AGENDA ITEM: Consideration of Revocation or Restoration of a Charter of a Charter Holder Operating an F School

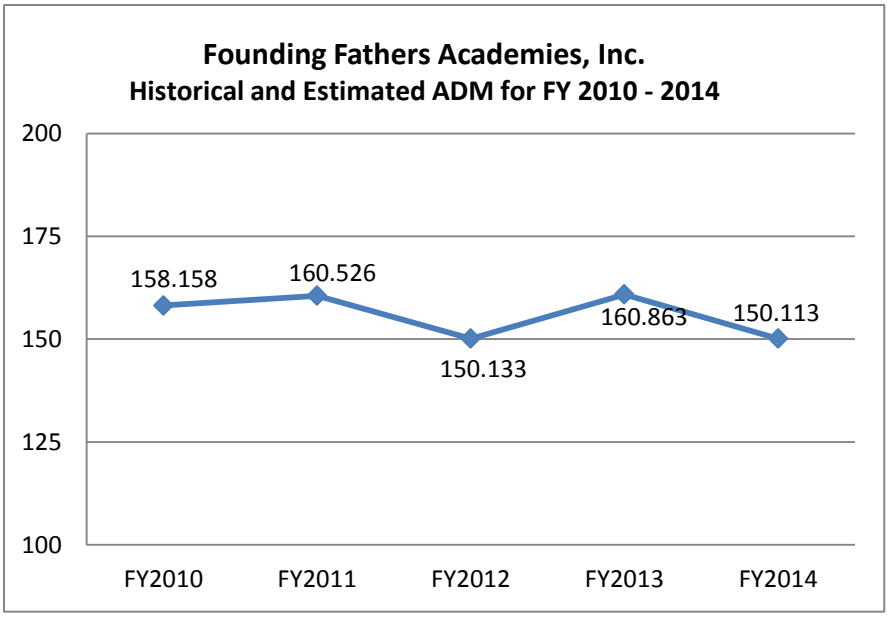
Issue

Jefferson Academy of Advanced Learning, a school operated by Founding Fathers Academies, Inc., was assigned an F letter grade by the Arizona Department of Education based on its academic performance during the 2012-2013 school year. The Board must determine whether to restore the charter to acceptable performance or to revoke the charter.

Background Information

In FY2011, Jefferson Academy of Advanced Learning received an achievement profile of Underperforming and a letter grade of D. In FY2012, the school received a letter grade of D. In FY2013, the school was assigned an F letter grade. On September 9, 2013, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) notified the Board of the F letter grade status (failing level of performance) of Jefferson Academy of Advanced Learning (portfolio: b. Letter Grade and Priority Letter). Pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-241(U), if a charter school is assigned a letter grade of F, the ADE shall immediately notify the charter school's sponsor. The charter school's sponsor shall either take action to restore the charter school to acceptable performance or revoke the charter school's charter.

Founding Fathers Academies, Inc. operates one school, Jefferson Academy of Advanced Learning, serving grades K-12 in Show Low. The graph below shows the charter holder's actual 100th day average daily membership (ADM) for fiscal years 2010-2013 and 40th day ADM for fiscal year 2014.



A dashboard representation of Jefferson Academy of Advanced Learning's academic outcomes for FY 2012 and FY 2013, based upon the indicators and measures adopted by the Board, is provided below.

NO PERMISSION TO EDIT

Jefferson Academy of Advanced Learning

		2012 Traditional K-12 School (K-12)			2013 Traditional K-12 School (K-12)		
1. Growth		Measure	Points Assigned	Weight	Measure	Points Assigned	Weight
1a. SGP	Math	41	50	10	38	50	10
	Reading	47	50	10	36.5	50	10
1b. SGP Bottom 25%	Math	43	50	10	38.5	50	10
	Reading	53	75	10	42	50	10
2. Proficiency		Measure	Points Assigned	Weight	Measure	Points Assigned	Weight
2a. Percent Passing	Math	21 / 62	50	7.5	17 / 60.8	50	7.5
	Reading	47 / 77.9	50	7.5	38 / 77.3	50	7.5
2b. Composite School Comparison	Math	-36.2	25	5	-37.9	25	5
	Reading	-26.4	25	5	-33.8	25	5
2c. Subgroup ELL	Math	NR	0	0	NR	0	0
	Reading	NR	0	0	NR	0	0
2c. Subgroup FRL	Math	22 / 51.7	50	3.75	18 / 52.5	50	3.75
	Reading	51 / 70.2	50	3.75	40 / 70.5	50	3.75
2c. Subgroup SPED	Math	9 / 25.3	50	3.75	9 / 23.6	50	3.75
	Reading	22 / 36.1	50	3.75	22 / 38.9	50	3.75
3. State Accountability		Measure	Points Assigned	Weight	Measure	Points Assigned	Weight
3a. State Accountability		D	25	5	F	25	5
4. Graduation		Measure	Points Assigned	Weight	Measure	Points Assigned	Weight
4a. Graduation		NR	0	0	NR	0	0
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		48.53		85	45.59		85

The following is a timeline of activities that have occurred related to the academic performance of Founding Fathers Academies, Inc.:

January 17, 2012 Founding Fathers Academies, Inc. was notified that the charter holder was required to submit a Performance Management Plan on or before July 1, 2012 for the five-year interval review because Jefferson Academy of Advanced Learning, the school operated by the charter holder, did not meet the academic expectations set forth by the Board.

July 1, 2012 The charter holder failed to timely submit a complete Performance Management Plan by the due date.

July 9, 2012	At its July meeting, the Board issued a Notice of Intent to Revoke the charter contract of Founding Fathers Academies, Inc. for failing to comply with its charter contract when it failed to provide a learning environment that improves pupil achievement in accordance with A.R.S. § 15-181(A).
August 13, 2012	Founding Fathers Academies, Inc. submitted a complete Performance Management Plan to the Board.
November 26, 2012	The Board approved the consent agreement for the charter holder. However, Founding Fathers Academies, Inc. rejected the agreement when its governing board failed to approve and its authorized representative failed to sign the agreement.
February 11, 2013	The Board withdrew its approval and acceptance of the consent agreement and directed staff to conduct a compliance review, which would include a multi-day site visit to evaluate the school's operations, including the academic program, and report back to the Board in March with a recommendation for moving forward.
March 5-6, 2013	Staff conducted a complete onsite review of the charter to evaluate the operations and academic program of Jefferson Academy of Advanced Learning. At its March 11, 2013 meeting, the Board agreed with a staff recommendation to continue monitoring the academic performance of the school in accordance with the academic framework and intervention schedule.
September 9, 2013	The ADE notified the Board of the F letter grade status for Jefferson Academy of Advanced Learning.
September 12, 2013	In accordance with the Board's processes, the charter holder was notified in an email of its requirement to submit a Demonstration of Sufficient Progress (DSP) and Financial Performance Response as a requirement for a failing school that does not meet the Board's academic performance expectations (portfolio: c. DSP Notification). The charter holder was informed that the determination by the Board of whether to restore or to revoke the charter for Founding Fathers Academies, Inc. would be based on the evidence of the charter holder's performance in accordance with the performance framework adopted by the Board, including the charter holder's demonstration of sufficient progress toward the academic performance expectations of the Board.
October 17, 2013	An email was sent to the charter representative that provided additional information regarding the process for evaluating a DSP and identified the site visit date (portfolio: d. Site Visit Notifications).
November 12, 2013	The charter holder submitted the DSP (portfolio: e. Demonstration of Sufficient Progress) and the Financial Performance Response timely.
November 14, 2013	Board staff sent an email to the charter representative (portfolio: d. Site Visit Notifications) which confirmed the site visit date, identified items to be reviewed on site, and provided the initial evaluation of the DSP submitted on November 12, 2013 (portfolio: f. DSP Evaluation Instrument).
November 20, 2013	Board staff conducted the site visit to meet with the leadership team (Sandy Stewart, Charter Representative and Executive Director; Kami Tate, Teacher Mentor; and Joey

Reidhead, High School Teacher) to confirm the documentation presented in the DSP and review additional information to be considered in the final evaluation of the charter holder's Demonstration of Sufficient Progress submission.

Demonstration of Sufficient Progress

The DSP submitted by Founding Fathers Academies, Inc. included no data; the narrative to address the required areas (curriculum, monitoring instruction, assessment, and professional development) for measures for which the charter holder was required to provide a response was scored as not acceptable for each measure. 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 and documentation at the time of the visit. The charter holder also had 48 hours following the site visit to submit relevant documentation (portfolio: g. DSP Evidence).

After considering information in the DSP, evidence and documentation provided at the time of the site visit, and additional documentation submitted following the site visit, the charter holder failed to provide evidence of a curriculum aligned to the standards, failed to provide a systematic process for monitoring and recording the implementation of the standards in instruction, failed to provide a comprehensive assessment system based upon clearly defined performance measures aligned with the curriculum, and failed to provide a comprehensive professional development plan that was aligned to teacher needs. A summary of findings for each required area as evaluated is provided below:

Curriculum

The Jefferson Academy of Advanced Learning did not successfully demonstrate a system to create, implement, evaluate, and revise curriculum, including supplemental curriculum, aligned with Arizona College and Career Ready Standards. The core reading program for grades K-8 is the same program that was in place when the school submitted its Performance Management Plan (PMP) (portfolio: h. Performance Management Plan). No evidence was provided to demonstrate that the program, Teach Your Children to Read Well, is aligned with Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards. The narrative for the PMP identified reading comprehension as a deficiency; at the time of the DSP site visit, the school stated that reading comprehension continues to be the primary deficiency in reading achievement. The school did not provide evidence of curriculum maps or pacing guides for the reading program.

This year, the school purchased a new core math program for grades K-6 and continues to use the previous math program for grades 7-8. The curriculum documentation provided by the school included pacing guides for the new math program for grades K-6 for standards aligned to Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards and math pacing guides for grades 7-8 for standards not aligned to Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards. For grades 9-12, the school uses an online curriculum for all of its courses. According to the school, the online program has been aligned to Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards. No documentation was provided to demonstrate alignment.

A system for evaluating and revising curriculum was not described in the DSP. At the site visit, the school did give an explanation of how the elementary math curriculum was selected but no evidence was provided to demonstrate the process has been implemented across the school.

Monitoring Instruction:

The Jefferson Academy of Advanced Learning did not successfully demonstrate a system to monitor the integration of Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards into instruction and the evaluation of instructional practices of the teachers supported by data, data analysis, and feedback to further develop the system. The school has no formal teacher evaluation process in place. While the school provided notes from informal

classroom observations for grades K-6 conducted by the Teacher Mentor, no evidence of feedback to teachers was provided to support that this occurs in a systematic way. The DSP states that the school is working on implementing a more thorough observation but, at the time of the site visit, no evidence was provided to demonstrate that this has occurred. Leadership for grades 9-12 provided documentation of para-professional evaluations which primarily evaluates interpersonal skills. Teachers are required to submit year-long lesson plans at the beginning of the year but no evidence of review, evaluation or monitoring of the plans was provided. An action step in the PMP submitted by the school stated that each teacher would review deficiencies on the AIMS test and then review and adjust yearly lesson plans so that deficiencies are covered throughout the year but no evidence of this occurring was provided.

Assessment:
The Jefferson Academy of Advanced Learning did not successfully demonstrate a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures aligned with the curriculum and instructional methodology that includes data collection and analysis from multiple assessments. The school administers several types of assessments including AIMSweb for math and reading, maintains skills checklists, administers diagnostic tests for math intervention, and tracks students' progress toward targets in math and reading. However, no evidence of analysis of the data collected from various assessments or sources or how the data is used to inform instructional decisions was provided. The PMP narrative stated that the school was changing to a four-day school week so that staff could use the fifth day to collaborate on data analysis to determine deficiencies and remediation. Professional development agendas for the collaboration day had an agenda item for data analysis on several of the agendas but no evidence of data analysis was provided either with the DSP, during the on-site visit, or with follow-up documentation submitted identifying activities on the collaboration days.

The school provided math diagnostic test results from a test administration in October to students in grades 1-8. The diagnostic test was administered for a grade level below each student's current grade level so a sixth grade student was given a fifth grade diagnostic. 95% of the students in sixth grade could not demonstrate proficiency on numeration, patterns, and relationships on the fifth grade math diagnostic.

Professional Development:
The Jefferson Academy of Advanced Learning did not successfully demonstrate a comprehensive professional development plan that is aligned with teacher learning needs, includes follow up and monitoring strategies, and is supported by data and analysis. According to the PMP, the school changed to a four-day school week to use the fifth day for staff to collaborate on data analysis to determine deficiencies and remediation. The DSP stated that the primary purpose of the meetings is to review the lowest quartile students as well as students who show no growth or regression and discuss what strategies to implement to increase learning. However, no documentation or evidence of data analysis was provided as a part of the professional development documentation. The school submitted agendas, sign-in sheets and notes but did not demonstrate a comprehensive professional development plan, with monitoring and follow-up documentation, or evidence of the effectiveness of new learning in the classroom.

The PMP narrative stated that the school had enrolled teachers in the Intel Math program and the school stated in the DSP that teachers have participated in Intel Math for the past year and a half but no documentation was provided to demonstrate that participation in the program has been effective and no evidence was provided to demonstrate that participation in the math professional development has improved student achievement.

Grad Rate
The DSP did not address strategies the school uses to ensure students graduate on time. Following the site visit, the high school provided education and career plans the school uses to track students' progress on coursework required for high school graduation. However, there is not enough information included in the plans to determine if a student is on-track to graduate in four years. The school provided ACT COMPASS placement results

for three students applying for dual enrollment at Northland Pioneer College; the placement results indicated all three students needed additional preparation in math or reading before being eligible for enrollment in credit-bearing courses. The school stated that a student enrolled at the school may take the ACT this year. The high school teacher stated, to his knowledge, this will be the first student attending the school that has taken the ACT or SAT. No additional data or analysis was provided to demonstrate students at the school are on-track to graduate in four years.

Financial Performance

The charter holder did not meet the Board's financial performance expectations based on the fiscal year 2012 audit. The following table includes the charter holder's financial data and financial performance for the last three audited fiscal years.

Founding Fathers Academies, Inc.

Financial Data				
	2013	2012	2011	
Statement of Financial Position				2010
Cash	$100,610	$99,010	$102,780	$15,661
Unrestricted Cash	$91,887	$94,970	$102,780	
Other Liquidity	$16,353			
Total Assets	$923,483	$899,560	$940,284	
Total Liabilities	$668,495	$736,355	$793,003	
Current Portion of Long-Term Debt & Capital Leases	$296,829	$33,967	$24,177	
Net Assets	$254,988	$163,205	$147,281	
Statement of Activities				
Revenue	$1,634,933	$1,629,653	$1,754,591	
Expenses	$1,543,150	$1,613,729	$1,732,877	
Net Income	$91,783	$15,924	$21,714	
Change in Net Assets	$91,783	$15,924	$21,714	
Financial Statements or Notes				
Depreciation & Amortization Expense	$20,615	$21,247	$23,869	
Interest Expense	$61,059	$56,360	$50,367	
Lease Expense	$15,400	$16,800	$15,400	

Financial Performance				
	2013	2012	2011	3-yr Cumulative
Near-Term Indicators				
Going Concern	No	Yes	Yes	N/A
Unrestricted Days Liquidity*	25.60	21.48	21.65	N/A
Default	No	No	No	N/A
Sustainability Indicators				
Net Income	$91,783	$15,924	$21,714	N/A
Cash Flow	$1,600	($3,770)	$87,119	$84,949
Fixed Charge Coverage Ratio	0.51	1.03	1.24	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 2012 audit (portfolio: h. Financial Evaluation and Response). Staff's evaluation of the initial financial performance response resulted in zero "Acceptable" and four "Not Acceptable" determinations (portfolio: h. Financial Evaluation and Response). On November 20, 2013, the charter holder was provided the opportunity to provide additional information within 48 hours. On November 22, 2013, the charter holder submitted a revised financial performance response (portfolio: i. Additional Financial Information).

While the charter holder did not meet the Board's financial performance expectations in fiscal years 2012 and 2013, the Demonstration of Sufficient Progress includes no indication that additional resources would be committed by the charter holder to developing systems that would result in improved academic performance.

Board Options

Option 1: The Board may vote to issue a Notice of Intent to Revoke the charter holder's charter contract. Staff recommends the following language for consideration: I move that the Board issue a Notice of Intent to Revoke the charter of Founding Fathers Academies, Inc. on the basis of its designation as an F school for FY 2013 and its failure to meet or demonstrate sufficient progress toward the Board's academic expectations as set forth in the performance framework. The charter holder failed to provide evidence of a system to adopt, implement, evaluate, and revise curriculum aligned with Arizona College and Career Ready Standards, failed to provide a systematic process for monitoring and recording the implementation of the standards in instruction, failed to provide a comprehensive assessment system based upon clearly defined performance measures aligned with the curriculum, and failed to provide a comprehensive professional development plan that was aligned to teacher needs, provides for monitoring and follow-up strategies and is supported by data and analysis.

I further move that:

- Within 48 hours of receipt of the Notice the charter operator shall notify staff and parents/guardians of registered students of the Notice of Intent to Revoke and the Notice of Hearing and provide a school location where the copy may be reviewed;
- Within 20 days of receipt of the Notice the charter operator shall provide copies of all correspondence and communications used to comply with the preceding provision; and
- Within 20 days of receipt of the Notice the charter operator shall provide the Board with the names and mailing addresses of parents/guardians of all students registered with the school.

Option 2: The Board may vote to restore the charter to acceptable performance. The following language is provided for consideration: I move to direct staff to work with Founding Fathers Academies, Inc. to create a Consent Agreement for the purpose of restoring the charter to acceptable performance in accordance with A.R.S. § 15-241(U) that would minimally include quarterly progress reports that demonstrate evidence of a system to adopt, implement, evaluate, and revise curriculum aligned with Arizona College and Career Ready Standards supported by data and analysis, evidence of a systematic process for monitoring and recording the implementation of the standards in instruction supported by data and analysis, evidence of a comprehensive assessment system based upon clearly defined performance measures aligned with the curriculum supported by data and analysis, and evidence of a comprehensive professional development plan that is aligned to teacher needs and provides for monitoring and follow-up strategies supported by data and analysis, which collectively improves student achievement as supported by data.

I further move that if the terms of a consent agreement cannot be reached by the January Board meeting that the Board issue a Notice of Intent to Revoke the charter of Founding Fathers Academies, Inc. on the basis of its designation as an F school for FY 2013 and its failure to meet or demonstrate sufficient progress toward the Board's academic expectations as set forth in the performance framework. The charter holder failed to provide evidence of a system to adopt, implement, evaluate, and revise curriculum aligned with Arizona College and Career Ready Standards, failed to provide a systematic process for monitoring and recording the implementation of the standards in instruction, failed to provide a comprehensive assessment system based upon clearly defined performance measures aligned with the curriculum, and failed to provide a comprehensive professional development plan that was aligned to teacher needs, provides for monitoring and follow-up strategies and is supported by data and analysis.

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