



**Charter School Subcommittee
Update on the March 14, 2018 Meeting**

Context

This memo summarizes the discussion of the March 14, 2018 subcommittee meeting on charter schools. The subcommittee members in attendance at the meeting were Elissa Kim, Wendy Tucker, and Gordon Ferguson. State Board staff and representatives from Green Dot Public Schools Tennessee and KIPP Nashville were also in attendance and presented to the subcommittee.

Discussion with Charter Schools Authorized by the State Board

The State Board currently authorizes three charter schools: Bluff City High School, operated by Green Dot Public Schools Tennessee, currently open and operating in Memphis; KIPP Antioch College Prep Elementary, operated by KIPP Nashville and scheduled to open in Nashville in August 2018; and KIPP Nashville Middle, operated by KIPP Nashville and scheduled to open in Nashville in August 2019.

The State Board invited Dr. Megan Quaile, Executive Director of Green Dot Tennessee, and Randy Dowell, Executive Director of KIPP Nashville, to present to the subcommittee about the progress of their schools and their work with the State Board.

Since Bluff City High School is currently in its first year of operation with 150 ninth grade students, Dr. Quaile presented internal data to the subcommittee for discussion, in lieu of state assessment data. Students at Bluff City will take the Algebra I and English I end-of-course exams in April 2018, and performance data from these assessments will be available in late summer/early fall. The internal data presented included:

Demographics of Bluff City High School

Enrollment	150
Free Lunch Eligible	100%
SPED Population	25%
EL Population	16%

The analysis provided by Dr. Quaile of the demographic data pointed out that both the special education and English Learner populations were higher than anticipated. Green Dot expects the special education population to decrease as the school increases in size. The subcommittee asked about the special education population and what Green Dot believes is the driver behind this large percentage of students. Dr. Quaile stated that parents know that Green Dot will be able to meet their students' needs, and therefore, the parents are opting into Bluff City for high school rather than attending their zoned high school.



Internal Benchmarking Data from Bluff City High School

	The change from fall to winter in the percent of students performing:		
	At or above grade level	One grade level below	Two or more grade levels behind
Reading	+8.9%	+8.2%	-17.1%

	The change from fall to winter in the percent of students performing:		
	At or above grade level	One grade level below	Two or more grade levels behind
Math	+7.9%	+4.6%	-12.5%

The analysis provided by Dr. Quaille of the academic data indicated that the school is seeing more success growing students in its literacy in comparison to math. Accelerating the growth of students in math has been a focus of the second semester for the school. The subcommittee asked for clarification around how the school is tracking students who are far behind grade level, and Dr. Quaille stated that Green Dot has worked with Instructional Partners, an outside contractor, to increase the instructional rigor within classrooms. However, with such a large percent of students who are far behind grade level (K to 2nd grade level), Green Dot understands that this growth may not translate into high TVAAS growth on state assessments.

School Culture Data for Bluff City High School

Average Daily Attendance	92%
Chronic Absenteeism	28%
Detention Average	26
Suspensions (15 incidents)	25
Average Suspension Days	1.2
Expulsions	0

Dr. Quaille’s analysis of the school culture data was that the chronic absenteeism rate is higher than Green Dot wants it to be, but it is not uncommon for Memphis. The subcommittee members and Dr. Quaille discussed the strategies that the school is using to decrease the chronic absenteeism rate and how the school is utilizing restorative justice practices to minimize discipline incidents.

Randy Dowell of KIPP Nashville discussed the pre-opening process for KIPP Antioch College Prep Elementary, which is opening in August 2018 with kindergarten. The school projects that it will enroll 140 students in kindergarten, and it will co-locate with another charter school during the 2018-19 school year while it builds a permanent facility in the Antioch area of Davidson County. Since there has been a change in grade structure and enrollment from the charter agreement, the State Board staff explained that this necessitated an amendment to the charter agreement with KIPP Nashville which will be presented to the State Board at the April meeting.

Next Steps

- The subcommittee discussed reconvening after state assessment data is back to have a full discussion on the performance of Bluff City High School based on the [State Board's charter school performance framework](#).

State Board Rule on the Charter School Authorizer Fee

Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-13-128 allows local boards of education to collect an annual authorizer fee that is a percentage of the charter school's per student state and local funding. The annual authorizer fee is set forth in law as the lesser of three percent (3%) of the annual per student state and local allocations or thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000) per school.

At the April meeting, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) will present a State Board rule governing the use and reporting of the authorizer fee by local boards of education, and during the subcommittee meeting, the members reviewed an early draft of the rule. The subcommittee provided the following feedback on the draft rule which was provided to the TDOE by the State Board staff.

- Ensure there is clarity around the specific uses of the authorizer fee so that local boards of education use the least amount of funds necessary.
- Provide specificity around the use of the authorizer fee as it relates to technology and software fees to ensure schools are not nicked and dimed for services.
- Ensure clarity around the uses of the fee for salaries and personnel, especially for roles outside of the charter school office.
- Clearly specify the reporting requirements of authorizers and when and how an authorizer will be required to return unused or misappropriated money to charter schools.
- Reach out to stakeholders (authorizers, charter school operators, and charter school support groups) for feedback on the rule prior to the April State Board meeting.

Next Steps

- The TDOE will present the charter school authorizer fee rule on first reading at the April State Board meeting, and the TDOE and State Board will continue to collect feedback on the rule language prior to the July board meeting.

State Board Charter Authorization Planning for School Year 2018-19

The State Board staff provided updates to the subcommittee on the board's charter school authorization work in school year 2017-18 and how it is preparing to add a second school in 2018-19. The staff discussed how the State Board fulfills its responsibilities of serving as the local educational agency (LEA) and the charter school authorizer for its authorized charter schools.

The staff discussed completion of the first annual site visit of Bluff City High School on March 1, 2018 in compliance with State Board Policy 6.500 – Oversight and Evaluation. Additionally, the staff discussed



upcoming items on the State Board meeting agenda including revisions to LEA policies and the State Board charter school authorizing policies. The staff also presented on how the district and authorized charter schools are in compliance with the SAVE Act through the development of a comprehensive, district-wide safety plan.

While reflecting on this year and planning for the 2018-19 school year, the staff shared that they have built strong relationships with key stakeholders to ensure they are able to accomplish their work. The State Board has initiated its planning process for the next school year including the submission of the required LEA plan, budgeting for 2018-19, and ensuring proper staffing, through both full-time employees and contract roles, to oversee the State Board's authorizing responsibilities.