

Alabama Public Charter School Commission
June 9, 2020 9:00 A.M.
Via Zoom

MINUTES

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission (APCSC) met on Tuesday, June 9, 2020, in a Zoom meeting to consider matters relevant to duties of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission outlined in the *Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act* for public charter schools in Alabama.

Welcome, Introductions, Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Logan Searcy reviewed the protocol for a Zoom meeting to ensure efficacy. Henry Nelson officially opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He asked for a roll call of the Alabama Charter School Commission (APCSC). Roll call was taken twice, at the advice of the commission's attorney, to verify participation. Eight members were present which represented a quorum. Members of the Commission who participated in the meeting via Zoom were as follows:

Henry Nelson

Allison Haygood

David Marshall

Marla Green

Paul Morin

Sydney Raine

Kim Terry

Lisa Williams

Jamie Ison and Eddie Hill were absent.

Chairman Nelson asked for a motion to approve the agenda and the minutes from the May 12, 2020 meeting. Sydney Raine made the motion to approve the agenda and the minutes, and Lisa Williams seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous with 8 votes to approve.

Acceleration Day and Evening Academy Mobile, Alabama Performance Model

Henry Nelson invited Dr. Jeremiah Newell of Acceleration Day and Evening Academy (Accel) to speak. Mr. Newell relayed that Accel was formed to support young people. He explained the connection between the graduation rate and the poverty rate and discussed nontraditional students and the nontraditional framework of Acceleration Day and Evening Academy. He then introduced Dr. Naomi DeVeaux from National Charter Institute who lends support to charter schools and authorizers. The requirements for students to be considered high-risk were discussed. High-risk students are those who have been expelled, those who are behind in credits, those with limited English, those who are pregnant, chronically absent, adjudicated, or using or have used drugs. There were also testimonies from students and parents who spoke of the positive experiences that they had encountered at Accel Academy. Commissioners were given a chance to ask questions. Lisa Williams had no questions, yet she congratulated the school officials on doubling the graduation rate. Mr. Nelson asked what the timeline was for achieving their goals and Mr. Newell responded that there was a five-year plan. Dr. Marshall expressed his appreciation for the attention that the school gives to high-risk students and made a motion that the performance framework

be approved. Lisa Williams seconded the motion. A second roll call for this meeting was conducted to verify participation in the meeting and eligibility for voting on motions. The motion to approve Acceleration Day and Evening's Performance Framework carried with all eight participating commissioners voting affirmative. The 8 Yes votes and 0 No votes were as follows:

Henry Nelson - Yes	Lisa Williams - Yes
David Marshall - Yes	Sydney Raine - Yes
Kim Terry - Yes	Allison Haygood - Yes
Marla Green - Yes	Jamie Ison - Absent
Paul Morin - Yes	Eddie Hill – Absent

Mr. Morin asked is there is a way to work with ALSDE to present information to the public, so they will understand the success/progress that schools are making that is not represented by numbers. Mrs. Searcy responded that she would make a presentation to Dr. Mackey so that he would understand the depth of the progress made by charter schools. Mr. Nelson then asked Mr. Newell if he had any plans to go into other cities with his program for high-risk students. Dr. Newell responded that he definitely believes that it could be possible in the future.

Legacy Prep - Birmingham, Alabama Amendment Request

Ms. Jonta Morris from Legacy Prep addressed the commission with the celebrations of the school's first year and how they responded to the Covid outbreak. She read a letter from a parent expressing great satisfaction with the Legacy Prep staff and efforts toward creating a very positive environment. Ms. Morris revealed a 95% student retention rate and a 96% staff retention rate. She stated that the school officials had anticipated student enrollment to reach 200 for year two, yet they are now anticipating 250. Therefore, Ms. Morris requested an increase in enrollment for 2020-2021 school year.

Commissioner Williams stated that this increase would make the school financially more viable and she made the motion to allow Legacy Prep to increase their enrollment. Mr. Raine seconded the motion. Chairman Nelson commented that this request indicated great work. It was a unanimous decision with 7 Yes votes and 0 No votes from the participating commissioners. The votes were as follows:

Henry Nelson - Yes	Lisa Williams - Yes
David Marshall - Yes	Sydney Raine - Yes
Kim Terry – (Technical issues)	Allison Haygood - Yes
Marla Green - Yes	Jamie Ison - Absent
Paul Morin - Yes	Eddie Hill – Absent

Capstone Academy Tuscaloosa, Alabama Request to surrender charter

Chairman Nelson then introduced a brief discussion relating to Capstone Academy surrendering their charter. Ms. Williams relayed that she was saddened by this, but that money is essential to success and there is a lack of sufficient money.

Mr. Raine made the motion to accept Capstone's request to surrender their charter and Ms. Terry seconded the motion. The motion carried with 8 Yes votes and 0 No votes from the participating commissioners. The votes were as follows:

Henry Nelson - Yes	Lisa Williams - Yes
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David Marshall - Yes
Kim Terry - Yes
Marla Green - Yes
Paul Morin - Yes

Sydney Raine - Yes
Allison Haygood - Yes
Jamie Ison - Absent
Eddie Hill – Absent

Discussion - Application Evaluation Rubric

David Hartman of SchoolWorks discussed how the charter applications were compared by specific categories to provide a rating and an Executive Summary was included to summarize ratings with evaluative comments for each section. He stated that SchoolWorks had worked with Mrs. Searcy to understand the rubric. Mr. Marshall stated that he likes identifying areas of strength/weakness in the application process, but he was not sure that the lack of an expulsion process accurately indicates failure or success of a school. He stated that some of the items evaluated may need to be examined to see if they are necessary at the time of application or “further down the road” for new schools. He also pointed out that the summary and the specific ratings on some parts of the evaluations differed. Mr. Hartman responded that they do make mistakes and that they would not repeat that mistake. Mr. Morin commented that federal funding applications have weighted components, but creating such a document requires time and work. He stated that he would like the commission to work with Mr. Hartman to see “what those should look like.” He agreed that some components should be designated as benchmarks for success “further down the road.” Commissioner Williams agreed that it was worth their review because some expectations don’t seem as important at “that particular time.” Chairman Nelson asked Tyler Barnett of New Schools for Alabama to give his perspective. Mr. Barnett stated that weight should be given to most predictive categories. He added that one of the greatest indicators of success is whether a leader is identified and the quality of that leader. He also suggested that developing a common understanding of the value of the indicators as a team would be beneficial. He suggested that good debate leveled against a high-quality charter school that is already doing well would yield a better understanding of the most important components of an application. Chairman Nelson asked Mr. Barnett if he meant that the commissioner’s rubric is not meeting expectations for high-quality. Mr. Tyler replied that if applied literally there was no way to meet expectations as defined. There are many “partially meets.” Mr. Nelson asked Mr. Barnett if he thought there should be a rubric for application and a rubric for later. Mr. Barnett replied that the pre-opening conditions already supplied that. Ms. Haygood asked if School Works’ contract ends in September and Mrs. Searcy replied affirmatively. Mrs. Searcy added that external evaluators are not required by law. It was decided that Mr. Hartman, Mrs. Searcy, Mr. Barnett, and Mr. Marshall would meet to look at the rubric. Mrs. Searcy asked the commission’s attorney if a vote was needed for that action and the attorney stated that since no formal action was being taken by the commission, then no vote was needed. One of the commissioners asked if he could be there and Mrs. Searcy said that she would send out a group invitation for anyone who wants to participate.

Discussion - Seed Funds

David Marshall presented a power point presentation on a Seed Grant Pilot Program with a 50,000 budget intended to fund innovative programs in existing and approved charter schools in Alabama. Commissioner Marshall stated that he is working with New Schools for Alabama to set up an application system and

rubric. These funds will provide support for local building leaders to make decisions for their teachers, students, and the community. Chairman Nelson then asked a question about the commission's finances, and Mrs. Searcy reminded him that some of the commission's funds were already encumbered by contracts.

Woodland Prep Revocation

Chairman Nelson announced that the next item on the agenda was the revocation of Woodland Prep. Commissioner Green suggested that the commission go into executive session to discuss this matter. Attorney Knight clarified the motion to go into executive session to discuss the revocation of Woodland Prep. There were 7 votes to go into executive session and one abstention. The votes were as follows:

Henry Nelson - Yes	Lisa Williams - Yes
David Marshall - Yes	Sydney Raine - Yes
Kim Terry - Abstain	Allison Haygood - Yes
Marla Green - Yes	Jamie Ison - Absent
Paul Morin - Yes	Eddie Hill – Absent

A member of the press asked the reason for the executive session. Attorney Knight provided the legal explanation.

After executive session, it was decided that revocation was warranted for failure to obtain a certificate of occupancy, failure to obtain adequate funding and insufficient description of fundraising, and lack of community support and outreach. The commission was advised to vote on each count individually.

A motion was made to vote on agreement that Woodland Prep had failed to satisfy the preopening condition related to the facility and specifically the failure to obtain a certificate of occupancy. Ms. Haygood seconded the motion. The votes were as follows with 5 Yes votes, 2 No votes, 1 Abstention, and 2 Absences:

Henry Nelson - Yes	Lisa Williams - No
David Marshall - Yes	Marla Green - No
Sydney Raine - Yes	Kim Terry - Abstain
Paul Morin - Yes	Eddie Hill - Absent
Allison Haygood – Yes	Jamie Ison - Absent

Commissioner Morin made a motion to vote on mismanagement of funds in that Woodland Prep had failed to meet the preopening condition related to funding and fundraising. Commissioner Haygood seconded the motion.

The votes were as follows with 5 Yes votes, 2 No votes, 1 Abstention, and 2 Absences:

Henry Nelson - Yes	Lisa Williams - No
David Marshall - Yes	Marla Green - No
Sydney Raine - Yes	Kim Terry - Abstain
Paul Morin - Yes	Eddie Hill - Absent
Allison Haygood – Yes	Jamie Ison - Absent

Commissioner Haygood made a motion to vote on Woodland Prep's failure to solicit community support and outreach as outlined in preopening conditions. Commissioner Raine seconded the motion. The votes were as follows with 4 Yes votes, 3 No votes, 1 abstention, and 2 absences.

Henry Nelson - Yes	Lisa Williams - No
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Allison Haygood – Yes
Sydney Raine - Yes
Marla Green – No

David Marshall – No
Kim Terry –
Jamie Ison - Absent

Judge Hampton was asked if there was a need to vote on a summary motion and Judge Hampton replied that there was no need since each motion had been voted on individually. Judge Hampton instructed Attorney Knight to submit a written order on what was submitted yesterday and to adopt “as is” or to write his own. Commissioner Haygood made a motion to accept Attorney Knight’s motion to revoke Woodland Prep’s charter, as written. The motion carried unanimously with 7 Yes votes, 0 No votes, 1 Abstention, and 2 Absences, as follows:

Henry Nelson - Yes
David Marshall - Yes
Sydney Raine - Yes
Paul Morin - Yes
Allison Haygood – Yes

Lisa Williams - Yes
Marla Green - Yes
Kim Terry - Abstain
Eddie Hill - Absent
Jamie Ison - Absent

Judge Hampton reminded Attorney Knight that there was a place on the back of the order for a signature.

Attorney Knight suggested that the commission form a subcommittee to outline a school closure protocol. A subcommittee including Ms. Haygood, Mr. Raine, and Ms. Williams was formed.

The meeting was adjourned with all commissioners agreeing to adjourn.