefits.
- **Cost:** During the planning year, the base accounting fee is **$2,500/month**, increasing to **$4,750/month once the school opens**, plus a $3,500 onboarding fee, $150 monthly technology fee, and additional charges for certain services outside the core scope.
- **Board Action/Next Step:** Review and approve the engagement so C.R. Neal can establish the financial systems and controls needed during the pre-opening year. The agreement becomes effective once the signed copy is returned to Veris

VII. Hiring and Staff Development — 6:57 PM

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
A. New Roles (NEED JDs)	Vote	Lalah Radney	5 m

- **Assistant Director of Operations:** Position is **currently posted** and recruitment is underway.

	Purpose	Presenter	Time

- **Operations Intern: Peyton Miller** is supporting pre-opening operations, enrollment, and key launch projects.
- **Enrollment Leadership (RSF):** Network-level enrollment position is in development and expected to be **posted by the end of September**.
- **Immediate Focus:** Build the core pre-opening team intentionally while ensuring staffing capacity grows alongside enrollment, operations, and launch priorities

VIII. Development — 7:02 PM

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
A. Program Partnership Update	Discuss	Lalah Radney	10 m

- **UNCF:** Exploring partnership opportunities to strengthen **early HBCU exposure and college pathways**, including a potential exploratory grant in partnership with Benedict College.
- **Prisma Health:** Advancing conversations around serving as C.R. Neal's **anchor healthcare partner**, co-designing the Healthcare pathway around regional workforce needs and creating a pipeline from early exposure to credentials, work-based learning, and employment.
- **Westinghouse:** Continuing development of our **Advanced Manufacturing partnership**, with a focus on pathway design, industry expertise, facility/lab needs, and long-term workforce alignment.

IX. Pre-Opening & Facility Updates — 7:12 PM

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
A. Voorhees Pre-Opening Conditions	Discuss	Lalah Radney	5 m

Ready to Open Condition

- **Readiness Framework:** C.R. Neal is actively working against VUCIL's Ready to Open benchmarks across four areas: **Academics, Finance, Operations, and Governance.**
- **Near-Term Focus:** By December, key priorities include establishing core financial and operational systems, maintaining a credible enrollment pipeline, advancing the facility/occupancy pathway, and keeping Board policies, training, and oversight on schedule.
- **Key Enrollment Benchmark:** VUCIL identifies **195 students, or 75% of our 260-student target,** as the critical Green threshold beginning with the April readiness review and for June authorization.

		Purpose	Presenter	Time

- **Board Focus:** We will continue using the checklist as a standing readiness tool to identify risks early, assign owners, and ensure C.R. Neal remains on track for **August 2027 opening**

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
B.	Facility Committee Updates	Discuss	Steven Carney	5 m

This item is a facility status update on the Atlas Road site, covering zoning, survey, and annexation, together with a governance note on the Facility Committee itself. It is a discussion item. No board action is requested.

IMPORTANT DATES

- September 17, 2026: a design page-turn meeting with GFB Consult was held earlier the same day as this meeting.
- Annexation of the site into the City of Columbia is in process.

TIMELINES

- **Zoning:** The City of Columbia Board of Zoning Appeals approved the special-use request for the Atlas Road site on September 3, 2026, the last zoning decision required. The city's written decision remains pending.
- **Survey:** Bunnell Lammons Engineering was confirmed as geotechnical engineer on August 19–20, 2026. The boundary-survey CAD for civil submission was targeted for September 11, 2026.
- **Design schedule:** GFB Consult committed on August 20, 2026 to deliver a detailed design schedule with 30, 60, and 90 percent stage gates and a written substantial completion date. We should see that schedule soon.
- **Construction:** On August 18, 2026, the gym was moved from Phase One to Phase Two for budget and sequencing reasons. It remains part of the master plan. Phase One planning remains within the 14 percent lease-cap threshold.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

- The Facility Committee has not yet convened, and its membership has not been posted to BoardOnTrack.
- The Owner's Advisor Committee (OAC) continues to meet on an active, weekly cadence, most recently September 10, 2026.

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
C.	ESMA Development Committee	Discuss	Thibaut Delloue	5 m

T. Delloue will provide a brief update on ESMA status.

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
X.	**Other Business**			**7:27 PM**
A.	South Carolina School Conference — Save the Date	FYI	Lalah Radney	5 m
B.	Upcoming Items to Review	FYI	Lalah Radney	2 m

Please review the Post and Courier Article: "**South Carolina charter schools fall short of state's new transparency laws"** and bring any questions to our next meeting.
-529 and Cash Transfer proposal

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
XI.	**Closing Items**			**7:34 PM**
A.	Adjourn Meeting	Vote	Randall Jackson	

Rooted School South Carolina
C.R. Neal Academy

Pursuant to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (§30-4-90), the minutes of this meeting are public records. Approved minutes will be posted to the school's public website and made available for public inspection within a reasonable time.