AGENDA ITEM: New School Site Notification Request – Hillcrest Academy, Inc.

Issue

A New School Site Notification Request was submitted by Hillcrest Academy, Inc. (HAI). The charter is authorized for grades K-8. HAI did not meet the Board's academic performance expectations, and was required to submit a Demonstration of Sufficient Progress (DSP).

Summary of Narrative Provided

Rationale for Expansion Request

HAI is in the process of merging entities with International Charter School of Arizona (ICSA), which is submitting a concurrent New School Site Notification Request. Hillcrest will locate a new site serving grades K-6 at the new site of ICSA on East Paradise Lane in north Phoenix, while ICSA is requesting to add a site serving grades 7-12 at the new location of Hillcrest Academy on South Power Road in Mesa. Both entities have aligned their corporate boards, missions, and programs of instruction. With the approval of the New School Site Notification Requests, HAI will request a decrease in approved grades from to K-6, and ICSA will request a decrease in approved grades from 5-12 to 7-12.

Support Information

The submitted minutes of the February 27, 2014 meeting of the corporate board of HAI show approval for the lease of a new facility on approval by ASBCS for an expansion site.

Background

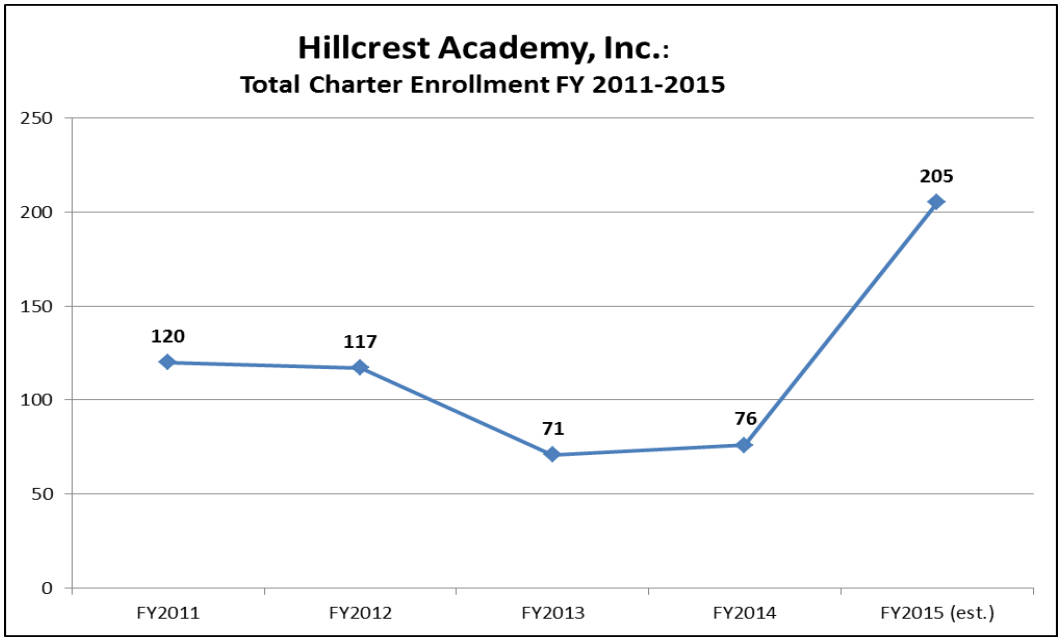
HAI was granted a charter in 1997 under the name DCS Partners, Inc., and renewed on July 11, 2011. The name change to HAI was approved by the Board on July 8, 2013. HAI operates 1 school, Hillcrest Academy (formerly Destiny Community School from 1997 to 2013) serving grades K-8 in Mesa. According to the Charter Holder, 4% of students in FY 2014 were in the ELL subgroup, 52% of students were in the FRL subgroup, and 3% of students were in the SPED subgroup.

School Environment

The following list shows the 2014 A-F Letter Grade for the five public schools serving grades in the K-8 range closest to the new site proposed for Hillcrest Academy on Paradise Lane in Phoenix:

School Name	District/Charter	Grades Served	FY2014 A-F Letter Grade
Whispering Wind Academy	District Charter	K-6	A
Arrowhead Elementary School	District	K-6	D
Benchmark School	Charter	K-6	A
Palomino Intermediate School	District	4-6	B
Palomino Primary School	District	K-3	B

The current enrollment cap is 400. According to ADE, the 100th day ADM for FY 2014 was 76. The graph below shows the Charter Holder's actual 100th day average daily membership (ADM) for fiscal years 2011-2014, and estimated enrollment for 2015.



Eligibility

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

Financial Performance

HAI did not meet the Board's financial performance expectations based on the fiscal year 2013 audit. The following table includes the charter holder's financial data and financial performance for the last three audited fiscal years. Please note that due to a Classroom Site Fund cash carryover balance at June 30, 2012 of $9,764, the charter holder had $0 in unrestricted cash for fiscal year 2012.

Hillcrest Academy, Inc.

Financial Data				
	2013	2012	2011	
Statement of Financial Position				2010
Cash	$27,177	$8,499	$0	$9,817
Unrestricted Cash	$18,965	$0	$0	
Other Liquidity	$1,010,864			
Total Assets	$3,219,943	$3,149,500	$3,322,646	
Total Liabilities	$4,819,128	$4,043,546	$4,048,072	
Current Portion of Long-Term Debt & Capital Leases	$214,048	$80,167	$49,200	
Net Assets	($1,599,185)	($894,046)	($725,426)	
Statement of Activities				
Revenue	$641,931	$1,090,888	$903,092	
Expenses	$1,347,070	$1,259,506	$1,418,473	
Net Income	($705,139)	($168,618)	($515,381)	
Change in Net Assets	($705,139)	($168,618)	($515,381)	
Financial Statements or Notes				
Depreciation & Amortization Expense	$153,274	$140,755	$137,390	
Interest Expense	$329,465	$313,972	$287,379	
Lease Expense	-	-	-	

Financial Performance				
	2013	2012	2011	3-yr Cumulative
Near-Term Indicators				
Going Concern	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Unrestricted Days Liquidity*	279.04	0.00	0.00	N/A
Default	No	No	No	N/A
Sustainability Indicators				
Net Income	($705,139)	($168,618)	($515,381)	N/A
Cash Flow	$18,678	$8,499	($9,817)	$17,360
Fixed Charge Coverage Ratio	(0.41)	0.73	(0.27)	N/A

* For fiscal years 2011 and 2012, the field reflects the charter holder's performance under the financial framework's previous "Unrestricted Days Cash" measure.

The Charter Holder was required to submit a financial performance response based on the fiscal year 2013 audit (presented in the Charter Holder's notification portfolio: f: Financial Performance Response). Staff's evaluation of the financial performance response resulted in zero "Acceptable" and four "Not Acceptable" determinations (presented in the Charter Holder's notification portfolio: g: Financial Performance Evaluation).

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. A dashboard representation of HAI's academic outcomes, based upon the indicators and measures adopted by the Board, is provided below.

Hillcrest Academy

		2012 Traditional Elementary School (K-8)			2013 Traditional Elementary School (K to 8)		
1. Growth		Measure	Points Assigned	Weight	Measure	Points Assigned	Weight
1a. SGP	Math	53.5	75	12.5	63	75	25
	Reading	47.5	50	12.5	70	100	25
1b. SGP Bottom 25%	Math	58.5	75	12.5	NR	0	0
	Reading	47.5	50	12.5	NR	0	0
2. Proficiency		Measure	Points Assigned	Weight	Measure	Points Assigned	Weight
2a. Percent Passing	Math	60 / 64.2	50	7.5	71.1 / 63.5	75	7.5
	Reading	72 / 77.3	50	7.5	81.6 / 78.3	75	7.5
2b. Composite School Comparison	Math	-3.3	50	7.5	5	75	7.5
	Reading	-4.3	50	7.5	0.4	75	7.5
2c. Subgroup ELL	Math	NR	0	0	NR	0	0
	Reading	NR	0	0	NR	0	0
2c. Subgroup FRL	Math	65 / 54.6	75	3.75	88.2 / 54.4	100	7.5
	Reading	69 / 68.8	75	3.75	82.4 / 71.2	75	7.5
2c. Subgroup SPED	Math	46 / 26.6	75	3.75	NR	0	0
	Reading	62 / 37	75	3.75	NR	0	0
3. State Accountability		Measure	Points Assigned	Weight	Measure	Points Assigned	Weight
3a. State Accountability		B	75	5	B	75	5
Overall Rating		Overall Rating			Overall Rating		
Scoring for Overall Rating 89 or higher: Exceeds Standard <89, but > or = to 63: Meets Standard <63, but > or = to 39: Does Not Meet Standard Less than 39: Falls Far Below Standard		61.25		100	83.12		100

The FY 2013 overall rating for Hillcrest Academy on the Board's academic performance measures was 83.12 including points received for the FY 2013 letter grade of B as reported by the Arizona Department of Education. The FY 2012 overall rating for Hillcrest Academy on the Board's academic performance measures was 61.25 including points received for the FY 2012 letter grade of B as reported by the Arizona Department of Education.

The FY 2014 letter grade of Hillcrest Academy as reported by the Arizona Department of Education is B.

The academic performance of HAI did not meet the Board's academic performance expectations set forth in the performance framework adopted by the Board. A Demonstration of Sufficient Progress (DSP) was submitted by the charter representative (presented in the Charter Holder's notification portfolio: e: DSP Submission).

Demonstration of Sufficient Progress

Following a preliminary evaluation of the DSP, staff conducted a site visit on August 22, 2014 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 (presented in the Charter Holder's notification portfolio: c. DSP Evaluation Instrument and d. DSP Site Visit Inventory) of the Charter Holder's DSP submission. The following representatives of HAI were present at the site visit:

Name	Role
Jerad Hunsaker	Superintendent
Dale Nichol	High School Principal
Mike Scott	Curriculum
Kris Johnson	Grants

The DSP submitted by HAI for Hillcrest Academy 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. The Charter Holder also had 48 hours following the site visit to submit relevant evidence. However, no evidence was submitted by the Charter Holder in the 48 hour period.

After considering information in the DSP and evidence provided at the time of the site visit, the Charter Holder has not provided 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 Standards (ACCR Standards) into instruction, implementation of a plan for monitoring and documenting increases in student growth and proficiency, or implementation of a professional development plan that contributed to increased student growth and proficiency.

The Charter Holder did not provide data and analysis that demonstrates improved academic performance based on data generated from valid and reliable assessment sources. No disaggregated data or analysis of data was presented to demonstrate increased proficiency in Math and Reading for students in the ELL, FRL, or SPED subgroups, or increased growth for students with proficiency in the bottom 25%.

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.

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

Curriculum:

In the area of curriculum, HAI's DSP was evaluated as Falls Far Below.

The Charter Holder did not provide evidence of a sustained improvement plan that includes implementation of a curriculum that contributes to increased student growth and proficiency. Rather, the Charter Holder provided evidence of disjointed efforts to develop or address school curriculum aligned with ACCR Standards.

The Charter Holder's demonstration of sufficient progress in the area of curriculum is not acceptable.

- The Charter Holder must provide evidence of implementation of a systematic process the school uses to create/adopt 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 Beyond Textbooks evaluation material. These documents identified materials used in the evaluation of an adopted curriculum, including samples of curricular documents (curricular calendar, sample lesson plan), a training agenda with an overview of the adopted curriculum, and documentation of attendance at a training regarding an adopted curriculum on July 7, 2014. The Charter Holder also provided email documents regarding the Beyond Textbooks (BT) demo account, dated June 12 to June 14, 2014. These documents include reviews of the BT curriculum system by two teachers sent to site leaders. The Charter Holder also provided Beyond Textbooks. This document provides an overview of the BT curriculum framework, which was provided to parents to describe the features and benefits of the BT curriculum. The document identifies the reasons the BT curriculum was selected and how it will be used by teachers. The Charter Holder adopted this curriculum over the summer of 2014, but did not document the implementation of BT, as instruction for FY 2015 had not started by the time of the site visit. These documents provide a limited demonstration of what findings the school makes about a particular curriculum option and who was involved in the adoption of that curriculum, but does not demonstrate how and when the school evaluates curriculum options. These documents provide evidence disjointed efforts the school uses to create/adopt curriculum, but do not provide evidence of implementation of a systematic process the school uses to create/adopt curriculum.

- The Charter Holder provided Principal Meeting 6/25. This document lists the reasons why BT was selected as the curriculum for the school for the 2014-2015 school year. The Charter Holder adopted this curriculum over the summer of 2014, but did not document the implementation of BT, as instruction for FY 2015 had not started by the time of the site visit. This document provide a limited demonstration of what findings the school makes about a particular curriculum option, but does not demonstrate how and when the school evaluates curriculum options. These documents provide evidence disjointed efforts the school uses to create/adopt curriculum, but do not provide evidence of implementation of a systematic process the school uses to create/adopt curriculum.
- The Charter Holder provided New Curriculum Adoption Methods and Criteria. This document was prepared at the time of the site visit, and outlines the process used to adopt the BT curriculum for implementation during the 2014-2015 school year, including who was involved, criteria used, and why BT was chosen. The Charter Holder adopted this curriculum over the summer of 2014, but did not document the implementation of BT, as instruction for FY 2015 had not started by the time of the site visit. This document provide a limited demonstration of how and when the school has evaluated a particular curriculum option, what findings the school has made about that curriculum option, and who was involved in the curriculum adoption process for that curriculum, but does not demonstrate how and when the school evaluates curriculum options. These documents provide evidence disjointed efforts the school uses to create/adopt curriculum, but do not provide evidence of implementation of a systematic process the school uses to create/adopt curriculum.
- The Charter Holder provided What Curriculum Materials Are High Performing Charter Schools Using? (Michigan Dept. of Ed.); Pearson Reading Street Longitudinal Efficacy Study (Gatti Evaluation Inc.); and What Works Clearinghouse evaluation of Saxon Math. The Michigan document identifies both Reading Street and Saxon Math as being used by high performing charter schools, while the Gatti document provided research results regarding the strengths and weaknesses of Pearson Reading Street. The What Works Clearinghouse document contains an evaluation consisting of a meta-analysis of the efficacy of Saxon Math. The charter holder stated that when the current leadership team took over, they used these documents to evaluate their curriculum offerings and identify the need for BT, but did not provide evidence of the process used to evaluate the curriculum and identify deficiencies, or evidence of the identified deficiencies. These documents provide a limited demonstration of how the school evaluates curriculum options, but do not 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. These documents provide evidence disjointed efforts the school uses to create/adopt curriculum, but do not provide evidence of implementation of a systematic process the school uses to create/adopt 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 demonstrated the Beyond Textbooks (BT) website. This electronic document contains a calendar to identify standards to be taught, and the amount of time allocated to provide instruction for that standard. According to the Charter Holder, the website also provides instructional resources for each ACCR Standard. The Charter Holder demonstrated the availability of linked resources for four standards, one 5th grade Math standard, one 6th grade Reading standard, and two 8th grade Reading standards. For three of the four standards, the BT site contains the resources available for the teacher to use for instruction, but not for one of the 8th grade standards. The Charter Holder stated that fewer resources were available for the upper grades. The Charter Holder adopted this curriculum over the summer of 2014, but did not document the implementation of BT, as instruction for FY 2015 had not started by the time of the site visit. These documents demonstrate the school has adopted by not implemented tools that identify what must be taught and the expected pacing, but did not demonstrate

the school utilizes tools that consistently identify the expected strategies, methods, and activities, or that the school has communicated expectations for the consistent use of these tools. This document provides limited evidence that the school has in place processes for implementing the curriculum consistently across the school.

- The Charter Holder provided Beyond Textbooks Non-Negotiables. This document describes the expectations for teacher use of BT curricular resources, including expectations for use of specific resources (calendars, essential standards, and unwrapped documents), and the expectation for planning one month in advance. The Charter Holder adopted this curriculum over the summer of 2014, but has not implemented BT yet, as instruction for FY 2015 had not started by the time of the site visit. The Charter Holder also provided Welcome Hillcrest Faculty presentation for the 2014-2015 school year. This document included the BT Non-Negotiables in the presentation. This document demonstrates the school has a process for communicating expectations for the consistent use of these tools, but not that the school utilizes tools that identify what must be taught, the expected pacing, strategies, methods, and activities. This document provides limited evidence that the school has in place processes for implementing the curriculum consistently across the school.
- The Charter Holder provided the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 Teacher Handbooks. These documents include expectations regarding how teachers will use the curriculum map, and when and how teachers are to submit lesson plans. However, no lesson plans were provided for FY 2014 to provide evidence that the expectations had been implemented. The Charter Holder also provided Welcome Hillcrest Faculty presentation for the 2014-2015 school year. This document identifies the expectation for lesson planning, indicating the expectation for identifying standards in each lesson, and creation of lessons by Sunday for following week. These documents demonstrate the school has a process for communicating expectations for the consistent use of these tools, but not that the school utilizes tools that identify what must be taught, the expected pacing, strategies, methods, and activities. These documents provide limited evidence that the school has in place processes for implementing the curriculum consistently across the school.
- The Charter Holder provided Saxon Math Table of Contents and Hake Fourth Grade Grammar and Writing Schedule. The Table of Contents and Grammar & Writing Schedule identify the instructional sequence of lessons for the particular grade. No similar pacing document was provided for Reading Street, which the charter holder identified as their primary Reading curriculum. These documents provide limited demonstration that the school utilizes tools that identify what must be taught and the expected pacing, but do not demonstrate that the school utilizes tools that identify strategies, methods, and activities, or communicated expectations for the consistent use of these tools. These documents provide limited evidence that the school has in place processes for implementing the curriculum consistently across the school.
- The Charter Holder described, but did not provide evidence of a pacing guide and curriculum map for ELA in grades 5-8. This does not provide evidence that the school has in place a system for implementing the curriculum consistently across the school.
- The Charter Holder described, but did not provide evidence of a Pacing Guides for Reading Street, which was described as the primary reading curriculum. This does not provide evidence that the school has in place a system for implementing the curriculum consistently across the school.
- The Charter Holder described, but did not provide evidence of a pacing guide for Saxon Math for 3rd grade. This does not provide evidence that the school has in place a system for implementing the curriculum consistently across the school.
- The Charter Holder described, but did not provide evidence of a Hake Grammar and Writing schedule for 6th grade. This does not provide evidence that the school has in place a system for implementing the curriculum consistently across the school.

- The Charter Holder described, but did not provide evidence of a two consecutive weeks of lesson plans aligned to the provided and requested pacing guides. This does not provide evidence that the school has in place a system for implementing the curriculum consistently across the school.

- The Charter Holder must provide evidence of implementation of a systematic process for evaluating and revising 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 What Curriculum Materials Are High Performing Charter Schools Using? (Michigan Dept. of Ed.); Pearson Reading Street Longitudinal Efficacy Study (Gatti Evaluation Inc.); and What Works Clearinghouse evaluation of Saxon Math. The Michigan document identifies both Reading Street and Saxon Math as being used by high performing charter schools, while the Gatti document provided research results regarding the strengths and weaknesses of Pearson Reading Street. The What Works Clearinghouse document contains an evaluation consisting of a meta-analysis of the efficacy of Saxon Math. The charter holder stated that when the current leadership team took over, they used these documents to evaluate their curriculum offerings and determine that based on the prior performance of the school and the findings of these reports, they would continue using Reading Street ELA and Saxon Math. These documents provide limited demonstration of how the school evaluates how effectively the curriculum enables students to master the standards, but do not demonstrate how the school identifies gaps in the curriculum, or how the school is addressing curricular gaps. These documents provide evidence disjointed efforts the school uses to evaluate and revise curriculum, but do not provide evidence of implementation of a systematic process the school uses for evaluating and revising curriculum.

- The Charter Holder must demonstrate implementation of a curriculum aligned to the ACCR standards.
  - The Charter Holder provided Saxon Math Content by Strand for grades K and 2, Saxon Math Table of Contents, Hake Grammar and Writing 4, Hake Fourth Grade Grammar and Writing Schedule, and Reading Street Alignment. The Table of Contents and Grammar & Writing Schedule identify the instructional sequence of lessons. The Saxon Math Content by Strand document identifies lesson numbers aligned to Common Core State Standards for the particular grades. The Hake Grammar and Writing 4 document aligns lessons to Common Core State Writing and Language Standards for the particular grade. The Reading Street Alignment document is organized by standard to document that all standards are addressed by Reading Street resources during the school year. These documents demonstrate the implementation of a curriculum aligned to the ACCR standards.
  - The Charter Holder demonstrated the Beyond Textbooks website. This electronic document contains a calendar to identify ACCR Standards to be taught, with links to unpacked standards phrased as student-friendly learning objectives. The Charter Holder adopted this curriculum over the summer of 2014, but did not document the implementation of BT, as instruction for FY 2015 had not started by the time of the site visit. This document provides evidence of the adoption, but not the implementation, of a curriculum aligned to the ACCR standards.

- 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 demonstrated the Beyond Textbooks website. This electronic document contains a calendar to identify standards to be taught, with links to website areas where teachers can upload differentiated instructional activities aligned to each standard. According to the Charter Holder, the website also provides intervention and accommodation resources for each ACCR Standard. The Charter Holder demonstrated the availability of linked resources for four standards, one 5th grade Math standard, one 6th grade Reading standard, and two 8th grade Reading standards. For the 5th and 6th grade standards, the BT site contains the resources available for the teacher to use for differentiation,

but not for the 8th grade standards. According to the Charter Holder, the ELP standards have not been integrated into BT for ELL students. The Charter Holder adopted this curriculum over the summer of 2014, but did not document the implementation of BT, as instruction for FY 2015 had not started by the time of the site visit. These documents demonstrate the school has adopted, but not implemented, a curriculum adapted to meet the needs of subgroup populations. This document does not demonstrate there is curriculum intended to provide differentiated materials, activities, and/or strategies for struggling students within the subgroups.

- The Charter Holder described, but did not provide evidence of, a tutoring program to meet the needs of students with proficiency in the bottom 25%. This does not demonstrate implementation of a curriculum adapted to meet the needs of subgroup populations.

Monitoring Instruction:

In the area of monitoring instruction, HAI's DSP was evaluated as Falls Far Below.

The Charter Holder did not provide evidence of a sustained improvement plan that includes implementation of a plan for monitoring the integration of the ACCR Standards into instruction. Rather, the Charter Holder provided evidence of the beginning stages of monitoring and evaluating standards and instructional practices.

The Charter Holder's demonstration of sufficient progress in the area of monitoring instruction is not acceptable.

- 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 Lesson Plans Spring 2014. This document is a checklist used by the Curriculum Director to indicate that lesson plans for the following week were received by the Friday due date indicated in the 2013-2014 Teacher Handbook described above. This document indicates that of the 19 weeks tracked by the checklist, lesson plans were received timely from all teachers on two weeks. The document does not indicate whether lesson plans were received late, and the Curriculum Director stated that he did not document follow up. The Charter Holder described, but did not provide evidence of, lesson plans from the period covered on this document. This document provides limited demonstration that teachers implement an ACCR Standards-aligned curriculum with fidelity. These documents provide evidence of the beginning stages of monitoring and evaluating standards and instructional practices. . These documents provide evidence of the beginning stages of monitoring and evaluating standards and instructional practices.
    - The Charter Holder provided Lesson Plans for the week of August 5, 2013 for ELA grades 5-8 and 4th grade, and for the week of April 14-18, 2014 for 4th grade. The lesson plans for ELA grades 5-8 indicate grade-level appropriate ACCR Standards for all classes except Language & Literature 7th, which lists a 6th grade standard one day and no standards the other four days. The August and April 4th grade lesson plans both list grade-appropriate ACCR Standards for ELA and Math for each day. These documents provide limited evidence that teachers implement an ACCR Standards-aligned curriculum with fidelity, but when requested, the Charter Holder did not provide lesson plans demonstrating alignment to the provided and requested pacing guides, or other lesson plans from the period documented on the Lesson Plan Spring 2014 document described above. These documents provide evidence of the beginning stages of monitoring and evaluating standards and instructional practices.
    - The Charter Holder provided 5 Minute Observation: 9 samples from December 2013. These documents record five minute observations completed by teachers and school leadership. Each teacher completed an observation of every teacher. The documents record what lesson was being taught, where the teacher was standing, evidence of student work, expectations of behavior posted,

evidence of objective and learning goals, number of students on task, the classroom climate, and other notes. In three of the nine records, the "Evidence of Objectives/Subject/Learning Goals" notes indicate that a schedule or homework was posted, four records indicate "yes," in one case students were testing, and in one case there is no entry, but none of the documents provided indicate that instruction was aligned to an ACCR Standard. These documents do not demonstrate that the school ensures all grade level standards are taught within the school year in all classrooms or that teachers implement an ACCR Standards-aligned curriculum with fidelity. These documents provide evidence of the beginning stages of monitoring and evaluating standards and instructional practices.

  - The Charter Holder demonstrated the Beyond Textbooks website. This electronic document contains a calendar to identify ACCR Standards to be taught on specific days, and the expected pacing for instruction related to each standard. The Charter Holder adopted this curriculum over the summer of 2014, but did not document the implementation of BT, as instruction for FY 2015 had not started by the time of the site visit. These documents demonstrate the school has adopted, but not implemented, a process that the school ensures all grade level standards are taught within the school year in all classrooms. However, the Charter Holder did not provide evidence of the implementation of a process that the school ensures all grade level standards are taught within the school year in all classrooms. These documents provide evidence of the beginning stages of monitoring and evaluating standards and instructional practices.

- 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 5 Minute Observation: 9 examples from December 2013. These documents record five minute observations completed by teachers and school leadership. Each teacher completed an observation of every teacher. The documents record what lesson was being taught, where the teacher was standing, evidence of student work, expectations of behavior posted, evidence of objective and learning goals, number of students on task, the classroom climate, and other notes. Three examples included comments that identified instructional weaknesses. The site leader stated that feedback was verbal only, and no documentation of feedback was provided. When requested, the Charter Holder did not provide evidence of an evaluation of instructional practice which identifies a learning need. These documents provide limited demonstration that the school evaluates the quality of instruction and identifies the strengths, weaknesses, and learning needs of teachers. These documents provide evidence of the beginning stages of monitoring and evaluating standards and instructional practices.
  - The Charter Holder provided Formal Teacher Evaluations Instructional Development Scale from December, 2013 for three teachers. These documents provide 4 page evaluation of teachers in the areas of Designs and Plans Instruction, Creates and Maintains a Learning Climate, and Implements and Manages Instruction and Assessment. Within each category teachers are rated on a scale of 1 to 5. Evaluation documents use a rating scale to identify skills that need improvement, with scores of 1 or 2 indicating a learning need. One of the three teachers had an area (Uses effective closure or summarization technique) scored below 3, while the other two were rated 3 or above in all scored areas. The forms also included hand-written notes by the evaluator. The site leader stated that feedback was verbal only, and no documentation of feedback was provided. These documents provide limited demonstration that the school evaluates the quality of instruction and identifies the strengths, weaknesses, and learning needs of teachers. When requested, the Charter Holder did not provide evidence of a teacher evaluation which identified a teacher learning need, provided feedback, and demonstrated the teachers have access to resources to address identified weaknesses and learning needs. These documents provide evidence of the beginning stages of monitoring and evaluating standards and instructional practices.

- The Charter Holder must provide evidence that school leaders conduct some analysis and provide some 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 5 Minute Observation: 9 examples from December 2013. These documents record five minute observations completed by teachers and school leadership. Each teacher completed an observation of every teacher. The documents record what lesson was being taught, where the teacher was standing, evidence of student work, expectations of behavior posted, evidence of objective and learning goals, number of students on task, the classroom climate, and other notes. Three examples included comments that identified instructional weaknesses. The site leader stated that feedback was verbal only, and no documentation of feedback was provided. These documents did not provide evidence that demonstrate teachers receive the feedback, or have access to the resources necessary to address identified weaknesses and learning needs. When requested, the Charter Holder did not provide evidence of an instructional observation which identified a teacher learning need, provided feedback, and demonstrated the teachers have access to resources to address identified weaknesses and learning needs. These documents provide evidence of the beginning stages of monitoring and evaluating standards and instructional practices.
    - The Charter Holder provided Formal Teacher Evaluations Instructional Development Scale from December, 2013 for three teachers. These documents provide 4 page evaluation of teachers in the areas of Designs and Plans Instruction, Creates and Maintains a Learning Climate, and Implements and Manages Instruction and Assessment. Within each category teachers are rated on a scale of 1 to 5. Evaluation documents use a rating scale to identify skills that need improvement, with scores of 1 or 2 indicating a learning need. One of the three teachers had an area (Uses effective closure or summarization technique) scored below 3, while the other two were rated 3 or above in all scored areas. The forms also included hand-written notes by the evaluator. The site leader stated that feedback was verbal only, and no documentation of feedback was provided. These documents did not demonstrate that teachers receive the feedback, have access to the resources necessary to address identified weaknesses and learning needs, or the school ensures teacher development is ongoing. These documents provide evidence of the beginning stages of monitoring and evaluating standards and instructional practices.
- 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.
    - No documentation was provided by the Charter Holder to demonstrate evidence of implementation of a system to evaluate the instructional practices of teachers that address the needs of students in subgroups.

Assessment:

In the area of assessment, HAI's demonstration of sufficient progress was evaluated as Approaches.

The Charter Holder did not provide evidence of a sustained improvement plan that includes implementation of a plan for monitoring and documenting student proficiency. Rather, the Charter Holder provided evidence of an assessment approach that is not comprehensive nor aligned with the curriculum and instructional practices. The evidence demonstrated that little data is collected and data is not used to make instructional decisions.

The Charter Holder's DSP in the area of assessment is not acceptable.

- 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 in a manner that is aligned with the curriculum in order to monitor student progress.
    - The Charter Holder provided Grade book pages: 7th Grade Math Q1, 4th Grade ELA February. These documents identify curriculum based test scores identified for 7th grade Math and 4th grade formative assessments for grade level reading selections. These documents provide a limited demonstration the school regularly assesses students in a manner that is aligned with the curriculum, but not that the school assesses in order to monitor student progress. These documents provide evidence of an assessment approach that is not comprehensive nor aligned with the curriculum and instructional practices.
    - The Charter Holder provided Galileo assessment reports. The Instruction Performance Tracker Report for grade 3 Math does not identify ACCR Standards, but identifies specific archived standards for teachers to focus on to reduce the risk level of students in the class. The Individual Development Profile Report provides the results of a teacher-created curricular quiz which does not assess an ACCR Standard, but addresses a specific archived standard in Reading for 6th grade. The Intervention Alert for 4th grade Math indicates performance for each student on each tested archived standard rather than ACCR Standards, and provides the number of archived standards met for each student and percent met for each performance objective. The Student Assessment History Report shows, for a particular 7th grade student, the results of each benchmark assessment taken for the 2013-2014 school year, including developmental level score, whether that score exceeds, meets, approaches, or falls far below standard, and the risk level, as well as the results on teacher-created curricular assessments. These documents all indicate that the assessments are aligned to archived standards in Math and Reading, rather than the ACCR Standards which the curriculum is aligned to. These documents demonstrate the school regularly and timely assesses students in order to monitor student progress, but not that the school assesses students in a manner that is aligned with the curriculum. These documents provide evidence of an assessment approach that is not comprehensive nor aligned with the curriculum and instructional practices.
    - The Charter Holder provided ACSA Quality Schools Assessment Worksheet. This document was used by the Curriculum Director to monitor teacher administration of Galileo pre-test and benchmark assessments after teachers were trained to assign Galileo assessments to students, and indicates that all teachers gave the Galileo pretest and Reading Benchmark 1, 5 of 9 gave Math Benchmark 1, and do not include any notations for later assessments. The Curriculum Director stated that after Benchmark 1, he realized that the Worksheet was redundant to information provided by the Galileo system. These documents provide limited demonstration that the school regularly and timely assesses students in order to monitor student progress, but not that the school assesses students in a manner that is aligned with the curriculum. These documents provide evidence of an assessment approach that is not comprehensive nor aligned with the curriculum and instructional practices.
- 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 Galileo assessment reports. The Instruction Performance Tracker Report for grade 3 Math identifies specific archived standards rather than ACCR Standards for teachers to focus on to reduce the risk level of students in the class. The Individual Development Profile Report provides the results of a teacher-created curricular quiz addressing a specific archive standards rather than ACCR Standards in Reading for 6th grade. The Intervention Alert for 4th grade Math indicates performance for each student on each tested archived standard, and provides the number of archived standards met for each student and percent met for each archived standard. The Student Assessment History Report shows, for a particular 7th grade student, the results of each benchmark assessment taken for the 2013-

2014 school year, including developmental level score, whether that score exceeds, meets, approaches, or falls far below standard, and the risk level, as well as the results on teacher-created curricular assessments. These documents provide limited demonstration of how and when the school analyzes assessment data, but do not demonstrate 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. These documents provide evidence of an assessment approach that is not comprehensive nor aligned with the curriculum and instructional practices.

  - The Charter Holder provided Galileo Student Growth and Achievement Reports. These documents indicate student performance on the benchmark posttest graphically, with individual student proficiency plotted against a proficiency cut score, and student growth from the pretest plotted against an expected growth score for the grade. Reports were provided for Reading and for Math for all grades K-8. These documents provide limited demonstration of how and when the school analyzes assessment data, but do not demonstrate 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. These documents provide evidence of an assessment approach that is not comprehensive nor aligned with the curriculum and instructional practices.
  - The Charter Holder provided Data Training, December 11, 2013. These documents include the meeting agenda and 2013 AIMS data used at the training. The data analysis provided includes a summary of findings from analysis of 2013 AIMS data by grade level, content area, and the instructional analysis tool used to conduct the analysis, with specific strands of the archived Performance Objectives highlighted to indicate deficiencies. Data also indicates an analysis of growth scores for students with Student Growth Percentiles listed in AIMS data, including whether the student was included in the Bottom 25% subgroup. These documents provide limited demonstration of how and when the school analyzes assessment data and what findings the school makes from assessment data, but do not demonstrate who is involved in the analysis of assessment data or how that analysis is used to inform and adapt instruction. These documents provide evidence of an assessment approach that is not comprehensive nor aligned with the curriculum and instructional practices.

- 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.
  - No documentation was provided by the Charter Holder to demonstrate evidence of implementation of an assessment system that meets the needs of students in subgroups. This provides evidence of an assessment approach that is not comprehensive nor aligned with the curriculum and instructional practices.

Professional Development:

In the area of professional development, HAI's DSP was evaluated as Falls Far Below.

The Charter Holder did not provide evidence of a sustained improvement plan that includes implementation of a professional development plan that contributed to increased student growth and proficiency. Rather, the Charter Holder's evidence demonstrated that the Charter Holder is at the beginning stages of developing a professional development plan based on identified teacher learning needs. Professional development is usually external and determined without regard to an overall school plan.

The Charter Holder's DSP in the area of professional development is not acceptable.

- 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 Hillcrest Academy Professional Development Needs. This undated document presents a narrative describing professional development needs. According to the site leader, this document was the narrative piece of a PD plan attached to a PD calendar, which was requested but not provided. The document indicates that areas of high need include training on newly adopted ACCR Standard-aligned curriculums, implementation of the Common Core-based standards, and implementation of the Galileo assessment system, and that these areas were determined by the governing board and administration, but does not describe or provide evidence regarding the process used by to develop these. The document states that at the beginning of the year several new curriculums were adopted, but no evidence of those adoptions was provided. The document states that mid-year follow-up trainings will be implemented to assess how effectively the new curriculums are being utilized, but no documentation of these trainings was provided. The document states that a survey of staff would be implemented to identify additional deficiencies, but no evidence of this survey was provided. The document also states that the PD needs of individual faculty are determined through the review of lesson plans, walk-through observations, and formal evaluations, but no evidence of this process was provided. This document provides a limited demonstration that the plan was developed to address areas of high importance, but do not provide evidence that the plan was developed to address teacher learning needs. This document provides evidence that the Charter Holder is at the beginning stages of developing a professional development plan based on identified teacher learning needs.
- The Charter Holder provided Data Training, December 11, 2013. These documents include the meeting agenda and 2013 AIMS data used at the training, but no other meeting materials. When requested, the Charter Holder did not provide sign-in sheets. The data analysis provided includes a summary of findings from analysis of 2013 AIMS data by grade level, content area, and the instructional analysis tool used to conduct the analysis, with specific strands of the archived Performance Objectives highlighted to indicate deficiencies. Data also indicates an analysis of growth scores for students with Student Growth Percentiles listed in AIMS data, including whether the student was included in the Bottom 25% subgroup. These documents provide limited demonstration that the plan was developed to address areas of high importance, but do not provide evidence that the plan was developed to address teacher learning needs. These documents provide evidence of that the Charter Holder is at the beginning stages of developing a professional development plan based on identified teacher learning needs.
- The Charter Holder provided Galileo system instructions and guides. When requested, the Charter Holder did not provide sign-in sheets. These documents were provided to teachers to support the use of Galileo for creating and administering assessments. The Charter Holder also provided ACSA Quality Schools Assessment Worksheet. This document was used by the Curriculum Director to monitor teacher administration of Galileo pre-test and benchmark assessments after teachers were trained to assign Galileo assessments to students. These documents provide limited demonstration that the plan was developed to address areas of high importance, but do not provide evidence that the plan was developed to address teacher learning needs. These documents provide evidence that the Charter Holder is at the beginning stages of developing a professional development plan based on identified teacher learning needs.
- The Charter Holder provided AZ Common Core Standards training materials. These documents include presentation slides for an external training on AZ Common Core Standards, which provides an overview of essential components of ACCR Standards. The documents also include an undated Certificate of Completion for the Curriculum Director. No agenda or sign-in sheets were provided. The Curriculum Director stated that he attended the external training and brought the materials back to the school, where he provided it to the teachers, but did not provide evidence of this school-level training. These documents do not demonstrate that the plan was developed to address areas of high importance or developed to address teacher learning needs. These documents provide evidence that the Charter Holder is at the beginning stages of developing a professional development plan based on identified teacher learning needs.

- 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 the article "What is a 'Professional Learning Community?'" by Richard DuFour. This document describes the process for implementing PLC at the school; the document was provided to teachers to guide implementation of PLC at the school site. Agendas for PLC meetings were provided to demonstrate implementation of PLC meetings. However, no sign-in sheets or meeting materials were provided to evidence implementation of PLCs. These documents provide limited demonstration of how the Charter Holder provides access to resources necessary to implement the information and strategies, and otherwise supports teachers in planning to implement the information and strategies. These documents provide evidence of that the Charter Holder is at the beginning stages of developing a professional development plan based on identified teacher learning needs.
    - The Charter Holder provided Galileo system instructions and guides. These documents were provided to teachers to support the use of Galileo for creating and administering assessments. The Charter Holder also provided ACSA Quality Schools Assessment Worksheet. This document was used by the Curriculum Director to monitor teacher administration of Galileo pre-test and benchmark assessments after teachers were trained to assign Galileo assessments to students, and indicates that all teachers gave the Galileo pretest and Reading Benchmark 1, 5 of 9 gave Math Benchmark 1, and do not include any notations for later assessments. The Curriculum Director stated that after Benchmark 1, he realized that the Worksheet was redundant to information provided by the Galileo system. The Charter Holder also provided Individual Development Profile Report. This document provides the results of a teacher-created curricular quiz addressing a specific archived Performance Objective in Reading for 6th grade, but do not provide evidence that the Galileo system was used to create curricular assessments by other teachers. These documents provide limited demonstration of how the Charter Holder provides access to resources necessary to implement the information and strategies, and otherwise supports teachers in planning to implement the information and strategies. These documents provide evidence that the Charter Holder is at the beginning stages of developing a professional development plan based on identified teacher learning needs.
    - The Charter Holder provided AZ Common Core Standards training materials. These documents include presentation slides for an external training on AZ Common Core Standards, which provides an overview of essential components of ACCR Standards. The documents also include an undated Certificate of Completion for the Curriculum Director. No agenda or sign-in sheets were provided. The Curriculum Director stated that he attended the external training and brought the materials back to the school, where he provided it to the teachers, but did not provide evidence of this school-level training. These documents provide limited demonstration of how the Charter Holder provides access to resources necessary to implement the information and strategies, and otherwise supports teachers in planning to implement the information and strategies. These documents provide evidence of that the Charter Holder is at the beginning stages of developing a professional development plan based on identified teacher learning needs.
- 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.
    - No documentation was provided by the Charter Holder to demonstrate 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.

- 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, FRL 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 Special Education Start-up In-service Training: 2013-2014 School Year. This document provides an undated agenda and materials from a PD session regarding the SPED student subgroup. When requested, the Charter Holder did not provide sign-in sheets. The document includes information for teachers about making modifications and accommodations to curriculum and instruction. This document included a pre/post-test that was completed during the training, and expectations that the general education teachers must meet the needs of students in the SPED subgroup who are in their classes. This document provided demonstration of how the professional development plan addresses areas of high importance in relation to students within the subgroups according to their needs, but not teacher learning needs regarding students in subgroups. These documents provide evidence of that the Charter Holder is at the beginning stages of developing a professional development plan based on identified teacher learning needs.
    - The Charter Holder provided Data Training, December 11, 2013. These documents include the meeting agenda and 2013 AIMS data used at the training, which identifies students in the Bottom 25% subgroup. When requested, the Charter Holder did not provide sign-in sheets. The agenda also identifies SST/Inclusion strategies as part of training, but no documentation was provided to support the presentation of materials addressing subgroups needs. These documents provide limited demonstration of how the professional development plan addresses areas of high importance in relation to students within the subgroups according to their needs, but not teacher learning needs regarding students in subgroups. These documents provide evidence that the Charter Holder is at the beginning stages of developing a professional development plan based on identified teacher learning needs.

Data:

The Charter Holder did not provide data and analysis that demonstrates improved academic performance based on data generated from valid and reliable assessment sources.

The Charter Holder's demonstration of sufficient progress in the area of data is not acceptable.

HAI did not demonstrate improved academic performance based on data generated from valid and reliable assessment sources.

- 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 AIMS assessment, as reflected in the dashboard, and benchmark assessments that demonstrates improvement compared to prior years.
    - The Charter Holder provided Galileo Student Growth and Achievement Reports. These documents, provided for Math and Reading for grades K-8, provide a graphical representation of each tested student's proficiency as compared to a proficiency cut score, and growth from the pretest to the posttest as compared to an expected growth measure, both set by Galileo. The results show that 77% of students met the proficiency cut score in Reading, and 56% met in Math. For growth, 55% of students made expected growth in Reading, and 42% made expected growth in Math. These documents only address FY 2014 internal benchmark data, and do not demonstrate a correlation between the school's performance on the AIMS assessment, as reflected in the dashboard, and benchmark assessments that demonstrates improvement compared to prior years. These documents do not 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.

Board Options

Option 1: 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 New Site Notification Request to the charter of Hillcrest Academy, Inc. on the bases that the Charter Holder failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward the academic performance expectations set forth in the performance framework as reflected in the staff report.

Option 2: Notwithstanding staff's recommendation to deny the request, the Board may determine that there is a basis to approve the New Site Notification Request to the charter held by Hillcrest Academy, Inc. as requested by the Charter Holder. 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, 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 when: [provide specific findings related to curriculum, monitoring of instruction, assessment, professional development, and/or data]. 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 New Site Notification Request to the charter of Hillcrest Academy, Inc.