

In The Matter Of:
ARKANSAS CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

September 14, 2021

Sharon K. Hill, CCR
(501) 680-0888

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

SEPTEMBER 14, 2021
9:00 a.m.

A P P E A R A N C E S

PANEL MEMBERS:

MS. DEBORAH COFFMAN	Chairperson/ADE Asst. Commissioner - Public School Accountability
DR. NACCAMAN WILLIAMS	Former State Board of Ed. Member
MR. PHIL BALDWIN	CEO, Citizens Bank
MS. SONJA WRIGHT-McMURRAY	Division of CTE - Assoc. Director for Career Readiness
DR. ERIC FLOWERS	ADE Asst. to Director

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. MARY CLAIRE HYATT DESE Attorney

ALSO APPEARING:

MR. TIM JOHNSTON DESE Coordinator of
Monitoring and Systems Support

LOCATION:

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
- Auditorium
#4 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, Arkansas

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Good morning. The September 14, 2021 meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel is called to order. Good morning everyone. Welcome to the Department of Ed. auditorium and to Zoom, and ask that you please silence all electronic devices.

We have a very quick meeting today, I believe. And good morning, Mr. Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN: Good morning.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Let's get straight into our agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And, Panel Members, we have approval of the August 17th and August 18th meetings for you to review. And when you're ready, I'll accept a motion.

MR. BALDWIN: I'll make that motion.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: A motion to approve the minutes as presented.

MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And a second by Ms. Wright-McMurray.

All those in favor?

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Motion passes.

1) CONSIDERATION OF FINALIZED 2021-2022 CHARTER SCHOOL DIGITAL
LEARNING PROGRAMS

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Good morning, Mr. Johnston.
We're ready for action item number one.

MR. JOHNSTON: Good morning. Tim Johnston, DESE
Charter Unit.

(A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE AS DAN DAVIS WORKS ON ZOOM CAMERA)

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Tim broke the camera.

MR. DAN DAVIS: As soon as he walked up here it
stopped working.

MR. JOHNSTON: I'm not surprised.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Well, I can affirm you look
great. I don't know how you could break the camera
first thing.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mary Claire probably had
something to do with it.

MR. GAST: See how you jinxed us when you say "a
short meeting."

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Evidently. Thanks.
Now we're back in business?

MR. DAN DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Johnston --

MR. JOHNSTON: Yes, ma'am.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: -- action item number one,
please.

1 a) PREMIER SPRINGDALE DIGITAL LEARNING PROGRAM

2 MR. JOHNSTON: Action item number one -- Premier
3 High School Springdale has submitted a digital
4 learning program that will follow asynchronous and
5 synchronous instruction through virtual delivery.
6 School instructors will utilize an LMS to monitor
7 student activity and engagement. Premier High School
8 Springdale serves grades 9-12 and their charter
9 expires in 2026.

10 And Dennis Felton and Steve Gast are both on
11 Zoom, if you have any questions.

12 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Questions from the Panel?
13 Dr. Flowers.

14 DR. FLOWERS: Nothing right now.

15 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Wright-McMurray?

16 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So if it expires in 2026,
17 do we need to have the same conversation about the
18 time period?

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes. So, Mr. Felton or Mr.
20 Gast, the question is are you willing to seek
21 approval for this application for three years, as has
22 been customary with all of the digital learning
23 applications?

24 MR. GAST: Yes, we're fine with that.

25 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any other questions?

1 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And then --

2 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: You may want to get closer to
3 your microphone.

4 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Sorry.

5 And then the second question that I have, and I
6 was just trying to review again just to make sure --
7 so for students that are virtual, if we start to
8 identify there's challenges or concerns, what type of
9 mechanism or plan is in place for them to have to
10 come back to in-person instruction?

11 MR. FELTON: I can take that, Mr. Gast.

12 One of the things that we want to make sure that
13 we're doing is being responsive to student needs.
14 And so in the event that we had a student that chose
15 the virtual option, the first thing we would do is
16 try to provide that additional support through a
17 virtual perspective. But if that's not working, then
18 we would set up mandatory days, you know, to come on
19 campus. What we don't want to do is, particularly
20 with our population -- if a kid has dropped out of
21 high school and we've got them back engaged in the
22 process, we're trying to be careful of being flexible
23 to them. So whereas, I would -- we would want to
24 work with the student versus saying, "Okay, you're
25 going to come on campus every day," and then we lose

1 that student and they dropped out again, they become
2 disengaged.

3 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: But you'll identify like a
4 couple of days a week that they will have to come in-
5 person and meet with someone if you identify that
6 there is some challenges with them doing the virtual
7 option?

8 MR. FELTON: That is correct.

9 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Baldwin, questions?

11 MR. BALDWIN: Yes, really just one. And I'm
12 sure you all have this in the application. I'm
13 traveling and I'm having a hard time finding where I
14 made my note on this. But talk to us a little bit
15 about the number of students that you anticipate
16 joining virtually and what percent of your total
17 population would that be? I know that's probably a
18 best guess, but I'm just trying to understand the
19 size of the program.

20 MR. FELTON: Right now the virtual piece
21 represents about 10% of the student population, so
22 very small at this time. So we're excited about
23 having kids -- the majority of kids wanting to come
24 in the building.

25 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Hearing no other questions --
2 and just for the record, the application has been
3 thoroughly reviewed by the DESE team. So any other
4 appli- -- any other questions?

5 Then I'll accept a motion.

6 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move approval.

7 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion by Ms.
8 Wright-McMurray to approve the application for three
9 years.

10 DR. FLOWERS: Second.

11 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: A second by Dr. Flowers.

12 All those in favor?

13 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Motion passes.

15 Congratulations. And as customary, this item
16 will be taken before the State Board at the next
17 meeting. Thank you.

18 Thank you, Mr. Gast. Thank you, Mr. Felton.

19 b) ACADEMIES AT RIVERCREST HIGH SCHOOL DIGITAL
20 LEARNING PROGRAM

21 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Johnston, item number two
22 please.

23 MR. JOHNSTON: The Academies at Rivercrest High
24 School submitted a digital learning program
25 application that will follow asynchronous and

1 synchronous instruction through virtual delivery.
2 Instruction will be provided by licensed staff
3 through an Arkansas approved digital provider. The
4 school serves grades 9-12. Their charter expires in
5 June of 2026, and their application has gone through
6 all of the DESE reviews. And Shantele Raper is
7 available via Zoom for any questions.

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Good morning, Ms. Raper.

9 MS. RAPER: Good morning.

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I'm assuming we can start
11 with the first question of are you agreeable for
12 modification for three years?

13 MS. RAPER: We are. Yes, three years will be
14 fine.

15 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Wright-McMurray,
16 additional questions?

17 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: (Shaking head from side to
18 side)

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Flowers?

20 DR. FLOWERS: None for me.

21 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Baldwin, additional
22 questions?

23 MR. BALDWIN: None. I'm good.

24 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Williams, additional
25 questions?

1 DR. WILLIAMS: None from me. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Then I'll accept
3 a motion.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: So moved.

5 MR. BALDWIN: Second.

6 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion by Dr.
7 Williams and a second by Mr. Baldwin to approve the
8 Academies at Rivercrest High School digital learning
9 program for three years.

10 All those in favor?

11 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

12 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any opposed?

13 Motion passes.

14 Congratulations, Ms. Raper.

15 MS. RAPER: Thank you.

16 MISC. COMMENTS

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And I think that concludes
18 our meeting.

19 I think we do need to recognize that Ms. Mary
20 Claire Hyatt is leaving us today. Today is her last
21 day.

22 And, Ms. Hyatt, you've been an excellent public
23 servant and you have served this committee very well.
24 We'll give our members an opportunity to say anything
25 that they'd like to.

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(OFF THE RECORD)

(BACK ON THE RECORD)

ADJOURNMENT

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. If there's no additional business, then I'll accept a motion to adjourn.

MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So moved.

DR. WILLIAMS: So moved.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: A motion by Ms. Wright-McMurray and a second by --

DR. WILLIAMS: Second.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: -- Dr. Williams.

All those in favor?

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you, everyone. Appreciate you being here today. Have a nice day.

(The meeting was concluded at 9:16 a.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ARKANSAS)
) ss.
 COUNTY OF SALINE)

I, SHARON K. HILL, CCR, a Certified Stenomask Reporter and Notary Public before whom the foregoing proceedings was taken, do hereby certify that the same is a true and correct transcription before the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Charter Authorizing Panel, in Little Rock, Arkansas, on September 14, 2021; that the said proceedings was reduced to typewritten form by me or under my direction and supervision; and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct transcription of all proceedings had in said matter.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I have no contract with any parties within this action that affects or has a substantial tendency to affect impartiality, that requires me to relinquish control of an original transcript or copies of the transcript before it is certified and delivered to the custodial agency, or that requires me to provide any service not made available to all parties to the action.

WITNESS, MY HAND AND SEAL, THIS DATE: September 17, 2021.

SHARON K. HILL, CCR
 Certified Court Reporter
 Certificate No. 670

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