

AGENDA ITEM: Opportunities for Youth, Inc. – Request for a Good Cause Suspension of Operation

Issue

Due to low enrollment numbers, Opportunities for Youth, Inc. is requesting a Good Cause Extension to the opening of Vistas Leadership High School to begin providing services for the 2012-2013 school year.

[Policy Statement for a Good Cause Extension to the Charter Contract](#)

Background

Opportunities for Youth, Inc. was granted a charter on January 26, 2010 to open a school in East Mesa for the 2010-2011 school year, serving grades 9-12.

On December 1, 2010, Board staff sent a letter to the authorized representative of Opportunities for Youth, Inc. reminding the approved applicant that, as part of the application, the authorized representative signed a statement acknowledging that if approved to operate a charter school, the contract must be executed within twelve months of the date of approval by the Board and that a one-time good cause extension request could be submitted no later than March 28, 2011.

On December 14, 2010, the authorized representative submitted a request to change the charter holder from Opportunities for Youth, Inc. to Pathway to Success (Arizona Not for Profit and 501(c)3). On that same day, staff received a request to add grade levels to the charter. The request was signed by Delmer Geesey, who was not an authorized representative of the approved applicant.

On December 15, 2010, Opportunities for Youth, Inc. sent a letter requesting a good cause extension to the execution of the charter contract until the following March due to difficulty finding an appropriate facility.

On January 20, 2011, staff sent a letter to the authorized representative, Jill Gaitens, stating that because the charter had not yet been signed, there was no mechanism to amend it and, accordingly, no action would be taken on the amendments to change the charter holder or add grade levels. The letter also stated that the request for a good cause extension would be placed on the Board's next regularly scheduled meeting.

On February 16, 2011, pursuant to the approved applicant's request, a meeting was scheduled and the charter was signed for the operation of a high school approximately 40 miles northwest of the location described in the application. The charter representative stated that an appropriate market study had been conducted and there was sufficient interest to move the charter school location and open in the fall of 2011.

On March 23, 2011, staff sent an email to Opportunities for Youth, Inc. informing the charter holder that in light of the contract having been signed in February, that the request for an extension would not be processed further.

On July 21, 2011, Opportunities for Youth, Inc. [submitted a Good Cause Extension](#) to the opening of Vistas Leadership High School until August 2012, due to low enrollment at their new location and the need for community outreach and development of a strategic plan that includes further research regarding selection of the location of the school.

On September 6, 2011, the charter holder signed an [Occupancy Compliance Assurance and Understanding](#)

Board Options:

1. Approve the request for a good cause extension.
2. Deny the request for the good cause extension.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to approve the request for a good cause extension for the operation of Vistas Leadership High School by Opportunities for Youth, Inc. until the fall of 2012