

**Minutes  
State Board Meeting  
January 13, 2022**

Present: Ouida Newton, Chair, Dr. Sarah Moore, Vice-Chair (via ZOOM); Charisse Dean; Randy Henderson (via ZOOM); Kathy McFetridge; Dr. Beth Anne Rankin; Steve Sutton; Adrienne Woods (via ZOOM); Susanna Post, 2021 Arkansas Teacher of the Year; and Dr. Ivy Pfeffer, Ex-Officio Secretary; Johnny Key, ADE Secretary

Absent: Dr. Fitz Hill

The Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board) met Thursday, January 13, 2022, in the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Auditorium. Chair Ouida Newton, called the meeting to order at 10:15 AM, led by a moment of silence.

**Recognitions**

There were no recognitions.

**Changes to Agenda**

Removed:

Action Agenda – Item VI.2. Consideration of Standards for Accreditation Waiver for 1-A.5.

**Consent Agenda**

Items included for consideration in the Consent Agenda were as follows:

1. Minutes – December 9, 2021 Regular Meeting Draft  
Minutes – December 29, 2021, SBE Special Meeting Draft
2. Newly Employed, Promotions and Separations
3. Consideration of Report on Waivers to School Districts for Teachers Teaching Out of Area for Longer than Thirty (30) Days, Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-309
4. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case #21-028 Charles Hornbeck
5. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case #22-027 Misty Nix
6. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case #22-030 Jacob Shroeder

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Dr. Beth Anne Rankin, seconded by Ms. Kathy McFetridge. The motion unanimously passed.

## **Action Agenda A.**

### **VI.1. Request for Waiver – LA-22-006; Emily Melton**

Ms. Karli Saracini, Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Assistant Commissioner of Educator Effectiveness & Licensure, presented Item V1.1. to the State Board. Educator Ms. Emily Melton and her attorney, Mr. Greg Alagood, were present. The ADE received information that Ms. Melton has a true finding for Neglect in the Child Maltreatment Central Registry. A true finding in the Child Maltreatment Central Registry is a disqualifying offense, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-410. Ms. Melton requested a waiver.

A motion to grant the waiver of the disqualifying true finding for Neglect in Child Maltreatment Central Registry was made by Ms. Charisse Dean, seconded by Mr. Steve Sutton. The motion unanimously passed.

### **VI.2. Consideration of Standards for Accreditation Waiver for 1-A.5.**

Pulled from the Action Agenda by Helena West-Helena School District.

### **VI.3. Consideration of Requests for Act 1240 Waivers**

Ms. Lori Freno, General Counsel for the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), presented one Act 1240 Waiver to the State Board for consideration. Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-103 (Act 1240 of 2015), a traditional public school may petition the State Board for waivers granted to an open-enrollment public charter school.

#### **VI.3.a. Lee County School District Act 1240 Waiver Requests**

Presented by Ms. Lori Freno, DESE General Counsel, Lee County School District, represented by Ms. Willie Murdock, Superintendent and Ms. Mary Hayden, Director of Learning Services, sought the renewal of Act 1240 waivers for three (3) years of Teacher licensure and Library Media Specialist licensure.

A motion to renew the Act 1240 waiver for three (3) years for both teacher licensure and library media specialist licensure was made by Dr. Beth Anne Rankin, seconded by Ms. Kathy McFetridge. The motion unanimously passed.

### **VI.4. District Conversion Charter Renewals**

Dr. Matthew Sutherlin, DESE Office of Public School Accountability, Coordinator of Standards and Systems Support/Charter School; Interim Director of Charter School, presented Items VI.4.a. through VI.4.f. to the State Board to determine to review or not review the decision voted on December 14, 2021, by the Charter School Authorizing Panel to approve district conversion charter renewals for a period of five (5) years.

#### **VI.4.a. Charter Renewal – Cabot Academic Center of Excellence (ACE)**

Cabot School District submitted a district conversion charter renewal for Cabot Academic Center of Excellence (ACE). Mr. Aaron Randolph, ACE Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, attended via ZOOM. Also present was Ms. Deborah Coffman, ADE Assistant Commissioner of Public School Accountability to answer questions from the State Board. Cabot School District requests district conversion charter renewal for a five (5)-year period for ACE. The campus serves grades 5-12, with a current enrollment cap of 2,500 students. Additionally, the district requests to change the charter name from Academic Center of Excellence to Cabot Panther Academy. The charter will continue to follow a combination of the Alternative Learning Environment, Virtual Only, and Credit Recovery models; a digital learning plan was included.

A motion to not review the Charter Authorizing Panel's decision of approval of the Cabot School District conversion charter renewal request for ACE for five (5) years, and charter name change to Cabot Panther Academy was made by Ms. Kathy McFetridge, seconded by Ms. Charisse Dean. The motion unanimously passed.

#### **VI.4.b. Charter Renewal – Hot Springs Junior Academy**

Hot Springs School District submitted a district conversion charter renewal for Hot Springs Junior Academy; Hot Springs School District requests the charter renewal for a five (5)-year period. The campus serves grades 7-9, with a current enrollment cap of 900 students. The charter will continue to follow a traditional education model; a digital learning plan was not included.

A motion to not review the Charter Authorizing Panel's decision of approval of the Hot Springs School District conversion charter renewal request for Hot Springs Junior Academy for five (5) years was made by Mr. Steve Sutton, seconded by Ms. Charisse Dean. The motion unanimously passed.

#### **VI.4.c. Charter Renewal – Cross County Elementary**

Cross County School District submitted a district conversion charter renewal for Cross County Elementary Tech Academy; Cross County School District requests the charter renewal for a five (5)-year period. The campus serves grades K-6, with a current enrollment cap of 500 students. The charter will continue to follow a traditional education model; a digital learning plan was not included.

A motion to not review the Charter Authorizing Panel's decision of approval of the Cross County School District conversion charter renewal request for Cross County Tech Elementary for five (5) years, was made by Ms. Charisse Dean, seconded by Dr. Beth Anne Rankin. The motion unanimously passed.

#### **VI.4.d. Charter Renewal – Lincoln High School**

Lincoln School District submitted a district conversion charter renewal for Lincoln High School; Lincoln School district requests the charter renewal for a five-year period. The campus serves grades 9-12, with a current enrollment cap of 850 students. The charter will continue to follow a combination of the traditional education model with a focus on trade/skill/certification/college/careers; a digital learning plan was included.

A motion to not review the Charter Authorizing Panel's decision of approval of the Lincoln School District conversion charter renewal request for Lincoln High School for five (5) years, was made by Mr. Randy Henderson, seconded by Dr. Beth Anne Rankin. The motion unanimously passed.

#### **VI.4.e. Charter Renewal – Prairie Grove High School**

Prairie Grove School District charter renewal for Prairie Grove High School; Prairie Gove School District requests the charter renewal for a five (5)-year period. The campus serves grades 9-12. The charter will continue to follow a traditional education model; a digital learning plan was not included.

A motion to not review the Charter Authorizing Panel's decision of approval of the Prairie Grove School District conversion charter renewal request for Prairie Grove High School for five (5) years, was made by Ms. Kathy McFetridge, seconded by Mr. Steve Sutton. The motion unanimously passed.

#### **VI.4.f. Charter Renewal – North Little Rock Center of Excellence**

North Little Rock School District requests charter renewal for North Little Rock Center of Excellence for a five (5)-year period. The campus serves grades 9-12, with a current enrollment cap of 3,000 students. The charter will continue to follow a blending of traditional and digital education models; a digital learning plan was not included.

A motion to not review the Charter Authorizing Panel's decision of approval of the North Little Rock School District conversion charter renewal request for North Little Rock Center of Excellence for five (5) years, was made by Ms. Charisse Dean, seconded by Mr. Steve Sutton. The motion unanimously passed.

## **Action Agenda B.**

### **VII.1.**

Dr. Matthew Sutherlin, DESE Office of Public School Accountability, Coordinator of Standards and Systems Support/Charter School; Interim Director of Charter School, presented Items VII.1.a. through VII.1.d. to the State Board to determine to review or not review the decision by the Charter School Authorizing Panel, voted to approve renewal of open-enrollment charters for a five-year period, unless otherwise noted.

#### **VII.1.a. Charter Renewal – The Excel Center**

The Excel Center requests the charter renewal for a five (5)-year period. The campus serves adults aged 19 and over who are completing grades 9-12, with a current enrollment cap of 1,050 students. The charter will continue to follow the adult education model.

A motion to not review the Charter Authorizing Panel's decision of approval of The Excel Center open-enrollment charter renewal request for five (5) years was made by Ms. Charisse Dean, seconded by Ms. Kathy McFetridge. The motion unanimously passed.

#### **VII.1.b. Charter Renewal – River Valley Virtual Academy**

Van Buren School District requests district conversion charter renewal for River Valley Virtual Academy for a five (5)-year period. The campus serves grades K-12, with a current enrollment cap of 1,000 students. The charter will continue to follow a virtual-only education model.

A motion to not review the Charter Authorizing Panel's decision of approval of the Van Buren School District conversion charter renewal request for River Valley Virtual Academy for five (5) years was made by Ms. Kathy McFetridge, seconded by Mr. Steve Sutton. The motion unanimously passed.

#### **VII.1.c. Charter Renewal – Arkansas Lighthouse Academies**

Arkansas Lighthouse Academies request charter renewal for a five (5)-year period. The campus serves grades P-12, with a current enrollment cap of 2,419 students. The charter will continue to follow a traditional education model; a digital learning plan was included.

A motion to not review the Charter Authorizing Panel's decision of approval of Arkansas Lighthouse Academies open-enrollment charter renewal request for five (5) years was made by Dr. Beth Anne Rankin, seconded by Ms. Charisse Dean. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **VII.1.d. Charter Renewal – Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock**

Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock requests charter renewal for a ten-year period; which was approved by the Charter Authorizing Panel for a ten-year renewal. The campus serves grades K-8, with a current enrollment cap of 540 students. The charter will continue to follow a traditional education model; the charter has neither requested nor have a digital learning plan. The charter is requesting double the enrollment cap incrementally over a five (5)-year period by adding 108 students annually, which will be considered next week by the Charter Authorization Panel.

A motion to not review the Charter Authorizing Panel’s decision of approval of Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock open-enrollment charter renewal request for ten (10) years was made by Ms. Charisse Dean, seconded by Ms. Kathy McFetridge. The motion unanimously passed.

#### **New Business**

There was no new business.

Meeting moved on to the Reports section of the agenda at 1:35 PM.

#### **Public Comments**

There were two public comments for the consolidation of the Dollarway and Pine Bluff Schools Districts:

- Mr. Julius Wright, concerned Pine Bluff School District stakeholder
- Ms. Charlene Wright, concerned Pine Bluff School District stakeholder

#### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the State Board meeting was made by Mr. Steve Sutton, seconded by Ms. Charisse Dean. The motion unanimously passed. Chair Ouida Newton adjourned the State Board meeting at 1:40 PM.

*Minutes recorded by Angela Scaife.*

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**Johnny Key, Secretary**  
Arkansas Department of Education

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**Ouida Newton, Chair**  
State Board of Education