



## **PRE-APPROVED MINUTES**

Carolina Achieve BOD Meeting Minutes  
February 9, 2026 | 05:00 PM EST  
Virtual: [Carolina Achieve Public Meeting](#)

### **ATTENDANCE**

Board Members Present: Charles Lopez, John Oxaal, Anjanette Miller, MaKayla Booker-Johnson, Jeff Clark, Tiffany Alrefae, Thomas Nechyba  
Absent: None, all were present  
Guests: Trip Cogburn, Head of School  
A quorum was present.

### **NOTICE**

Notice was provided. A waiver of notice is not included.

- 1) John Oxaal called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.
- 2) Charles Lopez read the Carolina Achieve Mission Statement: Carolina Achieve prepares K-12th-grade students to achieve their scholastic, personal, and professional goals through a learner-centered educational program focusing on a strong academic foundation, Habits of Success (entrepreneurial skills), well-being, and a Home-School partnership.
- 3) Approve Agenda - Thomas Nechyba made a motion to approve the agenda, and Jeff Clark seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.
- 4) Approve January Meeting Minutes - Jeff Clark made a motion to approve, and MaKayla Booker-Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- 5) Construction Update (Next Phase) - John Oxaal reported meeting with Hubrich Construction and an architect specializing in the design and construction of school facilities to discuss long-term plans for a permanent brick-and-mortar campus. The discussion centered on a long-term vision that would include housing seven grade levels within the new building, while maintaining several grade levels in modular classroom units. Trip Cogburn shared that he received a planning document outlining the number of rooms proposed for the facility, their intended purposes, and the projected square footage. Trip Cogburn distributed the document to school staff to review the proposed layout, confirm its accuracy, and identify any potential gaps. During the review process, staff raised several questions related to restroom capacity, counseling and student support areas, and available storage space. Additionally, concerns were raised about the square footage of certain classrooms relative to students' size and needs. Trip Cogburn noted that feedback had been submitted to the architect and that a response was pending. Trip Cogburn also provided an update on the playground project, noting that installation was nearing completion. Remaining improvements include the addition of

sidewalks, relocation of benches to safer locations, and the installation of fencing. During the discussion, John Oxaal asked about installing basketball goals. Trip Cogburn confirmed that basketball goals would need to be purchased. John Oxaal further noted that a 3-D mock-up of the future school building is expected to be developed soon to help stakeholders visualize the proposed campus. The anticipated timeline for completion of the permanent facility is approximately three years, with initial efforts focused on the permitting process, which is expected to begin in 2027. Charles Lopez added that the newly installed playground has generated significant positive engagement on social media, with many parents and grandparents sharing comments and stories about the addition.

6) Admission & Lottery Update: Trip Cogburn noted that they ran the lottery on Thursday and pushed out 132 offers on Friday, of which 76 were accepted, 2 declined, and 54 offers remain in the offered status. Trip Cogburn added that most new enrollments are for kindergarten. Jeff Clark asked if this included existing students. Trip Cogburn replied that all of these were new students and added that Intent to Return forms have been positively received. Jeff Clark asked what our target numbers are for the next school year. Trip Cogburn replied that the facility can hold 300, and the breakdown would be: 125 in Kindergarten, 75 in first grade, 50 in second grade, and 50 in third grade. Tiffany Alrefae asked if the school will have an Accepted Students Day this year. Trip Cogburn replied that the families will be invited to many activities, but will also consider the Accepted Students Day, as it has not been scheduled yet. Tiffany Alrefae encouraged current families to join with other interested parents and added that this would be a great opportunity for the PTA President and grade-level representatives to support the event. Charles Lopez added that a grandparent gave a positive social media review. Tiffany Alrefae agreed that there is a program through [www.niche.com](http://www.niche.com). MaKayla Booker-Johnson asked if the students are sent home with folders and added that registration information and requests for parent reviews could also be sent through these folders. Trip Cogburn replied that there could be something to work towards.

7) Committee Updates -

- a. **Finance & Development Committee** - Jeff Clark noted that their meeting was focused on revenue, specifically looking at items on the budget that the school has not received funding for: county revenue is slow coming in, Title I funding is slow coming in, and IDEA grant for exceptional student funding is also slow coming in. No change in balance at this time. At this juncture, it may look like we could break even. Anything that the school can do to raise additional funds would be vital. Jeff Clark met with Stacy Cogburn to discuss striking a balance between reaching out to the community and parents for outreach and funding. Jeff Clark added that it may be best to focus on short-term projects where staff, parents, and the community can come together to fund and/or deliver them to completion.
- b. **Academics Committee** - Thomas Nechyba reported that the Academic Committee reviewed the most recent student assessment results, which included both raw data and summary reports. Thomas Nechyba explained that the primary focus of the analysis is to project third-grade state assessment proficiency based on current second-grade performance data. Thomas Nechyba noted that

second-grade data indicate that nearly 50% of students are currently performing at or above the 50th percentile. Projected growth models suggest proficiency rates between approximately 60% and 70%, which approach but do not yet reach the desired proficiency target of 80% for third grade. Thomas Nechyba further explained that North Carolina's school grading system places significant weight on the absolute number of students who reach proficiency. Trip Cogburn added that these projections weigh heavily on both staff and administration. He shared that teachers have been presenting instructional programs and interventions to support students' readiness in reading, noting that the current second-grade cohort is the group experiencing the greatest academic challenges. Thomas Nechyba further explained that the way assessment data is presented varies by grade level. For kindergarten and first grade, reports reflect the percentage of students performing at or above the 50th percentile in reading and math. For second grade, however, reports focus on the percentage of students projected to reach proficiency on third-grade state assessments. Thomas Nechyba also noted that some assessment data remains incomplete due to missed or unfinished tests. He expects a more complete dataset by the March board meeting, including winter testing results and growth comparisons from the beginning of the school year. At present, second-grade data includes 16 students who completed the math assessment and 24 students who completed the language arts assessment. Trip Cogburn reported that, despite current challenges, the data show encouraging growth among many students and highlighted individual success stories across the academic spectrum. Several students who initially scored in the first to third percentiles have progressed to the 15th or 20th percentile. High-performing students have also continued to demonstrate strong achievement. Trip Cogburn noted that the middle 50% of students are progressing at a typical growth rate, while the school's goal is to accelerate that growth further. Thomas Nechyba added that the school aims to exceed expected growth benchmarks and is currently analyzing strategies to achieve that outcome, and also noted that the second-grade cohort includes a higher proportion of students who may have previously struggled academically at other schools. Recent assessment data also indicate that second-grade language scores are strongly tied to foundational reading skills, including comprehension, reading speed, and stamina. Trip Cogburn further explained that MAP testing provides detailed, actionable data to support instructional decision-making. For example, first-grade teachers used fall MAP assessment data to justify implementing the Letterland program and transitioning away from the Bookworms curriculum. The MAP assessment allows teachers to make real-time instructional adjustments to better support student progress. John Oxaal asked whether the reported data included Exceptional Children (EC) students. Trip Cogburn confirmed that EC students were included in the data set and expressed confidence that some would meet proficiency standards. Trip Cogburn also shared an example of an individual student in second grade who previously scored extremely low and had been retained at her former school, placing her

more than a grade level behind. The instructional team developed a long-term academic plan for the student to help her recover approximately 1 month of learning growth per year, so she can reach grade-level expectations by ninth grade. Trip Cogburn reported that the student's parents are actively engaged in the plan and are already seeing positive results. Trip Cogburn concluded by reminding the Board that, while proficiency rates are important, it is equally important to recognize and celebrate the measurable academic growth students are making. Finally, a summer reading program is being considered for summer deployment to address summer slide. Tiffany Alrefae reminded the team that the "Book-It" program from Pizza Hut continues, and we could use that to incentivise the children to read. Jeff Clark recognized that this is the exciting part of what we are doing and that it matters. Thomas Nechyba recognized this impact upon his visit to the school.

- c. Nominating & Governance Committee: Charles Lopez reached out to two community members who supported Carolina Achieve through the interview process and to educators in their own space to spark a conversation about joining the Board.
- 8) Calendar of Upcoming Events: Trip Cogburn shared several recent and upcoming school events. He reported that the school hosted a "Share the Love" event in celebration of Valentine's Day, which included a coffee food truck on site for parents and provided an opportunity for families to purchase coffee for school staff as a gesture of appreciation. Trip Cogburn also noted that the Winter Social, sponsored by the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), is scheduled for Friday, February 20, 2026, at the 5th and Washington Event Space. Additionally, Trip Cogburn informed the Board that the school will celebrate the 100th Day of School on Monday, February 23, 2026. Trip Cogburn further shared that the school is tentatively planning a mascot reveal event on Friday, February 27, 2026. This event is pending the finalization of the school's mascot logo, which is currently being developed in partnership with Media Integrations. Charles Lopez reminded John Oxaal to schedule the previously discussed off-site Board meeting. John Oxaal confirmed that the meeting will include a Board training session to guide members through common governance issues charter school boards may face, noting that this training is required by the North Carolina Office of Charter Schools, with dinner to follow.
- 9) Closed Session. A motion was made by John Oxaal and seconded by Jeff Clark to hold a closed meeting to discuss a personnel matter. After the closed session, the Board returned to the public forum for adjournment.
- 10) Quorum was present at the return from Closed Session. Charles Lopez reminded the Board that the next meeting will be on March 9th, 2026, at 5:00 PM.
- 11) Adjournment - Jeff Clark made the motion to adjourn the meeting, and MaKayla Booker-Johnson seconded it. The motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:21 pm.

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