

**Minutes**  
**Charter Authorizing Panel**  
**Tuesday, November 17, 2015**

The Charter Authorizing Panel met on Tuesday, November 17, 2015, in the auditorium of the Department of Education building. Deborah Coffman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Present: Deborah Coffman, Chair; Dr. Debbie Jones, Vice Chair; Annette Barnes; Dr. Mark Gotcher; Jennifer Liwo; Ivy Pfeffer; Greg Rogers; and Dr. Eric Saunders

Absent: Bobby Lester

The transcription of this meeting may be accessed on the Arkansas Department of Education website at the following:

<http://www.arkansased.org/about-ade/charter-authorizing-panel/minutes/archive/2015>

**Reports**

**Report-1 Chair's Report**

Ms. Coffman welcomed the members of the Panel and the audience. She provided the audience with instructions pertinent to the proceedings.

**Consent Agenda**

It was moved by Ms. Barnes, seconded by Dr. Gotcher and carried unanimously to approve the consent agenda.

Items included in the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes – October 14, 2015
- Minutes – October 15, 2015

**Action Agenda**

General Counsel Kendra Clay provided the Panel with directions for the proceedings. She also explained the public voting procedures to the Panel and the audience.

Ms. Coffman recognized state legislators in attendance.

Senator Bart Hester and Representative Jim Dotson addressed the Panel.

**A-1 Continuation Hearing of Open-Enrollment Public Charter School Application: Arkansas Connections Academy, Bentonville, Arkansas**

Ms. Coffman instructed the Panel that this item was tabled from a previous hearing and required a motion to remove this item from the table.

It was moved by Ms. Barnes, seconded by Dr. Saunders, and carried unanimously to remove the item from the table.

A question and answer period followed.

It was moved by Dr. Gotcher, seconded by Ms. Barnes, and carried by a 5-2 vote to approve the application.

**A-2 Hearing of Request for District Conversion Public Charter School Amendment: Washington Academy (Texarkana)**

Principal Terry Taylor presented the Panel with Washington Academy's request to amend the charter by expanding the grades served from 9-12 to 7-12.

A question and answer period followed.

It was moved by Ms. Barnes, seconded by Dr. Jones, and carried unanimously to approve the amendment request.

**A-3 Hearing of Request for Open-Enrollment Public Charter School Amendments: Academics Plus Charter School**

Executive Director Rob McGill and Elementary Principal Diane Gross presented the Panel with Academic Plus's request to amend the charter by licensing a new campus in Scott, Arkansas.

Representative Camille Bennett addressed the Panel.

Pulaski County Special School District Attorney Sam Jones spoke in opposition to the amendment request.

At the request of Ms. Coffman, Kendra Clay addressed concerns and questions regarding desegregation and the unitary status of the Pulaski County Special School District.

A question and answer period followed.

It was moved by Dr. Jones, seconded by Dr. Saunders, and carried by a 4-2 vote, with one abstention, to approve the amendment request.

**A-4 Hearing of Request for Open-Enrollment Public Charter School Amendments: eStem Public Charter School**

This request was withdrawn prior to the hearing.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

*Minutes recorded by Alexandra Boyd.*