

Program of Instruction Amendment Request

Charterholder Info

Charter Holder

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Foothills Academy

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Representative

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Downloads

 [Download all files](#)

Description of changes

Change From:


Foothills Academy offers college preparatory curriculum, based on rigorous classroom instruction per Arizona state standards. It works to provide an educational setting for academically advanced students who are self-directed, competent learners who will excel in college and exercise leadership in a changing world.

Change To:

FA is requesting Board approval to add a program to expand our current educational offerings. The proposed program would exercise our commitment to college preparation and personalized, student-centered learning, but would offer particularly self-directed and highly motivated eleventh and twelfth graders greater independence and agency over their academic path toward graduation. The curriculum will be rooted in the Common Core State Standards and competency mastery.

Attachments

Board Minutes –  [Download File](#)

Narrative that describes 1) the change, to include rationale and background and 2) how the program of instruction change will support the educational philosophy and target population served. –  [Download File](#)

Additional Information*

No documents were uploaded.

Signature

Charter Representative Signature
Donald Senneville 06/08/2012

**Foothills Academy
Board of Directors Meeting**

*Wednesday, June 6, 2012 at 5:30 PM
34205 N. Scottsdale Rd., #H4 Scottsdale, Arizona*

Minutes

Members in attendance:

Don Senneville
Joan McGregor
Nancy Tribbensee
Clea Senneville

Call to the Audience: None present.

Meeting commenced at 5:37PM.

1. Minutes from last meeting were approved unanimously.
2. McGregor presented an update on FA’s refinancing options, with a detailed explanation of analyses provided by RBC. She reminded the Board of the purpose for FA entering the bond pool initially and the status of it, especially as it related to FA’s ability to refinance. The options were presented as threefold: all members of the pool ultimately decide to move together and pull out; the reserve fund can be preserved, FA financial advisors determine, and we remain in the pool and wait to see how the situation progresses; we pull out of the pool and out reserve fund is still protected. Tribbensee put forth multiple scenarios, to further explore the important legal and financial implications of deciding upon one of the various pathways. All figures relevant to FA’s position and the bond pool seem to indicate substantial financial rationale for exiting the bond pool. Tribbensee moved to approve that FA continue by pursuing the next steps to withdrawal from the pool; C. Senneville seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. C. Senneville described the vision for an alternative [college prep] education program that would require an amendment to Foothills Academy’s charter. For this, approval from the FA Board is sought. For their review, all Board members received draft copies of the Program of Instruction Amendment Request. She began with a statement about FA’s intent to ready itself and apply for the Arizona Online Instruction Program Amendment Request in the future, and that the program being proposed could be considered a part of that longer term plan.

Thus far branded Foothills Academy “Empowered Learning Program” (FA-ELP), the program would offer highly-motivated, self-directed, college-bound students an opportunity to engage in facilitated independent study. C. Senneville provided examples of the types of students who might be especially attracted to and well-served by this program, which enhanced a sketch of the support system and emphasis on a student-centered, competency-based, and learning-outcome oriented approach. In this model, students would work on their own, with extensive mentorship and content guidance from program staff available in myriad modes – face-to-face and online, synchronously and asynchronously.

Tribbensee wanted to ensure that the program intended to provide for students who might not already have access to a computer. The program's campus will make necessary computing technologies available to students, to ensure that individuals are not excluded based upon their lack of access to a computer.

Tribbensee inquired about the decision to initially target only 11th and 12th grades in the proposal; she suggested that it might be beneficial to request consideration of a program serving all of high school, beginning with a pilot group of 11th and 12th graders. This will be deliberated.

C. Senneville described conversations with the Arizona Department of Education School Finance, regarding alternative calendar options. For the alternative program, FA hopes to offer extensive scheduling flexibility to students, while still ensuring that students meet the instructional time requirements (pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-901(A)(2)). FA's ADE School Finance Account representative, apparently in consultation with that Department's supervisor, the Audit Department, and the Director, indicated that – with ASBCS's approval by way of an Alternative Calendar Notification Request – FA would be able to record and report attendance in terms of minutes per week.

C. Senneville emphasized the importance of this development in FA's pursuit of an educational program that can be highly customized for each student. This will enable FA to offer FA-ELP students to formulate a schedule that works for their individual learning needs and life circumstances, provided that they are present and working at least 1200 minutes each week and successfully achieving learning outcomes. FA intends to pursue the option of an additional campus, whereat students will have access to campus during nontraditional, extended hours. FA will submit a New School Site Notification Request to ASBCS to accompany the Program of Instruction Amendment Request, once a suitable location is determined.

The Board agreed that ELP had the potential to add great value to FA, especially by providing a unique opportunity to further its current mission by expanding its educational offerings. It was thereby agreed that FA engage in the approval and development of FA-ELP. Tribbensee moved to support the submission of the requisite materials to propose the program to ASBCS and any subsequent actions to develop and implement it; McGregor seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. D. Senneville provided a general summary of the accomplishments of the recent year, and put forth an outlook for the next year. The budget is in good shape with a restructuring of and shift in faculty and staff at both campuses. Two teachers for the College Prep were just hired, making for a relatively young faculty for which excitement was expressed. Tribbensee emphasized the importance of determining position valuations based upon current fair market value, to ensure retention of quality employees, which garnered unanimous agreement.

Adjournment: C. Senneville motioned to adjourn, and Tribbensee seconded, at 7:15PM.

June 8, 2012



Arizona State Board for Charter Schools
1616 West Adams Street, Suite 170
Phoenix, AZ 85007

RE: Addition of Alternative Education Program for Foothills Academy

Mr. President and Members of the Board:

Foothills Academy is one of Arizona's first wave charter schools, with an excelling rating for many years and currently an "A" school under the new system. Since 1995, we have been relentlessly college preparatory, with outstanding results. (Please see supporting document.) We work to fulfill this mission: *The mission of Foothills Academy College Preparatory is to provide an educational setting for academically advanced students who are self-directed, competent learners who will excel in college and exercise leadership in a changing world.*

We need to extend our educational program to serve a particular group of students. They are highly motivated, self-directed, college-bound eleventh and twelfth graders, who and whose families have identified their individual learning needs as being better provided for outside of the traditional brick-and-mortar setting. The amendment request package, to which this letter refers, describes the program that meets this need.

Foothills Academy College Preparatory Empowered Learning Program (FA-ELP) is a competency based program for eleventh and twelfth grades, garnering its uniqueness from its emphasis on self-direction, self-management, and self-selection of course delivery options. Each student's personal learning experience will be supported by a program mentor (Program Advisor) and course teacher/experts (Course Consultants). These relationships will comprise the core of the Program's adaptive support system, attending to all aspects of students' successful path to graduation. The college preparatory curriculum is geared to ensure college readiness with a heavy emphasis on college counseling, advisement, and career exploration. With a curriculum founded in the Common Core Standards and a philosophy founded on the value of problem-solving for success through college and beyond, what makes the program widely appealing is its attention to individual learning styles and student interests. With a host of resources – accessible locally and online – from which to build and demonstrate competencies, students will earn credits at their own pace through culminating portfolio defenses in both real and virtual presentations to their instructors.

Thank you for your consideration of our Amendment request.

Sincerely,

Donald S. Senneville, Ph.D.
Director

Foothills Academy

Program of Instruction Amendment Request

This request is in pursuit of approval to amend the charter of Foothills Academy (FA) enabling our institution to add a program that provides an educational setting for facilitated independent learning, serving a subset of the college-bound upper level high school students in our locality. This program furthers our mission by offering academically advanced, competent students an alternative educational setting to practice learning and performing through self-motivation and self-direction.

The Foothills Academy College Preparatory Empowered Learning Program (FA-ELP) responds to the idea that in the digital age students can learn virtually anywhere, anytime, and any way they want. One of the aspects of this program that differentiates it distinctly from virtual schools or other programs that afford students an opportunity to work at their own pace and have agency in the decision-making involved in their learning path is FA's strong support system. Students develop personal connections to and have regular and near-immediate access to program staff in myriad ways, including face-to-face interactions, telephone, email, video chat, instant messaging, and text. The specific modes, tools, and frequency of these interactions are based upon determinations made by each student and relevant staff members.

Progress is determined by students' demonstration of their ability to apply content in novel situations and to offer substantive reflections that speak to specific competencies, as established by the Common Core. Technology is used as an enabling tool for what is a non-traditional, student-centered independent learning educational approach. Facilitated independent study is directed by a student's Plan of Study, competency demonstrations in each course, and the development and defense of culminating portfolios.

Foothills Academy sees a demand for an alternative education program that is customizable to individual students' unique life circumstances and learning styles, all the while providing a setting and support for advanced college preparation. FA-ELP is designed to serve ambitious, self-directed eleventh and twelfth graders, whose interest in learning has been constrained by traditional brick and mortar educational settings. These highly-motivated students will appreciate the agency over their learning path provided by this program, helping to push them beyond even their own expectations of themselves. Students will be determined candidates for this program based upon their exemplification of past engagement in learning and self-directedness, as well as a placement pre-assessment, similar to the current pre-enrollment placement assessment at Foothills Academy.

FA-ELP intends to begin small, with no more than twenty-five upperclassmen, housed at an additional member campus near to our current two. Students will be strongly encouraged to bring and use their own computing technologies, but the program will make computers and media tools devices for online interaction available at the site. FA expects that, in the future of this program, it will provide students with mobile devices. The campus will provide reliable broadband with sufficient bandwidth, electrical power, telephones, and access to technical support through the staff attendant. As this program will be an addition to our current school, all mechanisms and processes in place for student information protection will remain the same.

Each full-time enrolled student of FA-ELP will meet the requirements of minimum instructional time, as specified in A.R.S. § 15-901(A)(2) and updated by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) School Finance Procedures Manual (No. EX-18, ed. 07/26/10). An FA-ELP staff

member will monitor attendance, recording students' working time, for a minimum of 1200 minutes per week and 720 hours per year. FA-ELP is submitting this request with an Alternative Calendar Notification Request which will articulate the precise structure of the Program's schedule. It will provide each student the ability to formulate a schedule that works best for his/her learning needs, and ensure a rigorous work week supportive of students' smooth progress toward graduation. Our Alternative Calendar Notification Request will propose a separate calendar for this program that runs Monday through Friday, and enables students extended work hours relative a typical school. Attendance will be reported to the ADE through SAIS in terms of minutes per week, instead of hours per day, as we will continue to report for our brick-and-mortar schools. This scheduling construct is being proposed here after extensive consultation with the School Finance Department of ADE.

The Program of Study for FA-ELP is an upper level high school college preparatory curriculum founded in the Common Core Standards and competency-based learning. The program culminates in college readiness through demonstrations of competency mastery in all of the Common Core areas, portfolio defenses, and high scores on standardized tests (including AIMS, SAT, and ACT). Using the Common Core State Standards as a kind of "checklist," each student determines his/her preferred methods to study content, practice applying it in novel ways, and then provide evidence of mastery for major competencies to each respective Course Consultant (CC), as ready. The CC functions as the student's teacher of record per course. FA-ELP is developing a substantial database of high quality learning resources available online, as well as accessible locally, for which students will have virtually uninterrupted access. To further support students, the Program will provide examples of learning content, educational delivery and competency mastery demonstration methods, from which students can draw or propose alternatives.

Proposed Instructional Path

Orientation: New students and their families will attend a mandatory face-to-face orientation, including a campus tour, an introduction to program support staff, peers, and an overview of student expectations, particularly in regards to accountability, teacher access, and the student's role in the FA community.

FA 101 Course: As students work to develop their Plan of Study with their Program Advisors, they will begin participating in a course, entitled FA 101. It will serve as a grounding force, helping to foster strong connections for students to the Program and to their school, as well as clarifying what is expected of Foothills Academy students and necessary for success in this highly self-directed program. Aspects include:

- FA community and education philosophy: competency-based education
- College-orientation
- "How to be a good student"
- Ethics and FA-ELP Code of Conduct
- What are standards, competencies?
- Service learning and Senior project
- Support system – introduction of roles, relationships, and how to navigate the network, resources, and community effectively for academic success and personal growth
- Plan of Study (POS) formulation, objectives, and collaboration with Advisor

- Portfolio development and defense strategies
- Internet safeguards & safe research

Plan of Study (POS) Proposals

- Portfolio orientation
- Guiding schedule (including estimated assessment benchmarks in coordination with CCs)
- Communication/interaction agreements with Advisor
- Examples of content and methods expected to use for studying standards
- Examples of expected approaches to providing evidence of competency mastery
- College readiness plan

Declaration of Concentration (DOC): Student-advisor communications in the POS development stage may lead to the determination that student's academic career would be well-suited with a thematic "focus." Advisors will support students to articulate a POS with content resources and civic engagement that would better enable students to pursue their interests. Examples include global studies / globalization, sustainability, environmental studies, social justice, civic engagement / community organization, political science / political, animal science / rights, gender studies.

Competency defenses in each course

Senior Project: This is a year-long project, integral to portfolio development, wherein students engage with the broader community and reflect upon a specific problem.

College-readiness: counseling and required college entrance exam preparation program

Final Portfolio and College Readiness Defense

Students interact regularly with CCs and their Advisor, but there are multiple required personal contact points in the program which ensure face-to-face relationships between the student and his/her Advisor and CCs. Providing these contact points is important to fostering a strong support system and promoting a culture of both independent and personal learning as well as community and intellectual continuity. Students and Advisors have access to each other by any of the myriad ways available for synchronous and asynchronous interaction. At the start of the Program, the pair will cooperatively determine which communication approaches they expect will work best for them, including frequency, timing, and technologies used. Student-Advisor communication is two-way, and Advisors are held similarly accountable for students' engagement, as the student is for their own success.

When a student finishes constructing his/her Plan of Study, s/he is connected up with Course Consultants, specific to each course the student's POS indicates. Access to CCs is determined by mutual agreement as well, but it is less open-ended, and oriented specifically to the subject matter that is the Consultant's expertise. Students reach competency mastery in their programs through a portfolio development and defense process, culminating in final portfolio and college readiness defenses required for graduation.

Cross-program continuity is fostered by way of the strong FA-ELP support system, most notably students' relationships with their Program Advisors. It is through this interaction that students find guidance for success in the Program through to Graduation. The pair collaborates on a rigorous Plan of Study drafted to reflect and adapt to students' individual and changing academic demands. A student's advisor is his/her advocate and mentor for the duration of the Program, encouraging participation in FA's and the local community, e.g. through organized social

activities or athletic clubs and senior project, providing students and their families a clear initial point of contact in the Program, and supporting students who challenge themselves to pursue an ambitious, self-derived [personal] learning path.

This describes the amendment to our charter, adding FA-ELP described above. New School Site Notification Request and Enrollment Cap Notification Request are forthcoming.

Foothills Academy
Supporting Document, Program of Instruction Amendment Request

**COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WHERE
PRESENT AND PAST FOOTHILLS ACADEMY SENIORS
HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED, 2012**

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, DC
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
BARRETT, THE HONORS COLLEGE
ART INSTITUTE OF PHOENIX
BENNINGTON COLLEGE, VT
BOSTON UNIVERSITY, MA
BUTLER UNIVERSITY, IN
CAL POLY, SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA
CARNEGIE MELLON, PA
COLLEGE OF SANTA FE, NM
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY,
MONTEREY, MX
COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES
DENNISON UNIVERSITY, OH
DIXIE STATE UNIVERSITY, UT
DREXEL UNIVERSITY, PA
DUKE UNIVERSITY, NC
EASTERN ARIZONA COLLEGE
EMBRY RIDDLE, AZ
FORDHAM UNIVERSITY, NY
GARDNER WEBB, NC
GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY,
DC
GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY, AZ
HAMILTON COLLEGE, NY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY (TRANSFER)
INDIANA UNIVERSITY
JAMSAOPISTO COLLEGE, FINLAND
JOHNSON & WALES UNIVERSITY, NC
LAGUNA COLLEGE OF ART &
DESIGN, AZ
LEWIS & CLARK, OR
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, IL
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY, MT
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY, MA
NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY
OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE, CA
OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY
PACIFIC UNION COLLEGE, CA
PENN STATE UNIVERSITY, PA
PRESCOTT COLLEGE, AZ
QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY, CT
RICE UNIVERSITY, TX
ROSE-HULMAN INSTITUTE, INDIANA
SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY,
TN
SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY,
PHOENIX
STANFORD UNIVERSITY, CA
ST. JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY, PA
ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY, MO
TRINITY INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY,
IL
TULANE UNIVERSITY, LA
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
ACADEMY, CO
UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE
ACADEMY, NY
UNITED STATES NAVAL NUCLEAR
SCHOOL, N.C.
UNIVERSITY OF ADVANCING
TECHNOLOGY, TEMPE
UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA –HONORS
COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA
BARBARA
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO-BOULDER
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND
UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER, NY
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, ARLINGTON
VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY, PA
WALLA WALLA UNIVERSITY, WA
WESTMINSTER COLLEGE, PA
XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA