

TO: Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

FROM: Tess Stovall, Executive Director, Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

DATE: October 28, 2020

SUBJECT: Executive Director Updates

Background

This report is the first of the regular updates that I will provide to the Charter Commission on the stand-up of the Commission and general operational updates that have occurred since the previous quarterly meeting.

At the August 26, 2020 Charter Commission meeting, I shared a list of high-level priorities for my first three months in the executive director role, and, below, I provide the Commission with an update on the progress on those priorities.

- Onboarding/Relationship Building
 - I connected with each Commissioner individually on a phone call, and I plan to conduct monthly touch base calls with each Commissioner as we are in the set-up process. I started a monthly email to the Commissioners with general operational updates.
- Commission Staffing
 - Hiring General Counsel – I conducted a hiring process that has included phone interviews, interviews via a video call, and a performance task. I will conduct final round interviews with candidates during the first week of November, and I have offered candidates to do this interview in-person but socially distanced. I plan to make a decision by early November, and Commissioners will be notified when a candidate is selected and accepts the offer.
 - Hiring Director of External Affairs – I have permission to fill this position by receiving a state hiring freeze exception, and the job description is posted and distributed. I hope to have this individual hired by the end of November/early December. Commissioners will be notified when a candidate is selected and accepts the offer.
 - Other Staffing – I have requested permission to fill a special assistant for policy and strategy position, and once I receive a hiring freeze exception, I will move forward on filling this position. Beyond these roles, the next priority roles are a director of authorizing and a director of finance and operations. I have applied for hiring freeze exceptions for both roles. Commissioners will be notified when candidates are selected and accept the offers.
- Operational Set-Up
 - Finalize Office Space – Please see the proposal in the packet of materials.
 - Fiscal Year 2022 Budget – Please see the proposal in the packet of materials.
 - 2021 Meeting Planning – Please see the proposal in the packet of materials.
- Tennessee General Assembly
 - Sunset Hearing – The Charter Commission’s first sunset hearing is scheduled for November 17, 2020 with the Education, Health, and General Welfare Subcommittee of

the Joint Government Operations Committee. Tom Griscom, Commission Chair, and I will testify on behalf of the Charter Commission.

- Government Operations Committee Rule Review – We have not been notified of our date with the committee for rule review, but we anticipate it coming in the next few months.
- Goal setting
 - Goals for Executive Director – Over the next month, I will work with the Commission Chair and the on-boarding leads, Wendy Tucker and Derwin Sisnett, to develop my goals for the next year. These goals are due within the state HR system by December 1, 2020.
 - Strategic Planning – This will be a focus of the staff beginning in 2021.
- Preparation for Renewal Appeals
 - At the Charter Commission’s December 2020 meeting, we walk through the renewal appeal process and a sample appeal. From a timeline perspective, districts are required to vote on renewal applications by February 1, 2021, and both Shelby County Schools and Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools are considering renewal applications in this cycle. Any renewal appeals would be considered by the Charter Commission at its April 2021 regular meeting.
- Communications
 - Website – The Commission’s website is projected to be launched the first week of November, and I will notify Commissioners when it is live.
 - Logo – I am working with the Department of General Services on a logo and branding, and I will share a draft of the logo with Commissioners before it is finalized.

Additional Priorities

- Looking into 2021, the following are the next priorities:
 - The establishment of LEA policies and procedures in preparation for assuming the LEA functions on July 1, 2021.
 - Building out the processes to support the LEA functions including federal programs and special populations oversight and student information systems, and we will begin meeting regularly with State Board staff to facilitate this transfer of responsibility.
 - The establishment of new charter agreements with authorized charter schools. The following schools will be authorized by the Commission:
 - Bluff City High School
 - KIPP Antioch College Prep Elementary
 - KIPP Antioch College Prep Middle
 - Rocketship Nashville #3 – slated to open in 2022-2023
 - Cornerstone Prep – slated to open in 2021-2022
 - Nashville Collegiate Prep – slated to open in 2021-2022
 - KIPP Antioch College Prep High School – slated to open in 2023-2024
 - Staff will begin the pre-opening process for any school slated to open in 2021-2022.