

Arkansas Charter Authorization Panel Meeting

March 5th, 2025

(Special Meeting)

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order via Zoom by Chairperson Dr. Sonja Wright-McMurray at 9:06 AM. Members in attendance via Zoom were Dr. John Bacon, Ms. Toyce Newton, and Mr. Phil Baldwin.

II. Consent Agenda

There were no items included for a consent agenda.

III. Legal Review

** No Legal review was presented for this meeting.

IV. Action Agenda

- The Charter Authorizing Panel discussed the complete budget submission from Friendship Academy Charter School. The panel met to consider and approve the charter amendment request with all budget documents present.
 - Dr. Phong Tran of Friendship Aspire Academy Charter School was sworn in by Dr. McMurray.
 - Mr. Baldwin opened discussion by asking Dr. Tran to provide an overview of the budget. Dr. Tran asked Scott McRae, Finance Director of Friendship Aspire Academy System, to explain in more detail the budget and how it relates to the buildings and staff. Mr. McRae pointed out that they did make changes to the budget based on the state revenue that it is expected to be received. He also pointed out the staffing changes that would accommodate an increase in students. Mr. Baldwin ended his question by complimenting the schools' efforts.
 - Dr. Bacon asked one question surrounding the excess \$48,000 dollars that was put aside. There was no clear description. Dr. Tran clarified that question by explaining that the funds were there for specialists in the event it is needed.
 - Mr. Sonja Wright-McMurray asks for a motion to accept. Mr. Baldwin moved to approve the charter amendment request. The motion was seconded by Dr. Newton and passed unanimously.
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V. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Baldwin and seconded by Dr. Bacon. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned.

Minutes Prepared By:

Mr. Seth R. Seaton
Charter School Office Analyst
Arkansas Department of Education

Minutes Approved by Charter Authorization Panel Chairperson

Dr. Sonja Wright-McMurray