Minutes
Charter Authorizing Panel Meeting
December 13, 2022

The Charter Authorizing Panel met on December 13, 2022. Panel Member, Kim Davis called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

Present: Toyce Newton, Kim Davis, Phil Baldwin, Karli Saracini, Deborah Coffman (Virtual), Dr. Sonya Wright-McMurray

The transcription of this meeting may be accessed on the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education website at the following:
https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/about/archived-minutesvideo

Shastady Wagner, DESE Legal Office reviewed the process for the renewal hearings.

II. Consent Agenda

Ms. Newton moved to approve the CAP minutes from November 15, 2022. Mr. Baldwin seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

III. Action Agenda

II.1. Consideration of the 2023 Charter Authorizing Panel Meeting Dates
Presenter: Dorie Summons, Public School Charter Director -Item was tabled until December 14, 2022.

III.2. Consideration of the 2023 Charter Application and Renewal Timeline
Presenter: Dorie Summons, Public School Charter Director-Item was tabled until December 14, 2022.

III.3. Consideration of eStem Public Charter School Open Enrollment Renewal Application
Presenter: Dorie Summons, Public Charter School Director
Description: eStem Public Charter Schools
The district is requesting:

- Renewal of the charter for thirteen (13) years.
- The campuses serve Grades K-12.
- The current enrollment cap is 3,844 students.
- The charter will follow a traditional educational model.

Dr. John Bacon presented on behalf of eStem Charter Schools. He introduced his leadership team Johnecia Howard, Angela Miller, and Art Milholland the new Superintendent. Dr. Bacon provided enrollment history including enrollment by race. He

also presented a racial demographic comparison with neighboring districts, and included information related to enrollment of low-income students and student retention over time. Dr. Bacon provided information related to student-success and academic achievement. He spoke to how the school was addressing learning loss at different campuses and grade levels.

Johnecia Howard presented about innovation in teaching and learning (eStem advantage, Ignite Afterschool Program, Content Labs (intervention and enrichment). She also spoke about college and career readiness data for eStem students.

There was no opposition to the charter application, and there were no individuals wishing to provide public comment.

Shastaday Wagner provided the final legal review. She was assisted by Tripp Walter from APSRC.

As the legal team reviewed the waiver requests there were questions from the Panel. Panel members asked for further explanation about ALE, suspensions and expulsions. They also asked how the population of African-American Students had changed over time. The applicant was questioned about the need for the waivers of Arkansas History, class size and teaching load, instructional day, and counseling services. Panel members wanted to know how students' needs were being met in the areas of music, art, gifted and talented services, and library-media services.

Other questions from the Panel were related to percentage of licensed teachers, waiver of physical education, waiver of principal (ratio), waiver of school calendar, and the rationale for a 13 year renewal request.

Ms. Wagner read a list of waivers that the applicant was seeking to rescind. Ms. Summons asked the panel if they would like to hear from DESE staff related to any outstanding concerns from the internal review.

A motion was made by Dr. Wright-McMurray to approve the application for eStem charter for 10 years with a review after three years. The motion was seconded by Mr. Baldwin. The motion passed unanimously.

III.4. Consideration of Friendship Aspire Academies of Arkansas Open Enrollment Renewal Application
Presenter: Dorie Summons, Public School Charter Director
Description: Friendship Aspire Academies of Arkansas
The district is requesting:

- Renewal for a ten (10) year period.
- The campuses serve Grades K-12.
- The current enrollment cap is 2,285 students.
- The charter will follow a college prep educational model.

Phong Tran presented on behalf of the applicant. He provided a history of the school/campuses as well as enrollment data. He also provided demographic data related to free-reduced lunch numbers. He also spoke about how the school addressed learning loss. Virginia Perry Henry, Deputy Superintendent spoke about the professional development plan that helps to mitigate learning loss. The school uses data from the NWEA MAP testing to gauge year-end goals, make adjustments to instruction, and drive conversations and strategies for RTI and PLCs. The school addresses literacy daily. She also spoke about the use of ESSER Funds and how the school has leveraged these funds to address learning loss.

There was no opposition to the charter application, and there were no individuals wishing to provide public comment.

Shastaday Wagner provided the final legal review.

As Ms. Wagner reviewed the waiver requests, there were questions from the Panel. The Panel questioned the class size and teaching load waiver, waiver of the required 38 and Advanced Placement courses, grading scale, library-media services, gifted and talented services, school calendar, guidance counseling, and student health services. There was also a question about the percentage of teachers who were licensed.

Ms. Newton moved to approve Friendship Aspire for 10 years. It was seconded by Ms. Saracini. Motion passed unanimously.

III.5. Action Item Kipp Delta Public Schools Open Enrollment Renewal Application

Presenter: Dorie Summons, Public School Charter Director
Description: Kipp Delta Public Schools
The district is requesting:

- Renewal of the charter for a five (5) year period.
- The campuses serve Grades PK-12.
- The current enrollment cap is 2,600 students.
- The charter will follow a college prep educational model.

Meghan Stizinger, Executive Director presented on behalf of KIPP Delta. She provided enrollment data, academic achievement data, and information related to the KIPP Forward Program. She also presented data about teacher and student retention. She addressed the financial health of the district including the capitol project loans that they are working to pay off at the time. She spoke to the use of ESSER funding. She also spoke about what KIPP was doing to address learning loss. Finally, she presented the 5 year goals (academic growth, graduation rate, college and career readiness, and student and family impact).

There was no opposition to the charter application, and there were no individuals wishing to provide public comment.

Shastaday Wagner provided the final legal review.

As Ms. Wagner reviewed the waiver requests, there were questions from the Panel. The Panel questioned the need for a calendar waiver. Members also asked about the waiver of school counseling, and library-media services.

There were additional questions about career and technical education partnerships as well as a question about one campus that did not experience as much academic growth as other campuses.

There were no questions from the panel related to the internal review by DESE staff. Mr. Baldwin made the motion to approve KIPP Delta for 5 years. Ms. Saracini seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

III.6. Consideration of Premier High Schools of Arkansas Open Enrollment Renewal Application
Presenter: Dorie Summons, Public School Charter Director
Description: Premier High Schools of Arkansas
The district is requesting:

- Renewal for a ten (10) year period.
- The campuses serve Grades 9-12.
- The current enrollment cap is 600.
- The charter will follow a blend of an alternative learning environment and a credit recovery educational model.

Dennis Felton presented on behalf of the applicant. He presented historical information about Premier High Schools of Little Rock. He also presented information related to enrollment, targeted populations, academic model, connections with students, parents, and community, and enrollment trends. The school uses NWEA MAP testing to drive decisions related to academics and instruction. Mr. Felton expressed a commitment to support human capital. Tomiko Davis spoke about what a day at Premier would look like for a student at Premier. She highlighted student support services and parent support services. Aaron Duvall spoke about CTE programs and partnerships available as well as community engagement activities. Mr. Felton talked about community interest and spoke about the new campuses. He spoke about the challenges that the school still faces including attendance and engagement, academic learning gaps, community social problems, and recruitment and retention. He addressed the new goals should they be renewed, and he provided the rationale for requesting 10 years.

There was no opposition to the charter application, and there were no individuals wishing to provide public comment.

Shastaday Wagner provided the final legal review.

As Ms. Wagner reviewed the waiver requests, there were questions from the Panel. The Panel questioned the need for waivers of class size and teaching load, waiver of school calendar, student health services, comprehensive school counseling plan, library-media services, food services, and curriculum.

There were no concerns from the panel related to the internal review by DESE staff.

The panel had additional questions related to the request for a renewal of 10 years.

Dr. Wright-McMurray made a motion to approve the charter application for 5 years. The motion was seconded by Ms. Saracini. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Ms. Saracini moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Davis. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 PM

Deborah Coffman

Ms. Deborah Coffman, Charter Authorizing Panel Chair