



USI approves charter school application for Williams Arts and Technology Academy in Fort Wayne

Following the review of application and public comment, the University of Southern Indiana, as a charter school authorizer, approved the application for Williams Arts and Technology Academy (WATA) in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Wednesday, March 18. The school is approved for a three-year term beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, serving students in grades K-3 in its first year.

“The University of Southern Indiana is committed to serving as a responsible charter school authorizer by partnering with schools that demonstrate a clear vision for high-quality, innovative and rigorous academic programming,” said Dr. Shelly Blunt, USI Provost. “Our approval of the Williams Arts and Technology Academy reflects the University’s confidence in the vision presented by the WATA organizing team and its potential to contribute meaningfully to the educational opportunities available to students in Fort Wayne, Indiana.”

Charter school authorizers do not run schools but are the entities that decide who can start a new charter school, set academic and operational expectations and oversee school performance. They also decide whether a charter should remain open or close at the end of its contract. USI was approved by the Indiana State Board of Education as a charter school authorizer in 2021 and serves as an approved charter school authorizer under Indiana Code 20-24.

The Williams Arts and Technology Academy is expected to serve approximately 120 students in its first year and will be located at 1331 Gay Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

“We want to thank USI for their approval, guidance and support, throughout this process,” said Dr. Debra Faye Williams Robbins, Executive Director of Williams Arts and Technology Academy. “We would also like to thank the Fort Wayne community and Pilgrim Baptist Church for their willingness to share their thoughts and ideas and help us during the planning process. We look forward to continued conversations, input and the opportunity

to provide a unique educational experience that addresses the needs of this community and those children and parents who need and want options.”

USI also authorizes two additional charter schools, including Indiana Agriculture and Technology School and the Springville Community Academy.

USI’s Charter Schools Office carries out these responsibilities consistent with Indiana Code and the statewide framework for monitoring and accountability of sponsors. The office’s policies and practices are grounded in nationally recognized standards for quality charter school authorizing and emphasize transparency, high expectations for performance and responsible stewardship of public funds.

Additional information including application and timeline processes can be found on the [Charter Schools Office website](#).