



TO: Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

FROM: Tess Stovall, Executive Director

DATE: January 24, 2025

SUBJECT: KIPP Antioch Global Elementary School Addendum Request

Background

KIPP Antioch Global Elementary School ("KAGES"), operated by KIPP Nashville, the governing board, entered into a charter agreement with the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission ("Commission") on April 5, 2023. The agreement allowed the governing board to establish and operate KAGES in Davidson County serving kindergarten through fourth grade with a maximum enrollment of 600 students beginning in the 2024-25 school year. Subsequent to the signing of the charter agreement, KIPP Nashville exercised the option allowed under T.C.A. § 49-13-110 to delay opening by one year, setting the opening for the school to the 2025-26 school year.¹

In the original approved application, KAGES planned to initially serve students in kindergarten in Year 1, with subsequent expansion through the addition of one grade level annually. The school would then enroll all grade levels (kindergarten through fourth grade) beginning in 2028-29. However, through intentional facility planning, it was determined that KAGES would initially incubate within the existing KIPP Antioch Global High School Campus, which has a 1,000-student capacity. KAGES's decision to open with three grades (kindergarten through second grade), rather than the initially planned single grade, optimizes resource allocation from the outset. This strategic choice ensures a high-quality educational experience for its families while efficiently utilizing the space available during the incubation period within the existing high school. The thoughtfully designed grade bands accommodate year-over-year scaling within the existing facility, providing a sustainable model until the school can transition to its own space on the land already acquired. Additionally, this temporary incubation model reflects a commitment to both financial responsibility and the long-term vision of establishing separate elementary and middle school facilities when feasible.

In the case of KAGES, it was determined that the adjustment to initial grade bands was not a material modification and as such did not require a formal amendment petition, but instead through formal action would be considered an addendum to the current charter agreement. This is because while the incubation space can only hold a maximum of 300 students in the interim facility, the school still desires to maintain the rights to serve 600 students, in accordance with its charter agreement upon locating at its permanent facility. Commission staff independently reviewed the proposed plan, and the analysis below is based on materials submitted by the school and the numerous conversations between Commission staff and school representatives.

Analysis

The proposed addendum demonstrates a commitment to academic excellence by leveraging the existing KIPP Antioch Global High School campus to incubate the elementary school. This co-location strategy fosters a K-12 learning community, allowing for collaboration and shared resources across grade levels. Furthermore, the plan retains the ability to increase enrollment to its full charter capacity upon moving into its permanent facility, ensuring responsiveness to future demand and growth opportunities. Financially, by utilizing the existing facilities, the school avoids the immediate costs of new construction in a challenging financial climate marked by high-interest rates. The

¹ See T.C.A. § 49-13-110(b).



projected budget demonstrates a sound financial foundation, with a surplus expected in each year of operation. This prudent fiscal approach ensures the school's financial viability and its ability to deliver its mission and educational program effectively.

The facility plan is both thoughtful and realistic. The KIPP Antioch Global High School campus has sufficient capacity to accommodate the elementary school during its incubation period. The long-term vision includes separate facilities for the elementary and middle schools when financial conditions become more favorable. This strategic approach ensures a stable and conducive learning environment for students while maintaining financial sustainability. Operationally, the request outlines a detailed implementation plan, and the phased growth strategy allows for effective management of resources and staffing needs. The school's commitment to community engagement is evident in its plan to gather input from parents, students, and community members to ensure alignment with their educational needs and priorities.

Recommendation

Throughout the Commission staff's review of the addendum request for KAGES, staff found a strategic and thoughtful approach to opening the new school. By maximizing existing facility space, the plan effectively addresses financial and construction challenges through a phased growth strategy and efficient resource utilization. This approach prioritizes both academic excellence and community engagement, laying a solid foundation for the school's successful launch and eventual expansion to serve students in kindergarten through fourth grade within its own dedicated facility. Commission staff recommends approval of the charter agreement addendum by the Commission. Upon Commission approval, the addendum will permit the school to open in the 2025-26 school year serving students in kindergarten through second grade.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tess Stovall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tess Stovall, Executive Director
Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

January 24, 2025

Date