



MINUTES

Charter Authorizing Panel

August 7, 2025

Arkansas Department of Education Auditorium

4 Capitol Mall, Little Rock, AR 72201

1:00 PM

I. Call to Order

The August 2025 Regular Meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel (CAP) was called to order by Dr. Sonja Wright-McMurray (Chair) at 1:06 PM. Present in person were Dr. Wright-McMurray, Dr. John Bacon, Mr. Phil Baldwin, Dr. Tina Moore, Dr. Crystal Beshears-Duncan, and Ms. Edie Stewart. Ms. Toyce Newton joined the meeting via Zoom.

II. Changes to Agenda

Dr. McMurray opened by asking for changes to the agenda. Mr. Phil Baldwin moved to approve the agenda, and Dr. Crystal Beshears-Duncan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Action Agenda

DESE Chief Legal Counsel Daniel Shults reported no concerns regarding the action agenda and also discussed the procedures for the hearings.

Mr. Freddie Scott introduced the Action Agenda.

III.1. Academies of Math and Science (AMS)

AMS Impact Chief Operating Officer Brandi Adam and AMS Impact Superintendent Kristina Winters appeared in person to present the requests to do the following:

- add a K-8 campus in Fort Smith, Arkansas to open in Fall 2026 or Fall 2027, depending on which of two locations is selected;

- increase the enrollment cap to 1,560, accounting for 810 students in the new school; and
- maintain all current waivers held by AMS Little Rock for AMS Fort Smith.

Ms. Adams and Ms. Winters, along with Chief Executive Officer Erik Greenburg and Chief Financial Officer Katie Determan who both attended the meeting via Zoom, answered questions posed by members of the Charter Authorizing Panel.

Mr. Phillip Baldwin moved to approve the amendment requests for AMS and was seconded by Ms. Evie Stewart. The motion passed unanimously.

III.2. Garfield Scholars' Academy

Garfield Scholars' Academy CEO and Co-Founder Dr. Melanie Kennon appeared in person to request a relocation from 17784 Marshall Street, Garfield, AR 72732, to 18432 Marshall Street, Garfield, AR 72732. The address at 18432 Marshall Street, Garfield, AR 72432, is the address submitted on page 8 of the original charter application.

Dr. Kennon, along with Superintendent Cheryl Harrison and Joy Sawyer who both joined the meeting via Zoom, answered questions from members of the Charter Authorizing Panel.

Dr. John Bacon moved to approve the amendment request. The motion was seconded by Dr. Tina Moore and passed unanimously.

IV. Consent Agenda

Minutes from the July 17, 2025, Charter Authorizing Panel Meeting

Ms. Edie Stewart moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Dr. Crystal Beshears-Duncan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously,

V. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

VI. Adjournment

Ms. Stewart moved to adjourn the meeting, with a second by Dr. Moore. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 3:21 PM.

Minutes Prepared By:

Mary Perry, Board Liaison
Office of the Chief of Staff
Arkansas Department of Education

Minutes Approved By:

Dr. Sonja Wright-McMurray, Chair
Charter Authorizing Panel
Arkansas Department of Education

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