



6/15/2020

Dear Kaleidoscope Charter High School Community Member,

We hope during this challenging time you and yours are safe and well.

It is with **hope** yet **frustration** we write to you to inform you of the status of Kaleidoscope Charter High School (KCHS). The Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) chose not to re-vote for our DELAY. After many years dealing with the CSAB's resistance, they confronted us on May 11th and June 8th. In fact, they were still negative about our school's vision/mission, saying they never liked our pedagogy. *Interesting* - student focused/personally directed learning is successful and being implemented around the world.

We believe we were set-up for failure, due to several factors. **Yet we will not give up!** For many years we have been trying to create an innovative student-centered learning environment and demonstrate the benefits of this type of learning. We live in a world ready for *educational reform, and people all over are embracing this type of pedagogy*. Students love it! It empowers youth and educators.

Many of our board and advisory board members have worked endless volunteer hours, writing and rewriting numerous revisions of our charter; with changes based on the Office of Charter School's Charter School Advisory Board's rubrics and concerns. Our team has reached out to all communities in the Triangle hoping they would join us in creating the first high school in Morrisville. Our newsletter database is over 500 people. We have already written over one hundred *Ready to Open* documents and policies with our students and parents interests, concerns and safety in mind.

Being persistent, we have vetted at least 30+ potential temporary locations for our school, to no avail. Either they weren't zoned for schools or the business neighbors didn't want a school near them. Then in January 2020 we found a great temporary facility in North Raleigh. It has a large gymnasium, commercial kitchen and dining room, classrooms and a supportive landlord. It took a while to get the facility Letter of Intent, while we worked on the "location amendment to our charter".

Finally, we opened our lottery, engaged in additional marketing, paved the way for a Certificate of Occupancy from the City of Raleigh and communicated with our community the whole time. **We opened our Lottery the same day all businesses and schools closed due to the COVID19 Global Pandemic!** Talk about irony and life challenges! We still received 71+ applications from families throughout the RTP area. Many Morrisville parents were concerned with the North Raleigh commute, particularly in the case of future COVID-19 surges, even though we'd offer transportation options. However, in the North Raleigh area, we could also engage students from Wake Forest and central Raleigh. This site could meet our needs for up to three years.

On Monday, April 27th, the whole KCHS board was advised by the Director of the Office of Charter Schools by a virtual conference call, that we wouldn't get the "location" charter amendment approved by the CSAB because the local PTA lobby in North Raleigh thought there were too many charter-schools in that area and would complain enmasse to the CSAB, who wouldn't want the confrontation.

Additionally, we had an investor, **Performance Charter School Development's** Letter of Intent, stating they would buy land and build a Phase I of our school for Morrisville ONLY IF WE GOT A DELAY. It would take a year to build Phase I.

This OCS Director also told us he would support our request for a DELAY. When it counted, he did not! We took this expert's advice and stopped our efforts to attain a charter amendment, explained to our families we had to request a DELAY - so they could accommodate their child's educational needs. We didn't want to hold anyone back. Truly, we wanted to serve our students and families, yet *we received conflicting information when we attended the May 11th CSAB Meeting.* We requested a DELAY for several reasons: the COVID-19 pandemic eviscerated our enrollment, and you can't blame parent's justifiable fears, our facility and "location" charter amendment was discouraged, and we needed one more year delay to provide time to build our permanent campus.

No one from the OCS spoke up to support this request to give us one more year! It was frustrating, since the OCS was the governmental entity that dissuaded us from using the North Raleigh facility and advised us NOT to request a "location" amendment to our charter. We told the CSAB we had an investor who would help us IF they voted to give us a DELAY. They did not approve a DELAY. Our board was livid! We have come so far!

We then asked all our community supporters to write emails to the CSAB and ask them to re-vote. Thank you so much if you did the emails and surveys. We had a great citizen response, unfortunately, our CALL TO ACTION did not impact the CSAB members one bit.

At the CSAB review on June 8, they gave us until July 6 to meet all READY TO OPEN criteria and process, which includes the facility location and lease, the hiring of staff (we had some really excellent candidates), the insurance coverage, the Certificate of Occupancy for Education, and increased enrollment numbers sufficient to satisfy the state law, and more.

By following the information given to us by the OCS, our progress to open was stopped. Since we had to stop enrollment solicitation, we only have 71 students enrolled and many more parents surveyed would want to attend KCHS. We have been told that we need a minimum of 80 out of our allowed 230 capacity for the first year of opening.

The Executive Director of the OCS, Dave Machado, steered us with wrong information and then told the CSAB members at their meeting that he told us it was *his opinion* that we should not use the North Raleigh location. At our June 8 review for opening, Steven Walker, a member of the CSAB, stated that he was never in favor of us from the beginning because he didn't like our platform for teaching... that it just "wasn't his cup of tea". After five years of our seeking charter approval, he only voted for us to see if we could make it. It's too bad that we didn't know the state law when we had the original conversation with Mr. Machado about the location change. **In essence, the law states that only a zoning authority can stop the selection of a facility location.** He also told our KCHS Board in that conference call that if we sought a second-year delay that he would lobby on our behalf for it. He now says that lobbying is not in his job description.

Unfortunately, we don't think that it is possible now to open this year as we had hoped and planned, and the only thing that would have saved us would have been the second year delay. **Why would the SBE choose to rule on our case a month earlier than their usual and publicly posted procedure states? It makes us wonder if the CSAB hurried our case along so that we wouldn't have time to lobby the SBE members before they voted. Now there may be an appeal process we can follow.**

It's doubtful that we can fulfill the July 6th deadline to open in August 2020. **We just needed one more year and our investor would have built a school building in Morrisville.**

Our Board will be discussing options. Here are a few:

- Legally confront the CSAB's decision on the State Board level **to allow our DELAY** - then our investor can build our school and we can open August 2021;
- Resubmit a revised "charter" by July 26, 2020, for an August 2021 opening;
- Recreate Kaleidoscope as a *non-profit* Music-Science-Art Learning Center, thereby avoiding having to answer to the CSAB or the SBE.

We are waiting for our lawyer's input about our legal options.

Despite our frustration and consternation we are still hopeful we have some options. Please know that we will continue to keep you informed. Thank you for your continued support. Please feel free to give us your thoughts.

Sincerely,

The Kaleidoscope Charter High School Board of Directors