

BEFORE THE TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**2012 CHARTER SCHOOL APPEAL
GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-13-108, sponsors proposing to open new charter schools may appeal the denial of their amended applications by a local board of education to the State Board of Education (State Board).

On May 3, 2012, a hearing was held at the Shelby County Board of Education in Memphis, Tennessee, to consider Global Leadership Academy's appeal of the denial of its application by the Memphis City/Shelby County Unified Board of Education.

Based on the following procedural history and findings of fact, I believe that the decision to deny Global Leadership Academy's application was not "contrary to the best interests of the pupils, the school district, and the community", and therefore recommend that the Board affirm the decision of the Memphis City/Shelby County Unified Board of Education.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

1. The Memphis City/Shelby County Unified School Board of Education denied the amended application of Global Leadership Academy on October 25, 2011.
2. Global Leadership Academy amended and resubmitted its application.
3. On November 22, 2011, Memphis City/Shelby County Unified Board of Education voted to deny Global Leadership Learning Academy's amended application, following a unanimous recommendation of the review committee.

4. Because the denial was based, in part, on substantial negative fiscal impact, Memphis City/Shelby County Unified Board submitted documentation to the State Treasurer, David Lillard, on November 28, 2011.¹

5. On April 4, 2012, the State Treasurer determined that Global Leadership Academy's chartering would not have a substantial negative fiscal impact.

6. Global Leadership Academy then appealed the denial by email to the State Board, received April 9, 2012.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Shelby County Charter School Review Committee included the following individuals, who reviewed all of the applications submitted during this application window:

- a. David Stephens, Asst. Supt. Of Curriculum and Instruction, Shelby County Schools
- b. Karen Woodard, Director of Secondary Education, Shelby County Schools
- c. Tammy Mason, Director of Middle School Education, Shelby County Schools
- d. DeAnna McClendon, Director of Elementary Education, Shelby County Schools
- e. Anita Hays, Chief Financial Officer, Shelby County Schools
- f. Teresa Winter, Director of Finance, Shelby County Schools
- g. Joseph Anderson, Director of Purchasing, Shelby County Schools
- h. Marty Redding, Executive Director of Exceptional Children, Shelby County Schools
- i. Jeff Mayo, Director of Human Resources, Shelby County Schools
- j. Mike Tebbe, Chief of Staff, Shelby County Schools
- k. Mike Simpson, Asst. Supt. Of Operations, Shelby County Schools
- l. Herchel Burton, Asst. Supt. Of Student Services, Shelby County Schools
- m. Laura Link, Director of Professional Development, Shelby County Schools
- n. Marilyn Powell, Community Member
- o. Karen, Naccarato, Director of Employee Benefits, Shelby County Schools
- p. Shunji Brown, Director of Coordinated School Health, Shelby County Schools
- q. Michelle Beasley, Transportation Specialist, Shelby County Schools
- r. Sharon Farley, President, Shelby County Parent Teacher Association

¹ As provided in T.C.A. § 49-13-108 (b)(2).

2. Shelby County Schools employs a rigorous screening process based on the Principles for Quality Authorizing of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA).

3. Using the Tennessee Department of Education’s (TDOE) scoring criteria for the application, the review committee scored the application in each of the four domains outlined on the TDOE scoring sheet: Mission, Education Plan, Founding Group, Business/Operations Plan.

4. To be recommended for approval to the Memphis/Shelby County Unified Board of Education, applicants must score at least 86% in each of the four domains.

5. On the initial application, Global Leadership Academy’s scores were labeled according to the scoring criteria developed and promulgated by the Tennessee Department of Education. Global Leadership Academy Charter School earned a total of 25.5 out of 100 possible points:

Mission	0 out of 10 possible (0%; considered “inadequate”)
Education Plan	2 out of 40 possible (5%; considered “inadequate”)
Founding Group	14 out of 20 possible (70%; considered “inadequate”)
Business/Operations	9.5 out of 30 possible (32%; considered “inadequate”)

6. After the Memphis/Shelby County Unified Board of Education voted to deny Global Leadership Academy’s initial application, Shelby County Schools sent Global Leadership Academy the recommendation report of the committee, the average scores from the committee, and overall reasons for denying the Global Leadership Academy Charter School application.

7. Global Leadership Academy’s amended application earned a total of 42 out of 100 possible points:

Mission	0 out of 10 possible (24%; considered “inadequate”)
Education Plan	8 out of 40 possible (20%; considered “inadequate”)
Founding Group	18 out of 20 possible (90%; considered “excellent”)

Business/Operations 16 out of 30 possible (53%; considered “inadequate”)

8. After review of the application, the committee unanimously recommended denying the amended application. Ultimately, the Board determined that the authorization of the charter would be contrary to the best interests of the students of Shelby County Schools and would have a substantial negative fiscal impact on the overall school district budget. The committee had the following specific concerns:

a. Mission- In evaluating the application, the committee noted that the mission is vague and lacks a clear and compelling purpose for the school.

b. Education Plan- Among the many deficiencies cited in this section, the committee cited that the curriculum is underdeveloped and the instructional plan is unclear. The committee also found that the plan contained conflicting information in the narrative. Further, the committee noted that the assessment plan was minimally addressed and failed to demonstrate an understanding of student assessment needs.

c. Business Operations- The review committee found weaknesses in the operating budget, citing that the budget was insufficient to carry out the proposed school’s activities. Additionally, the committee cited concerns in the stated qualifications of the teachers and unclear hiring practices. Finally, they noted that there was no clear evidence that the funds for operating the school were obtainable and sustainable as cited in the application.

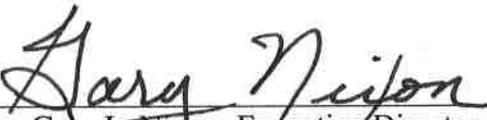
CONCLUSION

Pursuant to T.C.A. 49-13-108(b)(2), the State Treasurer, David Lillard, determined that the approval of Global Leadership Academy Charter School would not have a substantial negative

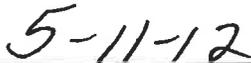
fiscal impact on Shelby County Schools. His determination is final, thus that issue will not be considered in my recommendation.

State law requires the State Board of Education to review the decision of the local board of education and determine whether the denial of the charter school was in the “best interest of the students, school district, and the community.”² In reviewing the Shelby County Schools scoring guide coupled with the evidence presented by both sides at the May 3rd hearing, it does not appear that Global Leadership Academy’s application meets the benchmarks necessary to open and sustain a high-performing charter school.

Based on the above findings, I do not believe that the decision to deny Global Leadership Academy’s charter application was contrary to the best interests of the students, the school district, and the community. Therefore, I recommend that the State Board of Education affirm the decision of Memphis City/Shelby County Unified School Board.



Dr. Gary L. Nixon, Executive Director
State Board of Education



Date

² T.C.A. § 49-13-108(a)(3).