Issue
A New Site and an Increase to Enrollment Cap Notification requests were submitted by American Leadership Academy, Inc. (ALA). The Charter Holder did not meet the Board's academic performance expectations for 2014, and was required to submit a Demonstration of Sufficient Progress (DSP).

Summary of Narrative Provided

ALA is requesting a new school site to be located in San Tan Valley and an increase the charter enrollment cap from 4500 to 7000 students. The Charter Holder provided an expansion plan that addresses securing the facility, obtaining staffing, creating budgets and purchasing, establishing a professional development plan, and marketing/enrollment (presented in the portfolio: B. Submission Materials, p.8). The Charter Holder intends to open the proposed campus for the 2015-2016 school year and serve grades K through 12.

ALA is familiar with the challenges of opening schools and has created an organizational structure that includes the hiring of new key personnel including a new CEO, CFO, and Business Manager. Additionally, new administrative FTEs have been added to monitor organizational compliance and Human Resource Management.

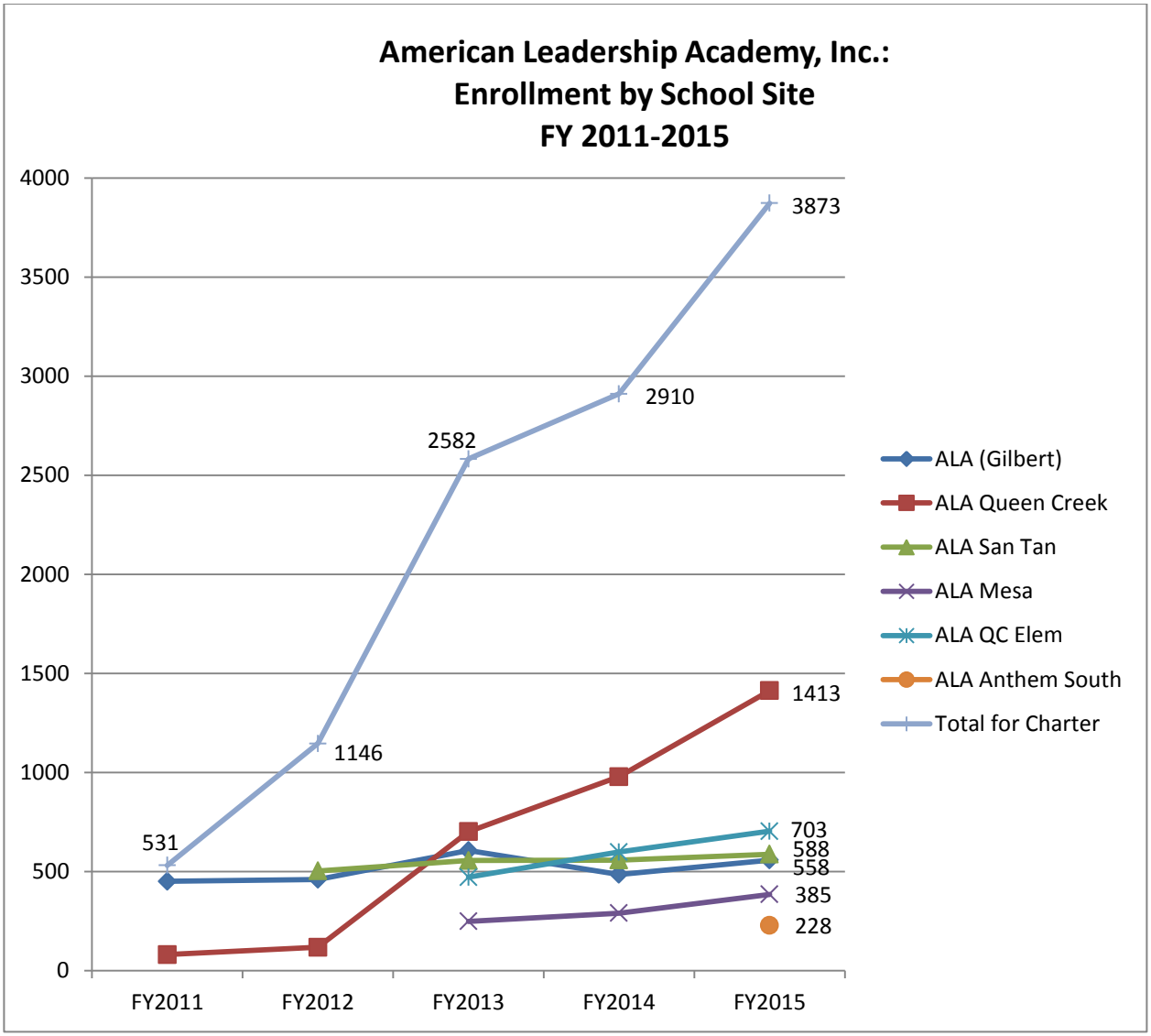
With the potential addition of the new campus, ALA has been preparing for the large administrative effort to recruit, interview, hire, and train the staff necessary for the new campus. Staffing, recruitment, and professional development plans are in development for immediate execution. These efforts are being facilitated through the use of software designed to leverage administrative capacity.

Financially, according to the Charter Holder, ALA "has undergone extensive financial reform over the last several months to ensure the organization's financial viability far into the future." These efforts include the application of managerial accounting techniques to identify, measure and control organizational cost drivers. Funding for the construction of the facility will be handled by ALA's facility developer from whom ALA will lease the facility.

Background
The charter for ALA was renewed in 2011. ALA currently has 6 school sites open under this charter. See table below.

School Name	Month/Year Open	Location	Current Grades Served	Current Status
American Leadership Academy	September 1997	Gilbert	K through 6	Open
American Leadership Academy – Queen Creek	August 2010	Queen Creek	7 through 12	Open
ALA San Tan	August 2011	San Tan Valley	K through 6	Open
ALA Mesa	August 2012	Mesa	K through 6	Open
ALA QC Elem	August 2012	Queen Creek	K through 6	Open
American Leadership Academy Anthem South Campus	July 2014	Florence	K through 6	Open

The current enrollment cap is 4500. According to ADE, the 100th day ADM for FY 2014 was 3873. The graph below shows average daily membership (ADM) for the charter based on 100th day ADM for fiscal years 2011-2014 and 40th day ADM for fiscal year 2015, as well as for each school site.



Academic Performance

As stated in the Board's Academic Performance Framework and Guidance document, a Charter Holder's academic performance will be evaluated by the Board when considering expansion requests. The academic performance of all schools operated by ALA is represented in the table below. Academic dashboards for each school can be seen in the notification portfolio: J. Appendix A.

School Name	Opened	Current Grades Served	2012 Overall Rating	2013 Overall Rating	2014 Overall Rating
American Leadership Academy	1997	K-6	57.5 / C	71.25 / A	80.62 / A
American Leadership Academy – Queen Creek	2010	7-12	72.19 / B	58.75 / C	66.25 / B
ALA San Tan	2011	K-8*	47.5 / C	80.62 / A	76.25 / A
ALA Mesa	2012	K-6	N/A	76.25 / A	61.56 / B
ALA QC Elem	2012	K-6	N/A	75 / A	75 / A
American Leadership Academy Anthem South Campus	2014	K-6	N/A	N/A	N/A

Because ALA does not meet the Board's academic performance expectations set forth in the performance framework adopted by the Board, the Charter Holder submitted a Demonstration of Sufficient Progress (DSP) as part of the expansion request (presented in the portfolio: C: DSP Submission).

Demonstration of Sufficient Progress

Following a preliminary evaluation of the DSP, staff conducted a site visit to meet with the school's leadership, as selected by the school, to confirm evidence of the processes described in the DSP and review additional evidence to be considered in the final evaluation of the Charter Holder's DSP submission (presented in the notification portfolio: D. DSP Evaluation). The following representatives of ALA were present at the site visit:

Name	Role
Jeremy Christensen	Business Manager
Arch Archunde	Executive Director
Rachel Ponsford	Assistant Director
Chelsey Griess	Academic Director
Rodney Richins	Chief Financial Officer
Anthony Lindsey	CTO

The DSP submitted by ALA for ALA Mesa was required to address the areas (curriculum, monitoring instruction, assessment, and professional development) for the measures for which the Charter Holder was required to provide a response. The Charter Holder was provided a copy of the initial evaluation prior to the site visit and informed that areas initially evaluated as not acceptable could be addressed with additional evidence at the time of the visit.

After considering information in the DSP, evidence provided at the time of the site visit, the Charter Holder demonstrated evidence of a sustained improvement plan that includes implementation of a curriculum that contributes to increased student growth and proficiency, implementation of a plan for monitoring the integration of the Arizona's College and Career Ready (ACCR) Standards into instruction, implementation of a plan for monitoring and documenting increases in student growth and proficiency, and implementation of a professional development plan that contributed to increased student growth and proficiency.

Data and analysis provided at the site visit demonstrates improved academic performance based on data generated from valid and reliable assessment sources. The data and analysis demonstrates improved/sustained growth and proficiency in Math and Reading in the whole school population and improved growth for students in the bottom 25%.

Based on the findings summarized above and described below, staff determined that the Charter Holder demonstrated sufficient progress towards meeting the Board's academic performance expectations.

A description of the findings for each required area as evaluated is provided below:

Data:

In the area of data, ALA's DSP was evaluated as Meets. As described in the DSP report and evidenced at the site visit, the Charter Holder provided data and analysis that demonstrates improved/sustained academic performance based on data generated from valid and reliable assessment sources. As the site visit was conducted in mid-November, only two data points were available for analysis of current year (pre-test and benchmark) assessment data. Additionally, the year to year comparison data was generated from a single source and included archived standards for the tested grades in the 2013-14 school year vs. ACCR Standards for all grades in the 2014-15 school year.

The Charter Holder must provide evidence of the effectiveness of their systems in each of the areas discussed above through the presentation of valid and reliable data and data analysis that demonstrates improved student

growth and proficiency. Sufficient evidence will demonstrate a correlation between the school's performance on the state's assessment, as reflected in the dashboard, and benchmark assessments that demonstrates improvement compared to prior years.

The Charter Holder provided several documents which demonstrate the analysis conducted by the school with respect to all students and students in the bottom 25% (presented in the portfolio: E: Data Inventory, Items 2-3,5-6).

The Charter Holder provided data demonstrating improved growth for students in Math and Reading (E. Data Inventory, Item 3). The school submitted data tracking student cohorts from benchmark assessments taken in the 2013-14 school year to assessments taken at the next grade level in the 2014-15 school year. While the assessment results are not directly comparable, as the standards tested shifted from the AIMS standards to ACCR Standards, the data demonstrated that in the current year 83% of students met the proficiency level on the more rigorous standards in Reading, and 60% met in Math, providing evidence of improved growth.

The Charter Holder provided data demonstrating improved growth for students with proficiency in the bottom 25% (E. Data Inventory, Item 2). Data from the school's Galileo benchmark assessments shows that 64% of students in the bottom 25% improved by at least one risk category (e.g. Approaches to Meets) in Math by the first benchmark of 2014. 68% of students in the bottom 25% improved by at least one risk category in Reading. When combined with the overall growth data described above, this data provides evidence of improved growth in students with proficiency levels in the bottom 25%.

The Charter Holder provided a slideshow presentation of evidence of the analysis conducted for all school sites under the charter (E. Data Inventory, Item 6). At the site visit, the Charter Holder indicated that through this analysis they determined that ALA Mesa was not an outlier based on similar performance from other school sites. This indicated that ALA Mesa was following the same trajectory as other campuses that received an overall rating of "Meets Standards" in FY2014. Additionally, a memo from the assessment provider was provided,, which described how the methodology of the pretest has been designed to include items with a range of difficulties, with a focus on easier items and how the rigor for the benchmark assessments increased. This resulted in seeing an expected pattern of decline in results in this first benchmark assessment. (E. Data Inventory, Item 1).

Curriculum:

In the area of curriculum, ALA's DSP is evaluated as Meets. As described in the DSP report and evidenced at the site visit, the Charter Holder has consistently implemented a comprehensive curriculum system that addresses each of the following required elements:

- adopting/revising curriculum;
- implementing curriculum;
- evaluating curriculum;
- addressing the curriculum needs of relevant subgroup populations; and
- ensuring curriculum is aligned with Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards.

The Charter Holder must provide evidence of implementation of a systematic process the school uses to adopt/revise curriculum. Sufficient evidence will demonstrate how and when the school evaluates curriculum options, what findings the school makes about curriculum options, and who is involved in the curriculum adoption process.

The Charter Holder provided two documents (presented in the portfolio: F. Curriculum Inventory, Items 1-2) that identify how the correlation standards documents were used in the analysis of the curriculum at all grade levels and a slideshow presentation on adopting curriculum, provided to their board the summer of 2013. These documents demonstrate implementation of the school's formalized process for adopting and revising curriculum.

The Charter Holder must provide evidence that the school has in place a system for implementing the curriculum consistently across the school. Sufficient evidence will demonstrate the school utilizes tools that identify what

must be taught, the expected pacing, strategies, methods, and activities, and communicated expectations for the consistent use of these tools.

The Charter Holder provided several documents (F. Curriculum Inventory, Items 7-13, 15) that provided evidence of tools which communicate what must be taught and expectations for implementation. These include curriculum maps, meeting notes from the curriculum mapping team, a Professional Learning Community (PLC) report on implementation and alignment of curriculum, and evidence that the school leadership provided feedback to teachers on lesson plans. These documents demonstrate implementation of the school's formalized process for implementing curriculum consistently across the school.

The Charter Holder must provide evidence of implementation of a systematic process for evaluating curriculum. Sufficient evidence will demonstrate how the school evaluates how effectively the curriculum enables students to master the standards, identifies gaps in the curriculum, and demonstrates how the school is addressing curricular gaps.

The Charter Holder provided several documents (F. Curriculum Inventory, Items 3, 5-6, 9-10, 14) which identify tools used to identify gaps, as well as meeting notes from the curriculum committee, and meeting notes with the Academic Director regarding the review of curriculum. These documents demonstrate implementation of the school's formalized process for evaluating curriculum throughout the school year.

The Charter Holder must demonstrate implementation of a curriculum adapted to meet the needs of subgroup populations. Sufficient evidence will demonstrate there is curriculum intended to provide differentiated materials, activities, and/or strategies for struggling students within the subgroups.

The Charter Holder provided 4 documents (F. Curriculum Inventory, Items 3, 16-18) which identify the process used to adopt supplemental curriculum, provide evidence of lesson plans adapted to meet the needs of subgroup populations, data reports identifying students in the bottom 25%, and curriculum to meet their needs. These documents demonstrate the school's curriculum is adapted for subgroup students.

The Charter Holder must demonstrate implementation of a curriculum aligned to the ACCR Standards.

The Charter Holder provided several documents (F. Curriculum Inventory, Items 3-4, 8, 12-13) which identify standard maps, a presentation on the aligned curriculum, and a reporting process to ensure implementation of standards. These documents demonstrate the school's curriculum is aligned to ACCR Standards.

Assessment:

In the area of assessment, ALA's DSP is evaluated as Meets. As described in the DSP report and evidenced at the site visit, the Charter Holder has consistently implemented a comprehensive assessment system that addresses each of the following required elements:

- assessing student performance based on clearly defined performance measures aligned with the curriculum and instructional methodology using data collection from multiple assessments, such as formative and summative assessments and common/benchmark assessments;
- addressing the assessment needs of relevant subgroup populations;
- analyzing assessment data to evaluate instructional and curricular effectiveness; and
- adjusting curriculum and instruction in a timely manner based on assessment results.

The Charter Holder must provide evidence of implementation of an assessment system that is aligned with curriculum and instructional methodology using data collection from multiple assessments. Sufficient evidence will demonstrate what types of assessments are used, what process is used for designing and selecting the assessment system and show how the assessment system is aligned to the curriculum and instructional methodology.

The Charter Holder provided documentation of evidence (presented in the portfolio: G. Assessment Inventory, Items 1-3, 9) of multiple assessments utilized and student data related to those assessments, teacher grade books including assessments, and a teacher checklist identifying the expectations of teacher actions based on assessing students. These documents describe and demonstrate implementation of the school's comprehensive assessment system that includes data collection from multiple assessments, how the assessments were selected and their alignment to the curriculum and instructional methodology.

The Charter Holder must provide evidence of implementation of an assessment system that meets the needs of students with proficiency in the bottom 25%, ELL students, FRL students, and students with disabilities. Sufficient evidence will demonstrate how the assessment system assesses students within the subgroups according to their needs.

The Charter Holder provided documentation for subgroup students (G. Assessment Inventory, Items, 6-8) which provide evidence of English Language Arts assessments related to grammar and fluency for English Language Learner students, a binder with assessment data from AZELLA which include the English Language Proficiency standards, and reading assessments used to meet the needs of students with disabilities. These documents describe and demonstrate implementation of the school's comprehensive assessment system and adaptations of that system to assess students within subgroups according to their needs.

The Charter Holder must provide evidence that data from these assessments is analyzed and utilized. Sufficient evidence will demonstrate how and when the school analyzes assessment data, what findings the school makes from assessment data, who is involved in the analysis of assessment data, and how that analysis is used to inform and adapt instruction.

The Charter Holder provided a PDM report for the school (G. Assessment Inventory, Item 5) that provides evidence that data is analyzed timely which results in an action plan for each grade level analyzed. A second document provided by the Charter Holder identifies how the school analyzed student growth percentile data from AIMS 2014 with the purpose of determining what had happened in the prior year and what systemic measures needed to take place in the current year (E. Data Inventory, Item 5). These documents demonstrate implementation of the school's process for analyzing and utilizing assessment data.

The Charter Holder must provide evidence of the implementation of a comprehensive assessment system. Sufficient evidence will demonstrate the school regularly and timely assesses students and adjusts curriculum and instruction in a timely-manner based on assessment results.

The Charter Holder provided several documents (G. Assessment Inventory, Item 1, 4-5) which identify when assessments are given throughout the year, agendas indicating when data is analyzed and action plans identifying intervention based on student assessment data. These documents demonstrate implementation of the school's process for regularly and timely assessing students and making adjustments accordingly and timely.

Monitoring Instruction:

In the area of monitoring instruction, ALA's DSP is evaluated as Meets. As described in the DSP report and evidenced at the site visit, the Charter Holder has consistently implemented a comprehensive instructional monitoring system that addresses each of the following required elements:

- monitoring the integration of Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards into instruction;
- evaluating instructional practices;
- evaluating instructional practices targeted to address the needs of relevant subgroup populations; and
- providing analysis and feedback to further develop instructional quality and standards integration.

The Charter Holder must provide evidence of implementation of a system to monitor the integration of ACCR Standards into instruction. Sufficient evidence will demonstrate that the school ensures all grade level standards are taught within the school year in all classrooms and that teachers implement an ACCR Standards-aligned curriculum with fidelity.

The Charter Holder provided reports from PLC meetings and a teacher checklist (presented in the portfolio: H. Monitoring Instruction Inventory, Items 1, PD9) which identify teacher expectations for lesson plans and evaluations and meeting notes related to monitoring implementation of the curriculum maps. These documents demonstrate describe and demonstrate implementation of the school's formalized process for monitoring the integration of the standards into instruction.

The Charter Holder must provide evidence of implementation of a system to evaluate the instructional practices of teachers. Sufficient evidence will demonstrate that the school evaluates the quality of instruction and identifies the strengths, weaknesses, and learning needs of teachers.

The Charter Holder provided multiple documents (H. Monitoring Instruction Inventory, Items 2-8, 11, 13) which provide evidence of tools utilized for teacher observation and evaluation. These documents include a teacher tracking form to ensure teachers have met all expectations on a weekly basis, walk-thru observation forms with notes related to certain instructional domains, formal evaluations, notes from teacher mentoring session, and an interactive online system for entering observation and evaluation data used for teacher observations. These documents demonstrate implementation of the school's formalized process for evaluating the instructional practices of teachers.

The Charter Holder must provide evidence of implementation of a system to evaluate the instructional practices of teachers that addresses the needs of students with proficiency in the bottom 25%, ELL students, FRL students, and students with disabilities. Sufficient evidence will demonstrate that the school evaluates the quality of instruction and identifies the strengths, weaknesses, and learning needs of teachers in relation to meeting the needs of students with proficiency in the bottom 25%, ELL students, FRL students, and students with disabilities.

The Charter Holder provided documentation of evidence (H. Monitoring Instruction Inventory, Items 10, 12) of how a teacher is evaluated based on the subgroup students in the classroom and when during the instructional schedule the Respond to Intervention blocks are provided. These documents demonstrate implementation of the school's formalized process for evaluating the instructional practices of teachers that address the needs of subgroup students.

The Charter Holder must provide evidence that school leaders conduct analysis and provide feedback to further develop the system. Sufficient evidence will demonstrate that teachers receive the feedback, have access to the resources necessary to address identified weaknesses and learning needs, and/or the school ensures teacher development is ongoing.

The Charter Holder provided a teacher improvement plan in addition to the documents related to the evaluation of instructional practices (H. Monitoring Instruction Inventory, Item 9) which provide evidence of communications to teachers related to identify areas of improvement, along with timelines and actions steps. The documents listed in the evaluation of instructional practices also include notes and action steps taken when a follow up is required. These documents demonstrate implementation of the school's formalized process for providing analysis and feedback to further develop the system.

Professional Development:

In the area of professional development, ALA's DSP was evaluated as Meets. As described in the DSP report and evidenced at the site visit, the Charter Holder has consistently implemented a comprehensive professional development system that addresses each of the following required elements:

- providing professional development that is aligned with instructional staff learning needs and focuses on areas of high importance;
- providing professional development that addresses the needs of relevant subgroup populations;
- supporting high quality implementation of the strategies learned in professional development; and
- monitoring and providing follow-up to support and develop implementation of the strategies learned in professional development.

The Charter Holder must provide evidence of implementation of a comprehensive professional development plan. Sufficient evidence will demonstrate that the plan was developed to address teacher learning needs and areas of high importance.

The Charter Holder provided documentation of evidence (presented in the portfolio: I. Professional Development Inventory, Items 1-3, 5, 9-10) which identify the required elements of the school professional development offerings in the summer and during the year, with evidence of participation, as well as tools for identifying areas of high importance. These documents demonstrate implementation of the school's comprehensive professional development plan.

The Charter Holder must provide evidence of implementation of a system that supports high quality implementation of the information and strategies learned through the professional development plan. Sufficient

evidence will demonstrate how the Charter Holder provides access to resources necessary to implement the information and strategies, and/or otherwise supports teachers in planning to implement the information and strategies.

The Charter Holder provided several documents (I. Professional Development Inventory, Items 2-3, 6, 9-11) which identify a technological system to support and track the implementation of professional development and documents evidencing follow-up and support for implementation of professional development. These documents demonstrate implementation of a system that supports high quality implementation of the information and strategies learned through the professional development plan.

The Charter Holder must provide evidence of implementation of a system to follow-up on and monitor the implementation of the strategies and information learned through the professional development plan. Sufficient evidence will demonstrate how implementation is observed and evaluated and how the school ensures teacher development is ongoing in relation to the information and strategies learned through the professional development plan.

The Charter Holder provided documentation of evidence (I. Professional Development Inventory, Items 2, 5, 10-11) of how the school monitors and follows up on professional development implementation through technology, observation, and feedback. These documents demonstrate implementation of a system to follow-up on and monitor the implementation of the strategies and information learned through the professional development plan.

The Charter Holder must provide evidence of implementation of a comprehensive professional development plan that meets the needs of students with proficiency in the bottom 25%, ELL students and students with disabilities. Sufficient evidence will demonstrate how the professional development plan addresses teacher weaknesses and learning needs and areas of high importance in relation to students within the subgroups according to their needs.

The Charter Holder provided documentation of evidence (I. Professional Development Inventory, Items 7-8)which identify external professional development for key personnel in meeting the needs of ELL students and students with disabilities. These documents demonstrate implementation of a comprehensive professional development plan that meets the needs subgroup students.

Board Options

Option 1: The Board may approve the New School Site and Enrollment Cap Notification Requests. Staff recommends the following language provided for consideration: Charter expansion is based on consideration of academic and contractual compliance of the Charter Holder. In this case, the Charter Holder did not meet the academic performance expectations set forth in the Board's performance framework but was able to demonstrate sufficient progress toward the Board's expectations. With that taken into consideration, as well as having considered the statements of the representatives of the Charter Holder today and the contents of the expansion portfolio which includes the Demonstration of Sufficient Progress, I move that the Board approve the requests to add a school site and increase the enrollment cap of the charter of American Leadership Academy, Inc. from 4500 to 7000.

Option 2: Notwithstanding staff's recommendation to approve the request, the Board may determine that there is a basis to deny the New School Site and Enrollment Cap Notification Requests to the charter held by American Leadership Academy, Inc. The following language is provided for consideration: Having considered the statements of the representatives of the Charter Holder today and the contents of the expansion portfolio which includes the Demonstration of Sufficient Progress, I move to deny the requests to add a new site and increase the enrollment cap of the charter of American Leadership Academy, Inc. on the basis that Charter Holder failed to: **1)** meet or make sufficient progress toward the academic performance expectations set forth in the performance framework when: [*provide specific findings related to curriculum, monitoring of instruction, assessment, professional development, and/or data*]; **AND/OR 2)** complete the obligations of the contract when: [*provide specific material findings related to obligations of the contract*]; **AND/OR 3)** comply with Arizona charter school statutes or any provision of law from which the charter school is not exempt when: [*provide specific violations related to provisions of law*].