



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION | Eric C. Davis, Chairman

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March 7, 2025

Mr. Brian Crawford
Acting Director
Community School for the Digital and Visual Arts
bcrawford@communitydva.org

Mr. Bruce Friend
Chairman
North Carolina Charter Schools Review Board
bfriend@pinespringsprep.org

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY ONLY

Re: Decision on Appeal from Community School for the Digital and Visual Arts

Dear Mr. Crawford and Mr. Friend:

I am writing, as Chairman of the North Carolina State Board of Education (“SBE”), to share with you the SBE’s ruling on the Appeal of the Community School for the Digital and Visual Arts (“CSDVA”) to the SBE following the Charter School Review Board’s (“CSRB’s”) January 13, 2025, decision not to renew CSDVA’s charter.

On Tuesday, March 4, 2025, an appeals panel of the SBE met, heard from the parties, and voted to recommend to the SBE that it remand this matter to the CSRB with a request that the CSRB review additional information. At its regular meeting on March 6, 2025, the SBE voted to adopt the appeals panel recommendation which is as follows:

The appeal by the Community School of Digital and Visual Arts from the Charter Schools Review Board decision not to renew the school’s charter is remanded back to the Charter School Review Board with a request that it review additional information with regard to the school. Specifically, the State Board respectfully requests that the Charter Schools Review Board further consider this matter at its April 2025 meeting by addressing the following items:

1. the results of the Community School for Digital and Visual Arts’ FY 2023 audit and the anticipated FY 2024 audit;
2. An expected detailed plan from the school for addressing all of the current and documented deficiencies noted by the Office of Charter Schools and the Charter Review Board;
3. Whether the school has met the requirements for a minimum charter renewal;
4. Whether there has been evidence of immediate serious attention to improving the school operations; and
5. Whether the school has demonstrated it will be successful going forward.

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Eric C. Davis, *Chairman* | eric.davis@dpi.nc.gov

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Following consideration of these items, CSRB is asked to decide to either affirm its prior January 13, 2025, decision not to renew the charter of the Community School of Digital and Visual Arts or withdraw its prior decision and award the school a renewed charter.

I need to make it clear that the SBE believes the Charter Schools Review Board had no choice but to vote to close the School because of the lack of legally required audits, the failure of the School's board to hold required meetings and produce and vote on budgets and minutes for the School's board meeting, the failure to produce requested documents and the failure of the full board to carry out its duties, including a failure to appear at meetings of the CSRB where the school's future was being debated. These are inexcusable failures that rest solely on the school's board and leadership.

The SBE has given the school another opportunity to present to the CSRB information that demonstrates that it can run a viable school only because students at the school have recently appeared to make academic progress. These students belong to a demographic that traditionally struggles academically.

In order to receive another charter, the school will need to correct every deficiency identified by the CSRB and the Office of Charter Schools ("OCS"). It will also need to make immediate and substantial progress toward changing how the school and board operates. Finally, the school must submit a realistic plan going forward that will ensure it has strong leadership and is in legal compliance. The State Board will rely on the CSRB's expertise and assessment of whether these steps have been taken and whether the school will be able to operate appropriately.

Again, the SBE's decision in no way condones the past failures of the school's board and leadership. The operation of a charter school, the education of students, and the oversight of millions of dollars of tax dollars are serious business. The school's board and leadership will need to demonstrate that they are up to the task if the school is to survive.

Sincerely,

Eric C. Davis, Chair

North Carolina State Board of Education

Cc: Members of the North Carolina State Board of Education
Members of the Charter Schools Review Board
Mo Green, State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Allison Schafer, General Counsel for the North Carolina State Board of Education
Rupen Fofaria, Director of State Board Operations & Policy
Ashley Baquero, Executive Director of the Office of Charter Schools

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