



THE OFFICE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

160 South Hollywood Street, Room 138 • Memphis, Tennessee 38112
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Submitted October 16, 2024, for the October 17, 2024 Quarterly Commission Meeting

Dear Members of the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

Memphis-Shelby County Schools (“MSCS”) would like to begin by recognizing the thorough planning and execution of the Tennessee Public Charter Commission staff and Commission members throughout a robust appellate cycle, while also engaging in the Commission’s regular authorizing duties. MSCS appreciates the commitment of the team to upholding the Tennessee Quality Charter Authorizing Standards and ensuring transparent practices throughout the process.

MSCS believes in transparent standards for our charter schools based on the Tennessee Quality Charter Authorizing Standards. As an authorizer, we use this as our rubric to ensure consistency and equality in meeting the appropriate standards for approval and authorization. The appellate cycle and the recommendation from the review team affirm our standard of review to ensure a fair and rigorous process for all our applicants.

As an authorizer, MSCS wants to ensure that these fair practices are implemented for strong outcomes in our communities. Principle 1 of the Tennessee Quality Authorizing Standards states, “A quality authorizer. . . [s]ets high but attainable standards for approving charter applicants.” Standard 2 states that “A quality authorizer... grants charters only to applicants who demonstrate strong capacity to establish and operate a quality charter school.” The rigorous review and approval are based on the Tennessee Department of Education’s (“TDOE”) Application and Rubric, in which an applicant must meet or exceed standards in each of the required sections.

In following the TDOE scoring rubric, MSCS determined that Wooddale Middle School provided insufficient evidence of capacity in all sections; academic, operations, finance and Portfolio Review and Performance Record, thus, only partially meeting the standard for approval. Additionally, as noted in the Executive Director’s report, the independent review team also similarly scored the application as partially meeting the standard in all areas except finance, which was deemed as meeting the standard.

While we respect the recommendation of the Executive Director, we disagree. Wooddale Middle School has been a part of the Achievement School District for a full term with inconsistent academic performance. The Achievement School District was designed to serve as an intervention to students and the community. At this time, Wooddale Middle and much of the network, has not demonstrated long term success as a high performing school.

As an authorizer, it is MSCS’ responsibility to ensure that the plan articulated in the proposed charter school’s application can be executed to fidelity to provide strong outcomes for students. In the case of Wooddale Middle, the application partially meets standard in all sections and the school is not positioned to open successfully as a charter seeking authorization by the home LEA.

Memphis-Shelby County Schools appreciates the Commission’s time and respectfully requests that the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission overturn the Executive Director’s recommendation and affirm the Shelby County Board of Education’s decision to deny the charter application for Wooddale Middle School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Arlandra Parker".

Arlandra Parker
Director, Charter School Development