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Office of the Principal Chief

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May 6, 2026

TO: Council Leadership
FR: Chuck Hoskin, Jr.
Principal Chief
CC: Bryan Warner, Deputy Chief
Cabinet / Sub-cabinet
Howard Paden, Executive Director of Language
Jon Young, Counsel for the Council of the Cherokee Nation

**Administration Memorandum Advising Council of Intent to Terminate (by non-renewal)
ᎠᎯᏍᎦ ᎠᎯᏍᎦ *tsunadeloquasdi* Public School Charter with the State of Oklahoma, Directing
Action by Chief of Staff**

The purpose of this memorandum is advise the Council of the Cherokee Nation of my intent to terminate the Oklahoma public school charter agreement relating to [ᎠᎯᏍᎦ ᎠᎯᏍᎦ *tsunadeloquasdi*](#), the Cherokee Nation language immersion school, by directing this action by Chief of Staff Corey Bunch and advising Council of same, pursuant to Section 4, §3 of the [Durbin Feeling Language Education Act, as amended](#).

I. Principles of Self Governance and Present Capacity Warrants Terminating the Charter

Since June 2011 Cherokee Nation has operated a public school under a charter from the state of Oklahoma pursuant the [state's charter school law](#). The charter agreement includes benefits and obligations for Cherokee Nation. The benefits include financial support. The obligations include adhering to substantially all requirements imposed by the state through the Oklahoma Department of Education. Charter agreements can be terminated with notice, but operate on renewable terms of five years. Our current charter ends with the end of the State of Oklahoma's fiscal year ending June 30, 2026.

The Council and the Hoskin / Warner administration have raised and discussed the issue of the efficacy of the charter since 2019. This includes embedding a requirement under the Durbin Feeling Language Preservation Act, as amended in 2024, requiring the executive branch to issue a "Report on the Effectiveness of Cherokee Nation Language Immersion: 2011 to 2023." The resulting 2024 public report,

authored by Cherokee Nation’s Language and Education Departments and titled “[Report on Language Education Self Governance](#)” recommended termination of the charter. That analysis is further referenced in the a public report dated February 10, 2025 See [Biennial Report on the State of Cherokee Language \(2025\)](#), pg. 84. In addition to these reports being made public, the reports were distributed to the Council of the Cherokee Nation.

Given Cherokee Nation’s resources, successful outcomes and increased capacity relating to immersion education, this conclusion is inescapable: administering language immersion education through a state charter public school is incompatible with the principle of self-governance given our present circumstances. Principles of self-governance require that Cherokee Nation increase its exercise of authority over its own affairs in proportion to its increase in capacity and resources to do so and in connection with reducing legal barriers for doing so. Nowhere are these principles more vital to our future prosperity than the subject of Cherokee language immersion education. On that basis, and for reasons I have discussed elsewhere and as recommended by the Language Department, termination of our state charter is warranted.

The termination of the charter will not be consequence-free. Moving forward without a charter will require us to find approximately \$2.5 to \$4 million in funding to backfill funds attributable¹ to the charter. Rather than conclude, however, that the Cherokee Nation in 2026 cannot afford to lose state charter related funding, my judgement- informed in a purposefully transparent manner by careful study of our internal subject matter experts since 2024- is that Cherokee Nation cannot afford, in the final analysis, to *remain subject* to the state charter.

II. Authority Under the Durbin Feeling Act, Notice of Termination

Pursuant to Section 4.3, the Principal Chief is authorized to withdraw Cherokee Nation from the charter. Pursuant to that authority, I am notifying the Council by this Memorandum of that determination. More specifically, I will notify the State of Oklahoma of our decision not to renew the charter when it expires on June 30, 2026. We will remain operating under the charter until it expires, therefore freeing us from the charter ahead of the 2026-2027 academic year.

III. Directive to COS Bunch to Notify OSDE of Non-Renewal

By this memorandum I am also directing Chief of Staff Bunch to communicate the termination of the charter to the Oklahoma State Department of Education no earlier than May 18, 2026, and no later than June 30, 2026. He will provide a copy of the letter to Council Leadership.

¹ Funds attributable to the charter included state funds from the Oklahoma Department of Education as well as federal funds leveraged by our school’s status as a state public charter school.

IV. Proposed Legislation for a New Era for Cherokee Language Immersion Education

Administration will propose new legislation to guide our language immersion into a new era of education self-determination. Major elements of the proposed legislation will include:

1. **Reaffirmation that we reject the false choice** of choosing between preparing students for a lifetime of learning academic and other forms of learning without limits *and* an immersive language education experience that will help revitalize the Cherokee Language and culture. We will reaffirm that both interests are part of a single aim worthy of our best efforts.
2. **A requirement for external accreditation** from a bona fide third-party accrediting body that aligns with the goals of immersion education.
 - a. It is my intent to seek full accreditation of our Cherokee language immersion education program through the [World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium \(WINHEC\)](#). We are presently operating under a temporary accreditation.
3. **A newly formed Immersion Education Advisory Board**, with requirements for a mix of credentials ranging from language proficiency to professional education experience and with a mandate to evaluate the performance of our immersion school against a variety of metrics.
 - a. The current board will be dissolved, though I would propose that the three incumbent board members assume three of five seats that will be proposed in the legislation.

It is my intent to propose this legislation at a special Culture committee meeting on May 28 (subject to Council approval of scheduling), then to the Education Committee on June 8, Rules Committee on June 25, and a special Council meeting on June 25, ahead of the conclusion of the state charter agreement on June 30, 2026.

V. Conclusion

For the reasons set forth above the *d̥əʂɡiːd̥ʌ tsunadeloquasdi* charter will terminate on June 30, 2026, with notice of non-renewal issued by the Chief of Staff to the Oklahoma State Department of Education between May 18, 2026 and June 30, 2026 and Administration will propose legislation to the Council creating a framework for moving forward with language immersion education all in advance of a 2026-2027 academic year through which we fully assert our self-governance authority on the subject.



Chuck Hoskin, Jr.
Principal Chief