

Alabama Public Charter School Commission
February 3, 2020 9:30 P.M.
Gordon Persons Building P-104
Face to Face and Teleconference

MINUTES

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission (APCSC) met on Monday, February 3, 2020, in a face to face meeting and via teleconference 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.

Members of the Commission who participated in the meeting and via teleconference meeting were as follows: Teleconference: Kim Terry

Lisa Williams

Henry Nelson

Allison Haygood

David Marshall

Marla Green

Jamie Ison

Paul Morin

Sydney Raine

Eddie Hill

Welcome, Introductions, Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Henry Nelson opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He asked for a roll call of the Alabama Charter School Commission (APCSC). All members were present. Chairman Nelson asked for a motion to approve the agenda and the minutes from the November 5, 2020 meeting. Jamie Ison made the motion to approve the agenda and the minutes, and Sydney Raine seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to approve. Mr. Nelson introduced the new commissioner, Eddie Hill and Logan Searcy introduced the teleconference participants from Schoolworks, explaining that Schoolworks would serve as the outside reviewers of new school applications, evaluators of authorizers, and providers for the School Review process. Mrs. Ison requested from the chairman, Mr. Nelson, that he inform commissioners when the Schoolworks team is in their area, stating that she would like to meet them. Mrs. Searcy informed the commission that she had the Schoolworks' schedule and that she would provide it to them.

Discussion with LEAD Academy

Henry Nelson invited representatives from LEAD Academy to address the commission, stating that he would like a discussion rather than a presentation. He commended Charlotte Meadows on her recent appointment to the Alabama legislature. Ms. Meadows stated that she wanted to introduce LEAD's new staff member; to request to change LEAD's organizational chart; and to answer specific concerns posed by the commission. She stated that LEAD Academy is not using the "Lead the Way," as specified in their contract yet they have formed a partnership with Korean members of the community who are providing daily language instruction in Korean language. Ms. Meadows also stated that LEAD has not done the Home Visits, as outlined in their contract, yet they are communicating with parents through various

methods, such as online and the existence of an active PTA. Ms. Meadows requested permission from the Commission to remove the Education Service Provider (ESP) from LEAD's contract, stating that LEAD has hired Ms. Amber Anderson who has made great strides in assisting LEAD in meeting many financial deadlines. Ms. Anderson addressed the Commission stating that she had submitted the Special Education budget for federal funding, submitted the Title I, Title II, and Title IV applications for funding, and talked with the state department regarding other deadlines. She stated that she would have all financial deadlines and requirements met by the end of February. A LEAD board member and parent then spoke to the Commission regarding the positive difference that LEAD has made in his child's education and stating that all new organizations face tremendous hurdles. He asked that the Commission assist LEAD Academy. Mr. Nelson restated Ms. Meadow's request for changes as 1.) Release LEAD from the ESP requirement and 2.) the addition of sixth grade for the 2020-2021 school year. Ms. Ison questioned Ms. Meadows regarding the operational Leader of the school. Ms. Haygood stated that the Commission needed to make sure that the organizational chart is workable before adding another grade. Discussion followed whereby Principal Lee stated that when he was on the Commission other organizations had been granted extensions. Mr. Nelson suggested that Principal Lee refrain from referring to his time on the Commission. Mr. Morin stated that the Commission could not ignore the initial signed contract with LEAD and that scrutiny, accountability, and strategic steps toward a sound organizational structure were needed before changes could be made. Mr. Nelson reminded LEAD that the Commission had supported them with a great deal of time and money. He then asked the attorney if there was cause for an Executive Session. EXECUTIVE SESSION followed. Kim Terry was not present. Upon returning, the Commission had roll call. Kim Terry was not present, yet there was a quorum. Ms. Meadows returned to the public commission meeting withdrawing her request for changes to LEAD's contract. Ms. Williams made a motion for the APCSC's attorney to provide LEAD Academy with a letter requesting information regarding financial issues and their organizational structure which should be ratified within 30 days. Eddie Hill seconded the motion. Roll call vote was taken. Marla Green recused herself due to conflict of interest. The motion carried with 8 Yes votes, 1 Recused, and 1 Absent.

Yes Votes

Henry Nelson
David Marshall
Eddie Hill
Allison Haygood
Sydney Raine
Jamie Ison
Paul Morin
Lisa Williams

Recused

Marla Green

Absent

Kim Terry

Ms. Williams suggested to the chairman, Mr. Nelson, that they consider refusing to accept anything handed to them just prior to the APCSC meeting. Mrs. Searcy stated that 7 days is appropriate.

Discussion with Woodland Prep

Attorney Nash Campbell introduced Dr. Joe Walters as their new School Leader. Dr. Walters introduced himself to the APCSC. Mr. Campbell then explained to the APCSC how Woodland Prep had reduced their financial obligations tremendously through lower rent and reduced salaries. Mr. Chuck Dolphin, the

attorney for Alabama Charter Development (ACD), then addressed some of the issues that Woodland Prep had faced, such as weather conditions that prohibited the completion of the building and controversy from a small amount of the community. Discussion followed regarding the goal of the school, financial solvency, attendance, teacher interest, community events, and community support. Mr. Nelson then invited the Washington County community representatives to address the APCSC. The superintendent of education, teachers, and board members from Washington County addressed the APCSC stating that the public school in that area had an “A” on their state report card, that weather had not been significant enough to delay the building, and that the funds following the students into the charter school would significantly affect the other students remaining in the district schools. Mr. Nelson and Mr. Hill both discussed their concerns for Woodland Prep’s financial future and Mr. Marshall stated that school safety was a big concern for him. EXECUTIVE SESSION followed. Upon return from Executive Session, roll call was taken. All members were present, except for Kim Terry. Allison Haygood made a motion to vote on the request to grant Woodland Prep’s facility completion extension. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion and a vote followed.

The vote to extend Woodland Prep’s contract did not carry with 7 votes not to extend, 1 Yes, 1 Recused, and 1 Absent.

<u>No Votes</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Henry Nelson	Lisa Williams
David Marshall	
Eddie Hill	<u>Recused</u>
Allison Haygood	Marla Green
Sydney Raine	
Jamie Ison	<u>Absent</u>
Paul Morin	Kim Terry

Lane Knight, the attorney for the commission, clarified that the vote to deny the extension to Woodland Prep’s contract for a facility completion until May represents a material breach of the charter contract. He further discussed the issue before the board at this time is whether or not to institute the revocation proceedings based on that breach and any other issues addressed and concerns of the commission to date. According to the attorney, if the vote carries to begin revocation, then Woodland Prep would receive written notification. Woodland Prep would then have 30 days to respond, a hearing before the commission would follow, and then APCSC will have 60 days to make its decision regarding the revocation of Woodland Prep’s contract. Mr. Raine made a motion to start the revocation process and Ms. Haygood seconded it. A vote was then taken to start the revocation proceedings.

The motion to begin the revocation process for Woodland Prep carried with 7 Yes votes, 1 Abstain, 1 Recused, and 1 Absent.

<u>Yes Votes</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Henry Nelson	Lisa Williams
David Marshall	
Eddie Hill	<u>Recused</u>
Allison Haygood	Marla Green

Jamie Ison
Paul Morin
Sydney Raine

Absent
Kim Terry

Charter School Update

Ms. Searcy discussed the need for a teleconference meeting for LEAD Academy's response to the letter they will receive from the commission. Ms. Searcy stated that she would conduct a poll to determine the best date in March. She also stated that she would be informing the commission of the dates that Schoolworks would be conducting School Quality Reviews in the four charter schools in operation in Alabama. She told the commission that there is also a new onboarding school, I 3, and suggested that the commission look at its website. Mrs. Searcy also informed the APCSC that they would soon have their own website. Mr. Tyler Barnett, Executive Director of New Schools for Alabama, was introduced. He stated that he is partnering with Schoolworks to provide trainings for effective authorizers and informed the commissioners that these trainings would appear on his website. Ms. Searcy stated that University Charter School would be growing by a grade but this growth had been previously requested, information had been entered into Charter.tools, and permission had previously been granted. Mr. Nelson commented on the tremendous load on Ms. Searcy and her part-time staff and discussed how the APCSC needed to investigate funding for the commission to have their own staff.

Adjourn

Lisa Williams made the motion to adjourn and Allison Haygood seconded the motion. The motion met with unanimous approval. The meeting was adjourned.