



Commissioner Mike Morath

1701 North Congress Avenue • Austin, Texas 78701-1494 • 512 463-9734 • 512 463-9838 FAX • tea.texas.gov

December 18, 2025

ACTION NEEDED

Brian Dillard, Board President
Akeem Brown, Superintendent
Essence Preparatory Charter School
4535 Lord Rd.
San Antonio, TX 78220

Re: Essence Preparatory Charter School (CDN 015-844)
Open-Enrollment Charter School Contract

Dear Mr. Dillard and Mr. Brown:

Thank you for completing the application for charter contract renewal. The purpose of this correspondence is to notify you that I am allowing the open-enrollment contract for the charter held by Essence Prep, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as the "charter holder") for Essence Preparatory Charter School (hereinafter referred to as the "charter school") to expire July 31, 2026, pursuant to Texas Education Code (TEC), §12.1141(d).

TEC, §12.1141(d) provides that the commissioner shall allow a charter contract to expire if (1) the charter holder has been assigned an unacceptable performance rating under Subchapter C, Chapter 39, for any three of the five preceding school years; (2) the charter holder has been assigned a financial accountability performance rating under Subchapter D, Chapter 39, indicating financial performance that is lower than satisfactory for any three of the five preceding school years; (3) the charter holder has been assigned any combination of the ratings described by Subdivision (1) or (2) for any three of the five preceding school years; or (4) any campus operating under the charter has been assigned an unacceptable performance rating under Subchapter C, Chapter 39, for the three preceding school years and such a campus has not been closed.

TEC, §39.0543 states that for purposes of public reporting requirements, an overall or domain performance rating of D shall be referred to as performance that needs improvement. An overall performance rating of D is included as an acceptable performance rating in statutory references if, since previously receiving an overall performance rating of C or higher, the charter school (1) has not previously received more than one overall performance rating of D; or (2) has not received an overall performance rating of F.

Pursuant to TEC, §39A.118(b), the agency may not implement certain interventions or sanctions if the performance rating initiating the action is based on the first or second overall performance rating of D, since previously receiving a rating of C or higher. Actions taken in accordance with §12.1141(d) are not subject to this provision.

A review of the charter holder's performance found the following:

- **Academic Performance:** Pursuant to TEC, §12.1141(d), the charter holder was determined to have academically unacceptable performance ratings of an F in 2022-2023, a D in 2023-2024, and an F in 2024-2025.

Because these ratings meet the expiration criteria in TEC, 12.1141(d), I must deny the petition to renew and allow the charter to expire.

Turnaround Plan

Pursuant to TEC §39A.107, your charter school was required to submit a turnaround plan by November 21st, 2025. If your charter school pursues informal review after receiving this closure notice, you must comply with revisions and resubmission according to the timeline provided by the School Improvement Division on the premise that the decision could be overturned during the review. Should you not pursue informal review, the feedback and revisions you receive will be aligned to school closure.

Conservator Appointment

Due to the expiration of the charter, a conservator will be appointed to the charter school to facilitate an orderly closeout of the charter school and to oversee the potential sale of state property.¹

The conservator will have all authority permitted under Texas law, including but not limited to, the following:

- Overseeing the financial management and governance of the charter school to ensure the charter school complies with state and federal law;
- Attending governing board meetings, including executive session, and directing the governing board as necessary, including all the actions needed to address the findings in the Final Audit Report required by 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC), §100.1077(a);
- Overseeing and reporting monthly to the Commissioner of Education on all closeout activities of the charter school, including the sale or disposal of property and assets; and
- Any other power necessary to effectuate the efficient closure of the charter.

The conservator may also direct, approve, or disapprove of any action of a principal of a campus or the superintendent of the charter school as the conservator deems necessary.² Please note that the appointment of the conservator does not relieve the charter school and its governing board of the responsibility to, at all times, operate the charter school in compliance with applicable statutes and rules. The agency reserves the right to implement interventions and sanctions under TEC, Chapters 12, 39, and 39A, and 19 TAC, Chapters 97 and 100, to address current or future deficiencies identified for Essence Preparatory Charter School.

The cost of the conservator's services will be paid by the charter school.³ The conservator's fee shall be \$250 per hour plus necessary travel expenses not to exceed the state per diem rate. Failure to make timely payments to the conservator may result in appropriate amounts being deducted from Foundation School Program (FSP) funds.

It is my sincere desire that all parties work together in a cooperative and productive manner with a focus on assisting the students and their families. Any questions about the conservator appointment may be addressed to Garrett Black, Director of Governance Interventions at (512) 463-9146 or Garrett.Black@tea.texas.gov.

Opportunity for Review

In accordance with 19 TAC, §157.1121, the charter holder has a right to request an informal review of the charter expiration and the decision to appoint a conservator under TEC, Chapter 39A, with a Texas Education Agency representative. Should you choose to request an informal review of the charter expiration and/or the appointment of a conservator, you must submit your written request to Leah Martin (contact information provided below), along with items and information to be considered, by **January 16, 2026**. Please note that the decision from an informal review regarding expiration is final and may not be appealed.

Pursuant to TEC, §39A.301, you are entitled to a SOAH review of the conservator appointment. To initiate this review, you

¹ 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §100.1077(b).

² TEC §39A.003.

³ TEC §39A.903.

may file a petition in accordance with the requirements outlined in 19 TAC, §157.1155. The petition must be received by TEA no later than the 15th calendar day after this notice was sent to you. However, should you request an informal review of the decision to appoint a conservator, the deadline to file the petition for a SOAH review will toll until you have received a final decision after the informal review.

A review request, written response, or other correspondence pertaining to this notice must be sent to:

Leah Martin, Director
Accreditation, Waivers, and Enforcement
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue Austin, Texas 78701
EnforcementCoordination@tea.texas.gov

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

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Mike Morath
Commissioner of Education

CC: Kelvey Oeser, Deputy Commissioner, Educator Support
Steve Lecholop, Deputy Commissioner, Governance
Marian Schutte, Associate Commissioner, Authorizing and Policy
Garrett Black, Director, Governance Interventions
Valerie Trevino, Division Director, Charter School Authorizing
Leah Martin, Director, Accreditation, Waivers, and Enforcement
Eric Marin, Deputy General Counsel, Office of General Counsel
Bridget Remish, Associate Counsel, Office of General Counsel