



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MINUTES

CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

February 19, 2026

Arkansas Department of Education

DESE Auditorium

4 Capitol Mall

Little Rock, AR 72201

9:00 AM

I. Call to Order

The February 19, 2026, Regular Meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel (CAP) was called to order by the Chair, Dr. Sonja Wright-McMurray at 9:00 a.m.

Present (in person) were:

Dr. Wright-McMurray
Dr. John Bacon
Ms. Edie Stewart
Dr. Tina Moore

Absent was:

Dr. Crystal Beshears-Duncan

Attending the meeting via Zoom were Mr. Phil Baldwin and Ms. Toyce Newton.

II. Changes to Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

III. Action Agenda

Assistant Commissioner Dr. Darrell Smith presented the panel with accountability profiles for nine schools with charters expiring on June 30, 2026. The Charter School Office recommended to the CAP that charters be renewed for 5 years for the following schools:

1. Cave City High School Career and Collegiate Preparatory School
2. Cave City Middle School Career and Collegiate Preparatory
3. Cross County Elementary Tech Academy
4. Cross County High School--A New Tech School
5. Fayetteville Virtual Academy--A District Conversion Charter School

6. Mountain Home High School Career Academies
7. Southside Charter High School
8. Southside Junior High School
9. Westwind School for the Performing Arts

After discussion and questions from the panel, it was moved by Dr. Tina Moore to accept the recommendation of the Charter School Office and renew all nine schools for 5 years. The motion was seconded by Ms. Edie Stewart. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Consent Agenda

1. Minutes

It was moved by Ms. Edie Stewart and seconded by Dr. John Bacon to approve the minutes of the January 29, 2026, Charter Authorizing Panel Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Reports

1. KIPP Delta Public Schools

Mr. Kevin Smith, Superintendent of KIPP Delta Public Schools, returned as requested by the panel following the November 2025 CAP meeting to provide an update to the panel regarding district progress.

Mr. Smith reported progress in the areas of Special Education (SPED), district finances and teacher professional development.

VI. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 a.m.

The next meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel is scheduled for March 19, 2026.

Minutes Prepared By:

Ms. Regina Rihani
Charter School Office Staff
Arkansas Department of Education

Minutes Approved By:

Dr. Sonja Wright-McMurray, Chair
Charter Authorizing Panel
Arkansas Department of Education