

Charter Authorization Panel Minutes, July 16, 2023

- I. Meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Chairman, Dr. Matthew Sutherlin. Members present: Chairman, Dr. Matthew Sutherlin; Mr. Freddie Scott; Mr. Phillip Baldwin (remote); Mr. Kim Davis (remote); Ms. Toyce Newton (remote); and Dr. Tina Moore (remote). Chair swore in all who planned to speak. The transcript and video of this meeting is available on the Arkansas Department of Education, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education website located at <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/about/archived-minutesvideo/2024>
- II. Motion to approve consent agenda by Freddie Scott, Dr. Moore Seconded. Motion to approve unanimously.
- III. Stephen Reynolds, staff attorney for ADE Legal Office, gave legal and procedural review.
- IV. Ms. Dorie Summons gave an introduction of Vilonia Pathways Academy. They are seeking a modification of grades served from K-12 to 9-12 and to rescind a waiver for Ark. Code Ann. 6-18-213(a)(2). Chairman swore in members of Vilonia Pathways Academy.
 - a. Jodie Brewer, Director of Vilonia Pathways Academy presented.
 - i. Looking to narrow grade levels due to financial considerations. Program has declined in enrollment.
 - ii. Will be rescinding the attendance wavier due to lowering of reading scores of 9-12 students and are not currently offering sufficiently rigorous instruction.
 1. Students have not been logging in to online programs.
 2. Want to modify 9-10 construction classes in school, once a month go to onsite construction sites; once per month for 9th grade students and twice a month for 10th grade students.
 3. 9th grade students are unable to drive and not feasible for them to get where they need to go.
 4. Dr. Adams, Superintendent of Vilonia Public Schools, was also present.
 - iii. Stephen Reynolds clarified that they were looking to rescind 6-18-213(a)(2) which was incorrectly listed on initial application.
 - iv. Mr. Davis asked why charter thought that K-8 was grade levels they could serve.
 1. Mr. Brewer said that in wake of Covid, having the online option would make easing them back into school easier and attract home school parents. Mr. Brewer said that they have not been able to attract home school students.
 - v. Mr. Baldwin appreciated the honesty of the charter and the quickly seeing that the current model wasn't working and coming to the Panel to alter plan.
 - vi. Dr. Moore asked, "Was there students starting CTE pathway in 8th grade?" Mr. Brewer said that 8th graders would still have access to pathway, but not on Pathways campus. Dr. Moore asked that due to many having concurrent credit with UALR, and asked if they would be "pumping the brakes" on these programs. Mr. Brewer said that they would not be and noted that last academic year, four students earned their Associates Degree through concurrent credit with UALR.
 - vii. Ms. Newton asked how they will evaluate in the future for the program in the future – was it simply economics or a combination of things.
 1. Mr. Brewer said that economic considerations were a part, but also due to lack of soft skill development of elementary students as well as declining

test scores. Mr. Brewer said that opportunities for students in K-8 just were not present.

viii. Mr. Scott asked the manner in which they approach community partners and how they plan to get 9-12 to get community service hours.

1. Mr. Brewer noted the several construction and agriculture companies with which they work. Mr. Brewer noted how students have constructed a pavilion for the community.

ix. Dr. Moore moved to accept the amendment to change to 9-12 and rescind the waiver as requested. Mr. Baldwin seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Mr. Scott moved to adjourn. Mr. Baldwin seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes prepared by:

Dustin Scott Wood, J.D.

State Director of School Choice

Arkansas Department of Education

Dr. Matthew Sutherlin, Ph.D.

Charter Authorization Panel Chairman