AGENDA ITEM: Request to Expand Charter School Operations – Arizona Autism Charter School

Issue

Arizona Autism Charter School (AACS) did not have sufficient academic performance data to demonstrate meeting the Board's academic performance expectations for 2014, and was required to submit a Demonstration of Sufficient Progress (DSP) Report with any expansion request. AACS submitted a request to increase the enrollment cap for the charter to 108 on March 26, 2015.

Summary of Narrative Provided

Rationale for Expansion Request

According to the narrative (presented in the portfolio: b. Amendment Request), AACS is requesting expansion to its enrollment cap in order to allow the enrollment of 18 kindergarten students in FY2016, and to allow for the promotion of its current students. The charter was approved in 2013 to serve grades K-5. The charter currently serves grades K-5. The narrative states that the school was the first to be approved with a focus on serving students with autism, and that the enrollment quickly filled, with a number of students on a waitlist.

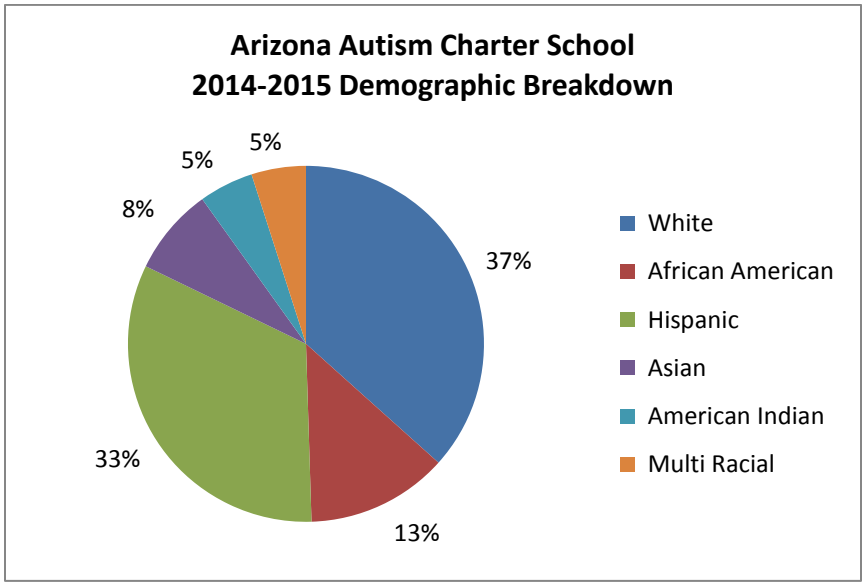
I. Background

AACS was granted a charter in January 2013, and is currently approved for grades K-5. AACS operates 1 school. See table below.

School Name	Month/Year Open	Location	Grade Levels Served	Current Status	2015 100th Day ADM	Enrollment Cap	Instructional Days
AACS	August 2014	Phoenix	K-5	Open	79	90	180

The enrollment cap for AACS is scheduled to increase to 99 for FY2016 based on the growth plan included in the approved charter application.

The demographic data for AACS from the 2014-2015 school year is represented in the chart below.[1]



The percentage of students served by AACS in the 2014-2015 school year who are classified as English Language Learners, classified as students with disabilities, or are eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRL), is represented in the table below.[1]

School Name	English Language Learners (ELL)	Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL)	Students with Disabilities
AACS	*	90%	98%

As stated in Board policy, prior to a request being considered by the Board, staff conducts a compliance check as part of the amendment and notification approval process. The Charter Holder is in compliance in all areas.

II. Academic Performance

As stated in the Board's *Academic Performance Framework and Guidance* ("*Guidance*") document, a Charter Holder's academic performance will be evaluated by the Board when considering expansion requests. AACS is in its first year of operation. As a result academic performance information is not available.

The mission of the school is "to educate students with autism and related disorders using evidence based teaching strategies delivered by highly trained teachers, and to make this high quality, specialized education accessible to all students with autism in the Phoenix Metropolitan area. Students will be empowered to reach their full potential in a motivating, compassionate environment using individualized programs so that every child gains the skills to integrate into the community and become a fulfilled, productive citizen."

The Charter Holder stated during the site visit that the enrollment cap increase would allow continued expansion of the school to meet the needs of families affected by autism, and that a forthcoming request to add grades would also allow the continuation of the education of students in a familiar setting and with trained staff.

III. Additional School Choices

AACS is located in Phoenix near the intersection of 7th Street and Indian School Road. The following information identifies additional schools within a five mile radius of the school and the academic performance of those schools.

There are 86 schools serving grades in the range of K-5 within a five mile radius of AACS. The table below provides a breakdown of those schools. Schools are grouped by the A - F letter grade assigned by the ADE. For each letter grade, the table identifies the number of schools assigned that letter grade, the number of those schools that are charter schools, the number of the charter schools that are meeting the Board's academic performance standard for FY14, and the number of schools serving a comparable percentage of students (± 5%) in the identified subgroups.[2]

[1] Information provided by the Research and Evaluation division of the Arizona Department of Education. If the percentage of students in a non-ethnicity-based demographic group is 0% or 100%, the percentage for that demographic group was redacted.

[2] Information provided by the Research and Evaluation Division of the ADE. If the percentage of students in a non-ethnicity-based demographic group is not reported to ADE, or is 0% or 100%, the percentage for that demographic group is redacted.

AACS				90%	*	98%
Letter Grade	Within 5 miles	Charter Schools	Meets Board's Standard	Comparable FRL (± 5%)	Comparable ELL (± 5%)	Comparable SPED (± 5%)
A	23	10	10	1		0
B	21	5	3	6		0
C	26	5	0	8		0
D	15	3	0	10		0
F	1	1	0	0		0

IV. Demonstration of Sufficient Progress

AACS submitted a DSP Report with the Enrollment Cap Notification Request addressing the school's systems and data. The Charter Holder was provided a copy of the initial evaluation of the DSP Report prior to the site visit and informed that areas initially evaluated as not acceptable must be addressed with additional evidence and documentation at the time of the visit.

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. The following representatives of AACS were present at the site visit:

Name	Role
Diana Diaz	Charter Representative/Executive Director
Nicholas Bowland	Lead Behavior Specialist
Rosetta Hicks	Director of Special Education and Human Resources
Lisa Long	Consultant
Kamren Taravati	Consultant

At the site visit, Board staff completed a document inventory for all evidence presented by the Charter Holder (portfolio: c. Inventory Documents). The Charter Holder was provided a copy of the document inventory at the end of the site visit. Following the site visit, Board staff completed a final evaluation of the DSP (portfolio: d. DSP Final Evaluation). The following is a summary of the final DSP Evaluation:

Evaluation Summary			
Area	DSP Evaluation		
	Meets	Does Not Meet	Falls Far Below
Data	☐	☐	☒
Curriculum	☐	☒	☐
Assessment	☒	☐	☐
Monitoring Instruction	☒	☐	☐
Professional Development	☒	☐	☐

After considering information in the DSP Report and evidence provided at the time of the site visit, the Charter Holder demonstrated evidence of a sustained improvement plan that includes implementation of a comprehensive assessment system, a comprehensive instructional monitoring system, and a comprehensive

professional development system**.** The Charter Holder did not demonstrate comprehensive curriculum system, with insufficient evidence of implementation provided in 6 of 11 required areas.

Based on the findings summarized above and described below, staff determined that the Charter Holder did not demonstrate sufficient progress towards meeting the Board's Academic Performance Expectations.

Data

In the area of Data, the Charter Holder's DSP is evaluated as Falls Far Below. The school is in its first year of operation and cannot provide comparative year-over-year improvement in all required measures. As evidenced at the site visit the Charter Holder did not provide evidence of the capacity to provide comparative year-over-year data in all required measures generated from valid and reliable assessment sources. Therefore, the area of Data is evaluated as Falls Far Below. For more detailed analysis see Data Inventory (portfolio: c. Inventory Documents, i. Site Visit Inventory -Data).

Question	Valid and Reliable Data	Data provided for Current Fiscal Year	Document Inventory Item
Student Median Growth Percentile (SGP) - Math	No	No	D1
Student Median Growth Percentile (SGP) - Reading	No	No	D2
Student Median Growth Percentile Bottom 25% - Math	No	No	D3
Student Median Growth Percentile Bottom 25% - Reading	No	No	D4
Percent Passing - Math	No	No	D5
Percent Passing - Reading	No	No	D6

Curriculum

The area of Curriculum is evaluated as Does Not Meet. As demonstrated by the evidence provided at the DSP site visit, the Charter Holder has consistently implemented a limited curriculum approach. At the DSP site visit, the Charter Holder sufficiently demonstrated the some of the components of these required elements, but failed to sufficiently demonstrate all components of these required elements. For more detailed analysis see Curriculum Inventory (portfolio: c. Inventory Documents, ii. Site Visit Inventory - Curriculum).

Question	Sufficient Evidence	Document Inventory Item
Evaluating Curriculum		
What is the Charter Holder's process for evaluating curriculum? How does the Charter Holder evaluate how effectively the curriculum enables students to meet the standards?	No	C1
How does the Charter Holder identify gaps in the curriculum?	No	C2
Adopting/Revising Curriculum		
What is the Charter Holder's process for adopting or revising curriculum based on its evaluation processes?"	Yes	C3
Who is involved in the process for adopting or revising curriculum?"	No	C4
When adopting curriculum, how does the Charter Holder evaluate curriculum options to determine which curriculum to adopt?	No	C5
Implementing Curriculum		
What is the Charter Holder's process for ensuring consistent implementation of the curriculum across the school(s) operated by the Charter Holder?	No	C6
What tools exist that identify what must be taught and when it must be delivered? How does the Charter Holder ensure that all grade-level standards are covered within the academic year?	Yes	C7
What is the expectation for consistent use of these tools? How are these expectations communicated?	No	C8
What evidence is there to demonstrate usage of these tools in the classroom and alignment with instruction?	Yes	C9
Alignment of Curriculum		
How does the Charter Holder know the curriculum is aligned to standards?	Yes	C10
Adapted to Meet the Needs of Subgroups		
How has the Charter Holder ensured that the curriculum addresses the needs of students with proficiency in the bottom 25%/non-proficient students?	Yes	C11
How has the Charter Holder ensured that the curriculum addresses the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs)?	N/A	C12
How has the Charter Holder ensured that the curriculum addresses the needs of Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) students?	N/A	C13
How has the Charter Holder ensured that the curriculum addresses the needs of students with disabilities?	N/A	C14

Assessment

The area of Assessment is evaluated as Meets. As demonstrated by the evidence provided at the DSP site visit, the Charter Holder has consistently implemented a comprehensive assessment system that addresses each of the required elements. For more detailed analysis see Assessment Inventory (portfolio: c. Inventory Documents, iii. Site Visit Inventory - Assessment).

Question	Sufficient Evidence	Document Inventory Item
Assessment System		
What types of assessments does the Charter Holder use?	Yes	A1
What was the process for designing or selecting the assessment system?	Yes	A2
How is the assessment system aligned to the curriculum and instructional methodology?	Yes	A3
What intervals are used to assess student progress? How does the assessment plan include data collection from multiple assessments, such as formative and summative assessments and common/benchmark assessments?	Yes	A4
Analyzing Assessment Data		
How does the assessment system provide for analysis of assessment data? What intervals are used to analyze assessment data?	Yes	A5
How is the analysis used to evaluate instructional and curricular effectiveness?	Yes	A6
How is the analysis used to adjust curriculum and instruction in a timely manner? What intervals are used to adjust curriculum and instruction?	Yes	A7
Adapted to Meet the Needs of Subgroups		
How is the assessment system adapted to meet the assessment needs of students with proficiency in the bottom 25%/non-proficient students?	Yes	A8
How is the assessment system adapted to meet the assessment needs of English Language Learners (ELLs)?	N/A	A9
How is the assessment system adapted to meet the assessment needs of Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) students?	N/A	A10
How is the assessment system adapted to meet the assessment needs of students with disabilities?	N/A	A11

Monitoring Instruction

The area of Monitoring Instruction is evaluated as Meets. As demonstrated by the evidence provided at the DSP site visit, the Charter Holder has consistently implemented a comprehensive instructional monitoring system that addresses each of the following required elements. For more detailed analysis see Monitoring Instruction Inventory (portfolio: c. Inventory Documents, iv. Site Visit Inventory – Monitoring Instruction).

Question	Sufficient Evidence	Document Inventory Item
Monitoring the Integration of Standards		
What is the Charter Holder's process for monitoring the integration of standards into classroom instruction? How does the Charter Holder monitor whether or not instructional staff implements an ACCRS-aligned curriculum with fidelity?	Yes	M1
How does the Charter Holder monitor the effectiveness of standards-based instruction throughout the year?	Yes	M2
Evaluating Instructional Practices		
What is the Charter Holder's process for evaluating the instructional practices? How does this process evaluate the quality of instruction?	Yes	M3
How does this process identify individual strengths, weaknesses, and needs?	Yes	M4
Providing Analysis and Feedback to Further Develop Instructional Quality		
How does the Charter Holder provide feedback on strengths, weaknesses, and learning needs based on the evaluation of instructional practices?	Yes	M5
How does this Charter Holder analyze this information? What does the data about quality of instruction tell the Charter Holder? What has the Charter Holder done in response?	Yes	M6
Adapted to Meet the Needs of Subgroups		
How does the Charter Holder monitor instruction to ensure it is meeting the needs of students with proficiency in the bottom 25%/non-proficient students?	Yes	M7
How does the Charter Holder monitor instruction to ensure it is meeting the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs)?	N/A	M8
How does the Charter Holder monitor instruction to ensure it is meeting the needs of Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) students?	N/A	M9
How does the Charter Holder monitor instruction to ensure it is meeting the needs of students with disabilities?	N/A	M10

Professional Development

The area of Professional Development is evaluated as Meets. As demonstrated by the evidence provided at the DSP site visit, the Charter Holder has consistently implemented a comprehensive professional development system that addresses each of the following required elements. For more detailed analysis see Professional Development Inventory (portfolio: c. Inventory Documents, v. Site Visit Inventory - Professional Development).

Question	Sufficient Evidence	Document Inventory Item
Professional Development System		
What is the Charter Holder's professional development plan?	Yes	P1
How was the professional development plan developed?	Yes	P2
How is the professional development plan aligned with instructional staff learning needs?	Yes	P3
How does this plan address areas of high importance?	Yes	P4
Supporting High Quality Implementation		
How does the Charter Holder support high quality implementation of the strategies learned in professional development sessions?	Yes	P5
How does the Charter Holder provide the resources that are necessary for high quality implementation?	Yes	P6
Monitoring Implementation		
How does the Charter Holder monitor the implementation of the strategies learned in professional development sessions?	Yes	P7
How does the Charter Holder monitor and follow-up with instructional staff to support and develop implementation of the strategies learned in professional development?	Yes	P8
Adapted to Meet the Needs of Subgroups		
How does the professional development plan ensure that instructional staff receives the type of development required to meet the needs of students with proficiency in the bottom 25%/non-proficient students?	Yes	P9
How does the professional development plan ensure that instructional staff receives the type of development required to meet the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs)?	N/A	P10
How does the professional development plan ensure that instructional staff receives the type of development required to meet the needs of Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) students?	N/A	P11
How does the professional development plan ensure that instructional staff receives the type of development required to meet the needs of students with disabilities?	N/A	P12

V. Board Options

Board Options – Enrollment Cap Notification Request

Option 1: The Board may deny the request. Staff recommends the following language provided for consideration: I move, based on the information contained in the Board materials and presented today, to deny the request to increase the enrollment cap the charter contract of Arizona Autism Charter School, for the reasons that:

- The Charter Holder failed to demonstrate sufficient progress towards meeting the Board's academic performance expectations, and
- (Board member may specify additional reasons the Board found during its consideration.)

Option 2: The Board may determine that there is a basis to approve the request. The following language is provided for consideration: Charter expansion is based on consideration of academic and contractual compliance of the Charter Holder. In this case, as a school in its first year of operation, the Charter Holder did not have State assessment data available. Having considered the statements of the representatives of the Charter Holder today and the academic performance of the Charter Holder, the Board has sufficient basis to deny the request due to the Charter Holder's failure to meet or demonstrate sufficient progress toward the Board's academic expectations set forth in the academic performance framework as reflected in the Staff Report, the Inventory Documents, and the DSP Final Evaluation. The Charter Holder was not able to provide evidence that it has consistently implemented a comprehensive curriculum system. Additionally, the data and analysis provided by the Charter Holder did not demonstrate the capacity to provide comparative data generated from valid and reliable assessment sources for all required measures. However, the Charter Holder was able to provide evidence that it has consistently implemented a comprehensive assessment system, and comprehensive instructional monitoring system, and comprehensive professional development system. All that taken into consideration, I move to approve the request to increase the enrollment cap for the charter contract of Arizona Autism Charter School from 99 to 108, for the reasons that:

- (Board member must specify reasons the Board found during its consideration.).