Central Carolina RESA Board of Directors Meeting

NCSBA Assembly Hall
November 17, 2023
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Minutes

Board of Directors in Attendance

Matthew Cheeseman (Beaufort), Kristy Davis (Alamance-Burlington Designee), Andy Bryan (Edgecombe), Steve Ellis (Nash), Frank Creech (Greene), Julie Thompson (Roanoke Rapids), Lane Mills (Wilson), Ethan Lenker (Pitt), Randy Bridges (Wake), Jim Merrill (Orange), Ashauna Harris and guest (Chapel Hill Carrboro Designee), Rodney Peterson (Person), Cindy Bennett (Vance), Rhonda Schuhler (Franklin), Keith Sutton (Warren), Eric Bracy (Johnston), Stan Winborne (Granville), Pascal Mubenga (Durham) Ethan Lenker (Pitt) Lane Mills (Wilson) Steve Ellie (Nash) Nyah Hamlett (Chapel Hill- Carrboro) Eric Bracey (Johnston) Frank Creech (Greene).

Affiliate Members in Attendance

Paola Sztajn (NC State), Michelle Handley (ESDB), Dr. Lakisha Rice (NCCU), Andre Green (ECU), Marjarie Ringler (ECU), Tony Jackson (Chatham).

Guests

Eenie Conner (Granville), Jamar Perry (Granville), Cory Rankin (Pitt), Steve Lassiter (Person), Tim DeCresie (Pitt), Cheryl Wilson (Wilson), Heather Pennica (Wilson), Marsha Abbott (Vance), Eric Locklear (Johnson), Kendra King (DPI), Anna Kuykendal (Johnston), Nick King (Durham), Joy Malone (Durham), Chris Godwin (Johnston), Lela Nichols (Franklin), Matthew Mayo (NCDPI), JM Darrish (NCDPI), Eric Locklear (Johnston), Ron Anthony (Person), Jason Clayton (Person), Tara Holmes (Person), Jason Clayton (Person), Ron Anthony (Person), Debby Atwater (Chapel Hill- Carrboro), Amber Godfrey (Beaufort), Amanda K. Clark (Roanoke Rapids), Clinton Robinson (Wake), Ryan Miller (Orange), Josè Garcia (Greene), Leigh Garner (Greene), Allison Reid (Wake), Charles Patten (Wake)

Staff

Patrick Miller, Dana Stutzman, and Katherine Chambers

Welcome

CCRESA Executive Director, Dr. Patrick Miller opened the meeting at 9:00am. Dr. Miller welcomed the NC Peak team, NCDPI members, Board members, along with the CCRESA Technology Council and the Curriculum and Instruction Council Members. He thanked Dr. Ross Renfrow with NC Peak for sponsoring the meeting and providing breakfast for the group. Dr. Miller provided an overview of the Agenda, highlighting the purpose of inviting Council Members to attend today's meeting: to engage them in a discussion with the Superintendents about the changes in vendor approval and cybersecurity.

NC Peak

Dr. Ross Renfrow, Director of Strategic Partnerships at NC Peak, gave an overview of programs offered by the organization. NC Peak is a group of retired public school educators, mostly working throughout the western part of the state, but are looking to expand east. NC Peak is currently partnered with CCRESA to facilitate the monthly Lead & Learn sessions for new Principals.

Approval of the September 19, 2023 Minutes

Dr. Lane Mills, CCRESA Board Chair, asked Superintendents to review the Minutes from September 29, 2023, and requested a motion to approve. Dr. Frank Creech gave a motion to approve the Minutes, Dr. Steve Ellis seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Approval of the Financial Reports

Dr. Lane Mills, stepping in for Dr. Keith Sutton, CCRESA Treasurer, summarized the financial report. Dana Stutzman mentioned that starting in January, CCRESA will serve as the fiscal agent for two organizations that are recipients of the Z. Smith Reynolds Grant**.** The motion to approve the financial memo and report was given by Dr. Dain Butler, Dr. Ethan Lenker seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Conversation with the NCDPI Technology Services Team

Mark Samberg and Jeremiah Jackson from the Technology Services & Digital Learning Division at NCDPI addressed the pressing issues and led discussions related to modernization and cybersecurity.

Modernization

NCSIS is now moving to Infinite Campus where many value-added resources will be available at no cost

to districts. This does not mean that Canvas is going away, this is another option. Districts may apply to be one of the twenty pilot districts after the November 28th webinar.

Cybersecurity

Of the thirty-six reported breaches in North Carolina, 90% were attributed to third-party products, while the remaining 10% were caused by human error. The consequences of these breaches included several instances of school closures lasting a week each time, with the additional challenge of having to rebuild servers from scratch after a cyber-attack. Notably, the average cost for a mid-sized school district in North Carolina facing a cyber-attack was estimated to be in the seven figures, encompassing financial, operational, and closure-related disruptions. An example of a cyber attack that most do not think of is the vulnerability of HVAC systems, which, if breached, could lead to the leakage of sensitive student data.

The team outlined the now-required process for vendors that directly connect to state systems. School districts were granted the discretion to extend this process to additional systems. Vendors need a third-party assessment that compares them to the national standards. These assessments, such as SOC 3, FedRAMP, ISO 2700, or HITRUST, may cost vendors a large amount of money and they can take about six months to complete. Vendors must have this assessment completed or provide a letter that states they are actively in the process of obtaining an assessment. NCDIT has posted a "Vendor Readiness Assessment Tool" which allows vendors to perform a self assessment prior to committing to the third-party assessment.

To assist districts in evaluating vendors, the team highlighted PSU cybersecurity office hours every Wednesday at 9 am. A significant concern raised during the discussion was the reluctance of vendors to undergo the expensive and time-consuming compliance work. It was acknowledged that larger school districts might have more leverage in negotiating with vendors compared to smaller districts.

A proposed solution to this challenge was for all CCRESA districts to collaborate and collectively decide whether to vet vendors together or not work with them at all. The Technology Council will discuss more at their meeting on November 28th.

Generative AI Primer for District Leaders: What, Why, and How

Allison Reid, WCPSS Senior Director of Digital Learning and Libraries, introduced herself and emphasized

the importance of understanding and utilizing artificial intelligence applications in schools. The three main aspects covered were understanding AI and ChatGPT, recognizing the importance of AI in the educational context, and engaging in practical hands-on experience.

Examples of AI in daily life were provided, including applications in maps and navigation, Google search, smart home devices, facial detection and recognition, text editors or autocorrect, search and recommendation algorithms, chatbots, digital assistants (e.g., Alexa, Siri, Google), social media, e-payments, and entertainment platforms like Spotify and Pandora.

The presentation highlighted the rapid adoption of new technology, citing ChatGPT's achievement of one million users in just five days, a feat that took Netflix 3.5 years. An overview of ChatGPT explained its role as an artificial intelligence chatbot using a dialogue format, trained on a vast collection of text data from various sources until 2021. It was emphasized that while ChatGPT itself is not biased, it may inherit biases from the internet-sourced data.

The presentation prompted reflection on the alignment of AI use with district values and the responsibility of guiding students on AI tools. Considerations were raised regarding the realistic impact of AI on cheating and security, as well as the opportunity to teach AI ethics as part of digital literacy.

The presentation concluded with a discussion on ChatGPT's alignment with Bloom's taxonomy, stating that when used effectively, AI tools could help access the upper levels of Bloom's taxonomy.

The group was encouraged to consider the resources needed for implementing AI in their districts, with a caution against outsourcing to external experts when there might be internal expertise within the district. The RAFT (Role, Audience, Format, and Topic) framework was introduced as a tool for thoughtful design, akin to design thinking. Several AI applications were recommended for exploration, including MagicSchoolAI, a Canvas course about AI created by Charles Patten and his team, Canva for Educators: Meet Magic Studio, Curipod, and Gradescope.

CCP3 Update
Dr.Miller reminded Board Members of the CCRESA and NC Central joint program, Central Carolina Principal Preparation Program (CCP3), and the benefit this program brings to the CCRESA districts. CCP3

is currently accepting applications for the next cohort, and the deadline for CCP3 applicants is December 1st. Dr. Miller emphasized the importance of district involvement, indicating that superintendents would receive a list of teachers who have applied from their districts, with a brief window to prescreen applicants before interviews proceed.

Adjourn

Dr. Miller thanked the sponsors, C&I and Technology Council members, and Board members for their time. He reminded Board members about the upcoming Holiday Board Meeting on December 12, which includes the invitation of administrative assistants. A Holiday lunch celebration at Winston's Grill follows the meeting. Dr. Miller urged Board members to look out for an email to RSVP for each of the Board members and their respective administrative assistants.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Keith Sutton
CCRESA Secretary/Treasurer