DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION

Charter Amendment Request From

The Charter Amendment Request Form and all required documentation must be received via email (ade.charterschools@arkansas.gov) at the Arkansas Department of Education at least 35 days prior to the Charter Authorizing Panel meeting.

Charter Name:	eStem Public Charter School
LEA Number:	6047700
Superintendent or Director:	Dr. John Bacon
Email:	John.bacon@estemschools.org
Phone:	501.324.9200

All open-enrollment amendment requests must include evidence that the request was contemporaneously sent by the applicant to the superintendent of the school district where the charter is located.

Type of Amendment(s) Requested

☐ **Add a New Campus** (Must also submit the map of current location, map of proposed location, Facilities Utilization Agreement and desegregation analysis)

Address: _____

School District: _____

☐ **Relocate Existing Campus** (Must also submit the map of current location, map of proposed location, Facilities Utilization Agreement and desegregation analysis)

Campus Name: _____

Current Address: _____

Proposed Address: _____

School District: _____

☐ **Increase Enrollment Cap**

Current Cap: _____

Proposed Cap: _____

☐ **Change Grade Levels Served**

Current Grade Levels Served: _____

Proposed Grade Levels Served: _____

☐ **Name Change**

New Name of Charter: _____

☐ **Add a Digital Learning Program**

Schools	Grades/Courses	Interaction	Delivery	Platforms
eStem Downtown Elementary	K-6th grades	☐ Asynchronous ☐ Synchronous ☒ Asynchronous & Synchronous	☒ Virtual (online) ☐ Remote (distance) ☐ Blended (hybrid)	☒ LMS ☐ CMS
eStem Downtown Junior High	7-9th grades	☐ Asynchronous ☐ Synchronous ☒ Asynchronous & Synchronous	☒ Virtual (online) ☐ Remote (distance) ☐ Blended (hybrid)	☒ LMS ☐ CMS
eStem East Village Elementary	K-6th grades	☐ Asynchronous ☐ Synchronous ☒ Asynchronous & Synchronous	☒ Virtual (online) ☐ Remote (distance) ☐ Blended (hybrid)	☒ LMS ☐ CMS
eStem East Village Junior High	7-9th grades	☐ Asynchronous ☐ Synchronous ☒ Asynchronous & Synchronous	☒ Virtual (online) ☐ Remote (distance) ☐ Blended (hybrid)	☒ LMS ☐ CMS
eStem High School	10-12th grades	☐ Asynchronous ☐ Synchronous ☒ Asynchronous & Synchronous	☒ Virtual (online) ☐ Remote (distance) ☐ Blended (hybrid)	☒ LMS ☐ CMS

Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the school is applying for the waiver and explain how the waiver will be utilized.
Attendance			6-18-213(a)(2)	This waiver will allow virtual students to be counted as present and receive credit based on completion of their assignments and assessments.
Class Size	1-A.5	DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load	6-17-812 (a)(2)	We currently hold a waiver for class size; however, this waiver would be specifically for teachers who are teaching virtual students and when a virtual class size may exceed state guidelines, if necessary.
Teaching Load Teacher of Record provides virtual instruction to only students who are remote. Please note that 100% virtual (online) or remote (distance) classes are considered large group instruction courses as per DESE Rules for Distance and Digital Learning and teaching load would not apply as per DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load.	1-A.5	DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load	6-17-812	This waiver would be specifically for teachers who are teaching virtual/hybrid classes and would allow for these teachers' teaching load to exceed the state guidelines, if necessary.
Six Hour Instructional Day Waiver applies to virtual/remote students only	1-A.4.2		6-16-102; 6-10-126	Virtual students will attend synchronous classes daily; however there may be times when asynchronous instruction is used and students will complete these assignments at their own pace and would not need to adhere to the six hour instructional day guidelines.
Clock Hours	1-A.2			Because we will use a combination of synchronous & asynchronous instruction, there may be times when students will complete work at their own pace and not need to adhere to the guidelines for clock hours.
Recess Waiver applies to virtual/remote students only	1-A.4.3	DESE Rules Governing Nutrition and Physical Activity Standards and Body Mass Index, Section 7.11	6-16-102(a)(5)	We are requesting this waiver to remove the recess requirements for virtual students.

Digital Model

Please complete the following application with complete responses describing the school digital programming.

Interaction / Delivery

What are the ways teachers and students will interact with digital content? (Synchronous or Asynchronous) Please describe instructional expectations and participation for students.	Teachers will deliver instruction synchronously, and virtual students will interact digitally on a daily basis, following a schedule similar to in-person learning. Elementary students will follow a daily schedule in which they will zoom for periods of the day but will also have breaks scheduled in for lunch, recess/activity, etc. Junior and high school students will follow a similar bell schedule and zoom in for all class periods throughout the day. Students will be expected to be engaged and present on zoom for all instructional classes and complete required assignments.
What delivery approach will the school utilize to meet the needs of both teachers and students? (i.e., virtual (online) / remote (distance) or blended (hybrid)? Please explain.	eStem will implement a blended learning system utilizing online components that are accessible to teachers and students, virtually and face to face. All components are aligned to Arkansas state standards and to the instructional practices and goals of eStem. Learning platforms like Google Classroom (K-9) and itsLearning (10-12) will be utilized for blended and virtual students with added tools to engage the learner, examples of these online tools are Nearpod, Peardeck, Powtoon. On-line curriculum resources like StemScope, In Focus Math, Rocket Math, Newsela, Reading A to Z, and Lexia5 provide opportunities for teachers and students to access lessons both virtually and face to face. These resources provide opportunities for cyclic practice of skills with various media formats, as well as, provide lessons that are individualized for each student that can be accessed virtually or face to face
Will teachers be dedicated to primarily remote instruction or serving in a dual role, teaching both remote and in-person learners. *If teachers will serve in a dual role, describe whether it will be simultaneously, meaning remote and in-person at the same time with course/schedule specific considerations.	For elementary, we will have specific teachers for virtual learners at each grade level, if numbers allow. We will not put a cap on virtual enrollment; however, our goal will be to have one virtual teacher per grade level. If our virtual numbers show that a teacher would exceed the teaching load threshold, the supports provided may include additional prep or planning time to create digital content & materials, to plan for upcoming lessons, grade assignments and provide feedback to students, and communicate with families; targeted coaching and support from administrators; additional resources and materials to aid in creating rigorous, high quality lessons. For junior high and high school, teachers will serve in a dual role; however, their classes will be separated so that they will teach virtual learners in one class and in-person learners in other classes. Teachers and students will follow the same daily bell schedule and virtual learners will zoom in for each class.
Describe the expectation for teacher instruction, interaction, and frequency with digital learning students.	To maximize instructional time, teachers who are instructing virtually will follow a similar schedule as an in-person teacher. They will utilize zoom throughout the day to present new material, provide support to virtual learners, meet with individual or small groups, and assess learning. Teachers will be expected to be available during the regularly scheduled school day for parents and students and will be provided instructional planning time daily as well.

If utilizing waivers for **class size**, what supports will the school put in place to support the teacher and students? How will the charter monitor and determine if the supports are adequate for teachers who exceed class size in digital learning settings.	We will do our best to follow class size guidelines, but if we do have to utilize waivers for class size, curriculum facilitators will work closely with these teachers to ensure they have the support they need, whether it is through assistance with planning and preparation, providing any additional materials and supplies, or support with tasks such as grading, entering grades, providing feedback to students, etc. The teachers will have weekly meetings with curriculum facilitators and the school Director will regularly check in with these teachers on a monthly basis to ensure they have everything that they need in order to be successful and provide quality instruction to students.
If utilizing waivers for **teaching load**, what supports will the school put in place to support the teacher and students? How will the school monitor and determine if the supports are adequate for teachers who exceed teaching loads in digital learning settings.	Similar to following class size guidelines, we will do our best to stay within the guidelines for teaching load for teachers. However, if we do utilize these waivers, administrators and curriculum facilitators will work closely with these teachers to provide any necessary additional planning times, assist with planning and preparation, and provide any other supports necessary for teachers to provide quality instruction. Supports provided may include additional prep or planning time to create digital content & materials, to plan for upcoming lessons, grade assignments and provide feedback to students, and communicate with families; targeted coaching and support from administrators; additional resources and materials to aid in creating rigorous, high quality lessons. The teachers will have weekly meetings with curriculum facilitators and the school Director will regularly check in with these teachers on a monthly basis to ensure they have everything that they need in order to be successful and provide quality instruction to students.

Technology / Platforms

Identify the learning management system/content management system that will the school will use? (Canvas, Buzz, Google Classroom, etc.)	Google Classroom (K-9th grades), itsLearning (10th-12th grades) These Learning Management Systems will ensure students have access to learning opportunities anytime and anywhere. Teachers will monitor student learning in Google Classroom (K-9) or ItsLearning (High School) as well as hold in-person and virtual sessions with students in whole group, small group, and/or one-on-one settings. Teachers will provide daily assignments and assessments. Grades will be taken on assignments required by their teacher. During Professional Development, prior to students' return, teachers were trained extensively on the use of the appropriate LMS, curriculum resources, and on-line tools, as well as delivering instruction through blended learning.

Describe the digital content that will be available to students, including any digital curriculum and supports that are available to teachers. If the school is using a content management system (CMS), please specify grades levels and subjects that the CMS will address.	Students on the digital platform will use a curriculum that is teacher-created using purchased curriculum resources with virtual components and based on the Arkansas state standards. These virtual components allow virtual students to access the material for review, application, practice, & assessment.
	Applications:
	    o Zoom - Hosting virtual classes, breakout sessions for individual or small group lessons
	    o Google Classroom (K-9)/itsLearning (10-12) - Posting assignments, materials, & resources

	o Nearpod, Loom, Flipgrid, Padlet - Creating virtual lessons, videos, slides, and materials for virtual learning o IXL, Khan Academy, NewsELA, Membean, Desmos, MobyMax - Providing instructional support and practice in multiple content areas For any material that does not have a digital component, we will convert it with apps (Google Classroom, Nearpod, SeeSaw, etc.) and create PDFs that allow students to view and interact with the material online. These resources also provide teachers with guides and support for implementation.
What video communication software is required for any digital learning student? Please describe the video communication software the teacher will use to facilitate live conferences between two or more participants.	Teachers will utilize Zoom for virtual students to be active participants in daily lessons. All teachers will have the capabilities to share their screen, utilize document cameras virtually, upload new material, and share documents and materials. Any classroom that will be used for virtual learning will be equipped with a web camera to ensure a seamless transition for students who are learning virtually. Lessons will be recorded and available for review or if a student is absent.
Describe the technology access (device and connectivity) that will be provided to each digital learning student to ensure each student receives a free public education.	We believe it is very important that we ensure every student is equipped with a personal device that he/she will be able to use during virtual learning. eStem does not consider smartphones appropriate devices for virtual learning. We also recommend that the device a student is using for virtual instruction is not shared by anyone else in the home during the school day if at all possible. To help accommodate families, parents may request a school laptop for their child and can contact their child's school Director if they should need a device at any point throughout the school year. If internet connectivity is an issue, parents may request a school-issued internet hotspot at any time throughout the school year. This internet hotspot will be available at no cost to the family and can be used for multiple virtual learners in one household. All students will use school provided devices for state testing. Students may bring their own device for classroom instruction, but for state testing, we will provide devices to ensure it is updated and ready.

Student Supports

Describe the manner and frequency the school will use to monitor the wellness and safety (food security, physical, mental health, etc.) of students in a digital learning setting. (This may be in-person, video communication, etc.). Identify supports available within the school to assist students.	eStem offers all virtual learners an opportunity to pick up meal kits multiple times a week. These pickup times are provided on different days and at different times so that all families can find an option that will work for them. These meal kits include healthy food options for breakfast and lunch for any days that the student is a virtual learner. Mental health is important during this time of uncertainty. Our school counselors have zoom time available for students to contact them throughout the day. Teachers are monitoring students during class and may send a referral to the counselor to check in with any student who may be exhibiting signs of distress, students who are not attending class regularly or attending the full class period, or students who may be showing other signs of low social emotional intelligence. Our counselors can then reach out to students and/or parents and provide additional supports as needed. These supports may include a one-on-one virtual meeting with the counselor, ensuring they have the necessary resources (food, technology, supplies, etc.) to attend class and engage, or if a student is in need of more specialized mental health counseling, we partner with several local providers that can offer virtual and/or in-person counseling sessions.

Describe the manner and frequency the school will use to monitor the academic and student engagement in a digital learning setting. Describe the additional supports available for students struggling with engagement.	Teachers will monitor student engagement and academics on a daily basis. If they see a student who is not engaged, either absent or present but not attending to the instruction, or struggling academically, they will first reach out to the parent or guardian to meet and create a plan to ensure the student's success. If the issue continues, the teacher can refer this student to an administrator who will then reach out to the parents for support. For students who continue to struggle academically, teachers will provide individualized intervention through one-on-one or in a small group setting. They can provide additional times for the student to zoom with the teacher for support. At the elementary level, students can attend an additional intervention session with an interventionist or be referred to RtI for additional monitoring and possible evaluations. At the junior and high school level, students can attend academic study halls or tutoring sessions to complete work with the support of a teacher or curriculum facilitator.
Describe the Academic Response to Intervention plan for digital learning students, including additional supports and personnel.	Teachers will follow the same process to refer a student who is struggling academically to our Response to Intervention (RtI) team. This referral process includes Tier 1, Tier 2, & Tier 3 interventions, monitoring student progress, and utilizing intervention programs and supports. Teachers will conduct individual or small group interventions via zoom breakout sessions with students. For more intensive interventions, students will meet via zoom with teachers, therapists, and/or interventionists for a more prescriptive intervention. Parents will be an important part of the process and all conferences will be held virtually as well. RtI meetings will be held on a regular basis to evaluate student progress and make determinations about next steps to ensure the student is receiving the supports needed to be successful.
Describe the school's formative assessment plan to support student learning.	NWEA provides data that identifies gaps in a student's learning and assists with the creation of an individualized, student-driven learning path through Edgenuity. IXL provides a comprehensive curriculum with real-time diagnostics and analytical data that allow teachers to create personalized lessons and assist with learning gaps. Both assessment programs help identify unfinished learning from the prior year and help plan pathways of learning to address those gaps. These resources, in addition to in class assessments, will be reviewed to identify areas for student growth on an individual basis.
Describe how dyslexia screening and services will be provided to digital learning students.	Dyslexia screening for virtual students is being completed in two ways: • K-2 Students have completed a prescribed set of NWEA subtests, either in-person or from home, according to their preference. • K-2 students will be screened on-site in the first quarter. Virtual students will be screened on-site by appointment; if the parent of a virtual student requests a virtual screening rather than on-site, we will accommodate their request. Virtual students in grades 3-12 who are identified as needing a Level I or II assessment will also be screened on-site by appointment unless an alternative is requested. Interventionists will serve in a dual role and provide instruction both remotely and in-person. Dyslexia Intervention for virtual students is being provided via Zoom. All sessions are live with a trained Dyslexia Interventionist. All virtual students have been provided with a Chromebook (if requested) and a Virtual Intervention Kit, that includes all of the multisensory instructional pieces that are used in our chosen program. Our

	district Dyslexia Coordinator will provide any necessary training to interventionists to ensure they are able to deliver instruction remotely. We have created manipulative kits for virtual students to ensure they have all the materials needed to implement the interventions with fidelity. If virtual students are struggling to complete work, showing signs of needing additional intervention, or frequently absent, we contact parents to recommend on-site placement and discuss any concerns or questions.
Describe how Gifted and Talented supports and services will be provided to digital learning students.	We have a waiver from having Gifted and Talented programs in our schools; however, our curriculum is designed to integrate enrichment activities into lessons and assignments so that all students have the opportunity to extend their learning.
Describe how English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL /ESL) supports and services will be provided to digital learning students.	Students receiving ESOL services will continue to receive those in both the on-site and virtual settings. These services are differentiated based on the student's level of English proficiency as measured with the ELPA 21 Screener or Summative results from 2020. The types of adaptations and modifications individual students receive are articulated in each English Learner's Annual Review. All data and review information is recorded in Ellevation Education. All supports are outlined in the student's Language Proficiency Assessment Committee's (LPAC) plan. Teachers will provide the supports outlined either on-site or virtually for students receiving ESOL services. We use the programs Transact and ELLevation to translate any documents to families who are not proficient in English. We also have access to a telephone translation service and the app Talking Points to help with communication as needed.
Describe how all special education services and supports will be provided to digital learning students, including the process for special education evaluations and conferences.	All students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will receive special education services. These services will be provided by their special education teacher and general education teacher through Zoom, Google Classroom (K-9) and itsLearning (10-12). Resource services will be provided according to a student's IEP. Resource teachers will provide/send modifications to general education teachers which will be implemented through Zoom and Google Classroom/itsLearning. General education teachers will implement/apply the modifications to the assigned classwork. For students who receive inclusion services, co-teachers will plan with the general education teachers in order to assist with instruction and modifications for students. Co-teachers will attend in person and virtual classes to assist special education students. Therapy services are provided via Zoom for virtual students. For all special education conferences, annual reviews, etc., all parents are offered the option to attend in person or via alternative method (phone, Zoom, etc.). We are also able to provide verbal signatures that are typed into the paperwork along with how that committee member is participating (ex: Ms. Whitley- via Zoom) All special education evaluations are conducted by our School Examiner who contacts parents to help accommodate the actual evaluation setting. Parents are able to bring their child on campus for the evaluation or at our district office, if they feel more comfortable.
Describe common and frequently used digital accommodations that the school has provided to general education teachers to assist students in digital learning classes.	Teachers utilize Zoom breakout sessions and the co-hosting feature to conduct one-on-one or small group activities. We Google classroom (K-9) and itsLearning (10-12) to upload assignments, materials, and resources. Teachers are utilizing several programs to help differentiate instruction and accommodate all learners. Some of

	these programs include: Learning Ally for audiobooks, IXL, MobyMax, Nearpod, and RocketMath.

Teacher Supports	
Describe school supports to provide on-going digital content and instructional supports for teachers.	Teachers will attend professional development focusing on virtual teaching, utilizing Zoom, implementing Google Classroom and itsLearning, and managing virtual learners. Teachers meet weekly with Curriculum Facilitators in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to identify areas of need for teachers, provide additional resources and professional development to address these needs, and monitor Zoom and in-person classroom teaching to provide feedback and coaching to support teachers. School leadership teams meet with individual teachers and teacher teams to offer support, address issues and concerns, and celebrate successes. If teaching load is above the threshold, supports provided may include additional prep or planning time to create digital content & materials, to plan for upcoming lessons, grade assignments and provide feedback to students, and communicate with families; targeted coaching and support from administrators; additional resources and materials to aid in creating rigorous, high quality lessons.
Identify the daily or weekly amount of time teachers will need to develop and plan for instruction based on interaction and delivery options selected and digital supports provided. How will the school support teachers with digital content and planning?	Prior to the school year, teachers will receive professional development in utilizing the technology available to provide digital instruction to virtual learners and in planning and preparing curriculum to meet the needs of virtual learners. Throughout the year, teachers have at least one hour each day for planning. Curriculum facilitators will meet with teachers at least one day of each week to support their planning and development of curriculum and lessons. Facilitators will also provide resources and materials to support the curriculum in place. If a teacher is struggling in specific areas (planning, utilizing technology, managing virtual learners, etc.), facilitators can provide additional support with specialized plans to assist this teacher in these areas.

School Supports	
Describe how the school will ensure equitable access to opportunities for success for digital learner's needs (poverty, homelessness, migrant, foster care, and military connected students) A link (URL) to the school equity plan may be acceptable if it meets this criteria.	All families have the opportunity to use a school laptop at home for virtual learning. If families need internet access, the school will provide an internet hotspot at no cost for as long as it is needed to complete virtual learning. If teachers notice that a student is struggling academically or in any other way, they can refer this student to the counselor or an administrator so that we can offer any other supports, such as our free meal pick-up, licensed counselor referrals, or any other way we can meet the need of that student or family.
All students are expected to test (statewide summative assessments) onsite as per DESE guidance. Provide an overview of how the school may communicate to parents and test digital learning students at a school site.	The school will communicate with parents regarding onsite testing through the building testing coordinator. The building testing coordinator will notify parents of onsite testing dates, expectations, and procedures via email, social media, district website, and phone. Alternative testing options (such as a different location, additional times, etc.) will be given to virtual students on an individual basis to ensure all students have the opportunity to test.

Provide a detailed explanation of how the school will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the digital option(s) and the fidelity of implementation as described within this application.	The district will survey parents and staff to evaluate the effectiveness of the digital option for virtual learners. In these surveys, questions regarding the fidelity of implementation will be included as well as an opportunity to provide feedback on how to improve the digital option. The schools will compare data between virtual and in-person learners to determine how effective the instruction/digital option has been. We can also compare data from years past to check for any discrepancies or areas that show a need for improvement.
Describe how the teacher(s) will engage families into the digital learning process. (School may link the District Engagement Plan if digital learning is included. The plan must address how the school will support parents/students with digital tools and resources)	At the beginning of the school year, each school will hold a Virtual Orientation to meet with parents and ensure they have everything they need at home to be successful with virtual learning. In these Virtual Orientation sessions, teachers will meet with each family to introduce the technology components and explain how virtual instruction will work each day. Each school will also provide informative videos, zoom sessions, and or one -on-one virtual meetings to instruct parents on the use of the technology components for digital learning. Parent information nights, like Title I night, Math & Literacy Nights, will be held via zoom and recorded so that all parents have the opportunity to attend or have access to the information.
Provide a URL to evidence of the local school board's approval of the waiver request(s).	https://www.estemschools.org/o/estem-pcs/browse/190493
Provide a URL to evidence of stakeholder feedback regarding the waiver request(s) and the school communication plan regarding digital learning program(s).	Stakeholder Survey Communication Plan/Ready for Learning Plan Stakeholder Feedback: We are currently still receiving survey responses from parents regarding their child's learning option for next year. The information below is out of a total of 332 responses: {table below} Individual schools also requested feedback from parents multiple times throughout the school year. Feedback, suggestions, issues, or comments are linked below. Stakeholder Feedback

District-wide		
Students interested in 100% virtual option	119	out of 332 survey responses
Downtown Elementary		
Students interested in 100% virtual option	17	
East Village Elementary		
Students interested in 100% virtual option	28	
Downtown Junior High		
Students interested in 100% virtual option	21	
East Village Junior High		
Students interested in 100% virtual option	39	
High School		
Students interested in 100% virtual option	14	

Policies	
Please provide a link (URL) to the attendance policy for digital learning students.	Attendance Policy
Please provide a link (URL) to the discipline policy for digital learning students.	Discipline Policy
Please provide a link (URL) to the grading policy for digital learning students.	Grading Policy
Charter	
Describe how the addition of a virtual program is in line with the mission or model of the school.	In these unprecedented times, we must offer a digital option in order to prepare our students for life after high school. We will continue to offer a rigorous, individualized curriculum for all students - whether we teach them in-person or virtually. Over the past year, we have continued instructing students, no matter where they are, just as careers have continued whether at the office or at home. We have solved problems that we never expected and shown students new ways to learn, think, and collaborate. By offering a digital option for students, we are not only meeting students' and families' needs but also shaping students to be world ready - no matter what that world may look like.

☐ **Additional Waiver(s)**

Waiver Topic #1	
Arkansas Code Annotated	
Standard for Accreditation	
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	

Waiver Topic #2	

Arkansas Code Annotated	
Standard for Accreditation	
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	

Waiver Topic #3	
Arkansas Code Annotated	
Standard for Accreditation	
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	

Waiver Topic #4	
Arkansas Code Annotated	
Standard for Accreditation	
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	

Waiver Topic #5	

Arkansas Code Annotated	
Standard for Accreditation	
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	

AMI (Alternative Methods of Instruction) Plans must be submitted in LEA Insights for the 2021-2022 school year. For assistance with LEA Insights, please contact Arijit Sarkar at 501-682-1524.