



Applications for Two Alabama Charter Schools Approved

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One application for a public charter school was approved in full and another was conditionally approved in the latest meeting of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission on Tuesday. The University of West Alabama's application to open a University Charter school impressed the committee, but the committee will require further action from the second applicant, Infinity Learning Center.

UWA plans to open a charter school in Sumter County, where the largest private school recently announced it will have to close its doors. The University Charter School hopes to be open to Kindergarten through Fifth Grade students next fall, before transitioning to a full K-12 school the following year.

Sumter County residents will have the first opportunity to enter the enrollment lottery. The group behind the effort has raised over \$370,000 in donations, and they plan to house the school on UWA's Livingston campus.

According to Al.com, UWA's Johnnie Aycock said that Alabama's federal legislators support their effort to increase local school choice. "[U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos] actually knows about us," Aycock said.

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers rated UWA's proposed school highly on its three criteria: educational program design, operations, and financial plans. With the high review, the commission approved UWA's application unanimously.

Applicant number two, the proposed Infinity Learning Center, would operate out of Montgomery if its conditional requirements for approval are met. ILC plans to teach students concrete skills through job training and internships in aviation, legal services and law enforcement, health care and business fields. According to ILC chairman Charlotte Meadows, students could gain professional certifications or a two-year associate's degree through some of the schools offered programs.

However, the commission decided to only conditionally approve ILC's application due to its partial meeting of NACSA's standards.

An [analysis from the Cato Institute](#) shows that Alabama is in the middle of the pack when it comes to school choice freedom in the 50 U.S. States. Alabama's ranking was boosted by the

private scholarship tax credit law in 2013–14, but conservative and libertarian policy makers still acknowledge there is work to be done.