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Hamilton County Schools Statement for Empowerment Academy of East Tennessee Appeals Hearing October 8, 2026

Hamilton County Schools appreciates the time and effort invested by Empowerment Academy of East Tennessee in developing and amending its charter application. HCS recognizes the value of providing families with additional educational options and takes seriously its responsibility to carefully evaluate each proposal.

HCS reviewed both applications using the Tennessee State Board of Education's Quality Charter Authorizing Standards and charter application rubric. The review included independent evaluation, a capacity interview, and a consensus review.

HCS ultimately recommended denial because the amended application did not provide sufficient evidence that Empowerment Academy had the capacity and readiness to successfully open and sustain a high-quality public school.

The review identified significant concerns across several key areas. Academically, the application lacked sufficient specificity regarding curriculum, measurable goals, and implementation of the proposed multi-grade model. Student population projections and recruitment plans were not adequately supported by evidence. Governance and operations did not yet demonstrate sufficiently developed structures and systems to open and manage the school. Financially, concerns remained regarding unsecured funding, revenue and expense assumptions, staffing allocations, and long-term sustainability.

Additionally, the proposal called for an emerging CMO to open three schools simultaneously without sufficient evidence that the necessary infrastructure and organizational capacity were in place to support that level of expansion.

While the amended application addressed some concerns, significant concerns remained regarding the school's readiness and organizational capacity. Based on the evidence presented in the application and review process, HCS could not conclude that Empowerment Academy had demonstrated the capacity necessary to successfully open and sustain the proposed school.

Thank you.