

AGENDA ITEM: Request to Expand Charter School Operations – Pine Forest Education Associates, Inc.

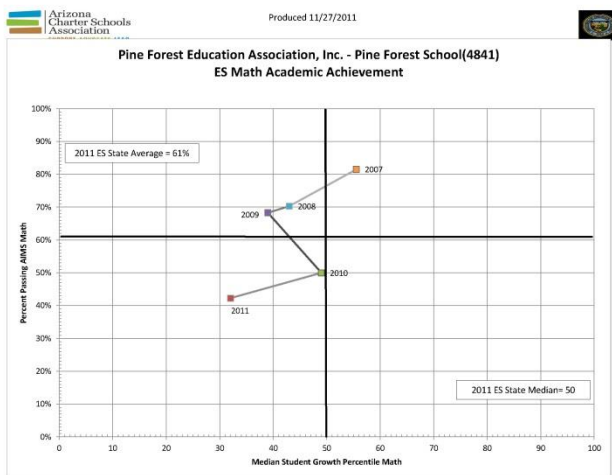
Issue

The Pine Forest Education Associates, Inc. (PFEA) submitted a request to expand charter school operations to increase the enrollment cap to 350. PFEA did not meet the Board’s academic performance expectations for 2013 and 2014, and is asking for additional consideration from the Board to be eligible to apply for an expansion request that would include a Demonstration of Sufficient Progress (DSP). The charter is authorized for and serving grades K-8 and has an enrollment cap of 270.

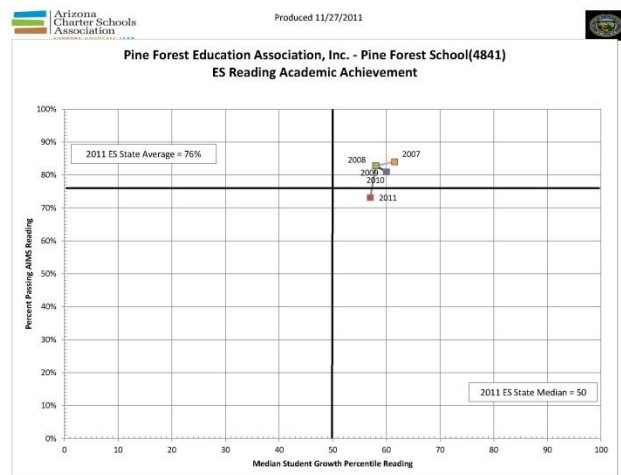
Background

PFEA was granted a charter by the State Board of Education, effective on May 22, 1995. The Charter Holder transferred the charter to the Board in May 2004. In July 2011, the charter was granted a renewal contract and since the academic performance of the school operated by the Charter Holder met the Board’s level of adequate academic performance (the accountability measure used for charter schools prior to FY 2012) for each of the previous three years (FY 2007 – 2009), the Charter Holder was waived from submitting the academic section of the renewal application. Prior to renewing the charter, the Charter Holder requested an increase in enrollment cap from 250 to 270 and was granted the increase in December 2010.

The graphs below provide academic performance data for Pine Forest School (PFS) based on state assessment data for fiscal years 2007 through 2011. In Math, PFS had a steady decline from fiscal years 2007- 2011. In Reading, PFS remained within the upper quadrant, meeting the Board’s level of adequate academic performance in status and growth measures, for fiscal years 2007 through 2010 and began a slight decline in 2011. In addition, in FY 2011, the Charter Holder received a letter grade of a C.

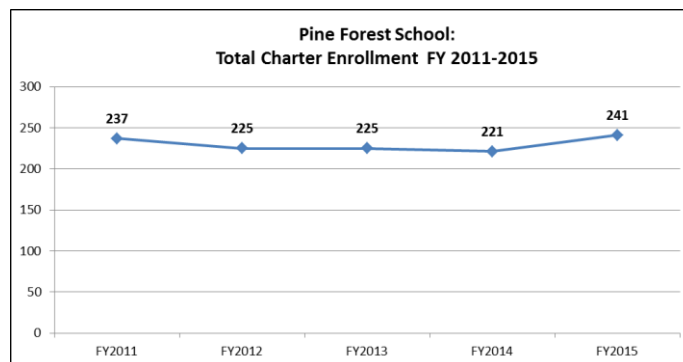


Note: This chart is based on data obtained from the ADE in Oct. 2011. Proficiency and growth percentiles are only reported for FAY students.



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The graph below shows average daily membership (ADM) for the charter based on 100th day ADM, with FY 2015 ADM based on the 40th day figures (Data provided by Arizona Department of Education).



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. The academic performance of PFS is represented in the dashboards below.

Pine Forest School											
		2012 Traditional Elementary School (K-8)			2013 Traditional Elementary School (K to 8)			2014 Traditional Elementary School (K to 8)			
1. Growth		Measure	Points Assigned	Weight	Measure	Points Assigned	Weight	Measure	Points Assigned	Weight	
1a. SGP	Math	62	75	12.5	45	50	12.5	54	75	12.5	
	Reading	61	75	12.5	57.5	75	12.5	61.5	75	12.5	
1b. SGP Bottom 25%	Math	58	75	12.5	48	50	12.5	35	50	12.5	
	Reading	81	100	12.5	64	75	12.5	66	100	12.5	
2. Proficiency		Measure	Points Assigned	Weight	Measure	Points Assigned	Weight	Measure	Points Assigned	Weight	
2a. Percent Passing	Math	54 / 64.1	50	7.5	43.8 / 64.3	25	7.5	44.6 / 63.6	25	7.5	
	Reading	78 / 77.2	75	7.5	77.4 / 77.9	50	7.5	76.8 / 79	50	7.5	
2b. Composite School Comparison	Math	-12.5	50	7.5	-23.6	25	7.5	-19.9	25	7.5	
	Reading	-1	50	7.5	-2.4	50	7.5	-2.3	50	7.5	
2c. Subgroup ELL	Math	NR	0	0	NR	0	0	NR	0	0	
	Reading	NR	0	0	NR	0	0	NR	0	0	
2c. Subgroup FRL	Math	39 / 56.6	50	3.75	32.1 / 55	25	3.75	34.6 / 54.1	25	3.75	
	Reading	52 / 69.9	50	3.75	50 / 70.6	25	3.75	64.7 / 70.7	50	3.75	
2c. Subgroup SPED	Math	20 / 24.7	50	3.75	16.1 / 25.3	50	3.75	18.2 / 24	50	3.75	
	Reading	47 / 36.3	75	3.75	41.9 / 37.2	75	3.75	45.5 / 38.4	75	3.75	
3. State Accountability		Measure	Points Assigned	Weight	Measure	Points Assigned	Weight	Measure	Points Assigned	Weight	
3a. State Accountability		B	75	5	C	50	5	C	50	5	
Overall Rating		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		69.69			51.56			58.75			
		100			100			100			

The FY 2013 overall rating for PFS on the Board's academic performance measures was 51.56 including points received for the letter grade of C as reported by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). The FY 2014 overall rating for PFS on the Board's academic performance measures increased to 58.75 including points received for the letter grade of C as reported by ADE. Since PFEA received an overall rating of Does Not Meet Standard, the Charter Holder was assigned a Performance Management Plan (PMP) based on the intervention schedule. The PMP was submitted timely. If PFS continues to not meet the Board's academic performance measure in FY 2015, the Charter Holder will be assigned a DSP in FY 2016, during the charter's 5-year interval review.

Request

On December 8, 2014, Mr. Pete Giovale, Charter Representative of PFEA, submitted a letter to Board staff requesting the Board's consideration to allow PFEA to submit an expansion request to increase the enrollment cap to 350. In the letter, he explains that the school intends to relocate to a larger property for the 2015-2016 school year. In October of this year, the Charter Holder purchased property from the Diocese of Phoenix. The facility is a former church on over three acres in a school-friendly neighborhood of Flagstaff. The new facility is located 4.3 miles away from the current site. PFEA has also secured additional funding to begin remodeling the 22,000 sq. feet building. It is the Charter Holder's intention to relocate during the summer of 2015 in order to begin classes at the new site in Fall 2015. (letter attached below).

Over the past 10 years, PFEA has been searching for a centralized neighborhood/family-friendly Flagstaff location in order to expand. The current wait list has over 100 students, primarily in grades K-3. In 2010, the Charter Holder ASBCS, January 13, 2015

intended on asking for an expansion of 350, but understood that the current campus did not have an occupancy load to sustain that number, therefore, the charter was only increased to 270. The PFEA board has developed a long-range strategic plan to add a section in grades 1-4 over the next five years by enrolling new students from the early elementary wait list. This expansion has begun on the current campus in August 2014 with the addition of a second 1st grade class. In FY2015, PFS serves a population that is 15% SPED and has no students in the ELL subgroup.

While PFEA has increased their overall rating from FY 2013 to 2014, past academic performance for PFS has not been sustained since the renewal was granted in 2011, specifically in Math. Board staff recommends that if the Board allows PFEA to submit the Enrollment Cap Notification Request, the Charter Holder would be required to submit the Demonstration of Sufficient Progress Report with a site visit.

Board Options

Option 1: The Board may approve the request to be eligible to apply for expansion. The following language is provided for consideration: I move, based on the information contained in the Board materials and presented today, that the Board approve the request of Pine Forest Education Association, Inc. to be eligible to submit a Request to Increase the Enrollment Cap to 350 with a Demonstration of Sufficient Progress that includes benchmark data through December 2014. Following their submission, the results of Board staff's review of these items will be provided to the Board for its consideration of Pine Forest Education Association, Inc.'s expansion requests.

Option 2: The Board may deny the request to be eligible to apply for expansion. The following language is provided for consideration: I move, based on the information contained in the Board materials and presented today, the Board does not find sufficient support to consider an expansion request. The Charter Holder may submit a request in the future when the academic dashboard provides evidence of additional improvement.



An Arizona Charter School Inspired by Waldorf-Education

Established in 1995

1120 W. Kaibab Lane, Flagstaff, AZ 86001, 928-779-9880, Fax 928-779-9792

TO: Johanna Medina, ASBCS Director of School Quality
FR: Pete Giovale, Pine Forest Education Association, Inc., (PFEA) Charter Representative
RE: Letter of Intent requesting ASBCS permission for the PFEA to submit an enrollment expansion request for Pine Forest Charter School for school year 2015-16
DA: Monday, December 8, 2014

The Pine Forest Education Association, Inc. (PFEA), dba Pine Forest Charter School (PFCS) would like to request the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (ASBCS) grant the PFEA Governing Board permission to submit an enrollment expansion amendment between January 1 and March 31, 2015 with a Demonstration of Sufficient Progress (DSP) Report attached. The PFEA and PFCS submitted a Performance Management Plan on November 15, 2014 addressing PFCS's not meeting the ASBCS's academic performance expectations in the current and prior years and the school's plan to meet academic performance expectations in the future.

The School intends to relocate to a larger property for the 2015-2016 school year. The new campus property was purchased in October of this year. In order to achieve the move, it is the school's understanding that we will need approval of a relocation amendment as well as an enrollment expansion amendment. The school believes that the relocation amendment can be filed at any time. The school plans on submitting the relocation amendment once the renovation of the property has begun. However, PFCS has been told by ASBCS we need to seek permission prior to filing the enrollment expansion amendment. This is the subject of this letter.

Rationale for Expansion of Enrollment: PFCS has operated for 19 years on a campus in a light industrial sector of Flagstaff which allows for approximately 270 PreK-Gr. 8 students. Over the past 10 years, the PFEA Governing Board has been searching for a new safer and more centralized neighborhood/family-friendly Flagstaff location in order to expand our enrollment and improve our Waldorf- education

curriculum based program. Our current wait list has over 100 students, primarily in grades K-3. Following the ASBCS enrollment expansion approval in 2010, PFCS increased its enrollment cap from 250 to 270. At that time, we were interested in an increase to a capacity of 350 students, as we recognized Flagstaff's growing need for early childhood and elementary educational options. However, our current campus could not physically sustain that number; therefore the ASBCS approved an increase to 270. In addition, the PFEA board has recognized the budgetary needs for expansion and developed a long-range strategic plan in which the PFCS will add a section in grades 1-4 over the next five years by enrolling new students from the expansive early elementary wait list. This expansion began on our current campus in August 2014 with the addition of a second first grade class. This expansion cannot continue on the current site, as there is not the physical space. Therefore, the PFEA has purchased a 22,000 sq. ft. former church on over three acres in a school-friendly neighborhood of Flagstaff.

Type and Scope of Change: Since 1995, PFCS has operated as a K-8 charter school with two sections of kindergarten (35-40 children) and one section each of grades 1-8 ranging from 25-35 students per class. Relocating to this new site will allow PFCS to expand a PFEA-sponsored tuition-based preschool program, which feeds the PFCS kindergarten program, to 25-30 children. We also envision increasing enrollment in the two current kindergarten classes, which feed the first grades, to 50 children. In our grades, we intend to have two sections of first and second grades for school year (SY) 2015-16, add two sections of third grade for SY 2016-17 and two sections of fourth grade in SY 2017-18. Each grade will have 50-60 total students divided into two classes of 25-30 children. Our market analysis indicates these enrollment projections are feasible considering the new location is much more accessible to many more divergent populations in Flagstaff. In addition, best practices in education indicate a student body of 350 is financially sustainable and healthy for all learners and community members.

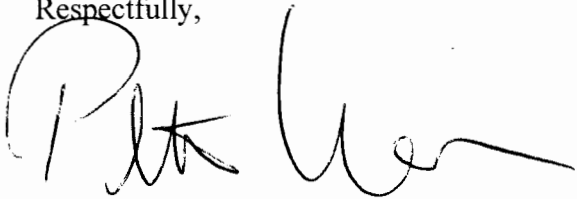
Timeline for Implementation: The PFEA entered escrow with the Diocese of Phoenix in March 2014 and completed the purchase of the property in October 2014. The PFEA has secured additional funding to begin remodeling the 22,000 sq. ft. building in February 2015. It is our intention to relocate the school during summer 2015 in order to begin classes at the new school in fall 2015.

It has been the intention since June 2014 for PFCS to submit a DSP Report to the ASBCS per the guidelines following the receipt of PFCS's not meeting the ASBCS's academic performance expectations in 2013 and 2014. However, after nearly 10 years of searching for a new site, the PFEA successfully fulfilled a dream of purchasing this larger site with the vision of offering our Waldorf-education alternative to more children and families of Flagstaff as well as expand and improve our academic and artistically integrated program. We fully intend to continue enrolling children from all cultural, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds,

including those children with academic challenges and/or deficiencies as indicated in their previous state assessment scores. We completely understand how the ASBCS expects charter schools to improve student academic achievement. Our Waldorf education vision for children includes and goes beyond academic achievement. As a community, we are very grateful to the original ADE Governing Board which approved the PFEA/PFCS charter in 1995 and we would be grateful to the current ASBCS to permit us to expand our enrollment so that we may bring this much needed alternative to more families of Flagstaff. In addition, the PFEA board and PFCS administration, faculty and parent community can provide for the ASBCS recent research conducted on schools implementing Waldorf education in the public sector with particular focus on academic achievement state assessment test scores as compared to other models of education. Basically, research indicates that according to test scores, grades 3-5 students in our Waldorf curriculum schools generally approach, but do not necessarily meet, academic achievement expectations, but increasingly meet and exceed academic achievement standards beginning in the middle school years.

We thank you for your consideration. Please communicate with PFEA Executive Director and PFCS Principal Michael Heffernan for the purpose of discussion of the expansion request.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Giovale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Pete Giovale
PFEA Charter Representative