



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MINUTES

Charter Authorizing Panel

April 17, 2025

Arkansas Department of Education

DESE Auditorium

4 Capitol Mall

Little Rock, AR 72201

9:00 AM

I. **Call to Order**

The April 2025 Regular Meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel (CAP) was called to order by Dr. Sonja Wright-McMurray at 9:04 AM. Members present in person were Dr. Sonja Wright-McMurray (Chair), Ms. Edie Stewart, Dr. Tina Moore, Mr. Phil Baldwin, and Dr. John Bacon. Member present via Zoom was Dr. Crystal Beshears-Duncan. CAP member Dr. Toyce Newton was absent. Daniel Shults, Litigation Attorney for the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), Office of Legal Services, provided an overview of legal procedures for the meeting.

II. **Consent Agenda**

The Consent Agenda was introduced by Dustin Wood, J.D., State Director of School Choice, and included the following items: -

- Minutes of March 20 Charter Authorizing Panel Regular Meeting
- Minutes of April 14 Special Charter Authorizing Panel Meeting
- Voluntary Rescission of Open Enrollment Charter Extension for Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas
- Voluntary Rescission of District Conversion Charter Extension for River Valley Academy

Ashley Enslow, Chief Program Officer of Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas, was recognized for a statement prior to the vote.

Mr. Baldwin moved to accept the Consent Agenda, which included the Voluntary Rescission of the Open Enrollment Charter Extension for Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas and the Voluntary Rescission of the District Conversion Charter Extension for River Valley Academy. The motion was seconded by Dr. Moore. The Charter Authorizing Panel voted unanimously 6-0 to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion passed.

III. **Action Agenda**

The Action Agenda was introduced by Dr. Darrell Smith, Assistant Commissioner, Office of School Choice and Parent Empowerment, and included the following items:

A. Charter Amendment Request--Founders Classical Academies of Arkansas

Susan Provenza, Superintendent of Founders Classical Academies of Arkansas, requested a name change to College Preparatory Academies of Arkansas. There are no legal concerns. Ms. Stewart moved to approve the request, seconded by Mr. Baldwin. The motion passed unanimously on a 6-0 vote to approve the name change request of Founders Classical Academies of Arkansas to College Preparatory Academies of Arkansas effective with the 2025-2026 school year. Votes: Dr. Sonja Wright-McMurray – For; Ms. Edie Stewart – For; Dr. Tina Moore – For; Mr. Phil Baldwin – For; Dr. John Bacon – For; Dr. Crystal Beshears-Duncan – For.

B. Charter Amendment Request--Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock

Dr. Smith introduced Tina Long, Superintendent of Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock. Exalt Academy presented three separate amendments to their charter, each requiring a separate motion. There are no legal concerns.

1. Charter Amendment Request--Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock (Location Change)

After the presentation by Ms. Tina Long and the Panel Q&A, Dr. Moore moved to approve the request to relocate the existing campus and add a new campus to their charter, seconded by Ms. Stewart. The motion passed unanimously on a 6-0 vote. Votes: Dr. Sonja Wright-McMurray – For; Ms. Edie Stewart – For; Dr. Tina Moore – For; Mr. Phil Baldwin – For; Dr. John Bacon – For; Dr. Crystal Beshears-Duncan – For.

2. Charter Amendment Request--Exalt Academy Enrollment Cap Increase

After the presentation by Ms. Tina Long and the Panel Q&A, Ms. Stewart moved to approve the request to increase the enrollment cap from 1080 to 1880, seconded by Dr. Bacon. The motion passed unanimously on a 6-0 vote. Votes: Dr. Sonja Wright-McMurray – For; Ms. Edie Stewart – For; Dr. Tina Moore – For; Mr. Phil Baldwin – For; Dr. John Bacon – For; Dr. Crystal Beshears-Duncan – For.

3. Charter Amendment Request - Grade Levels (9-12)

After the presentation by Ms. Tina Long and the Panel Q&A, Ms. Stewart moved to approve the request to change grade levels served under the charter from K-8 to K-12, seconded by Dr. Bacon. The motion passed unanimously on a 6-0 vote. Votes: Dr. Sonja Wright-McMurray – For; Ms. Edie Stewart – For; Dr. Tina Moore – For; Mr. Phil Baldwin – For; Dr. John Bacon – For; Dr. Crystal Beshears-Duncan – For. .

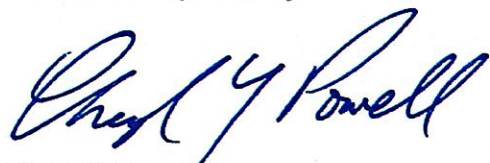
IV. Adjournment

Mr. Baldwin moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dr. Beshears-Duncan. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 10:54 AM.

V. Charter Authorizing Panel Working Session

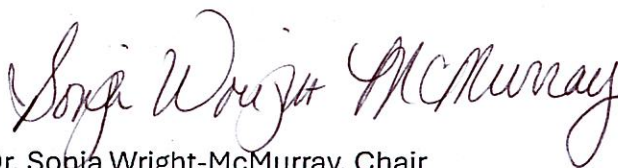
Dr. Smith convened CAP members in a working lunch session to introduce the Charter School Performance framework being developed with ADE Staff.

Minutes Prepared By:



Cheryl Y. Powell
Charter Office Operations Manager
Arkansas Department of Education

Minutes Approved By:



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