APPROVED

Rooted School South Carolina

Minutes

Rooted School South Carolina- Founding Committee Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday September 17, 2026 at 6:00 PM

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.

Directors Present
A. Peters (remote), C. Davis (remote), M. Fitzpatrick (remote), M. Neal (remote), R. Jackson (remote), T. Delloue (remote)

Directors Absent
A. Black Evans, F. McDavid

Guests Present
L. Radney (remote), S. Carney (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

R. Jackson called a meeting of the board of directors of Rooted School South Carolina to order on Thursday Sep 17, 2026 at 6:00 PM.

C. Acknowledge Guest

D. No guests were present

Ms. Radney informed the Board that representatives from Voorhees University Charter Institute of Learning may attend future meetings as part of the school's ongoing authorizer relationship. She also shared that representatives from The Mind Trust may attend meetings in connection with her participation in the South Carolina Founders Fellowship

II. Governance Foundational Documents

A. Vacant Positions

Ms. Radney announced that **Dr. Ron Rhames**, former President of Midlands Technical College, has agreed to join the Board, pending completion of the formal onboarding and appointment process.
Dr. Jackson shared background on Dr. Rhames, including his leadership experience at Midlands Technical College and his finance background. The Board discussed the possibility of Dr. Rhames serving as Treasurer; however, he has not yet accepted that officer position. Therefore, the **Treasurer position remains vacant**.
Follow-Up: Complete Dr. Rhames' onboarding and formal Board appointment process and continue discussion regarding the Treasurer role.

III. Consent Agenda

A. Approve Minutes

B. Adopt Policy BEA, Regular Board Meetings

C. Adopt Policy BEB, Special Board Meetings

D. Adopt Policy BEC, Executive Sessions / Open Meetings

E. Adopt Policy BED, Meeting Procedures

Steven Carney clarified the purpose and process of a consent agenda, explaining that items included on the consent agenda may be approved collectively unless a Board member requests that an item be removed for separate discussion.
Motion: Clarence Davis moved to approve the consent agenda as presented.
Result: Consent agenda approved.
The approval included the meeting minutes and Policies **BEA, BEB, BEC, and BED** contained within the consent agenda

IV. Board Development

A. Adoption of Board Member Services Policy (Policy BI)

The Board reviewed the proposed Board Member Services Policy establishing expectations and support for Board member onboarding, ongoing development, and service.
There was no substantive discussion
C. Davis made a motion to Approve Policy BI.
T. Delloue seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Adopt Board Training Schedule

The Board discussed required statewide Board training and corrected the originally proposed training dates so that training would align with the Board's established meeting schedule.
The Board confirmed its upcoming regular meetings as:

- October 1, 2026
- November 5, 2026
- December 3, 2026

Training sessions are intended to occur **from 5:00–6:00 p.m., immediately before the regular Board meetings**.
Board members also discussed prior state training completed by some members. Steven Carney will determine whether previous training satisfies current requirements and coordinate with Voorhees regarding any additional required training.
Motion: Marcus Neal moved to correct the Board training schedule to the first Thursday of October, November, and December, preceding the regular Board meetings.
Second: Thibaut Delloue.
Result: Motion carried with no opposition recorded.
Follow-Up: Verify which Board members have already completed qualifying state training and confirm remaining training requirements with Voorhees.
M. Neal made a motion to Marcus Neal moved to correct the Board training schedule to the first Thursday of October, November, and December, preceding the regular Board meetings.
T. Delloue seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

V. Enrollment & Community Engagement Update

A. September 2026 Updates

Ms. Radney provided the Enrollment & Community Engagement Committee update.

The committee has added two community representatives: **Tara Williams** and **Dr. Xavier Carter**. The school is also seeking prospective founding parents to participate so that family voices are represented early in the school's development.
The committee is developing a community ambassador approach in which trained community members can provide consistent C.R. Neal Academy updates at neighborhood meetings, churches, and other community organizations. Board members emphasized the importance of providing ambassadors with consistent talking points and training.
Ms. Radney reported approximately **1,300 leads** in the enrollment database at the time of the meeting. The school is developing systems to nurture prospective families through newsletters, direct outreach, and the enrollment platform.
The application period is planned to begin in late October, with the first major enrollment event scheduled for **Friday, October 30, 2026, at Bible Way**. Board members will receive a formal invitation and are encouraged to participate. Families will be able to apply onsite using tablets, and early applicants will receive founding-family/"I Applied" shirts.
The Board also discussed the overall enrollment timeline. The application window will run approximately October through February, followed by a public lottery if applications exceed available seats. The school is targeting approximately **500 applications** to account for expected attrition and support full enrollment

B. Adopt Monthly Enrollment Targets

Steven Carney presented enrollment targets required as part of the Voorhees pre-opening conditions.
The founding enrollment target is **260 students**, consisting of:
130 sixth-grade students and **130 ninth-grade students**.
The Board reviewed monthly recruitment and application targets designed to backward-map toward opening-day enrollment. Mr. Carney explained that enrollment performance will also inform budget decisions and contingency planning if enrollment falls below projections.
Motion: Clarence Davis moved to adopt the founding-class enrollment target of 260 students and the associated recruitment/admissions funnel targets.
Second: Thibaut Delloue.
Result: Motion carried with no opposition recorded
C. Davis made a motion to Clarence Davis moved to adopt the founding-class enrollment target of 260 students and the associated recruitment/admissions funnel targets.
T. Delloue seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

C. Adopt Enrollment Policy and Procedure

Steven Carney presented **Policy JBC – Enrollment**, including open enrollment, lottery procedures, enrollment preferences, special-population protections, withdrawal/transfer procedures, appeals, recordkeeping, and enrollment administration.

The policy establishes that enrollment is open to eligible students throughout South Carolina and does not restrict enrollment based on district boundaries. If applications exceed available seats, the school will conduct a public lottery consistent with South Carolina requirements.
Enrollment preferences discussed included returning students, siblings of currently enrolled students, eligible children of employees/charter committee members, and a proposed preference for **dependents of active-duty military personnel**.
The policy also addresses students with disabilities, multilingual learners, students experiencing homelessness under McKinney-Vento, and students in foster care.
The Board discussed outreach opportunities to military families at Fort Jackson, including possible outreach through the Base Exchange and Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities. The school is also exploring Purple Star designation.
Following clarification of an initially misstated motion:
Motion: Clarence Davis moved to adopt Policy JBC – Enrollment as presented, including the active-duty military dependent preference and subject to outside legal review.
Second: Thibaut Delloue.
Result: Motion carried.
Follow-Up: Research Fort Jackson outreach opportunities and complete legal review of Policy JBC
C. Davis made a motion to Clarence Davis moved to adopt Policy JBC – Enrollment as presented, including the active-duty military dependent preference and subject to outside legal review.
T. Delloue seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

VI. Finance & Funding

A. Update RSF CSP Funding Update

Steven Carney presented an overview of Rooted School Foundation's federal CMO CSP funding and C.R. Neal Academy's projected pre-opening funding needs.
The Board discussed anticipated **furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E)** costs, which are not fully covered within existing federal funding. RSF is exploring whether some FF&E expenses can be incorporated into facility financing.
Mr. Carney shared that approximately **$125,000 has already been raised through the South Carolina Children's Fund** to support the school's launch and planning year.
The Board discussed the need to begin fundraising early through grants, foundations, corporate partnerships, and other philanthropic sources. Members also discussed establishing a dedicated fundraising structure or committee and potentially exploring a separate **"Friends of C.R. Neal"** nonprofit entity.
The Board discussed South Carolina tax-credit opportunities and potential relationships with scholarship-granting organizations. Future School Fund and MCDC were identified as organizations for further exploration.
No Board action was required; the item was informational.

Follow-Up: Begin organizing the Board's fundraising/development infrastructure and continue exploring grants, corporate giving, FF&E financing, and tax-credit-related opportunities.

B. Veris Engagement Letter

The Board reviewed an engagement letter with **Veris**, the accounting firm supporting development of the school's operational budget and financial systems.
The Board discussed Veris' charter-school experience, anticipated fees, and the long-term possibility of eventually determining whether the school should continue outsourcing financial services or hire an internal CFO as the organization grows.
RSF will cover the initial cost of the engagement during the pre-opening period.
Motion: Thibaut Delloue moved to approve the Veris engagement letter.
Result: Motion carried with no opposition recorded
T. Delloue made a motion to Thibaut Delloue moved to approve the Veris engagement letter.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

VII. Hiring and Staff Development

A. New Roles (NEED JDs)

Ms. Radney provided an update on two planned positions:
Assistant Director of Operations: A school-specific role responsible for non-academic operations, including compliance, facilities, finance, enrollment support, vendors, and other operational systems. The position will report to Ms. Radney and must be based locally.
The intention is to develop the Assistant Director through training and a fellowship pathway toward future advancement into a Director of Operations role.
Enrollment Leadership: A network-level RSF position responsible for enrollment strategy across the Rooted network, including demographic analysis, enrollment trends, digital lead generation, marketing strategy, and recruitment systems. This role will report through RSF and may work remotely.
RSF/CSP resources will support the positions during the pre-opening period, with the Assistant Director of Operations ultimately transitioning to the school once C.R. Neal Academy opens.
The anticipated Assistant Director salary range discussed was approximately **$70,000–$80,000**.
The update was informational; **no Board action was required.**

VIII. Development

A. Program Partnership Update

Ms. Radney provided updates on strategic partnerships supporting the school's career-connected model and fundraising efforts.

Westinghouse: Discussions are underway regarding sponsorship and partnership connected to the Advanced Manufacturing pathway/wing.
Prisma Health: Discussions are underway regarding a comprehensive partnership around the Healthcare pathway, including industry-informed curriculum, healthcare professionals engaging with students, career exploration, internships, certifications, and potential sponsorship of the healthcare wing.
The school is seeking a connected **K–12/higher education/workforce pipeline**, including partnerships with two- and four-year institutions. Students could begin healthcare career exploration in middle school, progress to internships and credentials in high school, and ultimately transition into postsecondary healthcare programs and employment.
Ms. Radney also discussed plans for a **two-week Summer Leadership Academy** before the beginning of school to establish school culture, routines, expectations, and academic readiness without sacrificing instructional time once the school year begins. UNCF and Benedict College are among the organizations involved in ongoing partnership discussions.
The Board also discussed potential engagement with the USC School of Medicine, including a future scrub ceremony and healthcare pathway experiences.
No Board action was required.

IX. Pre-Opening & Facility Updates

A. Voorhees Pre-Opening Conditions

Ms. Radney reminded the Board that Voorhees has established a series of **Ready-to-Open benchmarks and pre-opening conditions** that the school must satisfy before opening.
Board members were encouraged to review the readiness benchmarks included in their materials so they understand the requirements, deadlines, and gates that must be cleared.
School leadership continues to meet frequently with Voorhees regarding progress toward these requirements.

B. Facility Committee Updates

Ms. Radney reported that the school received approval for its **special-use permit**, allowing the facility project to advance.
The school leadership team met with the design team for approximately four hours to continue architectural planning, including classroom design, lighting, and other facility elements. Updated architectural renderings will be shared with the Board.
A potential **November 8 groundbreaking ceremony** was discussed in conjunction with Bible Way's anniversary; the date remained subject to final confirmation.
Leadership reported that the project remained on schedule for the school to open in its facility in **August 2027**.

C.

ESMA Development Committee

Thibaut Delloue provided an update on development of the **Educational Services and Management Agreement (ESMA)** between Rooted School South Carolina and Rooted School Foundation.
The draft has undergone multiple rounds of review and revision between RSSC and RSF.
Proposed revisions were submitted to RSF's legal team for incorporation into the next draft.
Mr. Delloue will provide Board members with a summary of key provisions, including the proposed management fee, before circulation of the complete revised agreement.
The Board discussed the importance of retaining **independent South Carolina legal counsel** to represent Rooted School South Carolina, separate from RSF's legal counsel, and to review the ESMA before approval.
Potential charter-school counsel identified for consideration included **Turner & Caudell** and **White & Story**.
The anticipated timeline is to select legal counsel, review the revised ESMA, resolve remaining issues, approve the agreement, and submit it to Voorhees following Board review.
No Board action was taken on the ESMA at this meeting.
Follow-Up: Begin outreach to prospective independent legal counsel and prepare for Board discussion/selection at an upcoming meeting.

X. Other Business

A. South Carolina School Conference — Save the Date

Ms. Radney informed the Board that she and Steven Carney intend to submit a proposal to present at the **South Carolina Charter School Conference in Greenville, December 2–4, 2026**.
The item was informational; no Board action was required

B. Upcoming Items to Review

The Board discussed the importance of transparency, compliance, and active governance as C.R. Neal Academy progresses through pre-opening.
Board members were reminded that the Board is ultimately responsible for ensuring transparency, legal and policy compliance, financial oversight, and accountability of school leadership and contracted partners.
Members were encouraged to thoroughly review Board packets, ask substantive questions, and avoid functioning as a "rubber stamp" board.
The Board was also advised that upcoming meetings may require approximately **two hours for regular Board business**, in addition to scheduled Board training, because of the number of policies and pre-opening decisions that must be addressed.
The Board also discussed transitioning toward more in-person meetings over time to strengthen relationships and the Board's effectiveness as a working governing body.

XI. 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 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
A. Peters

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.