

**Alabama Public Charter School Commission
Inaugural Meeting - August 27, 2015
10 AM – 12:00 NOON
P104, Gordon Persons Building, Montgomery**

MINUTES

The inaugural meeting of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission was held on Thursday, August 27, from 10 a.m.—12 Noon in Room P104 of the Gordon Persons Building in Montgomery.

Members of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission in attendance were as follows:

Ed Richardson
Thomas Rains
Sally Howell
Mac Buttram
Melinda McClendon
Terri Tomlinson
Gloria Batts
Alma Freeman
Henry Nelson

Chad Fincher was absent.

Dr. Thomas R. Bice, State Superintendent of Education, began the meeting with welcoming and opening remarks. At Dr. Bice's request, Commission members provided brief introductory remarks to everyone in attendance. Dr. Bice introduced the public charter school staff members from the Alabama State Department of Education (Chris Wilson, Kimi Riggins, Dennis Heard, Jeff Langham, and Beverly Davis).

OVERVIEW OF LEGISLATION AND ROLE OF THE COMMISSION

An overview of the *Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act* (Act 2015-3) was provided by Emily Schultz from the Alabama Coalition for Public Charter Schools. She used a PowerPoint presentation (attached) and discussed the legislation and role of the Commission.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Dr. Bice facilitated the Commission's election of Officers. Forms were disseminated listing all Commission members' names for members to make their selection for Chairman of the Commission. Seven (7) of the nine members present voted for Dr. Ed Richardson as Chairman. Forms were then disseminated for the election of a Vice Chairman. There was a tie vote, 4 to 4,

Dr. Richardson confirmed with Dr. Bice that draft materials regarding standards, RFP information, etc., would be sent to the Commission members for review in advance of the next meeting. Dr. Bice stated that this would be done a week in advance of the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned, but members stayed for instructions about information for reimbursement of travel and per diem expenses

ATTACHMENT:

Alabama Coalition for Public Charter Schools PowerPoint

Alabama Public Charter School Commission
Tuesday, October 27, 2015
10 AM – 12:00 NOON
P104, Gordon Persons Building, Montgomery

MINUTES

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission met on Tuesday, October 27, from 10 a.m.—12 Noon in Room P104 of the Gordon Persons Building in Montgomery.

Members of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission in attendance were as follows:

Ed Richardson
Thomas Rains
Sally Howell
Mac Buttram
Melinda McClendon
Terri Tomlinson
Gloria Batts
Alma Freeman
Henry Nelson

Chad Fincher was absent.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Ed Richardson opened the meeting by thanking Dr. Bice for the work done and support provided by his staff to assist the commission. He stated that the commission will work through the drafts developed by the department of a charter school application, checklist, and contract and discuss those in a meeting in December. A commission meeting would be set in January to finalize and approve those documents so that they can be posted on the web site for people to access. Dr. Richardson asked the two co-chairs to head up two subcommittees with assignments as follows: Gloria Batts—Application and Checklist and Thomas Rains—Contract. He asked Dr. Bice to allow department staff to be available to assist each subcommittee as needed, and Dr. Bice approved that request.

Dr. Tommy Bice told the commission that there had been some transition in the staff of the Public Charter Schools Section due to the retirement of Chris Wilson. He stated that Kimi Riggins was still in the office and that Dennis Heard was assisting as needed. Logan Searcy who was employed

in another section of the department has been reassigned to the Public Charter Schools Section to replace Chris Wilson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM AUGUST 27, 2015, MEETING

Dr. Richardson asked members if they had any questions or needed any changes on the draft minutes prepared from the August 27, 2015, meeting, a copy of which had been sent to them and were included in the meeting folder. There being none, a motion was made and seconded that the minutes be approved. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

ALSDE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS OVERVIEW

Act 2015-3

Dr. Bice used a PowerPoint Presentation to present an overview of the *Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act* (Act 2015-3). He specifically addressed the kinds of public charter schools (start-up and conversion), charter school authorizers, the role of an authorizer, public charter school governing boards, contracts, and funding for charter schools.

Following his presentation, Dr. Richardson requested clarification on several points. He confirmed with Dr. Bice that any questions or information needed as the commission members work through the draft documents should be requested through Beverly Davis and she will get the appropriate person from the department to respond. In addition, he stated that having an accurate way to assess whether or not a charter school is making progress would be crucial. He mentioned the possibility of securing an outside entity to assist with that, which would cost money. He asked that it be considered for future discussion. Finally, Dr. Richardson stated that once applications are received for consideration by the commission that he would like to see applicants come before the commission so that commission members might be able to ask questions and seek information in order to make a better decision. Dr. Bice indicated that would be possible and would be akin to how it would work in a local school system acting as an authorizer.

Specific Laws Related to Act 2015-3

Dr. Bice referred members to a handout in the folder about specific state laws that are referenced in Act 2015-3 that are applicable to public charter schools in the state. He stated that some additional information has been prepared to add to this document, and that Dennis Heard will be going over that information.

Mr. Dennis Heard relayed information on other state laws that would/could be applicable to public charter schools. Some of these include: A-F school grading system, audit reporting, Alabama Governmental Guaranteed Energy Cost Savings, public deposits (SAFE Act—Treasurer's Office), records retention, Immigration Act (E-Verify), tampering with governmental records

(attendance/financial), employment and labor laws, state revenue and income tax laws, education laws regarding health/safety/welfare (transportation, bullying/harassment, discipline), state insurance fund law, and workman's compensation.

Dr. Richardson stated that one of the key components of a charter school is flexibility. He added that while he agrees with the information shared, he would like for some of the information to be simplified so as not to be so intimidating. He asked department staff to consider this for the December meeting. He said we need to work toward maintaining flexibility, being user-friendly, and accomplishing our objectives regarding charter schools.

Mrs. Sally Howell asked that the additional information about Alabama laws shared by Mr. Heard be incorporated into a document and loaded onto the Public Charter School web page in order to assist applicants. She also indicated that the interpretation of some of those laws would be needed. In some cases she stated that it might be necessary to negotiate with other agencies, etc., on a law's particular applicability to a public charter school and whether or not the school would be exempt from such. She said it is also assumed that Dr. Bice would be able to interpret state law for applicability to a public charter school due to an understanding of what a charter school is designed to do. Dr. Richardson agreed and confirmed with Dr. Bice that Attorney General Opinions could still be sought if needed.

ALSDE Guidelines (New)

Mr. Heard briefly covered the new ALSDE Guidelines that have been written and stated that they were not written for the commission. Instead, they were developed to assist parents, citizens, and community representatives to find out information. He stated the guidelines are divided into five sections that have been written in a way to simplify the law. The details of the guidelines are covered by the appendices.

Opportunities, Obligations, Timelines

Mrs. Kimi Riggins asked members to look at the Opportunities, Obligations, Timelines document in their folder. She specifically pointed them to the draft information (peach-colored pages) that has been developed to depict timelines associated with the commission in its role as a charter school authorizer. The timelines are taken straight from the charter school law. She asked commission members if they were in agreement with the information so it can be placed on the commission's part of the Public Charter School web page. Dr. Richardson asked Dr. Bice whether or not he envisioned the commission using the same application, etc., that local school systems use, and Dr. Bice stated that he does see that being the case.

Mrs. Riggins walked through the Public Charter Schools web page to show how/where information is stored. Commission members expressed appreciation to departmental staff for the quality and quantity of documents available on the web page.

REVIEW DOCUMENTS FOR ADAPTATION TO ALABAMA LAWS

Dr. Richardson stated his idea on this topic is for the three draft documents, application, checklist, and contract, to be reviewed today just as an overview. He then indicated his intent that the two subcommittees (Batts group—application/checklist and Rains group—contract) work together prior to the December meeting to become thoroughly familiar with the documents and identify issues for detailed discussion in December. He plans for the December meeting to be dedicated to a thorough discussion of the documents so that final approval of them could take place in the January meeting. The documents could then be posted on the web page.

Start-Up Public Charter School Application and Checklist

Mrs. Riggins started by telling the commission that being an appellate body as outlined in the law means that it would not be issuing an RFP like school systems are required to do. The application is considered the commission's starting point on being an authorizer. She stated that applicants appealing to the commission may have completed a different application as developed by a school system, and the application may need to be revised if the commission has a different mission or set of objectives from the local school board.

The draft application mirrors the 32 components outlined in the law, Sections 7-10. The commission may adapt it for use. School systems are not required to use it but they may do so and should also tailor it to their specific needs within the school system.

Mrs. Riggins stated the components to be outlined in the Executive Summary of the application as follows:

- The proposed plan for the school.
- The geographic and population considerations of the school environment.
- The challenges particular to those considerations.
- The applicant team's capacity to successfully open and operate a high-quality school given the above considerations.

Regarding the detail and complexity of the application, Mrs. Riggins stated that while specific information will not be known at that point in time, the components require applicants to think through and have a vision for what it proposes. In addition, there has to be proof of community involvement and identification of a need for a public charter school.

Mrs. Riggins stated that in her discussions with staff in state of Washington she learned that it has an outside entity that reviews the applications prior to the commission receiving them for review. She stated that members might want to review each one knowing that doing such is a big undertaking due to all the components and documentation that have to be provided. With funding issues in mind, she stated that the commission might want to consider doing that in the future. Mrs. Howell spoke in support of a department review of any applications.

Dr. Richardson brought up an issue that might entail a commission member and/or department staff member going to look over and work through an entity's application prior to it being submitted to see if everything had been adequately addressed. Dr. Henry Nelson inquired as to whether or not a commission member is permitted to speak with or meet with an entity interested in starting a public charter school. Dr. Richardson stated that he thought there were some restrictions on that under the Ethics Commission but that commission members could provide general information but not be a sponsor or advocate. Mrs. Howell expressed concerns about whether commission members should go and review an applicant, stating instead her desire to rely on department staff and experts having done that. Her concerns are due to someone's perceived perception of advocacy by the commission for a particular school instead of for charter schools as a whole. Dr. Bice offered that department staff can serve in that role. He asked that commission members who are contacted for assistance either contact the department for information or refer those calls to the department. Mrs. McClendon also expressed her concerns about commission members meeting with applicants. She stated that while seeming very innocent at first, it could later be brought under scrutiny as decisions play out on approving and denying applications.

Contract

Mr. Heard stated that the draft charter contract was developed just for the commission's use as an authorizer. A local school board using it would have to change terminology throughout. He stated the contract would need to be vetted by attorneys from both the charter school and authorizer perspectives. The contract was modeled after the one used by the state of Washington. He shared information about seeing recent reports dealing with financial difficulties in charter schools across the nation. For that reason there is accountability built into the contract to guard against that and make the finances of the charter schools transparent like they are with public school systems and schools. The Alabama draft contract did not go near as far in this regard as some of the other states' contracts and has been somewhat shortened. Dr. Richardson shared that even with accountability and transparency in place that some schools and school systems in Alabama have had financial difficulties. However, he stated that the commission should be very cognizant of the financial aspect of authorizing a charter school. Mr. Heard mentioned that some groups having charter schools outside of Alabama have had financial issues and could be looking to start charter schools in Alabama. Dr. Richardson agreed and said that would certainly be considered at that time. Dr. Bice suggested that the draft be reviewed by all and discussed by the subcommittee members specifically so that questions and issues can be covered adequately in the next meeting.

Mrs. Howell brought up that Alabama's charter school law is very stringent. She stated that the accountability measures the commission can control, especially financial and performance metrics, will be the strength and character of our law if upheld. She said the problems in other states are that some poorly performing charter schools have not been shut down. She shared that her hope is that the commission would have a strong rubric in terms of performance

standards and expectations for meeting them. She stated that one of the benefits of doing an RFP, which the commission does not have to do, is that it would set forth a focus and vision. Not having such might make it harder to judge an application. Mrs. Riggins stated that Section 6 of the law contains information about the commission establishing operational provisions. It is in that process where the commission can set up its mission and vision.

PLANNING FOR NEXT MEETING

After a discussion of possible dates for the December meeting, it was decided that the meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 1, at 10 a.m. (meeting room to be determined). Dr. Richardson asked that the commission be divided into the two subcommittees previously referenced to discuss the three draft documents. He stated that the goal for the meeting in December is to work through them and get as close to a final document on all three documents as possible. The January meeting will be to approve the documents and then get them placed onto the web site so everyone can access them.

Dr. Richardson thanked Dr. Bice and the department staff for all the work done up to this point to assist the commission.

The meeting was adjourned.

**Alabama Public Charter School Commission
Tuesday, December 1, 2015
10 AM – 12:00 NOON
P104, Gordon Persons Building, Montgomery**

MINUTES

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission met on Tuesday, December 1, 10 a.m.—12 Noon, in Room P104 of the Gordon Persons Building in Montgomery.

Members of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission in attendance were as follows:

Ed Richardson
Thomas Rains
Sally Smith
Mac Buttram
Melinda McClendon
Terri Tomlinson
Gloria Batts
Alma Freeman
Henry Nelson

Chad Fincher was absent.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Ed Richardson opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He expressed thanks to the department staff for the work done in preparation for the meeting. Dr. Richardson asked for any additions or changes to the agenda and there were none. The agenda was approved.

Dr. Tommy Bice briefly addressed the Commission and thanked everyone for attending. He stated that department staff do not have any presentations to make at this meeting and are available to serve in any capacity deemed necessary by the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 27, 2015, MEETING

Dr. Richardson asked members if they had any questions or needed any corrections, additions, etc., on the draft minutes prepared from the October 27, 2015, meeting, a copy of which had been sent to them and were included in the meeting folder. There being none, a motion was

made by Terri McClendon and seconded by Sally Smith to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

GOALS FOR MEETING

Dr. Richardson stated that since the last meeting the two subcommittees each had a conference call to begin working through the details of the draft public charter school application, checklist, and contract in order to adapt them for use by the commission. He stated that the conference calls facilitated the detailed discussions that will occur on the documents later in today's meeting. He indicated that the conference calls seemed to go well and that he participated in part of both calls.

Dr. Richardson outlined that in the meeting today there would be brief opening remarks by the two chairpersons of the subcommittees on the results of the conference calls and then time would be dedicated to additional discussions by the subcommittees in Room P-104 and P-103B. After subcommittee discussions, he asked that members return for a summation of discussions today prior to adjournment.

He indicated that the focus at this time is the application since it is needed before the contract subcommittee can start a detailed review. He stated his desire today would be to make a determination on whether additional conference calls would be needed and when the next Commission meeting needed to be held (January or February).

Mrs. Gloria Batts, Chairman of the Application/Checklist Subcommittee, stated that there was a conference call on November 19 to review the document and get clarifying information from department personnel. She stated that all members did call in and participated in portions of the conference call. She expressed her appreciation to Dr. Richardson for his participation as well. Mrs. Batts stated that discussions were not deliberative at all and were geared toward addressing any specific items identified by members. The subcommittee did a very thorough review of the application and checklist. She indicated a possibility of subcommittee assignments on application components as the discussions occur in the meeting today.

Mr. Thomas Rains, Chairman of the Contract Subcommittee, stated that there was a subcommittee conference call on November 23. He told staff that Dennis Heard, SDE staff member, did a very thorough job of going through the components of the contract. He said the main point is that the quality of the contracts will be critical to the success of any charter school. He indicated that there would need to be great attention to the details of any contract in order to consider the autonomy that benefits charter schools with strict accountability measures. He stated that the contract template is important to have recognizing that each contract will be specific to the application of the proposed charter school. He mentioned that timelines would be important due to the executing of a contract that has to be done within 60 days of approval

of a charter school application. Mr. Rains expressed that the final approved application is needed before the work on the draft contract can be done.

SUBCOMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS

The Application/Checklist Subcommittee convened in Room P-104, and the Contract Subcommittee convened in P-103B. Applicable department staff sat with each subcommittee in order to answer any questions and provide additional information. The purpose of these small-group discussions was to gain input into the drafts so that all three documents can be considered for approval by the full Commission. After approval, the documents will be promoted and posted for use by interested charter school applicants.

FULL COMMISSION MEETING RESUMED

Dr. Richardson asked for an update on the work of the subcommittees. Mrs. Batts indicated that the Application/Checklist Subcommittee would reconvene on December 15, 10 a.m., in Montgomery to finalize the documents so that the full Commission could review them at the next meeting. Mr. Rains stated that until the application is approved, the Contract Subcommittee's work could not proceed due to the specificity of the public charter school application influencing various components of the contract. In addition, Mr. Rains said the subcommittee generally discussed the performance framework that it wanted in the contract and settled on a minimum standard based on the AMOs to make sure that any charter school that opens is setting a high bar for the success of students. Another discussion centered around the inclusion of any Alabama state laws that are non-waivable versus just a discussion about them with applicants prior to approval of any application. Mrs. Sally Smith clarified that there might be more effective means of getting the word out to applicants about the laws that would apply to charter schools without those details having to be part of the contract. Mr. Rains relayed a question that needs to be resolved by the Commission about whether the Commission will require applicants to use its application or will the Commission review applications used by local authorizers. It was the consensus of the group that the use of the Commission application was preferred since there could be variances in the applications used by other authorizers.

Mrs. Sally Smith indicated that there was a philosophical discussion in the subcommittee meeting about the overall Commission's policies, procedures, and mission of this work and the type of applications the Commission is looking for from potential charter schools. She suggested a possible training for charter authorizers before submission of an application to applicants understand the kinds of things the Commission is looking for as well as the requirements that must be met so that forward-thinking planning can occur. Dr. Richardson stated that he felt the development of Commission by-laws and governing rules could begin once the application and contract are well underway.

Since the Contract Subcommittee requires an approved application before any additional work can be done toward a charter school contract, Dr. Richardson suspended the work of the Contract Subcommittee until the public charter school application is approved.

PLANNING FOR NEXT MEETING

After a discussion of possible dates for the January meeting, it was decided that the next Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 5, 2016, at 10 a.m. in Room P-104 of the Gordon Persons Building in Montgomery. The purpose of the meeting is to approve the public charter school application.

The meeting was adjourned.

Alabama Public Charter School Commission
Tuesday, January 5, 2016
10 A.M.
P104, Gordon Persons Building, Montgomery

MINUTES

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission met on Tuesday, January 5, 2016, at 10 a.m., in Room P104 of the Gordon Persons Building in Montgomery.

Members of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission in attendance were as follows:

Ed Richardson
Thomas Rains
Sally Smith
Mac Buttram
Terri Tomlinson
Gloria Batts
Alma Freeman
Henry Nelson
Chad Fincher

Melinda McClendon was absent.

WELCOME AND CLARIFYING INFORMATION REGARDING THE AGENDA

Dr. Ed Richardson opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He began the meeting by clarifying two items on the agenda as follows:

- The minutes from the December 15, 2015, Charter School Application Subcommittee noted on the agenda and included in the meeting packet have not been approved and stated that the minutes would need to be approved by the Subcommittee in the meeting today.

- The agenda item noting approval of the public charter school application is flexible since the Commission can delay that approval to another meeting if additional time to review and discuss the application is desired by the members.

Dr. Richardson then asked if Commission members had other changes or items for the agenda. There being none, Sally Smith made a motion and Thomas Rains seconded the motion to approve the agenda. It was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 1, 2015, MEETING

Dr. Richardson asked members if they had any questions or needed any corrections, additions, etc., on the draft minutes from the December 1, 2015, meeting, a copy of which had been sent to them and were included in the meeting folder. There being none, a motion was made by Sally Smith and seconded by Alma Freeman to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 15, 2015, MEETING OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

Dr. Richardson commended the work of the Subcommittee on Charter School Application and stated that the process is ahead of schedule due to its work. He asked Mrs. Gloria Batts, Subcommittee Chairman, to handle approval of the minutes of its last meeting. Mrs. Batts stated that all Subcommittee members who attended the December 15 meeting were in attendance today. Mrs. Batts made a motion to approve the minutes; Mr. Mac Buttram and Mrs. Alma Freeman both offered a second to the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved by members of the Subcommittee as submitted with no changes.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED APPLICATION FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS

Dr. Richardson began the discussion of the draft application by noting that the draft presented is in a format so everyone can clearly see what changes were made by the Subcommittee. Subcommittee changes are noted in strike-through and underlined text, and State Department of Education (SDE) legal changes are noted in yellow highlighting. Dr. Richardson asked that the discussion go section by section in order to allow all members to have an opportunity to offer suggestions and/or get clarification as needed.

Sally Smith began the discussion by asking if this application would be required for use by all public charter school applicants. Dr. Richardson stated that he did not think the Commission had the authority to require any applicants other than those applying to the Commission directly to use the form. Mrs. Smith stated she believes many school systems will use the application with customizations as necessary by the school systems.

Commission members went through each section of the application and discussed changes submitted by the Subcommittee and offered input and suggestions on some of those items. All such changes and input were noted by SDE staff. Information was provided by Dr. Bice and other SDE staff as needed to answer questions or issues that members had.

After the full draft application had been reviewed, Dr. Richardson asked that SDE staff provide a new final draft for Commission members that incorporates changes noted today. Once that is done, the Commission members will be surveyed regarding dates that would work for a Commission teleconference to review the final application.

APPROVAL OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

As noted above, once the Commission members receive an updated draft application a Commission teleconference meeting will be scheduled to approve the application. Once approved, the application's availability will be publicized and a template of it will be posted on the SDE Public Charter Schools web page.

OUTLINE WORKING SCHEDULE FOR CHARTER SCHOOL CONTRACT SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. Thomas Rains, Chairman of the Contract Subcommittee, stated that he had been thinking about a timeline for initiation of the required contract with approved applicants. In trying to offer a year of planning in advance of a fall 2017 opening of a public charter school, he stated he felt that a contract should be in place by August 2016. He stated getting the application approved at the next meeting, hopefully in advance of his February 16 Subcommittee meeting, would greatly assist contract work going forward and felt like the contract could be ready in April. Dr. Richardson stated that the contract will be a much more technical document than the application and that assistance from the SDE legal office would probably be needed.

GEORGIA CHARTER SCHOOLS BOOT CAMP MEETING

Mrs. Logan Searcy from the SDE provided Commission members with information about a January 20, 2016, meeting the Georgia Department of Education is having for the purpose of sharing information about public charter school authorizing. Due to out-of-state paperwork that will be required, she asked that Commission members notify the department by Thursday, January 7, if they are interested in attending.

PLANNING FOR NEXT MEETING

After receipt of a final draft application, Commission members will be surveyed about possible dates for a teleconference meeting to approve the public charter school application.

The meeting was adjourned.

**Alabama Public Charter School Commission Teleconference
Friday, February 5, 2016, 10 A.M.**

MINUTES

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission met via teleconference on Friday, February 5, 2016, at 10 a.m. for the purpose of considering and approving a public charter school application for use by applicants wanting to open a public charter school under the authority of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission.

Members of the Commission who called in to participate in the teleconference were as follows:

Ed Richardson
Gloria Batts
Mac Buttram
Chad Fincher
Alma Freeman
Melinda McClendon
Henry Nelson
Thomas Rains

Members not participating were Sally Smith and Terry Tomlinson.

WELCOME / APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Dr. Ed Richardson opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the first Charter School Commission teleconference meeting. He told participants that the charter school law contained provisions for electronic meetings and that this format was allowable. Dr. Richardson also advised that only Charter School Commission members and State Department of Education personnel as requested would be allowed to speak during the teleconference.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

He asked for any additions or changes to the agenda and there were none. Mrs. Alma Freeman made a motion and Mrs. Gloria Batts seconded the motion to approve the agenda. The agenda was approved 8-0.

DISCUSSION

Dr. Richardson directed members to review a draft timeline document sent to them for consideration dealing with due dates, etc., that would apply to the Commission and applicants once an application is received by the Commission. He stated that initial dates shown on the top right part of the chart were not final but only entered as a starting point for discussions going forward. He added that he would propose a change to those dates to allow more time for applicants to submit an application.

APPROVAL OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

Dr. Richardson asked for a motion and second to approve the application with discussion to follow. Mr. Thomas Rains made a motion to approve the application and Mrs. Freeman seconded the motion.

Amendment to Application—Dr. Richardson asked members to look at Page iii of the application for the part dealing with when applications would be due to the Commission for the first year. He stated that in talking with Mr. Rains about when a possible charter school contract would be ready for approval by the Commission (possibly late April), that having a May 1 deadline for applications this first year would not allow enough time for some applicants to comply. He stated he would like to offer an amendment to the charter school application for discussion to allow for an August 1, 2016, deadline for this first year. He further indicated that in subsequent years the Commission's deadline could go back to May 1 since all documents, etc., would already be developed. Mr. Rains asked whether that deadline would result in a rolling year approval schedule for the Commission so that applications would be acted on within 60 days of receipt as required by the law. Dr. Richardson said that it would be more difficult on the Commission this first year having to deal with the 60-day requirement, but that it would be that way this first year. Mr. Rains stated his approval of the amendment of the proposed August 1 date with that being the case. Dr. Richardson asked for a motion and second to approve the amendment to the application to reflect an August 1, 2016, deadline. Mr. Rains made the motion and it was seconded by Alma Freeman. The Commission voted 8-0 to approve the amendment to the application.

Dr. Richardson asked for a final motion and second to approve the public charter school application. Mr. Rains made the motion and it was seconded by Mrs. Melinda McClendon. The motion was approved on a vote of 8-0.

Dr. Richardson asked department staff when it could be made available for the public to access. Staff responded that it would be loaded on the ALSDE Public Charter School Web site on Monday, February 8, in Word template format so that interested parties can download it for completion.

SET DATE FOR MEETING OF CHARTER SCHOOL SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONTRACTS

Mr. Rains indicated that the Subcommittee on Contracts would conduct its first meeting on Tuesday, February 16, 2016, at 10 a.m. in Room P103-B of the Gordon Persons Building. He indicated that the meeting would go through lunch and into the afternoon as needed that day. He stated that the Subcommittee would then decide if additional meetings, etc., would be needed.

Dr. Richardson advised members that he would like to follow the process of having a full Commission meeting (probably mid to late April) once a final draft of the contract is available for discussion and then have a follow-up teleconference meeting to approve the contract like was done for approval of the charter school application. He asked that Mr. Rains keep him apprised as to the Subcommittee's progress in that regard.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Dr. Richardson brought up an additional item regarding Public Charter School Commission Member terms as specified in the law. He stated that he would like to see a copy of the approved public charter school application be sent to the four people who nominated members (Governor, Lt. Governor, Speaker of the House, and Senate Pro Tem) to show progress to date. He asked Juliana Dean to follow up with information about who is to set the terms of members, those nominating the members or Dr. Bice.

Mrs. Batts brought up the issue of the Commission needing to develop its stated priorities since they are referenced in the charter school application. Mrs. Kimi Riggins from the SDE stated this is referenced in the Executive Summary of the charter school application. SDE staff indicated that once the priorities are developed the information could be placed in a guidance document or posted as a separate document on the Commission Web site. Mr. Rains suggested that there could be a broad description of such in the actual public charter school law that could be used since the Commission's priorities would be broader in nature than what a local school system might use. Mrs. Logan Searcy indicated that the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) has information on its site that could be useful in this matter. Dr. Richardson suggested that she provide that information to Mrs. Batts so that her subcommittee could consider using that information as a starting point for its work on the Commission's stated priorities.

SDE staff asked Dr. Richardson about the possibility of the Commission wanting some kind of press release or statement to announce the availability of the public charter school application. Dr. Richardson said he wanted the widest possible dissemination of that information and asked that something be disseminated/publicized.

Mrs. Searcy announced to the Commission that Birmingham City and Athens City have been approved to be authorizers of public charter schools. He asked if there were other school systems that applied but were not approved, and she responded that others applied but did not resubmit applications after they were returned for additional information. Mr. Rains also reminded everyone about the recent memorandum sent to all county and city superintendents with information about becoming a charter school authorizer. Interested local school systems should make application to become authorizers by March 1, 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mrs. Melinda McClendon and seconded by Mrs. Batts to adjourn. The vote to adjourn was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 10:34 a.m.

**Alabama Public Charter School Commission
Monday, April 11, 2016, 10 A.M.
P103-B, Gordon Persons Building, Montgomery**

MINUTES

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission met on Monday, April 11, 2016, at 10 a.m. to consider and approve a public charter school contract for use with entities approved to open a public charter school under the authority of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission.

Members of the Commission who attended/participated in the meeting were as follows:

Ed Richardson
Gloria Batts
Mac Buttram
Chad Fincher (via telephone)
Alma Freeman
Melinda McClendon
Henry Nelson
Thomas Rains
Terri Tomlinson

Mrs. Sally Smith was unable to attend the meeting.

WELCOME / APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Dr. Ed Richardson opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He asked for any additions or changes to the agenda and there were none. Mrs. Melinda McClendon made a motion and Mrs. Alma Freeman seconded the motion to approve the agenda. The agenda was approved by a unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES

January 5, 2016, Meeting--Dr. Richardson asked members if they had any questions or needed any corrections, additions, etc., on the draft minutes prepared from the January 5, 2016, Commission meeting, a copy of which had been sent to them and were included in the meeting folder. There being none, a motion was made by Mr. Thomas Rains and seconded by Dr. Henry Nelson to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

February 5, 2016, Commission Meeting--Dr. Richardson asked members if they had any questions or needed any corrections, additions, etc., on the draft minutes prepared from the February 5, 2016, meeting, a copy of which had been sent to them and were included in the meeting folder. There being none, a motion was made by Mrs. McClendon and seconded by Mr. Rains to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONTRACTS TELECONFERENCE MEETING MINUTES

Dr. Richardson referred this item to Mr. Rains, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Contracts, for action. Mr. Rains asked subcommittee members if they had any questions or needed any corrections, additions, etc., on the draft minutes of the Subcommittee on Contracts Teleconference on March 22, 2016. There being none, Mrs. McClendon made a motion, and it was seconded by Mr. Rains to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved by all subcommittee members.

TERMS OF OFFICE FOR COMMISSION MEMBERS

Dr. Richardson asked members to review the document included in the meeting folder showing the terms of office for all members. He indicated that he set the terms of office for each member. The inaugural members of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission were approved with an effective date of June 1, 2015. Five of the ten members had one-year terms expiring on May 31, 2016, and the other five members had two-year terms expiring May 31, 2017. The terms of the one-year individuals will change to two years on June 1, 2016, thereby placing all Commission members on two-year terms where half of the membership will come up each year to be approved by the State Board of Education. Dr. Richardson told members that he recently met with representatives from the Governor's Office, Lt. Governor's Office, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and Speaker of the House regarding this issue. He asked the representatives to consider renominating existing members due to continuity in developing initial policies and procedures to implement the law. He stated that he received a commitment that they would do that. Renomination for a specified number of years is allowed under provisions of the law. He stated that Mrs. Sally Smith asked not to be renominated so the Governor will submit the names of two individuals from which the State Board of Education can choose one. The official vote on appointment/reappointment of five members is scheduled for May 12, 2016.

Dr. Richardson also apprised the members of a request he made in the meeting for a supplemental (FY16) and line item (FY17) legislative appropriation for the Commission's use to secure the services of an entity such as PARCA, etc., to do an analysis of any applications received in order to tell the applicants what will be necessary in order to be an acceptable charter school. He stated he felt those in attendance at the meeting were receptive of the request and that he would let everyone know the results of that request when known.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION TIMELINE FOR APPLICATIONS AND CONTRACT EXECUTION

Dr. Richardson asked staff to review the Commission timeline handout. He stated that although the item was discussed in the previous meeting the actual dates were not approved. The Commission, during this initial year, decided on an August 1 deadline for receipt of applications. He stated that once the bylaws and regulations of the Commission are established that the Commission might want to change that date to May 1 for future years. Mr. Rains added that a rolling timeline this first year where the Commission internally could pick a date on which to act on any applications received prior to August 1 could be problematic for the Commission due to the legal timeline that kicks in once an application is officially received. However, he also stated that in this first year any action on an application received prior to August 1 would allow more time for the year of planning that the May 1 date in future years allows.

Dr. Richardson asked the Mrs. Juliana Dean, SDE General Counsel, for an interpretation of the law's provision on the Commission acting on an application within 60 days. Mrs. Dean stated the law indicates that the Commission would act on any application received 60 days from the filing of such application. She stated the Commission could have latitude on what it interprets that to mean, such as the date it was mailed, date it was received in the SDE, etc.

Dr. Richardson indicated he had no solid information about any entity preparing to submit an application this year and asked the Commission members whether they had any information on this. No members indicated they had information about potential applicants at this time. Dr. Richardson inquired the same of SDE staff and Mrs. Logan Searcy indicated she had information from possibly two areas of the state where there could be applicants but she was not sure if the entities planned to submit an application this year or next year. Mrs. McClendon inquired about whether a letter of intent could be requested from applicants that intend to submit an application so the Commission could get an idea about how many applications may be received. Mrs. Kimi Riggins said that a letter of intent notification has not been prepared and is not specified in the law, but it could be helpful if the Commission wanted such.

Dr. Richardson raised the issue of consistency between deadlines the Commission uses for applications, etc., and those used by local education agencies (LEAs) as authorizers. Dr. Richardson asked how many LEAs had been approved as authorizers and Mrs. Searcy stated there are only two. She stated that in regional meetings held recently that many other LEAs may be applying by the next deadline, March 1, since they are becoming more comfortable with the requirements, etc.

Dr. Richardson asked for a motion and second on the timeline document presented for approval. Mrs. McClendon made a motion and Mr. Rains seconded the motion to approve the timeline for the Commission regarding processing applications and executing contracts with approved applicants. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

DISCUSSION OF DRAFT CHARTER SCHOOL CONTRACT

Before turning the discussion over to Mr. Rains who chaired the Contract Subcommittee, Dr. Richardson thanked all members of the subcommittee for their work. He stated that the contract document is complex due to its legal implications and expressed appreciation for the careful job done by the subcommittee members and SDE staff. He stated he felt like the draft contract is in excellent shape.

Mr. Rains stated that the work on the contract began with a great start due to the initial draft that SDE staff provided. He stated that in the first meeting on February 16 the subcommittee went over the draft contract page by page and revised content as needed. Some legal points in the draft were fine-tuned later with the SDE legal counsel. Mr. Rains offered that the draft contract should be considered a living document because changes could be needed later as an actual contract is prepared and executed for an approved applicant. The subcommittee approved the draft in a teleconference on March 22. Prior to offering the draft contract for full Commission consideration, Mr. Rains pointed out one correction needed on page 20 to remove old language that was inadvertently left in the track changes version once new language was added. He asked his two subcommittee members in attendance, Dr. Nelson and Mrs. McClendon, if they had anything to add and both indicated approval of the draft contract. One member, Mr. Mac Buttram, asked for clarification regarding non-sectarian status mentioned on page 14 of the draft since he feels sure that some faith-based groups will be interested in opening a charter school. He asked whether charter schools had any more freedom or restrictions on religious issues than regular public schools. Mrs. Dean stated that charter schools are public schools so they would have the same status as regular public schools on religious issues. She added that the Commission would be in the position of approving the schools' curriculum so religious issues could also be considered at that time for legality. Mrs. Gloria Batts asked about religious-type events occurring before school and after school now in public schools and the issue of those things in charter schools with varying and different school days and school years. Mrs. Dean indicated she would research this issue and provide clarification to the Commission. Dr. Richardson asked that this clarification be expedited as much as possible with the Attorney General's office.

APPROVAL OF CONTRACT

Mr. Rains made a motion and Mrs. Batts seconded the motion to approve the draft contract as a template for use in development of a contract with approved charter school applicants. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

UPDATE ON COMMISSION'S STATED PRIORITIES (REFERENCED IN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION AND ASSIGNED TO APPLICATION SUBCOMMITTEE IN FEBRUARY 5 MEETING; NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZERS INFO SENT ON FEBRUARY 5, 2016)

Dr. Richardson asked Mrs. Batts whether there was any information to report on development of the Commission's stated priorities, as was discussed in the February 5 teleconference Commission meeting. Dr. Richardson stated that he had received a NACSA document from Mrs. Logan Searcy that contained some helpful information. Mrs. Batts indicated that her subcommittee had not met to deliberate this issue. She indicated that the information contained in the Commission's application regarding alignment with the purposes of the Alabama charter school law was broad enough to use. After discussion on information disseminated from NACSA, the Georgia Charter School Commission, and the Alabama Legislature, the Commission decided to use the information from the Alabama Legislature as outlined in the Alabama public charter school law as its mission/stated priorities. The following information will be used by the proposed subcommittee on bylaws once work begins on that assignment:

"To provide for the establishment of public charter schools in Alabama, the 2015 Alabama Legislature announced its intent to accomplish all of the following:

- *Provide school systems and communities with additional tools that may be used to meet the educational needs of a diverse student population.*
- *Encourage innovative educational ideas that improve student learning for students at all academic levels.*
- *Empower educators to be nimble and strategic in their decisions on behalf of students.*
- *Provide additional high-quality educational options for all students, especially students in low-performing schools.*
- *Create public schools with freedom and flexibility in exchange for exceptional results.*
- *Foster tools and strategies to close achievement gaps between high-performing and low-performing groups of public school students."*

CONSIDERATION OF SUBCOMMITTEES NEEDED

Dr. Richardson discussed his opinion on the need to have two different subcommittees begin work on operational guidelines/bylaws for the Commission. He stated one subcommittee issue would be to outline operational procedures that the Commission would follow in conducting its business such as term limits, etc. The second issue requiring subcommittee work would be accountability. Dr. Richardson said he asked SDE staff to send him copies of charter school applications that have been approved in other states. The purpose of this request is to prepare a proposal to send to interested entities (PARCA, UAB Center for Accountability, etc.) for development of a system the Commission could use to assess whether an approved charter school is meeting minimum satisfactory levels of requirements set forth and approved in its application. Interested entities could submit information about what they could design and the

cost for such. He stated the importance of the school knowing this information up front. In addition, other items to be considered under accountability would be student reporting requirements, financial report submissions, facilities that meet health and safety standards, etc. Mrs. Batts brought up the issue of having a boot camp type meeting for applicants where all the accountability issues could be addressed in an effort to avoid any misunderstandings. Dr. Richardson added that there would likely be additional issues arising in the future that would need to be added to the operational guidelines/bylaws of the Commission.

MISCELLANEOUS

Dr. Richardson shared with Commission members a copy of a letter he received from Mrs. Nancy Anderson of the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program and his letter in response to the issues raised in her letter. He stated that public charter schools would not be treated any different than regular public schools regarding the provision of special education services as is required under federal law.

Dr. Richardson stated that he would get subcommittee assignments out to everyone so that work can begin. In addition, he stated he would work on a draft proposal that could be reviewed by everyone in the next meeting. The middle of June was generally agreed upon for the next meeting by all Commission members.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mrs. McClendon and seconded by Mrs. Batts to adjourn. The vote to adjourn was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 10:34 a.m.

**ALABAMA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON BYLAWS/OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES TELECONFERENCE
MONDAY, AUGUST 8, 2016 • 10 A.M.**

Via Teleconference 1-888-822-7517, Meeting Room Number 814512#

MINUTES

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission Subcommittee on Bylaws/Operational Procedures convened via teleconference on Monday, August 8, 2016, at 10 A.M. Members of the Subcommittee on Bylaws/Operational Procedures participating were as follows:

Terri Tomlinson
Thomas Rains
Chad Fincher

Mrs. Alma Freeman could not participate in the teleconference meeting today. Members of the State Department of Education who attended the meeting were Juliana Dean and Logan Searcy.

WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS / APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mrs. Terri Tomlinson, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Bylaws/Operational Procedures, welcomed everyone to the meeting. She asked for a motion and second to approve the agenda. Mr. Thomas Rains made the motion and Mr. Chad Fincher seconded the motion. The agenda was approved on a 3-0 vote.

REVIEW OF PURPOSE OF BYLAWS/OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Mrs. Tomlinson stated that the reason for developing bylaws is to give the Commission a set of rules to guide the operation of the Commission's work. She stated the purpose for the discussion today is to approve the draft document of the Bylaws/Operational Procedures that will be recommended for full Commission approval. She asked for any discussion that might be needed.

APPROVAL OF DRAFT DOCUMENT ON COMMISSION BYLAWS/OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Mr. Chad Fincher made a motion to approve the Bylaws and Operational Procedures by the subcommittee, and Mr. Thomas Rains seconded the motion. The Bylaws/Operational Procedures were approved on a 3-0 vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Fincher made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Mr. Rains. The meeting was adjourned on a vote of 3-0.

**Alabama Public Charter School Commission
Tuesday, November 29, 2016, 1 P.M.
Teleconference Meeting**

MINUTES

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission met on Tuesday, November 29, 2016, at 1 p.m. via teleconference to consider matters pertaining to implementation of the *Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act* for public charter schools in Alabama.

Members of the Commission who participated in the teleconference meeting were as follows:

Gloria Batts
Mac Buttram
Alma Freeman
Henry Nelson
Thomas Rains
Ed Richardson

Welcome

Dr. Ed Richardson opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He asked for a roll call of the Alabama Charter School Commission.

Approval of 2016 National Association of Charter Schools Association (NACSA) Contract

Dr. Richardson asked for a vote to approve the 2016 National Association of Charter Schools contract. Mr. Henry Nelson made the motion and Mrs. Gloria Batts seconded the motion. All voted in favor of this action.

Dr. Richardson asked if there was a need to authorize him for the 2017 contract with NACSA, and Mrs. Julianna Dean stated that it was not needed. Dr. Richardson also confirmed that the ACCEL charter school contract was fully executed.

Approval OF Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA)

Dr. Richardson explained the proposed plan for technical assistance from the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA) for the performance evaluation of charter schools in Alabama. He stated that the proposed cost was \$12,000. Dr. Henry Nelson made the motion, and Mrs. Gloria Batts seconded the motion.

General Discussion/Progress Reports

Dr. Richardson open the floor to discussions involving the current progress on the conditionally approved Sports Leadership and Management (SLAM) charter school and the STAR Academy application in Birmingham. Mr. Whit Colvin spoke to the commission members about the desegregation order in Huntsville, and Dr. Richardson and Mrs. Emily Shultz updated the Commission on the current progress of the STAR Academy application.

Dr. Richardson informed the Commission of a meeting that was held with Senator Del Marsh and invited Mrs. Emily Shultz to recount the items discussed with him. Mrs. Emily Shultz informed the Commission of some possible legislative actions that could be forthcoming such as clarification for the request for proposals and funding.

Mr. Mac Buttram made a motion that the Commission help facilitate the work for SLAM's approval as long as it was appropriate and Mrs. Gloria Batts seconded the motion. All voted in favor of this action.

ADJOURN

With no members offering additional items for discussion, Dr. Richardson asked for a motion and second to adjourn. Mr. Mac Buttram made a motion and Mrs. Batts seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion was approved on a vote of 6-0.

**Alabama Public Charter School Commission
Tuesday, April 25, 2017, 9:30 A.M.
Auditorium, Gordon Persons Building, Montgomery**

MINUTES

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission met on Tuesday, April 25, 2017, at 9:30 a.m. to consider and approve public charter school appeals and other relevant concerns.

Members of the Commission who attended/participated in the meeting were as follows:

Ed Richardson
Gloria Batts
Mac Buttram
Henry Nelson
Thomas Rains
Terri Tomlinson
Lisa Williams

WELCOME / APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Dr. Ed Richardson opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He asked for any additions or changes to the agenda and added remarks about the terms of the Commissioners. Mr. Henry Nelson made the motion to approve and Thomas Rains seconded it. The vote was unanimous. Dr. Richardson shared the decision of Mr. Thomas Rains and Mrs. Alma Freeman to not seek reappointment to the Commission. He added the approval of resolutions commending the work of both Commissioners. Mac Buttram motioned to approve the resolutions and Lisa Williams seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Mrs. Logan Searcy read the resolutions commending both commissioners. Thomas Rains commented on his decision and hopes for the future of the Commission. Dr. Richardson noted that the action was taken due to the timing of the next meeting. Dr. Richardson outlined the items on today's agenda.

AUTHORIZER GUIDANCE

Dr. Richardson asked Mrs. Logan Searcy to explain the guidance that has been given to local education agency authorizers. Mrs. Searcy explained the guidance and the background to it. Dr. Richardson asked clarifying questions in regard to the guidance and whether or not the Commission could act on the appeals. He recognized that legal opinions would be sought.

RECOGNITION OF THE ROTATING MEMBER/PRESENTATION FROM ROTATING MEMBER

Dr. Richardson recognized Mr. Cedric Tatum as the rotating member of the Commission from the Birmingham School Board and described his position on the Board. Mr. Tatum addressed the Commission in reference to its position as either an authorizer or as an appellate body. Mr. Tatum explained the points in the denial of the charter school applicant, Rising Star. He emphasized that the decision was not related to just one point and stated that they had eight other reasons for denial. He explained the eight points including budget, revenue, class size, facility, conflict of interest, and special populations. In addition, he stated that portions were from Colorado and not Alabama. He also stated that the National Association for Charter School Authorizer's (NACSA) review had information that was not available at the time of the initial application review. Mr. Tatum also stated the reasons for the denial of the charter school applicant, iBestow. He commended them for addressing the dual immersion priority but explained that the plans were not detailed, and the application did not address the standards. He stated that Birmingham City Board of Education followed the correct process.

QUESTION AND ANSWERS

The Commission asked Mr. Tatum clarifying questions in regard to the authorizer review process. Mr. Nelson asked if Birmingham City would likely do a Spanish immersion school. Mr. Tatum stated that they could begin the process and grow it. He stated that they could recruit teachers. Mr. Nelson asked why they had not done it themselves and if the RFP put undue burden on the charter school applicants. Mr. Tatum stated that they now have a better timeline and have more communication to overcome obstacles. He could not comment other peoples' intent. He stated that there were gaps in the applications that needed to be addressed. Dr. Richardson asked if they had completed a study on the needs of the system in regard to dual language. Mr. Tatum stated that he did not know since he was not a part of the process at that time. Mr. Tatum pointed out again that NACSA had details that they did not have upon the original submission. Mr. Thomas Rains questioned if there was an external review team for the application review and Mr. Cedric Tatum stated that they did not have one.

RECOGNITION OF RISING STAR ACADEMY/PRESENTATION BY RISING STAR ACADEMY

Mr. Moore, Rising Star executive director of 501C-3, and Mrs. Jonta Morris, executive director of the Rising Star Academy, responded to the items presented by Mr. Tatum. They stated that the RFP was narrow in focus and they had attempted to communicate with Birmingham and was not given help in the process. Mr. Beavers, pastor of Rising Star, stated that they he had recorded the interview and could share that they could share it. They stated that some of the information was new and some was not. Dr. Richardson asked that they provide the information to the

Commission. Mr. Nelson asked how high the wall was between the church and the school. Mr. Beavors responded that it was high and the separation clear. Lisa Williams asked if the church had considered being a private school, and Mr. Beavors responded that he felt it was a civil right issue, so no, he believed it should be public.. More questions and answers continued to explain the focus of the school. Dr. Richardson and Mrs. Batts asked for further clarification on when changes were made to the application such as their partnership with High Marks. Dr. Richardson asked for a short break.

RECOGNITION OF IBESTOW AND PRESENTATION

IBESTOW applicants, Mr. and Mrs. Lee Loder presented a short video for iBestow and gave an overview of the plans for the school.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Mr. Nelson asked Mr. Tatum if iBestow had addressed the dual immersion component. Mr. Tatum stated that they had addressed it, but there were not enough details. Mr. Rains asked about the difference in k4 and K-12 education. He also asked about a separate lottery. Mr. Loder stated that they had plans for a separate lottery. Mr. Loder explained that his organization had a separate 501C-3 than the charter school would have, and that they had not applied for the separate one at this time. He stated that they could, and it would not take long. Mrs. Williams asked a question in regards to K-5. Mr. Tatum stated that there were gaps in the application that needed to be addressed and stated that applicants could reapply in the Nov. 1 release of the RFP. He also stated that things needed to be in place first and not after. Mr. Rains asked about the employees' hours and the hours of the school. Mr. Loder said that these issues would be addressed after approval and were based on what is occurring in their current program. Mr. Rains addressed vacation leave, and Mr. Loder stated that this too would be addressed. Mrs. Batts asked if they had formed a separate 501C-3. He stated that they had not but they had plans to do so.

PARCA UPDATE AND BUDGET

Dr. Richardson ASKED Mrs. Logan Searcy for an update on the PARCA Contract and the budget. She stated that the contract must go before the review committee and the budget would be available at the May meeting.

SLAM PETITION

Sports Leadership and Management (SLAM) had their attorney present a petition to lift the condition on the approval of their charter school in Huntsville. The attorney requested that the

Commission complete an analysis to determine if the charter school would negatively impact the Huntsville School System's effort for desegregation. Dr. Richardson asked for clarification of what they needed and stated that a legal opinion would be needed.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Richardson asked Mrs. Searcy to take a poll to see the best time for a meeting. He stated at the May meeting they would be reviewing applicants, electing officers, approving a budget, reviewing plans with PARCA and seating new commissioners. A motion was made by Mr. Buttram and seconded by Mrs. Batts to adjourn. The vote to adjourn was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

**Alabama Public Charter School Commission
May 2, 2017 1 P.M.
Teleconference Meeting**

MINUTES

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission met on Tuesday, May 2, 2017, at 1 p.m. 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 teleconference meeting were as follows:

Gloria Batts Cedric Tatum (Rotating Member of the Commission)
Mac Buttram
Lisa Williams
Henry Nelson
Thomas Rains
Ed Richardson
Terri Tomlinson
Chad Fincher

Welcome

Dr. Ed Richardson opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He asked for a roll call of the Alabama Charter School Commission (APCSC). He introduced Mr. Cedric Tatum as the rotating member of the APCSC.

Approval of the Agenda

Dr. Richardson introduced the Agenda and stated the need for an executive session. The motion to approve the agenda was given by Mrs. Terri Tomlinson and Mr. Henry Nelson seconded the motion. The vote to approve was unanimous. Dr. Richardson stated he would entertain the motion for an executive session. Motion was made by Mrs. Terri Tomlinson and seconded by Mr. Henry Nelson. The vote was unanimous.

Roll Call and Approval of Minutes

Dr. Richardson called for a roll call after the Commission returned from executive session. The following commissioners were present: Mac Buttram, Thomas Rains, Ed Richardson, Terri Tomlinson, Gloria Batts, Chad Fincher, Henry Nelson, Lisa Williams, and Cedric Tatum.

Dr. Richardson called for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 25th meeting. Mr. Thomas Rains made the motion and Mrs. Lisa Williams seconded the motion. Eight voted to approve and one abstained.

Discussion of Appeal and Issues to Address

Dr. Richardson asked for a consideration of the appeals. A motion was made by Mr. Thomas Rains to overturn the decision of Birmingham City to deny Star Academy. Mac Buttram seconded the motion. Dr.

Richardson read the memo he received from Mr. Michael Sentence, State Superintendent. Dr. Richardson asked for a legal opinion from Mrs. Juliana Dean. Dr. Richardson summarized his interpretation of the memo. He stated that the Commission is not restricted based on larger issues in the system. Mr. Cedric Tatum asked the legal counsel to interpret the law and maintained new information was provided to the Commission and if the Commission overturns, it will make it difficult for authorizers to do their job. Mr. Thomas Rains stated that he agreed with the memo and stated the reasons by law that the Commission has the authority to overturn.

- High quality application was submitted by applicant
- Open meeting was held on April 24th in Birmingham, AL
- Academic data from the Birmingham City School System indicates that their denial was not supported since the proficiency in Birmingham City is well below the mean
- There are no other charter schools in the area
- Birmingham City did not follow nationally recognized standards for authorizing. There was not evidence of clarity and transparency, and it was not open to diversity since it narrowly defined the RFP.
- Birmingham City did not use an external evaluator for the evaluation and review of the application which is needed according to nationally recognized standards for authorizing.

Mrs. Lisa Williams affirmed the reasons stated by Mr. Rains and added that the applicant should be careful not to co-mingle church and school. Mr. Cedric Tatum stated that the five areas have not been met since the applicant added new information. He questioned the Commission's use of NACSA since Birmingham had used them for the RFP development. Dr. Richardson stated that the Commission has had a two-year contract with NACSA. There is no conflict of interest since Birmingham did not use them for the review of the application submitted. Dr. Richardson asked for a roll call for the vote to overturn the denial of Star Academy. Eight voted to approve the motion to overturn and one voted against it.

Dr. Richardson called for a motion for IBestow. Mr. Thomas Rains made the motion to uphold Birmingham City's decision to deny. Gloria Batts seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Dr. Richardson informed the Commission of the Sports Leadership and Management's (SLAM) request to remove the condition part of their approval. Mrs. Juliana Dean requested Whit Colvin to summarize a resolution removing SLAM's need to return to the Commission after the judge's decision; however, the Commission is not in a position to approve without that clarification. He asked the counsel to forward the resolution to SLAM.

Dr. Richardson informed the Commission that the deadline for new application was May 1st. The Commission has three new applications and will need to meet before the end of the terms of some of the Commissioners if possible. He requested that Logan Searcy polled the Commissioners for the best date. He gave a short summary of the current budget and asked for any thought before adjourning.

ADJOURN

With no members offering additional items for discussion, Dr. Richardson asked for a motion and second to adjourn.

Alabama Public Charter School Commission
July 24, 2017 1 P.M.

MINUTES

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission met on Monday, July 24, 2017 at 1 P.M. at the Gordon Persons Building in P103 and via teleconference to consider matters relevant charter school applications and 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:

Mac Buttram
Lisa Williams
Henry Nelson
Charles Jackson
Ed Richardson
Terri Tomlinson
Melissa McInnis
Rick Carter (Rotating Member from Athens City Schools)

Welcome

Dr. Ed Richardson opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He asked for a roll call of the Alabama Charter School Commission (APCSC). He introduced the new members of the APCSC. He also recognized Dr. Rick Carter the rotating member from Athens City Schools.

Approval of the Agenda

Dr. Richardson introduced the Agenda. The motion to approve the agenda was given by Mrs. Terri Tomlinson and Mr. Mac Buttram seconded the motion. The vote to approve was unanimous.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Richardson asked for the approval of June 27, 2017 minutes. Henry Nelson made the motion to approve the minutes, and Mac Buttram seconded the motion. The motion to approve was unanimous.

Approval of 2017-18 Timeline

Logan Searcy explained the need for the timeline for the 2017-18 school year. Dr. Richardson called for a motion to approve the timeline. Melissa McInnis made the motion to approve the timeline and Mac Buttram seconded the motion. It was approved by a unanimous vote.

Acceptance of Resignation of Melinda McClendon

Mac Buttram read letter of resignation from Melinda McClendon. She is resigning due to starting a new job that will prevent her from attending meetings. Terri Tomlinson moved to accept the resignation and Henry Nelson seconded it. The vote was unanimous to approve.

Letter of Withdrawal from Infinity Learning Center

Dr. Richardson called for a motion to consider the acceptance of the withdrawal for Infinity Learning Center. Melissa McInnis made the motion to accept the letter of withdrawal and Henry Nelson seconded the motion. Mac Buttram recused himself from the vote. Dr. Richardson invited Mrs. Charlotte Meadows to address the Commission. She asked to resubmit and be given consideration of a 2018 start date if approved. The vote was unanimous to accept the letter of resignation.

University Charter School Resolution

Dr. Richardson called for a motion to approve the resolution for the approval of The University Charter School. The Commission reconvened from lunch, and Dr. Richardson called the roll. Mac Buttram made the motion to approve the resolution and Henry Nelson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to approve the resolution.

Meeting Dates

Meeting dates for the 2017-18 school year were announced, February 12th and April 16th.

Teen's Path to Success

Dr. Richardson welcomed Teen's Path to Success and introductions were made. The applicant addressed the Commission, and it was followed by a question and answer period. The Commission addressed the concerns outlined in the NACSA review. After a discussion of the 60 day timeline, the Commission discussed an opportunity to be given to the applicant to address the concerns in the report. A due date of August 11th was given to have a response. Mac Buttram made the motion to give a conditional approval based on the a acceptable response by August 11th with the Commission voting again to either accept or reject the application on the meeting to be held August 21, 2017. Henry Nelson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to give TPS a conditional approval.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting was adjourned.

Alabama Public Charter School Commission
September 22, 2017 9 A.M.
Teleconference

MINUTES

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission met on Friday, September 22, 2017, 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:

Mac Buttram
Tommy Ledbetter
Lisa Williams
Henry Nelson
Charles Jackson
Terri Tomlinson
Chad Fincher

Welcome and Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Mac Buttram opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He asked for a roll call of the Alabama Charter School Commission (APCSC).

Vote for Approval of Resolution Commending Dr. Ed Richardson

Mac Buttram called for a vote for a resolution commending Dr. Ed Richardson for his work as chairman of The Alabama Public Charter School Commission. Dr. Richardson resigned, so he could assume the role of Interim State Superintendent of Education. Chad Fincher made the motion and Tommy Ledbetter seconded the motion. It was approved by a unanimous vote.

Vote for the Vice Chairman of the Commission

Mac Buttram called for a motion for a Vice Chairman of the Commission. Mac Buttram became chairman when Ed Richardson resigned, so a vice chairman position was open. Terri Tomlinson made the nomination for Lisa Williams. Lisa Williams graciously declined and nominated Henry Nelson. Charles Jackson made the motion to close the nominations and Chad Fincher seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Tommy Ledbetter seconded the nomination for Henry Nelson as Vice Chairman. The vote was unanimous.

Vote for the Approval to contract with Adams and Reese, LLC

Mac Buttram introduced the proposal from Adams and Reese, LLC. Adams and Reese addressed the Commission on legal services discussed in the proposal. Chad Fincher made the motion to accept the proposal for legal services and Lisa Williams seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Discussion of the Approval of the Charter Contract with University Charter School and WebEx Announcement

Mac Buttram introduced the charter contract with University Charter School. Adams and Reese, LLC made it transparent that they are representing The University of West Alabama; however, they will opt out if it ever becomes a conflict of interest. In this scenario, they recommended ALSDE legal counsel review the charter contract. The Commission will wait to get that recommendation. Tommy Ledbetter made the motion that Mac Buttram would have the authority to sign the charter contract pending the legal review by the ALSDE legal counsel. Logan Searcy announced the Applicant WebEx to be held on October 5th.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting was adjourned.

Alabama Public Charter School Commission
February 12 9: 30 A.M.
Face to Face and Teleconference

MINUTES

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission met on Monday, Feb. 12, 2018, in the Gordon Persons Building Willie J Paul Conference Room 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:

Mac Buttram	Absent: Charles Jackson
Tommy Ledbetter	Terri Tomlinson
Lisa Williams	
Henry Nelson	
Ibrahim Lee	
Chad Fincher	
Melissa McInnis	

Welcome

Mac Buttram opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He asked for a roll call of the Alabama Charter School Commission (APCSC). Henry Nelson made the motion to approve the agenda, and Melissa McInnis seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Henry Nelson made the motion to approve the minutes and Tommy Ledbetter seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Mac Buttram introduced Mr. Ibrahim Lee, the new Commissioner.

Commission Terms to Expire

Mac Buttram reminded the Commissioners that some will have terms that will be expiring in May. Those who can and choose to be reappointed should inform Logan Searcy. He also introduced Michael Berson from Adams and Reese who is the legal representation for the Commission.

Performance Frameworks

Mac Buttram made note of the Performance Frameworks and asked Logan Searcy to explain the contents. There are three frameworks: academic, organizational, and financial that will be used to monitor and evaluate the charter schools. Logan explain the contents and gave credit to NACSA and Washington State. Lisa Williams commended the frameworks. Logan described Charter.tools and placing the frameworks into the platform. Logan updated the Commission on the monitoring of Accel in December, and Accel's

upcoming monitoring in the spring by the ALSDE. This summer there will be pre-monitoring of the upcoming school who will open in 2018.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Mac Buttram noted the need to approve the Agenda and minutes. Henry Nelson made the motion to approve the agenda, and Melissa McInnis seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Henry Nelson made the motion to approve the minutes and Tommy Ledbetter seconded the motion

Approval of a Grant Writer

Mac Buttram informed the Commission of the need for a grant writer and the request for proposal for one. Logan emphasized the need for a grant writer who has experience in writing charter school program grants. Lisa Williams made the motion to proceed with the process to obtain a grant writer. Henry Nelson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to approve, Also, Mac called for a motion to approve the frameworks. Melissa McInnis made the motion and Ibrahim Lee seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to approve the frameworks.

Presentation from Lead Academy

Mac Buttram introduced Charlotte Meadows from proposed school, Lead Academy to make a presentation. Members of the Board were introduced. They each spoke to the concerns addressed in the NACSA report and Unity Services share contractual information. Questions and answers followed the presentation. Commission members asked questions for clarification and received assurances around the Commission's concerns. The questions also addressed concerns listed in the National Association for Charter School Authorizers around contracts with American Charter Dev. and Unity Services and the other issues addressed in the report. Contracts and other aspects were noted that they must be approved by the Commission as a preopening condition in the charter contract. Mac Buttram called for a motion to approve or deny Lead Academy. Ibrahim Lee made the motion to approve and Melissa McInnis seconded the motion. The vote to approve was passed with a 5 (to approve) and one voted no. Mac Buttram abstained from the vote.

Vote to Approve:

Lisa Williams, Tommy Ledbetter, Chad Fincher, Melissa McInnis, and Ibrahim Lee

Vote to not approve:

Henry Nelson

Abstained: Mac Buttram

The Charter Contract will be executed within sixty days. It will outline all measures that must be met before the school can open.

Presentation from Legacy Prep formerly Star Academy

Mac Buttram introduced the director from Legacy Prep, Jonta Morris. Mrs. Morris gave the Commission an update on the past year and the name change. Mac Buttram called for a vote to approve the new charter contract with Legacy Prep as the official name to replace the former contract. Lisa Williams made the motion and Henry Nelson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to approve the new charter contract.

Meeting Adjournment

Mac Buttram adjourned the meeting.