

# Instructional Days Amendment Request

## Charterholder Info

### Charter Holder

**Name:**  
CASA Academy

**CTDS:**  
07-82-18-000

**Mailing Address:**  
1500 W Maryland Ave  
Phoenix, AZ 85015  
> [View detailed info](#)

### Representative

**Name:**  
Jenna Leahy

**Phone Number:**  
602-759-0836

## Downloads

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## Contractual Days

200

To  
180


**Fiscal Year Effective Date**  
2017

**Type of Change**  
Permanent Change

## Attachment

Board Minutes –  [Download File](#)

School Calendar –  [Download File](#)

Daily Instructional Schedule –  [Download File](#)

Narrative –  [Download File](#)

**Additional Information**  
No documents were uploaded.

## Signature

**Charter Representative Signature**  
Jenna Leahy 04/27/2016

# CASA ACADEMY

## Minutes

### Board Meeting

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#### **Date and Time**

Monday April 4, 2016 at 6:30 PM

#### **Location**

CASA Academy, 1500 W. Maryland Ave. Phoenix, AZ 85015/ Dial-in Number: (712) 775-7031 Meeting ID: 356-190-185 Host PIN: 5293

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#### **Board Members Present**

D. Brown, N. Arrowsmith, P. Vemulapalli, T. Wee

#### **Board Members Absent**

#### **Non Voting Members Present**

J. Leahy, T. Clayton

#### **Guests Present**

A. Kirk, B. Locker, D. Puente, E. Bolick, J. Smith, M. Dahlen, R. Baughman

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### **I. Opening Items**

#### **A.Record Attendance and Guests**

#### **B.Call the Meeting to Order**

N. Arrowsmith called a meeting of the board of trustees of CASA ACADEMY to order on Monday Apr 4, 2016 @ 6:35 PM at CASA Academy, 1500 W. Maryland Ave. Phoenix, AZ 85015/ Dial-in Number: (712) 775-7031 Meeting ID: 356-190-185 Host PIN: 5293.

#### **C.Approve Minutes**

T. Wee made a motion to approve minutes from 3/7/16.  
P. Vemulapalli seconded the motion.  
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

### **II. Reports**

#### **A.Academic Excellence**

Working on retention report, retooling academic dashboard, dashboard will be presented at next meeting, Tacey is reaching out to schools across the country.

## **B.Development/Event**

### **C.Finance**

Putting together summary for each Board member for give or get requirement, sending each person an email with up to date give or get status, will upload dashboard for next meeting, Aspire is working on next year's budget.

### **D.Governance**

### **E.School Directors**

## **III. Old Business**

### **A.New Board Member Recruitment**

Discussion held. Mary will draft a new board member grid.

### **B.Strategic Planning**

Discussion held. Strategic planning is on hold pending facility decision.

## **IV. New Business**

### **A.Facilities/Architect Discussion**

Facility committee to be formed: Danielle, Danny, Tia, and Brian are interested in being involved.

### **B.200 Day Calendar Vote**

T. Wee made a motion to authorize a 180-day calendar for the 2016-2017 academic year to be implemented by the School Directors.

D. Brown seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

T. Clayton left early.

## **V. Closing Items**

### **A.Adjourn Meeting**

D. Brown made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

N. Arrowsmith seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
N. Arrowsmith



## **Instructional Days Amendment Request-Narrative**

### **1. Describe the reason for the change in instructional days, including how it will improve pupil achievement in the target population.**

CASA Academy is requesting a permanent change in instructional days from a 200-day calendar to a 180-day calendar for the following reasons:

#### *Academic Reasons:*

- a) **Teacher Burnout-** CASA Academy had six classroom teachers in the 2015-2016 school year. Of the three teachers that CASA asked to return to CASA for the 2016-2017 school year, all three teachers stated that they could not return to CASA due to its two-hundred day calendar. These three teachers indicated significant “burnout” due to the combination of CASA’s extended school day and extended school year.
- b) **Teacher Recruitment Obstacle-** Between January of 2016 and April of 2016, CASA interviewed 35 teaching candidates for positions at CASA for the 2016-2017 school year. Two of these candidates, after a rigorous interview process, were offered teaching positions at CASA Academy for the 2016-2017 school year. When these positions were offered, however, these teacher candidates ultimately turned the positions down because they wanted to work at 180-day calendar schools. Due to the fact that the majority of schools in Arizona have a 180-day calendar, it is difficult for CASA to compete for high quality teachers.
- c) **Student Burnout and Family Vacation Challenges-** Despite outreach attempts to communicate the importance of a 200-day calendar, in the summer of 2015, many CASA families approached June as a “summer month” despite CASA’s extended school year. This is due, in part, to CASA’s partnership with Empower College Prep, a 180 day calendar school that CASA shares bus transportation with; many families send their children to both CASA and Empower. In June of 2015, late bedtimes became more frequent for CASA scholars, school attendance was not as regular and family vacations occurred frequently. This significantly affected the amount of learning that could occur on campus during the four weeks of June; scholars were often absent, tired and distracted in class. This had a detrimental effect on learning in the classroom and on school culture.

#### *Financial Reasons:*

- a) **Student Transiency-** CASA Academy serves a population of 97% free or reduced priced lunch. Due to that fact that CASA serves a low-income population, over the course of the school year, a portion of CASA families, despite loving the school, are forced to

withdraw because they move away. At a 180 day calendar school, if a student withdraws after the 100th day, the 180 day calendar school is not penalized financially for having less students on the last day of school. As a 200 day calendar school, however, CASA must have the same amount of students on the 100th day of school and the 200th day of school in order to not incur a financial penalty. For example, in the 2015-2016 school year, nine CASA scholars withdrew between January 20th and April 11th due to the fact that they were moving. This means that unless CASA filled those spots, CASA would lose \$30,500 on the 200th day. While it may seem that it would be easy to fill these spots, a) many interested families do not want to switch their child's school so close to the end of the year and b) academically and culturally, it causes challenges for students to enter CASA so late in the year.

- b) Unfortunately, despite knowing about CASA's 200 day calendar and committing to enrolling their children at CASA, many parents still decide to take long vacations during the month of June. This affects CASA's attendance, in particular, for those parents who insist on taking 10 (or more) day vacations in the month of June. Although these families do not want to withdraw their children, because they have taken more than ten unexcused absence days off, CASA is forced to withdraw these students due to the fact that they have missed ten (or more) days of school. This, again, causes CASA to incur a financial penalty (see part A above).

#### *Improving Pupil Achievement*

- a) When CASA wrote this charter, CASA strongly believed that increased time in the classroom would yield significant academic gains in the classroom; CASA is still fully committed to its extended day program. Unfortunately, while extended learning time is beneficial, CASA cannot compete with the majority of 180-day calendar schools in Phoenix for high quality teachers. Due to its extended school year, CASA has struggled to recruit and retain outstanding teachers. Ultimately, it is more important for CASA to have the best possible teachers in the classroom than for CASA to have four extra weeks of school. For this reason, CASA seeks to decrease its school year, so that it can hire and retain exemplary teachers in future years.
- b) Although the four extra weeks of school were meant to increase student achievement, currently, they are causing significant student burnout. CASA students should be ready to focus and work hard when in they are in school. Unfortunately, due to the fact that June is treated as a summer month by many CASA families, CASA scholars are not able to focus on their school work as effectively in the month of June. Changing the school calendar from 200 to 180 days will enable students an adequate amount of summer rest so that they can be fully focused during the 180 days that they are in school.

- 2. Describe how the school calendar and daily instructional schedule(s) provided demonstrate compliance with A.R.S. §15-901 regarding annual instructional hours for each grade served.**

As demonstrated in Figure A.1, CASA Academy’s 180-day school calendar offers CASA scholars 1060 hours of instruction each year. For kindergarten, this is 704 more instructional hours than required by A.R.S. § 15-901, and for first through third grade, this is 348 more hours than required by A.R.S. § 15-901.

Figure A.1

Hours of Instruction Per Year		
Grade Level	State Requirement (ADE)	CASA Academy
K	356 (half-day K)	1060
1	712	1060
2	712	1060
3	712	1060

Additionally, as demonstrated by Figure A.2, CASA Academy exceeds the instructional minutes recommended by the State of Arizona for both developmental reading and language arts and math. CASA Academy offers 215 more instructional hours per week for developmental reading and language arts and 195 more instructional hours per week in math.

Figure A.2

Subject	Daily Minutes			Weekly Minutes	
	State of Arizona Recommendation	CASA Academy Full-Day	CASA Academy Early Release	State of Arizona Recommendation	CASA Academy
Developmental Reading and Language Arts	150	210	125	750	965
Math	60	105	75	300	495

**3. Describe whether the change will apply to all schools operated under the charter, or to identified school sites only.**

This change will apply only to CASA Academy (identified site). CASA Academy has only one school in its charter.

**4. Provide the timeline for implementing the change, including whether the Instructional Days Amendment Request will be submitted in conjunction with any other amendment or notification requests which would warrant concurrent consideration.**

*Timeline*

The timeline for implementing this change will occur as follows:

4/13/16- CASA Academy submits its Instructional Days Amendment Request.

8/1/16- The first day of school for the 2016-2017 school year occurs.

8/8/16- The Arizona State Board for Charter Schools approves CASA Academy's Instructional Days Amendment Request to move to a 180 day calendar.

5/19/17- CASA Academy's last day of school occurs for the 2016-2017 school year.

*Amendment Request Status*

CASA Academy's Instructional Days Amendment Request will not be submitted in conjunction with any other amendment or notification requests which would warrant concurrent consideration.



## 2016-17 School Year Calendar

Jul-16						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Aug-16						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Sep-16						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Oct-16						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Nov-16						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Dec-16						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Jan-17						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Feb-17						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

Mar-17						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Apr-17						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

May-17						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Jun-17						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

<b>Professional Development (staff only); No School for Scholars</b>
<b>First Day of School</b>
<b>Last Day of School/ Report Cards Sent Home</b>
<b>No School</b>
<b>Grading Period Ends</b>
<b>Report Cards Sent Home</b>
<b>Early Release Day</b>
<b>100th Day of School</b>





## 2016-17 School Year Important Dates

<b><u>July 2016</u></b>	<b><u>January 2017</u></b>
<b>July 11- July 29:</b> Staff Professional Development (PD)	<b>January 2:</b> No School for Scholars; Staff PD <b>January 16:</b> Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; No School <b>January 18:</b> 100 <sup>th</sup> Day of School
<b><u>August 2016</u></b>	<b><u>February 2017</u></b>
<b>August 1:</b> First Day of School	<b>February 20:</b> President's Day; No School
<b><u>September 2016</u></b>	<b><u>March 2017</u></b>
<b>September 5:</b> Labor Day; No School <b>September 6:</b> No School for Scholars; Staff PD <b>September 30:</b> Q1 Ends	<b>March 3:</b> Q3 Ends <b>March 10:</b> Q3 Report Cards Sent Home <b>March 13-17:</b> Spring Break; No School <b>March 20:</b> No School for Scholars; Staff PD
<b><u>October 2016</u></b>	<b><u>April 2017</u></b>
<b>October 7:</b> Q1 Report Cards Sent Home <b>October 10-14:</b> Fall Break; No School <b>October 17:</b> No School for Scholars; Staff PD	N/A
<b><u>November 2016</u></b>	<b><u>May 2017</u></b>
<b>November 11:</b> Veteran's Day; No School <b>November 23:</b> Early Release Day <b>November 24-25:</b> Thanksgiving Break; No School	<b>May 19:</b> Last Day of School; Q4 Ends; Q4 Report Cards Sent Home
<b><u>December 2016</u></b>	
<b>December 9:</b> Q2 Ends <b>December 16:</b> Q2 Report Cards Sent Home <b>December 19-30:</b> Winter Break; No School	