

Arizona State Board for Charter Schools
Arizona State Board of Education
1700 W. Washington St., Room 164, Phoenix, AZ 85007
(602) 364-3080 Fax (602) 364-3089
www.asbcs.az.gov

RECEIVED JAN 27 2010

ADDING GRADE LEVELS TO CHARTER AMENDMENT REQUEST

(Charter Holder Name) Aprender Tucson (CTDS) 108785
(Charter Holder Mailing Address) 2701 S. Campbell Avenue
(City, State) Tucson, AZ (Zip) 85713
(Charter Representative's Name) Christine Curtis
(Phone Number) 520-623-7102 (Fax Number) 520-623-7125

Failure to submit all required documentation will result in the Amendment Request being returned without being processed. Faxed copies will not be accepted. Please send originals.

Adding grade levels served for charter

Included are the following:

- Board minutes approving the change (If the body is subject to Open Meeting Law, minutes must comply with ARS §38-431.01)
- Narrative that 1) provides background and support for expansion; 2) how the additional grades support the philosophy, methods of instruction, special emphasis, and mission of the charter
- Timeline for implementation
- Proficiency level required for credit and/or promotion and credit transfer policies

For each grade level being added, provide the following as a representation of a program of instruction aligned to the State Academic Standards and to the methods of instruction described in the charter:

- Math – A completed curriculum sample template including all required attachments as outlined on the template attached.
- Language Arts - A completed curriculum sample template, for both reading and writing, including all required attachments as outlined on the template attached.

The Arizona State Board for Charter Schools and Aprender Tucson (Charter Holder), herein agree to amend the terms of the charter contract as follows:

FROM SERVING GRADES: K-8

TO SERVING GRADES: K-9

In witness whereof, Charter Holder has signed this contract amendment as of this 7th day of January, 2010, and the State Board for Charter Schools has signed this contract amendment as of this ____ day of ____, 20__, to take effect at such time as it is signed by both parties.

Christine Curtis, President
Charter Representative Signature

Representative Signature for the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools

**Aprender Tucson
Southside Community School
2701 S. Campbell Ave
Tucson AZ 85713**

**Board Meeting Minutes
Held Thursday, January 7, 2010**

Board Members Present:

Christine Curtis, Board President
James Christopher, Board Member
Charlotte Curtis, Board Member (via conference phone)

SCS Faculty and Staff Members Present:

Laura LaFave, Larry Speta, Laura Esquibel, Toni Smith,

1. The meeting was called to order by Christine Curtis at 4:14 p.m.
2. Southside Community School proposes addition of 9th Grade for the 2010-2011 school year, to begin in August, 2010. Board Member Charlotte Curtis moved to approve seeking charter amendment to add 9th Grade for the 2010-2011 school year. Board Member James Christopher seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Southside Community School proposes to add a new classroom building; to enter into a contract with ESB Modular Manufacturing, Marana, Arizona, in the amount of \$277,468.00 to construct and install the new building; \$260,000.00 to be financed over 10 years, with monthly payments of \$2,632.37. Board Member James Christopher moved to approve the contract and financing. Board Member Charlotte Curtis seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Call to the audience: no questions or comments from the audience.
5. Meeting adjourned at 4:27pm

Submitted by Laura LaFave

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**Aprender Tucson, Southside Community School
Adding Grade Levels to Charter Amendment Request
Supplemental Narrative Information January 2010**

Background and support for expansion:

Southside Community School was founded in 2001 by a Pima County Community-Based Prosecutor, in order to serve the children of a high poverty, high crime, high drop-out rate neighborhood--at the request of the community. We were originally chartered by the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools to serve Grades 6-8, with anticipated annual articulation upward each year, to ultimately include Grades 6-12. Our first year, the 2001-2002 school year, we had 142 students in Grades 6-8, but hardly any working at grade-level. We only had 4% Meeting on AIMS that year. We saw that we were getting the students too late. As a result, considering the neighborhood circumstances, and with strong encouragement from our parents, we eventually revised our grade level goals to include Kindergarten-8th Grade. Our revised emphasis was on early ages as a result of the student achievement data; but we have always had parent and student requests to revisit the original vision, and include older grades.

They want to stay here because we are situated in their neighborhood, the students can walk to school, and because we care enough to serve the "whole child" by providing a number of additional resources including: food boxes from the Community Food Bank, National School Lunch Program (our students are currently 100% free lunch eligible), free breakfast, free afterschool snacks (also from the Food Bank programs), free books to take home and keep, a dental program, fun field trips, and a Little Sister and Little Brother Program.

Most importantly, the current K-8 grade level plan has provided some success over the years in student academic achievement, and our non-violent conflict resolution approach has created visible change for our students and the neighborhood. We are a real neighborhood school--not just a strip-mall school. We have five acres, with playing fields, sports programs; art; music; computers; and students can attend from 7:30am to 5:30pm for free. We also have free Saturday School, and eight weeks of free Summer School. We are a designated U.S. Department of Justice Weed and Seed Program "Safe Haven". Over these nine years, our students have transformed from a rather rowdy bunch of gang affiliated tough-guys, into a wonderful group of decent, kindly children who care about their education. If you had walked into any classroom in 2001 and you would have seen teachers struggling to maintain order, with up to half of each class "disaffected". Today you will see bright-eyed children engaged in learning, and hoping for a better future. This remarkable change came about because we "grew" our students from Kindergarten. A very substantial proportion of our students return each year, and our families are highly loyal.

How the additional grades support the philosophy, methods of instruction, special emphasis, and mission of the charter

Our philosophy of non-violent conflict resolution, and strong responsiveness to community needs has taken us far. Many students feel confident here, and have begged us to provide a High School so they do not have to leave Southside Community School. But we do not feel we are a large enough campus to do High School programs credit. However, we have observed for several years that our 6th Graders who have left the self-contained Elementary style classroom to enter the Middle School classroom format, do not excel, and often seem lost. We would like to pull them back into a traditional K-6th Grade Elementary School, and back into a self contained classroom; and offer our older students a Junior High School format that includes 7th-9th Grade students. We feel that this approach is best for all of our students, and provides our rising 9th Graders one more year to thrive in a small school environment where they are known - and their academic and social needs are met - before they launch into High School at another institution. Moving in this direction is entirely in-line with our community-based philosophy and approach. It is what the parents and students want, and our professional educators agree that it will be beneficial to the students.

Regarding methods of instruction, we will self-contain 6th Grade in the Elementary School side of the house, and the 7th-9th Graders will be instructed in a Junior High School format, rotating from classroom to classroom, and teacher to teacher. We currently offer seven periods, with the four core subjects and three additional subjects, and will continue in this same manner next year: Science, Social Studies, Math, Language Arts, Writing, Physical Education, Art.

Our special emphasis is to be a community focused safe-haven, a place of reason and calm in an otherwise drug and gang-infested neighborhood with very low SES. Over the past years of operation we have gained the trust of our parents, many of whom have recommended us to their extended families and friends. We are very proud of the cohort of students who entered Southside Community School the first year we offered Kindergarten, and many of whom are still here. They were 5th Graders for the 2009 AIMS, with over 60% Meeting or Exceeding on the Math portion, and over 80% Meeting or Exceeding on the Reading portion. This is amazing progress for our community. At parent request, we would like to add the 9th Graders to continue the good work. We do not envision adding any further grades, due to campus constraints, and our belief that if we properly prepare our students, they can succeed at any of the local charter and district high schools.

In summary, the request to add 9th Grade is consistent with our mission, which calls for the "cooperative effort" of our learning community and the families we serve, in order to "spark a child's intrinsic dedication to excellence, an ability to envision their future role in society, and hope for the future of all children", and a "safe campus with a school-wide policy of non-violence". Each morning after the Pledge of Allegiance, our students recite this pledge: *"Peace starts with me. Members of Southside Community School commit to peace and non-violence. We will respect ourselves and others, treat our place with care, work hard toward equality, be excellent scholars and strong leaders, and work together toward a peaceful world."*

Aprender Tucson, Southside Community School

Adding Grade Levels to Charter Amendment Request
Supplemental Narrative Information January 7, 2010

Southside Community School was founded in 2001 by a Pima County Community-Based Prosecutor, in order to serve the children of a high poverty, high crime, high drop-out rate neighborhood. We were originally chartered by the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools to serve Grades 6-8, with anticipated annual articulation upward each year, to ultimately include Grades 6-12. Our first year, the 2001-2002 school year, we had 142 students in Grades 6-8, but hardly any working at grade-level. We only had 4% Meeting on AIMS that year. We saw that we were getting the students too late. As a result, considering the neighborhood circumstances, and with strong encouragement from our parents, we eventually revised our grade level goals to include Kindergarten-8th Grade.

With this grade level plan we have had success over the years in student academic achievement, and our firm but kindly non-violent conflict resolution approach has created visible change for our students and the neighborhood. We are a real neighborhood school--not just a strip-mall school. We have five acres, with playing fields, sports programs; art; computers; and students can attend from 7:30am to 5:30pm for free. We also have free Saturday School, and eight weeks of free Summer School.

Many students feel confident here, and have begged us to provide a High School so they do not have to leave Southside Community School. But we do not feel we are a large enough campus to do High School programs credit. However, we have observed for several years that our 6th Graders who have left the self-contained Elementary style classroom to enter the Middle School classroom format do not excel, and often seem lost. We would like to be able to pull them back into a K-6th Grade Elementary School, into a self contained classroom, and offer a Junior High School format that includes 7th-9th Grade students. We feel that this approach is best for all of our students, and provides our 8th Graders one more year to thrive in a small school environment where they are known - and their academic and social needs are met - before they launch into High School at another institution.

Moving in this direction is entirely in-line with our community-based philosophy and approach. It is what the parents and students want, and our professional educators agree that it will be beneficial to the students. Our special emphasis is to be a community focused safe-haven, a place of reason and calm in an otherwise drug and gang-infested neighborhood. Over the past years of operation we have gained the trust of our parents, many of whom have recommended us to their extended families and friends. We are very proud of the cohort of students who entered Southside Community School the first year we offered Kindergarten, and many of whom are still here. They were 5th Graders for the 2009 AIMS, with over 60% Meet or Exceeding on the Math portion, and over 80% Meeting or Exceeding on the Reading portion. This is amazing progress for our community. We would like to add the 9th Graders and continue the good work.

Aprender Tucson, Southside Community School

Adding Grade Levels to Charter Amendment Request
Timeline for Implementation and Proficiency Level Required for Credit/Promotion

TIMELINE

2009 - In the Fall semester of the 2009-2010 school year we sent letters home to parents to get feedback on our proposal to add 9th Grade. The response was overwhelmingly positive. We also worked with a Civil Engineering firm and the City of Tucson to get a Site Plan approved in order to add a new classroom building. The plan was approved in December. Concurrently we were working with a builder to plan the design and installation of the new building.

2010 - This Spring semester we are doing the academic planning and moving forward on seeking authority from the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools to add 9th Grade. We will also complete the building construction this semester.

We will re-organize the Elementary School to bring 6th Grade back into the Elementary format, with a self contained classroom, beginning August, 2010.

We will either have the 5th Grade teacher "loop" to 6th Grade, or if she chooses not to do so, hire a new 6th Grade teacher this summer.

Our existing 6th -8th Grade Middle School teachers will teach 7th-9th Grade Junior High in the Fall semester. They are all Highly Qualified to do so.

Our new 9th Grade will hopefully - with State Board for Charter Schools approval - begin classes in August 2010, along with all other students, on the first day of regular classes.

CREDIT AND PROMOTION POLICIES

Southside Community School does not endorse or permit "social promotion." Per state law, it is our policy to teach students according to state standards, at each grade level, and require them to meet or approach those standards in order to be promoted to the next grade level. They may be required to complete Summer School in order to be promoted if their grades are poor. Each Report Card has the following notification on it: "Students with a grade below 60 in any single subject, or an average below 70 in all subjects, may be required to repeat the year, or may be required to attend summer school in order to be promoted to the next grade. Free afterschool tutoring and Saturday School are available to all students." Teachers and parents understand and support this important policy at Southside Community School. [Note: our Special Education students are graded in accordance with their IEP's.]