

# Welcome & Hearing Overview

- Public Hearing: Consideration of a New Charter School Application
- Williams Arts and Technology Academy
- March 5, 2026 | Fort Wayne, Indiana
  - 6 – 7:15 p.m.
  - Pilgrim Baptist Church

# Call Hearing to Order

- Hearing called to order
- Conducted under Indiana Code 20-24 and Open Door Law.
- Introductions

# Intent of Hearing

- The purpose of this hearing is to provide an opportunity for public input regarding the proposed charter school application submitted by the organizing board of the Williams Arts and Technology Academy.
- Comments may be provided regarding the impact of the proposed charter school on the community.
- To align our expectations, this hearing is not a Q and A session, nor is it to be a forum to discuss other schools within the community.
- No decision is being made this evening.

# Agenda

1. Call Hearing to Order
2. Authorizer Evaluation Framework
3. Applicant Presentation
4. Public Comment Period
5. Summary and Next Steps
6. Adjournment

# USI Role as Charter Authorizer

- Authorized charter school authorizer under Indiana law
- Responsible for consideration of approval, oversight, and accountability
- Commitment to quality, equity, and compliance

# Authorizer Fact Sheet

- The University of Southern Indiana is a state-approved charter school authorizer (2021).
  - Aligned with Indiana Code 20 – 24
  - NACSA Principles and Standards
- USI has authorized two schools, Indiana Agriculture and Technology School and Springville Community Academy to date.
  - IATS has five (5) campuses
  - Springville Community Academy operates one K–8 campus in Lawrence County.
- Per Indiana code, charter schools are public schools operating under a charter.
- The USI Office of Charter Schools provides oversight and monitoring to authorized schools in four areas of focus on an ongoing basis:
  - Educational Performance
  - Operational Performance
  - Financial Performance
  - Equity



# Application Review Process

- Comprehensive application analysis
  - NACSA New Application Rubric
- Interviews and verification
- Assessment of student and community need
- Evidence of need/demand and value-add
- Public input consideration

# Proposed School Overview (Informational)

- Williams Arts and Technology Academy
- Arts-integrated and technology-focused model
- Serving Fort Wayne community

# Proposed School Timeline

- Notification of Intent
  - October 2025
    - Approved for Next Step
- Application Submission
  - December 2025
    - Due Diligence In Progress
- Public Hearing
  - March 2026
- Authorizer Decision
  - 10 – 12 Days Post Public Hearing

# Williams Arts and Technology Academy

Enter a Learner, Leave Ready to Serve

Dr. Debra Faye Williams-Robbins

**WATA**

# WILLIAMS ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY



# WATA



## ACADEMIC MASTERY

Classroom Size

Licensed and Certified Staff

Competency Based/Demonstrated  
Mastery Learning

Individual Student Success Plan

Literacy Focused /Science of  
Reading

Real World/Project- Based/  
Hands-on

Deep Learning Global  
Competency's

Critical Thinking Collaboration

Creativity Communication

Citizenship/Culture

Character Education/Connectivity

## ACADEMIC MASTERY

- Maximum class-size of 15
- Licensed and Certified Staff
- Proficiency and Mastery Learning
  - No Traditional Grade-Levels
  - No Traditional Grading
  - No Social Promotion
  - Must achieve proficiency. Ensures deep comprehension and retention.
- Student Success Plan – an individualized plan for each student utilizing pacing, assessments, interventions and supports.
- Research Based and Literacy Focused
  - Science of Reading
    - Structured literacy, utilizing research-based Science of Reading
    - Explicit instruction in Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development and comprehension.
- Hands-On, Real-World, Project-Based Instruction
- Michael Fullan's Global Competency's of Deep and Sticky Learning
  - Critical Thinking
  - Collaboration
  - Creativity
  - Communication
  - Citizenship/Culture
  - Character Education/Connectivity

# WATA

## WELLNESS/HEALTH

- Ongoing and Proactive Interventions through Mental Health Supports
- Listening to the Voice of the Child
  - Creates Empowerment
  - Improves Engagement
  - Helps in making informed decisions, considering feelings, perspectives, experiences, support needed and how to promote development
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma Informed Care
  - Training and Awareness
  - Implementation of Strategies
  - Working with Families
- Mental Health Counseling
- Conscious Discipline
  - Training and Awareness
  - Not Allow the Triggers of Adults to become the Issues of the Children
  - Ensuring Adults are Utilizing Best Practices of Child Development
- Vision, Hearing and Physical Screenings



### WELLNESS/HEALTH

Listening to the voice of the  
Child

Adverse Childhood  
Experiences/ACEs

Trauma Informed Care

Conscious Discipline

Therapeutic Counseling

Vision, Hearing and Physical  
Screenings

# WATA



## CONNECTIVITY/COMMUNITY

Community Support and  
Engagement

Parent Engagement/Support

Community Partners

Cultural Awareness, Self-Worth,  
Self-Respect and Community  
Pride

Service to Others

## Connectivity/Community

- Community Support, Engagement and Relationships
  - Enveloped within the community, supported by the community through time, talent, treasure and resources
- Parent Engagement/Support to and for
  - Regularly and continuously engaging parent voice in their child's development and the supports they need as a parent
- Community Partners
  - Neighborhood Partners
    - Engaging organizations, churches, neighbors, grandparents who know, live-in, and who understand the students, families and community.
  - Corporate and organizational partners willing to provide needed resources
- Cultural Awareness, Self-Worth, Self-Respect and Community Pride
  - Knowing the history of this nation and what makes them special and unique as a part of it.
  - Knowing the greatness with in, their potential, establishing future goals
- Service to Others

# WATA

# Arts and Technology Integration

SAMR Model, Music Therapy, Teaching Indiana Standards

- Not just focused using Technology or playing of an instrument, but the integration of arts and technology within all core content, throughout the learning experience:
  - Teaching math standards through a music project
  - Using music to teach fractions
  - Using song lyrics that children know and love, to teach poetry
  - Using the arts to promote de-escalation
  - Using technology not as a substitution for writing, reading, or completing assignments, but as a tool to redefine and create new tasks that were previously inconceivable
  - The use of the arts and technology to promote higher-order thinking skills, analyzing evaluating, and a life-long love of learning.

# WATA

# Operational Readiness

## Facility

Pilgrim Baptist Church

Public Charter not Parochial

The school is leasing Space

Zoning and inspections complete

Floors are in the process of being completely retiled In first floor classrooms, restrooms, and hallways. That process has been completed in other areas.

Policies and Procedures

**WATA**



Arts and  
Technology  
Integrated into the  
core curriculum

Literacy focused

Science of Reading

**WATA**

# Operational Readiness

## Financials

5 year projected budget based on student enrollment

Fundraising

Donations

Pledges

Similar to any public school

**WATA**

We can, whenever and wherever we choose  
successfully teach all children whose  
schooling is of interest to us; we already know  
more than we need to do that; and whether or  
not we do it must finally depend on how we  
feel about the fact that we haven't so far.

-Ron Edmonds-

Educational Researcher

**WATA**

# WILLIAMS ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY (WATA)

Enter a Learner, Leave Ready to  
Serve



# WATA

# Use of Public Input

- Documented and recorded comments
- Reviewed alongside application evidence
- Informs final authorizer decision

# Public Comment

- Total public comment period: up to **40 minutes**
- Individuals who have signed up before the hearing to speak will be **called randomly** until time expires.
- Each speaker: **2 minutes** with a 60 second warning
- Speakers **may yield remaining time back** to the moderator, but NOT to another individual
- Please **avoid repeating** previously stated comments
- Because of time constraints, not everyone that signs up to speak will have an opportunity.
- As you begin, **please state your name.**

At approximately the halfway point:

- One representative selected by the Superintendent of Fort Wayne Community Schools (3 minutes)
- One community representative selected by the WATA organizing board (3 minutes)

# Expectations for Conduct

- Address the topic of the hearing
- Maintain respectful and civil discourse
- Applause, outbursts, signs, noise makers, and personal amplification systems are prohibited
- No personal attacks, profane language, or disruptive behavior
- The hearing will be video recorded
- Disruptions may result in removal from the hearing

*The University of Southern Indiana Charter Schools Office reserves the right to amend, suspend, or adjust these public hearing procedures as necessary to maintain efficiency, order, and safety during the meeting.*

# Go-Forward

- The authorizer (USI) will complete due diligence, finalizing a decision.
  - Public comments presented previously, this evening, and over the coming days will be considered during this final phase of our review.
- The decision will be communicated and available on the USI Charter Schools Office website.

# Go-Forward

- Authorizer Decision Considerations:
  - Approve Proposal as Presented
  - Deny Proposal
  - Conditional Approval of Proposal
    - With Revisions

Thank you for attending and taking part in tonight's hearing.