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# Review of Local Charter Schools

## Lower Cape Fear League of Women Voters

February 2016

### Introduction

*NOTE: Items underlined are links to websites.*

*North Carolina LWV position: "Charter Schools that receive public dollars must be held to the same educational, accountability and transparency standards as traditional public schools."*

The LWV-LCF Education Roundtable focused on the study of Charter Schools during 2015-16. Our "charge" established at last year's annual meeting was to gather information such as what is a charter school; how do they fit into public school financing, how do they function; what is their organizational structure; and what reporting is required (transparency). Teams met with staff at six charter schools: Cape Fear Center for Inquiry; Island Montessori; Wilmington Prep; and three Charter Day Schools: Charter Day-Leland, Douglass Academy, and South Brunswick Charter.

Our methodology was to look at the research, develop a series of questions to ask the schools and then send teams of two to each school. We met periodically to compare notes, discuss the research and develop a plan for a report.

### Legislation

The NC General Assembly passed legislation in 1996 to establish the North Carolina Charter Schools Advisory Board which would oversee the process of establishing charter schools, GS115C-218. As stated in the legislation, the purpose of these schools is to:

1. *Improve student learning*
2. *Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are identified as at risk of academic failure or academically gifted;*
3. *Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;*
4. *Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunities to be responsible for the learning program at the school site;*
5. *Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; and*
6. *Hold the schools established under this Article accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results, and provide the schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems.*

These schools are required to administer end-of-grade tests, provide data needed for NC School Report Cards, and their best practices are to be shared with traditional public schools.

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Like traditional public schools, a charter receives state money per pupil based on a formula determined by the state, as well as funding from Local Educational Authorities (LEA), and the Federal Government, if applicable. It may also receive grants or private donations. The charter may hire a for-profit management company, and pay it a fee, which is usually based on a percentage of the revenues received from the state.

Each school's Board of Directors chooses the curriculum, which is approved by the State Board of Education.

### **Differences Between Charter Schools and Traditional Schools in NC**

- Charters may be managed by for-profit companies with no requirement that board members reside in North Carolina
- Charters must integrate the NC Standard Course of Study, which follows the Common Core Standards for Language Arts and Math, into their curriculum, *but can be flexible in how they do so.* (See section on Roger Bacon Academies for an apparent anomaly)
- Unless specifically stated in the legislation of their charter, "a charter school is exempt from statutes and rules applicable to a local board of education or local school administrative unit." GS115C-218.10.
- Charters have no restrictions on class size
- Charters can expand by one grade level without approval if it has been open for three years and not identified as inadequately performing
- Only 50% of Charter teachers must be licensed, unlike district schools where all teachers must be licensed
- In Charter Schools, only those teaching the core subject areas of mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts are required to hold a college degree
- Charters are not required to hold teacher workdays for professional training and development
- Charters are not required to provide free and reduced price lunches.
- Charters are not required to protect students against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity
- Charters are exempt from public bidding laws that protect how tax dollars are spent.
- Public assets can become private assets when a failing charter is taken over by a private school, instead of being closed. The assets are transferred to the new operator, not back to the public.

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## Important Changes to the Original Legislation

In 2011, the legislature eliminated the cap of 100 charter schools and that number now stands at 158. The legislature also made it possible for an existing charter to expand enrollment up to 20% per year without approval from the State Board.

Regulations were loosened in 2013 to create a new NC Charter Schools Advisory Board where members “shall have demonstrated an understanding of and a commitment to charter schools as a strategy for strengthening public education.” The legislature eliminated the requirement that charters “reasonably reflect the racial and ethnic composition” in the area where it is located. The legislature also reduced the requirement that 75% of teachers needed to be certified, down to 50%. Finally, it included a tax exemption for landlords who rent property to charter schools.

In 2014, a new law was passed to require Charters to comply with public records laws.

### The NC Charter School Advisory Board and the NC Charter School Advisory Council

The Board and the Council are two entities that influence Charter School policy, legislation, approval, and oversight. Both are under the NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). Both have Bylaws and should follow the state requirements for Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest.

**The Board’s Responsibilities:** To make recommendations to the State Board of Education (SBE) on the adoption of rules regarding all aspects of charter school operation, including time lines, standards, and criteria for acceptance and approval of applications, monitoring of charter schools, and grounds for revocation of charters; To review applications and make recommendations for approval; To make recommendations regarding renewals, non-renewals, and revocations of charters.

**The Council’s Responsibilities:** To make recommendations to the SBE on policies regarding all aspects of charter school operation, including timeliness, standards and criteria for acceptance and approval of applications, monitoring of charter schools, and grounds for revocation of charters.

It is unclear as to why there are two entities that seem to provide the same function. The Advisory **Board** members are appointed by the Governor (3), Lt. Governor (1), Senate (2), and House (3). Two State Board members and the State Superintendent are also on the Board. Advisory **Council** members are appointed by the SBE. Nine of the Fifteen Council members are either founders of charter schools, including a for-profit Educational Management Organization, or serve as Charter School board members or administrators.

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## The Data

### School Performance Achievement Scores:

#### A Comparison Between District and Charter Schools

	SPA MEAN	SPA MEDIAN
Brunswick Co. District Schools	C - 65%	C - 66%
Brunswick Co. Charters (1)	B - 70%	B - 70%
New Hanover Co. District Schools	C - 54%	C - 59%
New Hanover Co. Charters (3)	C - 60%	C - 57%

	CFCI	CDS	DA	IMC	SBC	WPA		
<b>Opened</b>	2001	1999	2013	2013	2014	2009		
<b>Grades</b>	K-8	K-8	K-3 (K-4)	K-6	K-2 (K-3)	K-8		
<b>Title I</b>			Y			Y		
<b>SPA</b>	B	B	I	D	I	C		
<b>Reading</b>	B	B		C		C		
<b>Math</b>	B	C		D		D		
<b>EVASS</b>	Not Met	Not Met		Met		Met		
<b>% AMO</b>	100%	100%		77.8%		76.9%		
<b>College/career ready</b>	66.2%	61%		77.8%		39.7%		
<b>Common Core</b>	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes		
<b>Students</b>	405	927	132	190	192	147		
<b>Trans.</b>	No	No	Yes	No	No	To school		
<b>Free Lunch</b>	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No		
<b><u>RACE</u></b>							Brunswick Co.	NH Co.
<b>White</b>	352 (87%)	695 (75%)	6 (4.5%)	158 (83%)	168 (87.5%)	44 (30%)	81.4%	76.9%
<b>Black</b>	22 (5.5%)	95 (10%)	113 (85.6%)	4 (2%)	5 (2.6)	79 (53.7%)	11.2%	14.6%
<b>Hispanic</b>	17 (4%)	59 (6%)	7 (5%)	15 (8%)	6 (3%)	17 (11.6%)	4.8%	5.4%
<b>Asian</b>	2 (.4%)	9 (1%)	1 (.7%)	5 (2.6%)	1 (.5%)	0	0.7%	1.4%
<b>Indian</b>	1 (.2%)	8 (1%)	0	2 (1%)	3(1.5%)	0	0.9%	0.6%
<b>Pacific I.</b>	0	1 (.1%)	0	0	0	0	0.1%	0.1%
<b>2 or more races</b>	11 (3%)	60 (6.5%)	5 (4%)	6 (3%)	9 (4.7%)	7 (4.8%)	1.7%	0.2%

## NCDPI 2014-2015 District Report\*

\*CFCI-Cape Fear Center for Inquiry; CDS-Charter Day School; DA-Douglass Academy; IMC-Island Montessori Center; SBC-South Brunswick Charter; WPA-Wilmington Prep. I: Insufficient data; EVASS: Educational Value Added Assessment System; AMO: Annual Measurable Objective.

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## Comparisons of the Six Charters Visited

Three of the Charter Schools visited (Charter Day-Leland, Douglass, and South Brunswick) are campuses of the Charter Day School (CDS) group, which also has a fourth campus in Columbus County (not visited). All are managed by an education management organization (EMO), Roger Bacon Academy (RBA), unlike the other three schools we visited. A further explanation of RBA is in the next section.

The six schools visited have many similarities, but some differences, which we'll discuss in this section. One significant difference is that the Charter Day Schools operate on a year-around calendar, with just six weeks off in the summer, and three, two-week breaks in the Spring, Fall, and Winter.

### Mission

The Charter Day School group's mission is to teach the rules and techniques for effective expression and communication in the arts and sciences; to communicate our understandings of the universe and our role in it; to instill a love of learning and discovery, justifying a life-long dedication to health, truth, and virtue.

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry's mission is to promote students' abilities to think and create in personally meaningful ways through an inquiry-based, integrated curriculum in a nurturing and empowering environment.

Island Montessori strives to inspire children to develop inner discipline, self-assurance, and a love of learning in a balanced learning environment, and to view themselves as contributors of the global community.

Wilmington Preparatory seeks to offer a high quality base of literacy, global knowledge and life skills to prepare youth for college and beyond.

### Students

Due to high enrollment, all the charters visited, with the exception of Douglass Academy, have a lottery. At the Charter Day Schools and Wilmington Preparatory, the students wear uniforms. Also, at Charter Day Schools, the students are required to start the day with a recitation of the pledge. Charter Day School-Leland and South Brunswick have year-around calendars and Douglass Academy has an extended day.

Charter Day School-Leland has a student body population that generally reflects the racial make-up of the county. Refer to the NCDPI report to see the figures that indicate racial imbalances at the remainder of the schools we visited.

Although Charter Schools are required to accept special needs students, they vary widely as to resources to accommodate those students.

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## Curriculum

Only Cape Fear Center for Inquiry (CFCI) and Wilmington Prep use Common Core Standards. When we asked the Charter Day Schools about what standards they used, they responded that the textbooks explain those standards and goals.

CFCI uses “Responsive Classroom” to promote positive social/emotional behaviors. Spanish instruction begins in Kindergarten, as well as music, art, PE, and computers.

The Charter Day Schools Group has a curriculum centered on a classical education and the study of Western Civilization. They use Saxon Math, Reading for Mastery, Shirley English-Grammar and Composition, and “Story of the World” for Social Studies. Teachers use the “Direct Instruction” method of teaching that teaches skill sets using lectures or demonstrations of the materials, rather than inquiry learning. They also use Behavioral Direct Instruction using hand signals to conduct question/answer sessions. While in class the students must sit straight with hands folded until instructed to do otherwise. The Charter Day Schools Group offers 5 activities in addition to the core curriculum: PE, Music, Art, Computers, and Library. Latin instruction begins in 4th grade.

Island Montessori uses the Montessori curriculum, which has students learning at their own pace and given a choice of activities.

Wilmington Preparatory does not offer PE, but does have Art.

## Staff

All teachers at the six schools are either certified or are lateral entry (working on certification). Salaries are comparable with district school teachers, except at Wilmington Preparatory, where they are paid below state standards.

Cape Fear Center has three full-time administrators.

The Charter Day Schools have a Headmaster and Assistant Headmasters at each campus, who are employees of Roger Bacon Academy. Curriculum specialists and coaches are also RBA employees. We were told that RBA employee information is private and not open to scrutiny. However, a 2014 memorandum from NCDPI to Charter School administrators states that information on all employees paid by the EMO and assigned to manage or work at a school should provide Name, Duties, and Annual Salary, at a minimum. Kindergarten and First Grade teachers have their own teaching assistant, while grades 2 through 8 share teaching assistants.

## Assessment and Evaluation

Charters are required to follow the same assessment and evaluation schedule as district schools and that data is reported to the Department of Public Instruction and available to the public.

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## Funding and Operations

Charters are funded using public monies: Federal (when applicable), State, and Local Educational Area (LEA). We have no data as to other funding, such as grants and donations.

The Charter Day Schools are the only charters visited who use an Educational Management Organization, Roger Bacon Academy (RBA), for all school operations, including accounting, data management, hiring teachers and staff, purchasing, curriculum specialists, headmasters, leasing buildings, etc. RBA central offices are located on the grounds of Charter Day School in Leland.

## Transportation and Reduced Meals

No transportation or reduced meals are provided at Charter Day School, Island Montessori, South Brunswick, or Wilmington Prep (has transportation to school, but not after school). However, a generous parent provides lunches for the needy at Island Montessori.

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry offers free or reduced lunches, but no transportation. Douglass Academy has free and reduced lunches and transportation.

According to NC law G.S. 115C-238.29F(h) "The charter school shall develop a transportation plan so that transportation is not a barrier to a student who resides in the local school administrative unit in which the school is located."

## Boards

The Charter Day Schools group has a 5-7 volunteer Board of Trustees that currently includes a retired AT&T executive, two bankers, and two business owners. The founder of Roger Bacon Academy and Charter Day Schools served as President, until recently stepping down to serve as Secretary.

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry has a 12-member board with 7 voting members made up of parents or community members. Four teachers are on the board, but do not vote. They have a strict conflict of interest policy.

Island Montessori has a Board of Directors who are parents, professionals, Montessori's, and members of the community.

Wilmington Preparatory has a Board of Directors that includes the Dean, the Financial Officer, and four others, one of whom is a parent.

## Roger Bacon Academies

The Roger Bacon Academy (RBA) is a for-profit educational management organization (EMO) for local charter schools. Baker Mitchell founded and owns RBA and is also the founder of Charter Day Schools. Mitchell also served on the board of Charter Day Schools until 2013. He now serves as Secretary.

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**Founder** Baker Mitchell has won awards from the John Locke Foundation, where he also serves on the Board, and was elected to the Board of the North Carolina Alliance for Public Schools in 2010. In 2011 he was appointed to the NC Public Charter School Advisory Council, which makes recommendations to the State Board of Education for rules regarding all aspects of charter school operations, reviews applications and makes recommendations as well as recommendations on renewals and revocation of charters.

A question we were unable to resolve is the disconnect with the use or non-use of common core standards. The application for South Brunswick Charter, for example, states “the scope and sequence of the math curriculum...are aligned with the State Common Core Standards.” “All students will be academically proficient in the Common Core State Standards for Reading and Math.” As stated in the application, this application replicates the applications for the other three RBA charter schools.

The Charter Day schools receive the monies allocated by the district and then pay management fees directly to RBA, which is responsible for the day-to-day operations, such as hiring and firing school staff and accounting functions. Equipment, desks, and supplies are purchased from companies owned by Baker Mitchell and they lease space in buildings owned by Baker Mitchell. The income from leasing to a charter school is tax-exempt under a new NC law passed in 2013.

## Summary of the NC Department of Public Instruction Report issued January 2016

*Note: As of this writing, this revised document has not yet been approved by the SBE*

In 2015-2016 there were 158 charter schools operating serving 81,951 students, with over 38,000 students on wait lists. State funding for charter schools has increased from just over \$16 million in 1997 to more than \$366 million in 2014-15.

### **Racial and Ethnic Balance:**

NC’s charter schools are not subject to school district geographic restrictions and often have student populations drawn from multiple local school districts. Charter schools are directed in G.S. 115C-218.45(e) to “make efforts [to have] the population of the school reasonably reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the general population residing within the local school administrative unit in which the [charter] school is located or the racial and ethnic composition of the specific population that the school seeks to serve residing within the local school administrative unit in which the [charter] school is located.” There is no mechanism by which schools can guarantee racial and ethnic balance, however, nor is there an official consequence for not achieving it. Charter schools may target certain students through admissions set-asides, if the student population being given priority for admission is identified as such through the school’s State Board-approved mission and admissions process; in practice, this has been done infrequently.

### **Accountability:**

Once opened, though each charter school has significant flexibility in how it operates, the school must meet financial, governance, and academic standards set by the State through

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statute, State Board of Education policy, and the terms of the Charter Agreement that is signed by each school when the State Board grants final approval of the charter. The State Board monitors each school's financial, academic, and operational performance annually, and does a comprehensive review, assisted by the Charter Schools Advisory Board, as part of considering whether to grant charter renewals.

### **Demographics:**

*Ethnicity:* Based on data from 2014-15, the overall student populations in the NC charter schools and traditional public schools are similar in terms of racial and ethnic composition, though several differences do exist. The overall charter schools student population is 15% more White and 49% less Hispanic than the overall traditional school population. Duke University researchers analyzed the racial composition of NC charter schools' student populations and found that the student populations of individual charter schools in NC have historically been either predominantly white (less than 20 percent nonwhite) or predominantly minority (greater than 80 percent nonwhite). Also, over time, the share of minority students in charter schools has declined.

*Socioeconomic Status:* The percentage of Economically Disadvantaged (ED) students in traditional public schools and charter schools has fluctuated over the past three years, but historically charter schools have served a lower proportion of ED students than traditional schools. In 2014-15, the percentage of ED students in charter schools was approximately 34% lower than in traditional schools. It is important to note that the percentage of ED students in charter schools may be under-represented as charter schools that do not provide free and reduced lunch for students do not collect participation rate data from this National program.

*Special Education:* Charter schools serve approximately the same percentage of students identified as requiring Exceptional Children's (EC) services as are served by traditional public schools.

### **Performance:**

*School Performance Grades:* The data indicates that charter schools had higher percentages than traditional public schools of both A/A+NG and B ratings, and D and F ratings. This suggests that there are higher percentages of charter schools on both ends of the rating continuum and fewer in the average range, as compared to traditional public schools.

*Performance Composite (Grade Level Proficiency):* Approximately two thirds of charter schools are either comparable to or exceed the composite performance in Grade Level Proficiency of the local school administrative unit in which they are located. Approximately one third of charter schools are not comparable to their local school districts.

*Academic Growth* The data for 2014-15 indicates that the charter schools achieved approximately the same distribution of academic growth statuses as the traditional public schools.

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*“Inadequate” Schools:* “Inadequate” is defined as demonstrating less than 60% proficiency and not meeting growth for two of three consecutive years Schools. Four schools are under review by the Charter School Advisory Board, which will make a recommendation to the State Board of Education regarding what actions to take regarding these four schools.

*High Academic Growth with Disadvantaged Student Population:* Another measure of excellence for charter (and traditional) schools is achieving high academic growth, as measured by the Education Value Added Assessment System (EVAAS) with a student population that is economically disadvantaged. Eight charter schools were able to exceed growth expectations with student populations that were 70% or greater Economically Disadvantaged, and two of these schools were able to achieve extremely high growth. In addition, seven other charter schools with an ED population over 70% exceeded expectations for student growth (by achieving an EVAAS growth score of greater +2). Nine charter schools received special State or national recognition for their performance in 2014-15.

### **Charter School Closure:**

Between 1997 and 2011, 57 charter schools closed. This total number includes schools that were not able to open, schools that relinquished their charters, and schools that either had their charters revoked or not renewed by the State Board of Education. The majority of charter school closures have been the result of financial or financially-related issues – low enrollment, fiscal noncompliance, excessive debt, etc. Out of the 43 schools that opened for operation, but then closed, 35 (or 80%) of those schools closed due to financial reasons.

Since the cap on charter schools was lifted in 2011, 13 schools have closed (including three that were not able to open). Since August of 2014, seven charter schools have closed. Two of those schools relinquished the charter prior to opening and five schools were in the first year of operation. One of those schools was revoked due to non-compliance with requirements for services for Exceptional Children.

### **Impact of Charter Schools on the Public School System:**

Growth in the number of charter schools combined with increased population at existing charter schools has increased the financial impact charter schools have on the overall system of public schools. State funding for charter schools has increased from just over \$16 million in 1997 to more than \$366 million in 2014-15. Many, but not all of the dollars directed to charter schools would have been directed to school districts (traditional public schools), as most charter school students were formerly enrolled in traditional public schools. In cases where former private or home schoolers enroll in charters, State funding for the charter schools comes from reserve funds appropriated specifically for such growth and other enrollment-related contingencies, so the funds do not reduce funds going to school districts. Local funding for home and private schoolers coming into the public system to attend charter schools does reduce local funding to school districts.

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## Best Practices for NC Charter School Approval

(Resources include NC Public Schools First, NC Public Charters organization, and members of the Roundtable)

- Applicants must show a compelling need and offer an educational experience that is qualitatively different from what is available in the local traditional public schools.
- Applicants should work in partnership with local educational agencies (LEA's), including approval of applications. Charter schools should have limited impact on traditional school's long-term planning including capital, facilities, and enrollment.
- Charter Schools should follow the NC Course of Study.
- Charter Schools and boards should be held to the same oversight, accountability, and transparency regarding academic standards and financial review as traditional public schools and boards. *Note: These standards currently exist, but are not always followed.*
- Charter Schools should reasonably reflect the racial and ethnic composition in the area where the school is located. *Note: These standards exists, but need improvement.*
- Charter Schools must protect students from sexual orientation discrimination. *Note: "Public Schools" are required to follow non-discrimination policies, which includes sexual orientation. However, this area was not included in Charter School legislation.*
- A formal research structure must be followed for sharing innovative educational experiences with traditional public schools.
- For-profit entities (Educational Management Organizations) should not be allowed.
- Charter Schools should have the same public bidding process as district schools.
- Charter Schools should have a single oversight Board.

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## How Do NC Public Schools Measure Up

*(October 2014 report by the NCDPI)*

- Four year high school graduation rate is 83.9%, highest in state history.
- Annual dropout rate is 2.45%, lowest in state history.
- Among the top 11 participating education systems in the world for 4th & 8th grade math scores on the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).
- 16th in the percentage of seniors taking at least 1 Advanced Placement Exam.
- 14th in the percentage of seniors scoring 3 or higher on Advanced Placement Exams.
- 18th in 4th grade math, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress.
- 23rd in 8th grade math, according to NAEP.
- 29th in 4th grade reading, according to NAEP.
- 37th in 8th grade reading, according to NAEP.
- Among the bottom 10 states in per pupil funding.
- 46th in teacher pay. (Now at 43rd)

Additional information from DPI website

- For 2014-15 year, compared to 2008-2009, textbook funding has gone from \$68 per student to \$15 and instructional materials funding from \$59 per student to \$28.

### The Charter School Debate: Links to Articles

National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2015. This report, from the US Department of Education, is a comprehensive review of testing results across the board. It demonstrates that levels of achievement in traditional public schools have been steadily rising from one decade to the next. Those scores are now “at their highest point ever recorded.” Graduation rates are at their highest level, with more young people entering college than at any time before.

A White Paper on Charter Schools – How can local Education Authorities (LEAs) and Charter schools work together to better prepare all North Carolina students to be college and career ready? An [NCpubliccharters.org](http://NCpubliccharters.org) white paper. Benefits: Equal access to charter schools; Improved communication that would allow the sharing of best practices and innovations between charter schools and traditional public schools; Avoid potentially high concentrations of low achieving or high poverty students; Easier access to facilities for charter school applicants; and enhanced charter school accountability, transparency, and oversight. LEA’s should have final approval of applications.

Charter School Power Broker Turns Public Education into Private Profits. This article was published in local papers and the Raleigh News and Observer, which describes how a local EMO operates.

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Updates from the November Charter School Advisory Board Meeting. A. J. Fletcher Foundation education experts attend these meetings and report on them. Their observations include: NC is bearing witness to the evolution of two distinct yet separate public systems of education: local public schools governed by the State Board of Education and a network of charter schools governed by the Charter School Advisory Board. This board consists of political appointees with vested interests in ensuring charter schools succeed and grow in number. The Charter School teacher of the year, at this meeting, stated she would like to see all charter schools be required to use the Standard Course of Study.

Review of Separating Fact and Fiction: What you Need to Know About Charter Schools

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools released a 2014 report “Separating Fact and Fiction” that addresses 21 “myths” about charter schools. Many in education critiqued this report. This review, by the National Education Policy Center at U. of Colorado lists each of the NAPCS’s arguments and gives a commentary and rebuttal.

Charter Schools: Finding Out the Facts: At a Glance A balanced look at Charter Schools that doesn’t make a judgment, but highlights the questions we need to be asking.

A Dozen Problems with Charter Schools A Washington Post article that looks at a report on Pennsylvania’s charter schools that reviews 12 areas of concern: Most are not helping kids; Some are actually hurting kids; Too many are “cash cows”; Fraud and corruption; Lack of transparency and accountability; Skimming and weeding out strategies; Re-segregation; Drain resources from districts; Closing traditional public schools; Lack of innovations; Hard to get rid of bad ones; Charters promote “choice” as solution.

Charter School Vulnerabilities to Waste, Fraud, and Abuse A report from the Center for Popular Democracy, May 2014, that looks at the US Inspector General’s *Semiannual Report to Congress, No. 60*, that highlights \$136,000,000 in fraud in 15 large charter school markets.

Stop the Madness Published on the National Education Association’s website, this article by Diane Ravitch explains her latest book *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education*.

This is Only a Test This is a review of Diane Ravitch’s latest book *Reign of Error*. “Ravitch was for many years one of the strongest advocates for the testing-and accountability agenda” and of charter schools. “Because of her impeccable credentials...she was a commanding presence.” In this book she focuses on the privatization movement, which she calls a “hoax” because it has fed on the myth that schools are failing.

5 Ways to Stop Bad Charters from Derailing Education Reform Closing bad charter schools.

The Growing Segmentation of the Charter School Sector in North Carolina. A Duke University study of the changing racial and socioeconomic demographics of students in

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charter schools and the effects that these trends could have on public schools: Concludes that improved performance for charter school students has more to do with the types of students they are attracting than the quality of the programs they offer.

Insights for NC in new charter report. A review of an essay published in a conservative intellectual journal “National Affairs” that notes: Charter schools should serve as generators of best practices, but that sector doesn’t appear to be doing much R & D today; They acknowledge that charters have become nothing more “than a ‘school of choice’ with some freedom to be different;” The authors observe the “vexing reality that market forces alone can’t reliably generate academic effectiveness;” They worry over the effects on charter schools managed by for-profit companies “when investor interests trump those of quality teaching and learning.”

20 Years of Charters: Where do we go from here? An [ednc.org](http://ednc.org) report. “The world of charter school data is maddening.” This report reviews the experiences of several states and includes a list of 5 “Best Practices” for the New Orleans schools. The final section deals with North Carolina and concludes that there is little evidence that innovations cultivated in charters had been transferred to traditional public schools in any meaningful way; Charter Schools are more racially segregated than those of traditional public schools; Charter Schools generally had lower levels of academic performance and had experienced problems with management and financial compliance. The report concludes with a list of questions we should be asking ourselves.

Second slate of A-F grades yield similar concerns. A look at the latest Report Card for NC.

13 Things to Know About Common Core State Standards in North Carolina A clear and concise explanation of Common Core and the importance of having these standards. They are more rigorous than earlier standards.

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## **Addendum A: The Reports**

### **CAPE FEAR CENTER FOR INQUIRY**

The Cape Fear Center for Inquiry (CFCI) was visited by on Friday, November 20, 2015. School Director Mrs. Lori Roy was welcoming and answered questions willingly and in detail, and conveyed pride in her school. We were given a tour of the entire school (K-8). CFCI has been a charter school since June 2000, and recently moved to their own campus where they own rather than rent the buildings.

#### **MISSION**

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry's mission focuses on using the curriculum to encourage students' interests and abilities.

#### **STUDENTS**

CFCI has an enrollment of 408 K-8 students and a waiting list of about 400 students (their enrollment is lottery-based). They have about 18% minority students and 15% free and reduced lunch. Their student population does not reflect the general population within the public schools in this area (Sunset Park has 93% free and reduced lunch). They do not provide transportation which limits their population to parents willing to drive their children to the school. Their target population for their curriculum are children who are independent thinkers. They have little student turnover (maybe 4-5 students a year and mostly in middle school where students leave for larger schools where they can play sports). They do not replace any students who leave after the first 20 days as they do not get any State funds for students enrolling after this time.

#### **CURRICULUM**

CFCI uses common core, they do not use text books or commercial programs to teach academics but they do use Responsive Classroom to promote positive social/emotional behaviors. Their teachers develop their units of study. They do have a reading specialist and behavior specialist, and access to math and curriculum specialists. CFCI has about 50 special education students. They have a part-time counselor, a part-time school psychologist, and they contract services for speech and occupational therapy. They offer Spanish instruction from Kindergarten, as well as music, art, PE and technology. They also have band for grades 5-8.

#### **STAFF**

CFCI has 29 full time teachers, all have NC teaching certificates except for one lateral entry teacher. They also have 3 full-time administrators. Teacher salaries match New Hanover County Schools (NHCS), administrators negotiate their salaries based on job

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responsibilities. Planning time of 60 minutes (elementary) and 80 minutes (middle school) is built into the schedule, and professional development days are the same as NHCS but CFCI provides their teachers more work days. Class size is 20 in K/1, 22 in grades 2/3, and 24 in grades 4-8. Teachers loop with their elementary students for 2 years (i.e. students will keep the same teacher for K and 1<sup>st</sup> grades, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades, and 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades).

There is little staff turnover, maybe 1-2/year, usually due to the teacher moving or pursuing a different career.

### **INNOVATION**

CFCI pursues best teaching practices as they promote inquiry in their students. They are hoping to collaborate with other charter schools in the State who have a similar mission. They do not have a formal relationship with NHCS, but hope to build relationships with individual public schools.

### **ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

All students in grades 3-5 take the EOG's, they don't teach to the test but do teach test-taking strategies. The last 2 years they have received a B grade from the State.

### **TRANSPORTATION, REDUCED MEALS, AND OTHER ISSUES**

Qualifying students receive free breakfast and lunch. CFCI does not offer transportation to its students and they do not have before or after school programs. Parent involvement is encouraged, even expected, but not required. The school has a strong PTO, parents drive the students on field trips, and many parents volunteer in the classrooms.

### **CHARTER ORGANIZATION**

CFCI has a 12 member board that meets once a month for 2 hours (members serve 3 year terms). There are positions for 7 voting members (made up of parents and/or community members), but only 6 are currently filled. The school has had UNCW professors on its board in the past, currently all board members are parents. The school lets its parent community know any specific skills they would like their board members to possess e.g. business or fund raising. There are 4 teachers on the board but they are not able to vote. The board has a strict conflict of interest policy. Ms. Roy stated that CFCI is very fiscally responsible which is why they've been able to save the money to buy their own campus.

## **CHARTER DAY SCHOOL A Roger Bacon Academy School**

Visited December 15, 2016

Charter Day School in Brunswick County has 900 students in grades K-8. They have a year round calendar, consisting of 186 school days. The students must wear uniforms, and

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are taught classic curriculum, and traditional values. The three laws of CDS are: reward good behavior, which includes respecting others; teach mastery; and observe the students carefully.

There are four classes in each grade from K-8. Class sizes are K=25 students, 1<sup>st</sup> grade=27 students, 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades=28 students. K and 1<sup>st</sup> have permanent assistants, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> share one assistant, as do 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. Twenty-four percent of the student body is minority, 15% is EC. They do not collect data on free and reduced lunch status. In the 4 EC units, they offer OT, Speech, IEP, and behavior modification. The EC students are mainstreamed into the regular classrooms as much as possible, i.e. for homeroom, lunch, and special classes, and, of course academically where feasible. The K-5 campus is a series of mobile classrooms arranged in a circle around a common meeting area.

Charter Day School Inc. is a non-profit board of trustees, and controls policy and procedure for the schools. The school is supported by the, for-profit, Roger Bacon Academy, Inc. There are typically five to seven members of the board of trustees, including some parents, and interested community members. New members are voted into service by current members. The board also develops the student /parent handbook. There is a rigorous yearly 200-hour evaluation and audit, similar to public schools. The school has been chartered long enough to qualify for reapplication every 10 years, a year- long process. Typically charters must reapply every 5 years.

We inquired as to other funding, such as grants and private donations. They said they do not pursue either. They may have an occasional fund-raising for a specific purpose. The founder received a \$3 million loan to start Roger Bacon Academies. We did not inquire as to how that is being repaid.

The RBA handles the finances and the business of the BOT. They also determine the curriculum, and hire the seven headmasters, five deans or curriculum specialists, and eight teacher coaches. Because they are employees of RBA, their salaries are not public. The CDS receives \$7300 per student from the state, which is 73% of the amount public schools receive per student. Title I also provides extra funding for the EC students. Before and after school child care is offered, for a fee. No transportation or lunch is offered.

Teachers are paid on the same scale as the public school teachers, even though it is not required. Instead of a raise in pay at the end of a five-year period, as enacted by the legislature, RBA chooses to grant a small increase in pay every year. Ninety-six percent of the teachers are certified, and the rest are earning their certificate via the lateral entry program, which takes 3 years to complete. Teachers are mentored for the first three years of employment. They are evaluated 3 times a year by the headmaster and coaches. Teachers are required to complete 10 days of professional development, provided by RBA, each year.

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Evaluations for teachers and students are based on the 4-1 ratio, i.e. 4 positive statements for 1 negative, in order to keep morale and performance high. Teachers observe a dress code, wearing only skirts and dresses to provide a professional atmosphere.

The classic curriculum is taught K-8. The Saxon Math program is utilized throughout. Because of the spiraling nature of the program, it is easy for teachers to move students within the program based on their progress. In grades 1-8, the four teachers in each grade level team-teach, and the students are tracked into three different achievement levels. Same tracking occurs in Reading Mastery classes. Connecting Math Concepts is used in Kindergarten. Rocket Math is a daily 10-minute review used in all grades. RBA collects and maintains a student database, based on required weekly quizzes. Teachers use that data to keep the students on track. Students are required to take the same assessments as all public school students.

The Social Studies series used is “The Story of the World”. As for the Science curriculum, Roger Bacon Academy employs content-area specialists who vet and coordinate various curricula for each grade level and provides lesson plans to teachers. The grade-level curriculum packages are informed by the NC State Standards.

Teachers are all trained in the direct instruction method, which includes the ready position where students must sit straight with hands folded until instructed to do differently, and hand signals to conduct question/answer sessions. When walking about campus, children walk in a single line, with hands behind their backs. Good behavior and respect for teachers and each other are a very important part of the CDS daily activities.

Extra curricular classes include physical education, art, library, computer science, and music once a week. Students can participate in archery, cheerleading, football, science Olympiad, history bowl, art club, and yoga. Parents have a booster club through which they may assist in the classrooms, or around campus, and hold fundraisers for field trips and other activities. Teachers communicate with parents by sending a daily report home, which includes a behavior checklist, homework, and parent notes. Teachers also email a newsletter to parents.

As stated on their website, and at our meeting, the school does not follow the Common Core Standards, which are a part of the NC Plan of Instruction. We asked if they had comparable standards in place and they do not. They said a parent could look at the textbooks and see the goals by chapter. However, in our research of the Language Arts System (Reading Mastery) and Mathematics System (Saxon Math), the publishers state these systems have been updated to align with common core standards. According to teams of education experts (Edreports.org), the University of Michigan School of Education, and articles in Education Journals, Saxon Math is not aligned with common core.

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January is open enrollment month. Typically there are from 5 to 20 open seats in grades 1 to 8. All applications are accepted, and a lottery is held to determine which students are admitted. Others remain on a wait list. Kindergarten takes approximately 80 students each year.

Submitted by Linda Kurta and Bonnie Bechard

## **DOUGLASS ACADEMY**

### **A Roger Bacon Academy School**

Douglass Academy was visited by on Wednesday, November 18, 2015. Headmistress Barbra Jones and Roger Bacon public relations employee Sawyer were welcoming and answered questions willingly and in detail. There was a sense of pride in the school and its achievements. An unrushed tour of classes in session at each level was given.

#### **MISSION**

Part of Douglass Academy's mission statement is to teach the rules and techniques for effective expression and communication in the arts and sciences, and our observation of the school supported this rules-based curriculum.

#### **STUDENTS**

Douglass Academy has an enrollment of 128 K-4 students (they will expand to 5<sup>th</sup> grade in 2017). Third and fourth grades are blended with only two fourth graders. Students reflect the general population within the public schools in this area (city schools). Ninety-six percent of students are non-white, 92% are economically disadvantaged (free and reduced lunch), one student was classified as having limited English when enrolled and 10% of students receive special education. At the start of the 2015 school year 144 students were enrolled; on November 18, 2015 the enrollment was down to 128. No new students are accepted after September 30. The structure of the curriculum demands continuous participation, late entry is difficult.

Douglass Academy only opened in 2013 and is still building its enrollment so they do not hold a lottery for enrollment. They only had 35 students last year (below the State's requirement of 65). They are performing outreach through churches, fairs, radio, WAVE transit, and community groups. They also offer \$59 vouchers to parents who recruit other families. They have some students leave (16 students or 11% this year), mostly due to families moving. No students have been expelled and the headmaster does not believe in suspension, if students are disruptive a family member is asked to come in and stay with the student in school.

#### **CURRICULUM**

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The teaching method is direct instruction. A reading block of 90 minutes begins each day, followed by a 90 minutes of math. The blocks are divided into 30 minute segments: with students rotating through 30 minutes led by teacher, 30 by teacher assistant, 30 independent student work. Sawyer emphasized teaching to mastery, and explained that Roger Bacon Academy (RBA) has a data department that checks on skills weekly (or at the end of units), and since reading and math are taught at the same times throughout the school, students can be moved to a lower or higher group in the school if warranted. The deans and coaches meet with the teachers every 2-4 weeks to assess each student's progress as analyzed by the RBA data dept. Common core is not used. RBA uses Reading Mastery and Saxon Math programs, their history curriculum is partially purchased, and they hire a curriculum specialist and some content area specialists to do their curriculum development.

Art, music, PE, and other programs are taught by TAs during the extended day.

A retired NC Schools science teacher volunteers twice each week. Every student takes her class. She has been given her own classroom and equipped it. Hands-on science experiments are used.

## **STAFF**

The seven teachers and seven teacher assistants on staff are degreed (they have one special education teacher and one special education assistant). Two were hired as lateral entry teachers; all of the others are NC certified. Since teacher assistants also have degrees, they often move into teacher positions when these become available. Salaries match the state scale; raises are given each year, and RBA offers a 401K with a 3% match. Planning time of 45 minutes is built into the schedule. Class size averages 20 students with a teacher and teacher assistant. Teachers' lunch is during recess and they supervise student lunch. Professional development is offered. Currently art, music and PE are taught by TA's who are not specialists in these areas, eventually as the school expands they will have specialized teachers for these positions.

## **INNOVATION**

In 2011 Douglass Academy partnered with UNCW to provide six-weeks of reading and math tutoring at the Hillcrest Center. Fourteen of the 17 participants advanced above grade level, the remaining 3 were on grade level. This program has been taken over by UNCW. RBA would like to share their expertise with the public schools, and have offered to assist with the NHCS pre-K program, but NHCS have not indicated any interest.

## **ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

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All students in grades 3-5 will take the EOG's, they don't teach to the test but do teach test-taking strategies. The two third grade students who took the test last year both passed. Twenty will be tested this year. Douglass was also using the nationally normed SAT-10 which is no longer available and they currently looking for a replacement, perhaps the ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills).

Charter schools receive 73% of the money that public schools receive for each student (they don't receive money for facilities, transportation and lunch).

#### **TRANSPORTATION, REDUCED MEALS, AND OTHER ISSUES**

Free breakfast and lunch is offered to all students and this year Douglass has been accepted into the National school lunch program. Bus transportation is offered to all and the area covered is quite large. Douglass has an extended school day (8:00 to 3:30) and after school care is not offered. Many students are picked up by after school programs chosen by parents. Parent involvement is encouraged but not required. Several community organizations have adopted or are working with Douglass.

#### **CHARTER ORGANIZATION**

Charter Day School, Inc. has a nonprofit board of five members that have the ultimate authority in running the school and communicate with DPI. There are no educators on the board. This board contracts with Roger Bacon Academy for school operations such as hiring teachers, choosing curriculum, etc. The webpage lists these board members:

Robert P. Spencer, Chairman, *Retired, ATT*, Wilmington, NC

Dawn Carter, V.P. Business Development, First Bank, Leland, NC

Jeremy Dickinson, V.P. Business Development, First Citizens Bank, Leland, NC

Melissa S. Gott, Esq., Gott Johnson Law Firm, PLLC, Wilmington, NC

Chad Adams, *Owner/President*, Red Wolf Strategies, LLC., Raleigh, NC

#### **ISLAND MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL**

6339 Carolina Beach Road

910-795-4860

**Island Montessori** was visited January 6, 2016 by Gail Wick (973-723-8853/gwick0117@gmail.com) and Anne Cousineau (acousineau38@gmail.com). The first hour, Samara Kuhn guided our visit of 5 classrooms. One half hour was spent with Principal Brian Corrigan.

**Mission** is to provide a unique child centered environment using the internationally recognized curriculum of pioneering educator, Dr. Maria Montessori. This philosophy believes that a thoughtful prepared environment fosters independence, curiosity, creativity and critical thinking. To respect each child as an individual and foster in each respect for self

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and others, joy in discovery, independence, communal responsibility and a peaceful approach to problem solving.

This type of teaching appears fluid since 3 age groups are intermixed, learning by helping each other.

**Students** are in groups of 24: 8 from the first grade; 8 from the second grade; and 8 from the third grade. There are three of these groups. 8 from the fourth grade; 8 from the fifth grade; and 8 from the sixth grade. There are three groups in these grade levels. The seventh grade appears, at this point, to be working as two groups. There were a total of **192 students** registered in the Fall. One has since moved away. There seems to be no diversity. Since no transportation or meals are provided, the Principal feels this does not foster diversification. (*There is a public bus system that can service this area.*) The number of special needs children has increased dramatically and the Principal feels those students could be better serviced in the public system since other schools are better equipped with equipment and tools. **Montessori Island** does have a special needs teacher.

Students are selected on a lottery system. Siblings are given priority.

**Curriculum** is *NOT* based on Common Core. It is totally based on the Montessori principles and course work is designed from the Montessori system. All classroom teachers have their certification in Montessori and others are either in the learning program or plan to be. (Teacher salaries are based on degrees earned, Montessori training and longevity.) Music, Art, Physical Ed and Environmental Science are provided one time each week for 45 minutes each. These are special teachers who visit the school.

**Required testing** is a reading test at the end of the third level and at the end of the sixth level. All third level students passed the first time the test was given. The sixth grade did not do well. The Grade for **Montessori Island** was an over-all "D". The Principal felt the higher level did poorly because they have not been in the "system" very long.

**Staff** includes the lead teacher who is degreed and trained in Montessori. 85% are degree holders.

**Funding** by the state and counties (1 student from Pender County (\$1,483/each); 13 students from Brunswick (\$2,305/each) and 178 students are from New Hanover County (\$2,640/each). The State provides differing amounts for each county which somewhat balances the per student provision. *We did not get that number.* Principal Corrigan says he has about 75% of the funding he needs to run the school. He is looking for ways to fund State requirements. Contributions are always welcomed. No charge can be made to students. Lunches for the needy are currently funded by a generous parent. Most students bring their lunch but can order delivery of lunches from Whole Foods at \$4.25.

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**Parent Involvement** is completely voluntary. Parents believe in the “Montessori System” and want the school to prosper. Parents are helping in Physical Education; they are helping in stocking supplies both physically and monetarily; they are building the playground (with grant money); one father is building a chicken house to house the school’s chickens. *(Animal care is part of the curriculum. Principal Corrigan has a dog in his office; a bunny is bouncing around one classroom (fully litter-trained).* Parents were busy planning a fund raiser.

**Board of Directors** is composed of individuals who are parents, professionals, Montessorians and members of the community. They attempt to recruit board members to fill specific needs, such as strategic planning, financial, legal, nutrition, technology, community service and so forth. Board Members serve a 3-year, renewable term.

**Over-all opinion** of this school is excellent but a financial cloud is visibly present. Principal Corrigan has hope that when they are fully operational (another 96 students) will make the school financially viable.

## **SOUTH BRUNSWICK CHARTER SCHOOL**

### **A Roger Bacon Academy School**

by Carol Roberts and Barbara Brandes

Tuesday, November 17, 2015

Headmaster – Michelle Mena

### **MISSION**

We did not observe the school opening procedures but were told that the entire school meets outside to recite the salute to the American flag and also to recite the school pledge. Students begin learning the pledge in kindergarten.

### **STUDENTS**

At this point the student population is entirely drawn from applications and there is no particular sub-population that they are trying to attract. We observed very little diversity but were told that last year the school had approximately 40% of students who qualified for free and reduced lunch. So far there is almost no student turnover but the school only opened in 2014. There are students with special needs and services are provided for these students.

### **CURRICULUM**

The direct instruction method is used throughout all subjects. Direct instruction involves the teacher following a script from a manual and student participation is cued at specific times.

Instructional materials include: SRA, Reading for Mastery, Saxon Math, Shurley English- Grammar and Composition. All of these materials are selected by Rodger Bacon

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Academy, the education management company that runs this school. The elementary dean of instruction with RBA oversees these subjects as well as science and social studies.

Students will follow a classical curriculum in social studies and begin taking Latin in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The classical curriculum in social studies for first and fifth grade is Ancient History.

Cursive writing is started in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and students are required to use it in classes from then on.

Art, Music, PE, and computer lab classes are offered as resource classes. Presently these classes are taught by teacher assistants. Services are available for EC students. OT and Speech services are provided by contract employees.

### **STAFF**

All teachers at Rodger Bacon Schools hold NC teaching certificates and assistants are required to have an associates degree. Presently art, music, PE, and computer skills teachers are not certified in those subjects.

The base salary is the same salary scale as local public schools, however, higher and more frequent supplements are given to teachers at this school.

Planning time is available daily and one day out of the week there is team planning for teachers. This occurs during resource class time.

### **INNOVATION**

All RBA schools use the same curriculum and teaching methods.

The direction instruction method is very structured and classes are tightly run.

Ms Mena has not shared any techniques with local public schools and did not feel that there was time or inclination to do that.

### **ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

This is the first year that 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students will take the EOG tests as this is the first class of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. The school will receive a REPORT CARD after these tests.

Student report cards or progress reports are issued each month and students are frequently evaluated for placement in math and reading groups.

Many instances of rewards/encouragement were observed.

### **TRANSPORTATION, REDUCED MEALS, AND OTHER ISSUES**

No meals or transportation is provided.

Before and after school care is available.

We observed parent volunteers arriving in the morning.

### **CHARTER ORGANIZATION**

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Ms Mena explained that RBA functions as the management company and serves the same purpose as the administration in a public school. The board of trustees is comparable to the local public school board.

### **WILMINGTON PREPARATORY ACADEMY**

**Mission:** The Academy opened its doors in 2009 with a mission to offer a high quality base of literacy, global knowledge and life skills to prepare K-8 youths for college and life beyond. Like WPA's founders, present leadership and staff strive to maximize the potential of every student. WPA is a public charter school located in Wilmington NC. Like all charter schools in the state WPA is publicly funded and as such is absolutely free for residents of NC. Admission to WPA is by lottery: open enrollment begins in early January and ends in late February, after which the lottery is held. WPA does not discriminate.

Students with siblings already enrolled are given preference.

**Students** There are 140 students with 55% black, 15% Hispanic and 10% white. Most are in the lower economic group. Students all wear uniforms: a polo shirt with the school logo provided at cost for \$11 or sweatshirt, and tan pants or skirt that can be purchased at any store. There are two kindergarten classes of 10 students each; all other grades have only one class each. There were about 12 special needs students enrolled.

Transportation to school is provided; parents must provide transportation home. No lunches are provided. All students eat in their homeroom classes.

After school care is provided after school until 6 pm for a fee of \$10/day or a maximum of \$40/week. Snack is provided.

Wilmington Preparatory Academy is a public charter school located in Wilmington, NC. Like all charter schools in the state, WPA is publicly funded and as such is absolutely free for residents of North Carolina. Admission to WPA is by lottery: open enrollment begins in early January and ends in late February, after which the lottery is held. Wilmington Preparatory Academy does not discriminate regarding admissions.

**Curriculum** is based on Common Core requirements. Students follow all state testing requirements. Art is available for all students 2 times a week from in-school certified art teacher who also helps out in kindergarten. All students receive 30 minutes of recess each day. Basketball and cheerleader training is available. There is no Physical Education teacher. The Grade given by the state for the school is C.

**Staff** are all certified teachers. It appeared there were two custodians who also double as morning bus drivers. The financial officer doubles as a school nurse. All teachers double in some school duties. The Teachers are paid below State standards. They begin at 90% and have as two step process in receiving raises, 2% increments each year to reach 94% of NC guide. The Benefits for teachers include Social Security, Medicare; (State Plan) Retirement

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Cost; State Health Plan; State Unemployment Insurance and Workers' Compensation Insurance.

**Board of Directors** includes Dean Johnson; Financial Officer, Mary Rusher; and four other people (one of which is a parent). The minutes are posted online although most of the work appears to be done in closed session.

Submitted by Gail Wick, Georgia Morgan and Anne Cousineau