



Tom Griscom, Chair
Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

September 26, 2022

Dear Chair Griscom:

American Classical Education (ACE) requests that the Commission defer ruling on the appeals of ACE in Madison, Montgomery, and Rutherford County by 45 days. We request this deferral to ensure the Commission has clarity regarding the sponsor appealing the decision and the governing body that will operate the school.

In light of the questions asked by the Commission review committee in the capacity hearing and by the Executive Director in each of ACE's three public hearings, it seems that our efforts have confused the staff. As articulated in our capacity interview and appeal hearings, ACE did not want to wait to keep improving the governing body that would ultimately be bound by a charter agreement between the Commission (authorizer) and the sponsor (distinct entities, as defined in T.C.A. § 49-13-104), and would be responsible for operating the charter school in compliance with T.C.A. §49-13-111 and other applicable statutes.

We believe deferring the Commission hearing will ensure that Commission staff and commissioners have clarity regarding this legal issue, and that any lingering confusion is not allowed to outweigh the required best interests analysis. To ensure that the Commission staff can make a comprehensive recommendation focused on the merits of the application and the best interests of students, districts, and communities, ACE is happy to work with the Commission and its staff to provide additional documentation (which we have offered throughout the appeal process).

Additionally, while we understand the Commission's desire to break with precedent and create additional public speaking slots at the proposed hearing on October 5th, this last minute change to the agenda will impact the ability of local community members to attend the meeting and share their views on whether the proposed school would be in the best interests of the students, the district, or the community. Two of the three school districts where these schools would be located are on fall break the week of October 5. We have already heard from multiple families who would like to speak (and did not believe they would be given a chance to do so) that they will be unable to attend given previously scheduled plans.

For these two reasons, and with concern for the Commission's capacity to complete the unusually high number of appeals before it this year within the prescribed time frame, we ask that votes on ACE's appeals be deferred 45 days. We believe this will allow the Commission to ensure its decisions are in the best interests of the students, districts, or communities ACE proposes to serve.

Given the short time frame for all involved in this appeal, we ask that you reply as soon as possible to this request.

Sincerely,

SIGNED BY

Dolores Gresham, Chair Rich Haglund, Legal Counsel

CC:

Tess Stovall, Executive Director, Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

Joel Schellhammer, Executive Director, American Classical Education