Review Email

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To

- michele.kaye@leonagroup.com
- bill.coats@leonagroup.com

Subject

First Year Site Visit Results

Email Body

See Email HTML

Arizona State Board for Charter Schools

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September 26, 2013

Desert Mirage Preparatory Academy Public Charter Elementary School

Michele Kaye and William Coats, Charter Representatives

7878 North 16th Street, Suite 150

Phoenix, AZ 85020

Dear Ms. Kaye and Dr. Coates,

On September 17, 2013, staff of the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools conducted the first year site visit of Discover U. Katie Poulos and I appreciated the opportunity to meet with Ms. Nahrgang, tour the facility, and observe the school in action. The table below is a summary of items reviewed, corresponding observations and findings, and any follow-up action or information that needs to be completed.

1. Tour of Facility: A tour of the facility was conducted.

2. Student Count: On the day of the site visit, a total of 122 students were counted**.** Attendance records provided for that date report 122 students. In addition, the attendance policy and procedures were reviewed. Students were organized into the following grades:

Grade	Observed	Reported Enrolled	Reported Absent	Reported Present
K	66	72	6	66
1	11	12	1	11
2	13	13	0	13
3	12	12	0	12
4	11	11	0	11
5	6	6	0	6
6	3	4	1	3

Total	**122**	**130**	**8**	**122**

The discrepancy between the students counted and students reported is less than 5%, threshold used to determine whether additional information is required.

3. Fingerprint Clearance Cards and Background Checks: Fingerprint clearance cards (FCCs) were reviewed pursuant to A.R.S. §15-183.C.5. Background checks, if applicable, were reviewed according to A.R.S. §15-512.

4. Resume File: A resume file of current and former instructional employees was available in the front office pursuant to A.R.S. §15-183.F but did not contain the resume of Ms. Nahrgang, Principal. Staff did observe that the instructional staff resumes contained personally identifiable information. Evidence was provided to indicate that parents had been notified through a newsletter and the Parent & Student Handbook of the availability of instructional staff resumes.

By October 10, 2013 provide:

- Documentation that a resume for Ms. Nahrgang is available for inspection upon the request of parents and guardians.

Please be aware that A.R.S. §15-183.F allows the charter school to remove personally identifiable information, such as address and phone number, from the resume made available to the parents.

5. Governing Body Meeting Notices, Agendas, and Minutes: The governing body meeting notices, agendas, and minutes were reviewed and are compliant with Open Meeting Law A.R.S. §38-431.01-09. Public notices have complied with A.R.S. §38-431.02 (A) (1). Review of the May 7, 2013 minutes indicated that William Coats and Michele Kaye are currently the only two members of the governing body.

6. Enrollment Policies: The enrollment policies were NOT available for review and we could not determine if the policies are in compliance with A.R.S. §15-184.

By October 10, 2013 provide:

- A copy of the school's enrollment policies.

7. Daily Instructional Schedule: The school calendar and class schedules were reviewed. The school meets the requirements for hours of instruction in each grade level per A.R.S. §15-901.

8. Program of Instruction: Students were observed in single-grade and mixed grade classrooms. All classrooms were arranged to facilitate collaborative work and allow for student movement. Superkids curriculum reading materials were observed in the Kindergarten through Second grade classrooms. Journeys curriculum reading materials were observed in the Fifth and Sixth grade classroom. EnVision mathematics curriculum materials were observed in all classrooms. Classroom observations are described below:

Pre-School/Kindergarten (North): One teacher, three instructional aides, and eighteen kindergarten students were observed in a full-Montessori classroom. Students were working on a variety of tasks in a variety of settings including independent, guided, pair, and group work. Lesson plans were posted on the wall.

Kindergarten (Zammit): Twenty-four students were observed working on reading and writing. The teacher was working with seven students in a small group on writing the letter "o". Other students were reading independently; some students were moving around the room and were not engaged in the independent activity.

Kindergarten (Clarke): Twenty-four students were seated at tables in groups observed having snack time after recess.

First and Second (Matie): Twenty-three students were sitting in groups. Some students were engaged in independent reading and some were observed during snack time.

Third and Fourth (Megan): Twenty-two students were observed sitting in a circle discussing behavior towards the end of P.E. and transitioning back to class.

Special Education (Hatanaka): Two students were observed in the classroom with Ms. Hatanaka.

Fifth and Sixth (Hauf): Nine students were observed working on reading using the Journeys curriculum. Teacher was working independently with one student; three students were working in a group practicing reading fluency by timing each other on the iPad and reading out loud; two students were working together at the computers creating flashcards; two students were reading independently.

9. Performance Management Plan (PMP):

Strategy I: Staff reviewed action steps described in the PMP, including purchasing curriculum and RtI materials, developing a written curriculum, and creating a tiered instruction plan.

The school has purchased grade-level appropriate curriculum and curriculum materials are evident in all classrooms. Ms. Nahrgang explained the school did not purchase the curriculum as originally described in the charter. Instead of Singapore Math, the school purchased enVision Math for all grades based on recommendations they received. Instead of Storytown, the school purchased Journeys for grades 3-6; Ms. Nahrgang indicated this was because it is better aligned to the common core standards. Instead of Storytown, the school purchased Superkids for grades K-2; Ms. Nahrgang indicated this was because it better incorporates phonics than does Journeys.

The teachers created curriculum maps and lesson plans during their in-service professional development prior to the beginning of the school year. Each teacher's curriculum maps and weekly lesson plans were available in Ms. Nahrgang's office. Teachers utilize planbook.com to submit lesson plans.

Ms. Nahrgang stated teachers are implementing Response to Intervention (RtI) in their classrooms, but Ms. Nahrgang did not have documentation of this, as the school has not yet created a tiered instruction implementation plan/guide.

Strategy II: Staff reviewed action steps described in the PMP, including crosswalking curriculum plans with the common core standards, providing feedback on lesson plans, and conducting classroom observations. The curriculum and curriculum maps observed incorporate common core standards, and teachers completed the crosswalk during in-service before the school year started.

Ms. Nahrgang stated she is reviewing weekly lesson plans and giving feedback. Ms. Nahrgang did not provide documentation to demonstrate feedback had been given. In most of the mixed grade classrooms, the curriculum maps and lesson plans indicated different standards for the different grade levels. However, the third and fourth grade class did not have different standards indicated for the different grade levels. Ms. Nahrgang stated that the combined 3rd to 4th grade classroom had not tested at the 4th grade level and therefore, were being instructed with a single grade level.

Ms. Nahrgang is observing teachers in the classroom and giving verbal feedback and written feedback through email. Ms. Nahrgang is not yet using an observation feedback form, but she did state they had a form they would be using. Ms. Hatanaka, the Special Education Coordinator will soon be taking over the responsibilities of "Curriculum Coach" and serving in that capacity 40% of the time. She will be responsible for lesson plan reviews and classroom walkthroughs.

Strategy III: Staff reviewed action steps described in the PMP, including developing an assessment plan, reviewing data to provide tiered instruction, and monitoring student achievement weekly. Ms. Nahrgang and Ms. Hatanaka are working to create an assessment plan for the remainder of the year. Students have completed Galileo and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) diagnostic testing; this testing data has not yet been analyzed and data sheets have not been completed. Teachers have utilized curriculum pre-tests to implement tiered instruction within the classroom.

Strategy IV: Staff reviewed action steps described in the PMP, including training on RtI, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for data and common core, and effective engagement strategies. Teachers received a variety of professional development during in-service before the school year began, including curriculum,

Special Education, discipline policies, lesson planning and curriculum mapping, Kagan strategies, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and Love and Logic. PLCs are being operated at the school level and comprised of all the teachers, grades Pre-K to 6.

By October 10, 2013 provide:

- Documentation of implemented lesson plans and samples of completed student work aligned with the Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards for 3rd and 4th grade in Reading Math, Science and Social Studies for the month of September 2013.

I look forward to receiving the above requested material by the end of business on October 10. The information will be reviewed upon receipt, with results communicated following the review. A charter holder that fails to timely submit all required information will be brought before the Board for consideration of non-compliance.

If you have any questions concerning the information above, please contact me at 602-364-3084 or johanna.medina@asbcs.az.gov. The Board appreciates your cooperation during this first year site visit.

Sincerely,

Johanna Medina

Johanna Medina

Director of School Quality

Arizona State Board for Charter Schools

Date Sent

09/26/13