



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MINUTES

Charter Authorizing Panel

July 17, 2025

Arkansas Department of Education Auditorium

4 Capitol Mall, Little Rock, AR 72201

9:00 AM

I. **Call to Order**

The July 2025 Regular Meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel (CAP) was called to order by Dr. Sonja Wright-McMurray at 9:01 AM. Present in person were Dr. John Bacon, Mr. Phil Baldwin, Dr. Tina Moore, Ms. Toyce Newton, and Ms. Edie Stewart. Joining via zoom was Dr. Sonja Wright-McMurray (Chair). Absent from the meeting was Dr. Crystal Beshears-Duncan.

II. **Changes to Agenda**

Dr. McMurray opened by asking for changes to the agenda. Mr. Phil Baldwin moved to approve the agenda, and Mrs. Newton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

III. **Action Agenda**

Mr. Shults reported there were no concerns regarding the action agenda and also discussed the procedures for the hearings.

Dr. Darrell Smith introduced the Action Agenda.

III.1. Charter Schools Requesting Location Changes:

- a. **Arkansas Lighthouse Charter Schools** requested an amendment to its charter to relocate Jacksonville Lighthouse Flightline School from 1030 Cannon Dr., LRAFB, AR 72099, to 251 N. First St.,

Jacksonville, AR 72076, and to rename the school Jacksonville Lighthouse Middle School.

Dr. LaShawnDa Noel, Chief Executive Officer of Arkansas Lighthouse Charter Schools, discussed the request and answered panel member questions.

Mr. Phillip Baldwin moved to approve the amendment request for Arkansas Lighthouse Charter Schools and was seconded by Dr. Moore. The motion passed unanimously.

b. eStem Public Charter Schools requested the following:

1. to relocate eStem High School from 2801 S. University Avenue in Little Rock, AR 72204, to 410 Shall Avenue Little Rock, AR 72206;
2. to relocate eStem Junior High School from 123 W. 3rd St., Little Rock, AR 72201, to 400 Shall Ave., Little Rock 72206; and
3. to split eStem Elementary between 112 W. 3rd St., Little Rock, and 123 W. 3rd St., Little Rock, AR 72201

eStem Chief Executive Officer Dr. Nicholas Patterson discussed the requests and answered panel member questions.

Mr. John Bacon moved to approve the amendment requests. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stewart and passed unanimously.

III. 2. Charter Schools Requesting to Defer School Opening Until the 2026-2027 School Year

a. IOTA Community Schools requested to defer opening its K-5 campus for one year and open both its K-5 and 6-8 campuses in 2026-2027.

Executive Director Dr. Jacquell Rodgers discussed the request and answered questions. The panel requested an update in October.

Dr. Tina Moore moved to approve the request. The motion was seconded by Ms. Edie Stewart and passed unanimously.

b. Pinecrest Academy Fayetteville;

c. Somerset Academy Bentonville

- 1. Somerset Academy Bentonville High School;**
- 2. Somerset Academy Bentonville Middle School;**
- 3. Somerset Academy Bentonville Elementary School;**
- 4. Somerset Academy Little Rock High School;**
- 5. Somerset Academy Little Rock Middle School; and**
- 6. Somerset Academy Little Rock Elementary School**

Dr. Todd German, chair and treasurer of the board of directors, for Pinecrest and the Somerset Academies explained the requests and answered questions.

Ms. Toyce Newton moved to approve the amendment requests, and Mr. Phil Baldwin seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

III. 3. Academies at Rivercrest District Conversion Charter

The Academies at Rivercrest requests an LEA change, a name change, and consolidation from two schools (Junior High 7-8 and High School 9-12) to one school, grades 7-12.

Ms. Edie Stewart moved to approve the charter amendment requests with a second by Mr. Phil Baldwin. The motion passed unanimously.

III. 4. Process for Placement of Items on the Consent Agenda

A seven-question approach to determine if items go on the Consent Agenda or Action Agenda, as discussed in detail at the panel's July 11 work session, was presented for adoption.

Ms. Toyce Newton moved to approve the process. Dr. John Bacon seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

IV. Consent Agenda

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Ms. Toyce Newton moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Dr. Tina Moore seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Reports

Freddie Scott provided updates on the following:

- charter school portfolio,
- charter openings and closures, and
- upcoming renewals.

VI. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

VII. Adjournment

Dr. Moore moved to adjourn the meeting, with a second by Dr. Bacon. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 10:33 AM.

Minutes Prepared By:



Mr. Seth R. Seaton
Charter Office Team Analyst
Arkansas Department of Education

Minutes Approved By:



Dr. Sonja Wright-McMurray, Chair
Charter Authorizing Panel
Arkansas Department of Education