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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 30, 2013

South Mountain 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. Coats,

On September 24, 2013, staff of the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools conducted the first year site visit of Advance U. Katie Poulos and I appreciated the opportunity to meet with Ms. Bridges-Brown, 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 78 students were counted**.** Attendance records provided for that date report 73 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	47	52	8	44
1	17	18	1	17
2	7	6	0	6
3	6	7	1	6
Total	**78**	**83**	**10**	**73**

The discrepancy between the students counted and students reported is greater than 5%, the threshold used to

determine whether additional information is required.

By October 15, 2013 provide:

- Copies of teacher-kept attendance rosters for all students for the period of September 23 through September 27, and
- Records from the attendance system for the period of September 23 to 27 listing, for each student, each student's grade, date of enrollment, number and dates of absences and partial absences, and date of withdrawal if applicable.

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 resumes of Clare Vance, Jacqueline Hall-Sims, or Tonya Bridges-Brown. Staff did observe that the instructional staff resumes contained personally identifiable information. Evidence was provided to indicate that parents had been notified through the Parent & Student Handbook of the availability of instructional staff resumes.

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By October 15, 2013 provide:

- Documentation that resumes for Clare Vance, Jacqueline Hall-Sims, and Tonya Bridges-Brown are 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. Ms. Bridges-Brown indicated the school is currently identifying individuals who might be interested in serving as members of the school's governing body.

6. Enrollment Policies: The enrollment policies were not available for review; however, Ms. Bridges-Brown discussed them with staff. She indicated that the school currently utilizes open enrollment and would start a waiting list if enrollment exceeded the cap. We could not determine if the policies are in compliance with A.R.S. §15-184.

By October 15, 2013 submit:

- 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 Third grade classroom. EnVision mathematics curriculum materials were observed in the Kindergarten through Second grade classrooms. Classroom observations are described below:

Pre-School/Kindergarten (Tricia): Two Kindergarten and several Pre-school students were observed in a full-Montessori classroom. Students were working independently on a variety of tasks in a variety of settings including independent, guided, pair, and group work.

Pre-School/Kindergarten (Heidimarie): Pre-school students were observed in a full-Montessori classroom. Students were working independently on a variety of tasks in a variety of settings including independent, guided, pair, and group work.

Kindergarten (Garcia): Twenty-five students were observed receiving whole group instruction on writing letters. The teacher modeled how to write the letter and passed out worksheets. Students began working on worksheets.

Kindergarten (Egbert): Twenty students were seated on the carpet singing during music class.

First (Substitute for Smith): Seventeen students were seated in groups working on worksheet packets including math work.

Second and Third (Vance): Fourteen students were observed reading independently, in pairs, and in groups. Students were using leveled materials from the SuperKids curriculum materials. Teacher was conducting an oral reading assessment with one student.

9. Performance Management Plan (PMP):

Strategy I: Staff reviewed action steps described in the PMP, including purchasing curriculum and Response to Intervention (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. 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. Instead of Storytown, the school purchased Journeys for grade 3 and SuperKids for grades K-2.

The teachers created curriculum maps and lesson plans during their in-service professional development the week prior to the beginning of the school year.

Ms. Bridges-Brown stated they are working on an RtI implementation plan. She noted that teachers would be receiving professional development on RtI from the Leona Group at the New Teacher Academy. She also noted that teachers have access to RtI materials in each of the curriculum programs they are using.

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. Ms. Bridges-Brown did not provide curriculum plans that had been crosswalked with the common core standards; however, she indicated that the curriculum materials used by the teachers and incorporated into their maps and lesson plans are aligned to the common core standards.

Ms. Bridges-Brown stated she is reviewing weekly lesson plans and giving feedback during the weekly Friday professional development meetings with the teachers. Ms. Bridges-Brown did not provide documentation to demonstrate the feedback that has been given.

Ms. Bridges-Brown stated she is observing teachers in the classroom at least twice a week and giving feedback during the weekly Friday professional development meetings with the teachers. Ms. Bridges-Brown did not provide documentation to demonstrate the feedback that has been given. Ms. Bridges-Brown stated there is a Leona Group observation tool for both formal and informal observations, but she is not yet using this observation feedback form.

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. Bridges-Brown stated they are using an assessment schedule that has been developed by the Leona Group. She further stated that the Leona Group will provide testing materials and training throughout the year.

Students will be completing Galileo and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) testing in October. After this testing is completed, Ms. Bridges-Brown indicated that a team from the Leona Group will conduct the data analysis and meet with teachers in October.

Ms. Bridges-Brown indicated that teachers have been conducting baseline testing in their classrooms and creating portfolios for each student. She indicated that parents have been notified of the baseline testing and she has been meeting with parents to discuss baseline testing results.

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. This training included training on lesson plans, curriculum maps, and common core standards. The teachers have also received professional development training on common core "close reading" strategies. Ms. Bridges-Brown indicated that teachers would be receiving professional development on RtI from the Leona Group at the New Teacher Academy. She monitors the implementation these trainings through her weekly observations and follow-up meetings.

I look forward to receiving the above requested material by the end of business on October 15. 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

09/30/13