LETTER OF INTENT

December 17, 2014

Johanna Medina, Director of School Quality
Arizona State Board for Charter Schools
1616 West Adams Street, Ste. 170
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Ms. Medina,

The George Gervin Prep Academy is making academic progress and received a C-Letter Grade during the 2014 school year. GGPA has developed strong systems to support continuous improvement this amendment serves as a vital component to the process. Adding elementary grades will enhance steady growth as well as gives the Academy an opportunity to spend a longer time with students during critical development periods as well as build stronger critical relationships with their parents and/or guardians.

The George Gervin Prep Academy currently serves 6th, 7th and 8th graders. During the second year of operation the District acknowledges it is essential to add K to 5th grades. Parents are making the request feeling they will be better served. Parental consensus in keeping siblings together is important and starting their child at the Academy as early as possible is essential. It is also imperative to stabilize the school both academically and operationally. Currently the school is 98% Title I with 99% minority students. (46% African-American; 53% Hispanic and 1% Anglo) After performing a longitudinal study on the student body it is significantly clear that early preparation will be the key to success for GGPA students. The grade expansion will directly impact challenges and barriers related to lack of foundational skills, low confidence, and mobility of students'.

Staffing changes will be reflective of the grade levels served. Staff ratios will be maintained at 1 teacher to 18 students. Additional staff will be phased in as enrollment increases. Additional staff brought on to handle the new grades will be certified and/or highly qualified. All applicants will be screened against the Arizona Department of Education Elementary Attestation Forms to ensure that all are Highly Qualified

Timeline for Implementation would take place during the following dates. May 2015: ASBCS approves Grade Expansion ● May 2015: Identify age-appropriate furniture and other supplies and materials ● May 2015: Continue curriculum review and supported materials. June 2015: Notify current parents and open enrollment K-5 by using mass media and robo call. June 2015: Preliminary K-5 curriculum review and development ● June 2015 - ongoing - Recruit Teachers ● May 2015 - July 2015 - Teacher Training ● July 29, 2015: First day of school ○ K-1: 2015-2016; approximately 72 (K) + 36 (1st graders) = 108 ○ 2-3: 2015-2016; approximately 54 (2nd graders) + 54 (3rd graders) = 108 ○ 4-5: 2015-2016; approximately 54 (4th graders) + 54 (5th graders) = 108 No other amendments will be submitted with this request.

40 W. Baseline Rd., Suite 101, Tempe, AZ 85283 | Phone: 480-219-2121 | Fax: 480-219-2241
Email: info@gervinprepacademy.org | www.georgegervinprepacademy.org

The experience of the first and second year have been enlightening as the Academy has extensively reviewed the academic standing of all students coupled with other factors that affect the learning community. The school has the space and the resources to support this request.

GGPA has the capacity to ensure the expansion is successful while at the same time managing the improvements necessary to ensure academic success for its' existing grades. GGPA identified its gaps through an extensive process in May 2014. The specific strategy is to implement a strategic process that uses best practices tools such as teacher evaluations, data driven instruction with accountability and on-going monitoring. GGPA is in the process of hiring an Academic Coach that will support teachers in the classroom and to expand professional development opportunities that are relevant to the need. The overall goal is to ensure all teachers become effective. Elementary staff will be trained during the summer months and the entire staff will participate in a summer institute with qualified consultants. All of these processes will be finalized by June 30th, 2015.

GGPA has moved the needle by moving from a D grade to a C, but this is not sufficient as we have adopted the Beyond Textbook Curriculum Framework and is brining in talent with a proven track record. The Superintendent in conjunction will monitor fidelity to the entire operational and academic process with other District leaders.

Sincerely,

Barbara Hawkins
Barbara Hawkins, Superintendent of Schools

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