# Minutes
# Charter Authorizing Panel Meeting
# December 14, 2022

The Charter Authorizing Panel met on December 14, 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.

## III. Action Agenda

### III.1. Consideration of Scholarmade Achievement Place of Arkansas Open Enrollment Renewal Application

Presenter: Thomas Coy, Public Charter School Office
Description: Scholarmade Achievement Place of Arkansas
The district is requesting:

- Renewal of the charter for a seven (7) year period.
- The campus serves Grades K-9.
- The current enrollment cap is 520 students.
- The charter will follow a hybrid educational model.
- Amendment request to drop Grade 9.

Dr. Phyllis Anderson presented on behalf of Scholarmade. Dr. Anderson presented information related to school demographics, mission, and history. She spoke of awards and recognitions received by the school. Important aspects of their model include personalized learning, emotional intelligence, and mental wellness. She presented comparison data related to academic achievement in relation to surrounding traditional public schools including data about performance of African-American students as well as economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities. She addressed school resources and partnerships as well as the use of ESSER funds. She highlighted successes and the vision for the school moving forward should they be renewed. She also presented goals for the next cycle should the school be renewed.

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

Shastady Wagner provided the final legal review.

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

Additional questions related to the number of licensed teachers, dyslexia services, and academic growth were posed by the panel.

There was a concern that the outstanding issue related to finances from the internal DESE review had not been addressed.

Ms. Newton motioned to approve the application for seven (7) years. The motion was seconded by Dr. Wright-McMurray. Motion carried unanimously.

**III.2. Consideration of Bauxite Miner Academy District Conversion Renewal Application**

Presenter: Thomas Coy, Public School Charter Office
Description: Bauxite Miner Academy
The district is requesting:

- Renewal of the charter for five (5) years.
- The campus serves Grades K-6 Virtual Only (Dawson Ed. Co-Op), Grades 7-12 Virtual, 6-12 Onsite.
- The current enrollment cap is 200 students.
- The charter will blend an alternative learning environment, a traditional, virtual only, and credit recovery educational model.
- Amendment request to remove K-6 Virtual students from the charter.

Ms. Wagner reviewed the charter renewal process.

Matt Donaghy, Superintendent, presented on behalf of the applicant. Ann Webb, Principal, also presented. She indicated that Miner Academy enhanced the educational experience through choice in their educational opportunities, with flexibility and pace of learning being the biggest innovations. She talked about scheduling for Academy students. There are five (5) classroom teachers and three (3) support staff. Students are placed in courses based on their need and their career action plan which is revisited each year.

She provided a history of the school, curriculum highlights, enrollment, and demographics. She also provided new goals that are more measurable and attainable. She provided achievement and attendance/enrollment data with comparison to surrounding schools/districts. She spoke to how the school addressed learning loss through high quality instructional materials, Tier I instruction, ACT Aspire Academy, and intervention programs. Ms. Webb also addressed how the ESSER funds were used.

There was no opposition to the charter application, and there were no individuals wishing to provide public comment.
Shastady Wagner provided the final legal review.
There were no questions related to waivers and no questions based on internal review.

Ms. Saracini motioned to approve Bauxite Miner Academy for five (5) years. Ms. Newton seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**III.3. Consideration of Polk County Virtual Academy (Mena) District Conversion Renewal Application**

Presenter: Thomas Coy, Public Charter School Office

Description: Polk County Virtual Academy (Mena)

The district is requesting:

- Renewal of the charter for five (5) years.
- The campus serves Grades K-12.
- The current enrollment cap is 200 students.
- The charter will follow the virtual only educational model.

Dr. Lee Smith opened the presentation. Bridget Buckley, Assistant Superintendent, presented on behalf of the applicant. She spoke of the success and challenges of the school. She talked about the challenges of enrollment and retention of students. She spoke of lessons learned through digital learning, time restraints, student/parent engagement, student support and interaction with adults, and attendance.

Ms. Buckley provided updated goals that the applicant believes is more student focused. These goals consider acceleration, remediation, and career focused educational opportunities. They need a dedicated guidance counselor. They now have a team of support within the district that helps to meet their goals. The applicant addressed learning loss through tutoring, student conferencing, and engagement opportunities. Academic achievement and test participation has dropped. She highlighted the human/community element that their program offers which is different from other statewide virtual options. There was also an explanation of the use of ESSER funds.

There was no opposition to the charter application, and there were no individuals wishing to provide public comment.
Shastady Wagner provided the final legal review.

As Ms. Wagner reviewed the waiver requests, there were questions from the Panel. The Panel questioned how gifted and talented services would be provided, the waiver of guidance counseling, and the waiver of library-media services.

There were two additional concerns from the DESE internal review that the panel requested to be addressed by the applicant. DESE staff questioned the offering of concurrent credit below Grade 9 and the synchronous instruction based on the Science of Reading at grades K-2.

Dr. Wright-McMurray motioned to approve Polk County Virtual Academy for five (5) years. Ms. Newton seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**III.4. Consideration of the 2023 Charter Authorizing Panel Meeting Dates**
Presenter: Thomas Coy, Public Charter School Office -Carryover from December 13, 2022

A motion was made by Ms. Saracini to approve the calendar for the Charter Authorizing Panel. Mr. Baldwin seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**III.5. Consideration of the 2023 Charter Application and Renewal Timeline**
Presenter: Thomas Coy, Public Charter School Office -Carryover from December 13, 2022

**Motion from December 14, 2022**
A motion was made by Ms. Newton to approve the application and renewal timeline. Ms. Saracini seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**Adjournment**
Dr. Wright-McMurray moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Ms. Saracini. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:36 PM

Ms. Deborah Coffman, Charter Authorizing Panel Chair