Mingus Springs Charter School, Inc.
Renewal Executive Summary Report

I. Sources of Evidence for this Document

A.R.S. 15-183.I states that "[a] charter school that elects to apply for renewal shall file an application for renewal…which shall include a detailed business plan for the charter school, a review of fiscal audits and academic performance data for the charter school and a review of the current contract between the sponsor and the charter school."

The Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (ASBCS) determined that renewal of a charter is based on affirmative evidence in three areas:

- Success of the academic program, including academic achievement
- Viability of the organization, including fiscal management and compliance
- Adherence to the terms of the charter, including contract and legal compliance

Evaluation of the charter holder's success in these three areas is based on a variety of information that will serve as sources of evidence in determining renewal. These sources include:

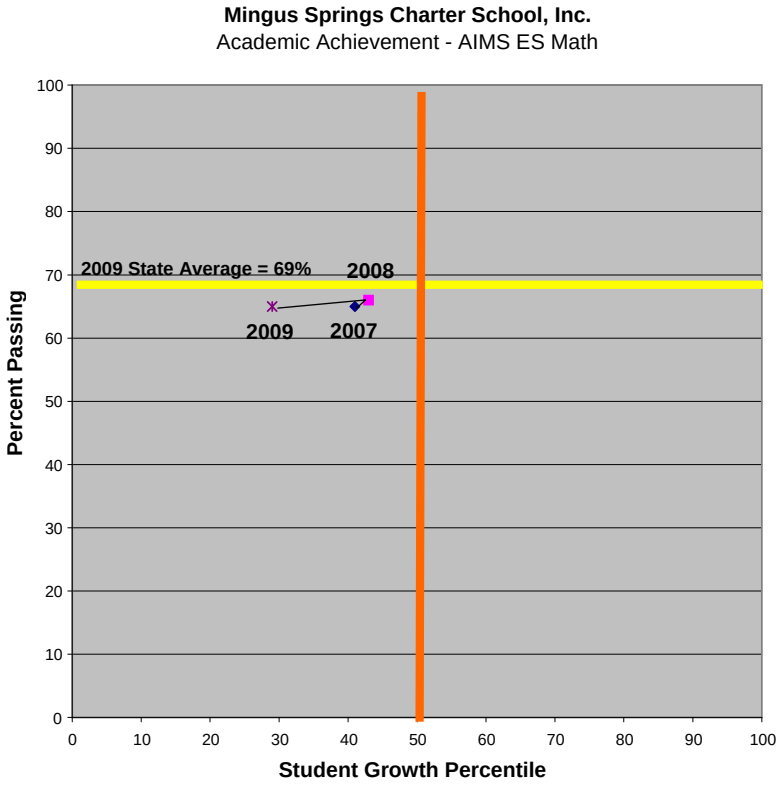
- Written application for renewal
- Student performance data
- Independent financial audits
- Five year interval summary reviews
- Site visit reports
- Monitoring reports

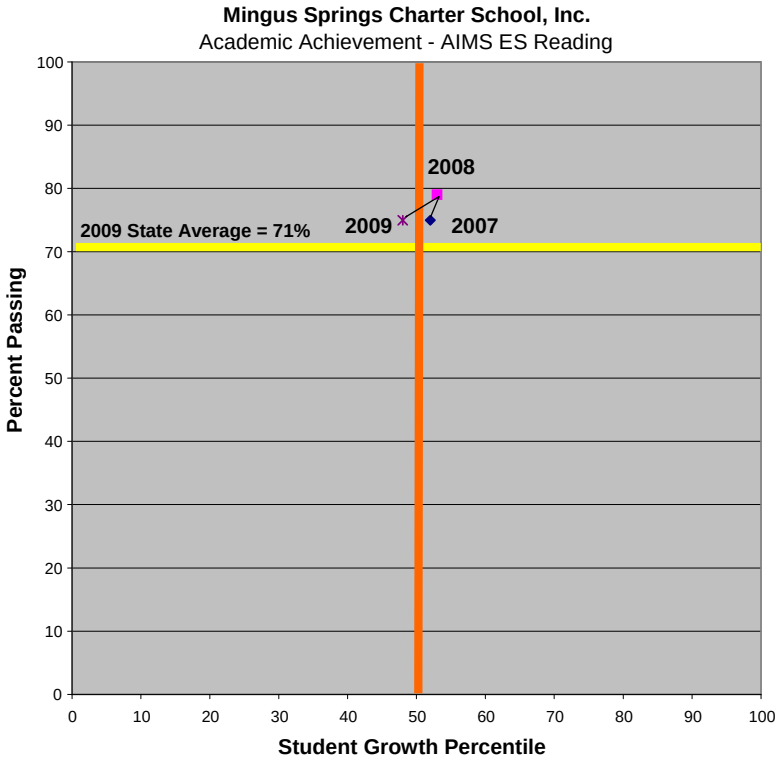
II. Profile

Mingus Springs Charter School, Inc. was granted a charter by the ASBCS, effective on August 28, 1995. Mingus Springs Charter School, Inc. is a non-profit corporation in good standing with the Arizona Corporation Commission. The charter representative is Dawn Gonzales. The school, Mingus Springs, is located at 3600 North Sunset Drive in Chino Valley, serves grades K-8, and had a FY10 100th day ADM of 165.515.

Mission Statement (as provided in the contract):
The Mingus Springs Charter School is designed to provide an alternative learning environment that is conducive to the development of individual human potential, and quality education that will promote high self esteem and academic success for all students through small, multiage classes. The school's structure will create problem solvers, critical thinkers, and self directedness that will help the students make the transition into the upper grades, and later into society.

III. Academic Performance





Fiscal Year	AZ LEARNS	Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
2009	Performing Plus	Yes
2008	Performing Plus	Yes
2007	Performing Plus	Yes

IV. Fiscal Compliance

As detailed in the Audit and Fiscal Compliance section of the *Renewal Summary Review*:

- The charter holder has timely submitted its annual audit.
- The fiscal year 2008 audit identified an issue which required a corrective action plan.
- The fiscal year 2009 audit identified two repeat issues: management was not comprised of individuals that possess the competencies required to prepare full disclosure financial statements in accordance with GAAP[1] and journal entries were not being adequately supported.

Mingus Springs Charter School, Inc. has received exceptions from the Uniform System of Financial Records for Charter Schools and State procurement regulations.

V. Legal and Contractual Compliance

For the previous five fiscal years –

- The charter holder has timely submitted the Annual Financial Report.
- The charter holder has timely submitted the Budget.
- All Declarations of Curricular and Instructional Alignment were submitted to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) in a timely manner.
- The Highly-Qualified Teacher report, updated on May 10, 2010, indicated 11 core teachers and all were reported as highly qualified.
- Cycle 5 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Compliance Monitoring in 2005-06 met compliance. Cycle 6 (2006-07) and Cycle 7 (2007-08) identified noncompliance findings. An On-site Review of the NLCB programs conducted by the ADE Academic Achievement Division reported findings to be corrected.
- In 2005 and 2008 ADE Exceptional Student Services determined the school was in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

VI. Renewal Application

A. Education Plan

[1] Mingus Springs Charter School's charter contract requires it to comply with GAAP.

Performance management plans are intended to assist schools in addressing academic performance deficiencies with a plan that clearly articulates the academic achievement area in need of improvement, the tools intended to measure improvement, and the degree of improvement to be achieved.

The Charter Holder was required to submit a Performance Management Plan in the academic section of the renewal application.

The introductory narrative for the Performance Management Plan describes the process the school community undertook for data examination and analysis. Data reviewed included results from state assessments, student attendance, AZ LEARNS, and AYP. Based upon the data analysis, the school determined to focus the plan on intervention and progress monitoring.

Indicator: **Math**
Duration of the Plan: July 2009 to June 2013
Strategies:

Provide and implement a mathematics curriculum that improves student achievement.
Develop and implement a plan for monitoring student proficiency in mathematics.
Develop and implement a professional development plan that supports effective instruction of the Arizona State Standards in Mathematics.

ANNUAL BENCHMARK TARGETS:

CURRENT STATE	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Target For This Plan
2009: 49% of students in grades 6-8 were proficient in AIMS math	2010: 54% of students in grades 6-8 will be proficient in AIMS math	2011: 59% of students in grades 6-8 will be proficient in AIMS math	2012: 65% of students in grades 6-8 will be proficient in AIMS math	2013: 70% of students in grades 6-8 will be proficient in AIMS math	2013: 70% of students in grades 6-8 will be proficient in AIMS math

Indicator: **Reading**
Duration of the Plan: July 2010 to June 2013
Strategies:

Provide and implement an after school tutoring program for at risk students.
Expand the use of the existing DIBELS program to include grades 4 & 5 and the progress monitoring portion of the program.
Develop and implement a plan for monitoring student progress.

ANNUAL BENCHMARK TARGETS:

CURRENT STATE	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Target For This Plan
2009: 37% of students in grades 1-3 have met or exceeded the mid year benchmark in Oral Reading Fluency	2010: 50% of the K-5 students will meet or exceed the DIBELS end of the year benchmarks	2011: 60% of the K-5 students will meet or exceed the DIBELS end of the year benchmarks	2012: 70% of the K-5 students will meet or exceed the DIBELS end of the year benchmarks	2013: 80% of the K-5 students will meet or exceed the DIBELS end of the year benchmarks	80% of K-5 students will meet or exceed the DIBELS end of the year benchmarks

Indicator: **Reading**
Duration of the Plan: July 2010 to June 2013
Strategies:
Develop and implement a plan for monitoring student progress.
Provide and implement an after school tutoring program for at risk students.

ANNUAL BENCHMARK TARGETS:

CURRENT STATE	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Target For This Plan
2009: 75% of students in grades 3-8 were proficient in the AIMS reading	2010: 76% of students in grades 3-8 will be proficient in the AIMS reading	2011: 77% of students in grades 3-8 will be proficient in the AIMS reading	2012: 78% of students in grades 3-8 will be proficient in the AIMS reading	2013: 80% of students in grades 3-8 will be proficient in the AIMS reading	80% of the students in grades 3-8 will be proficient in AIMS reading

In the Performance Management Plan Mingus Springs Charter School, Inc. scored 27 points out of a possible 40 points. Seventy percent of the sections scored at Meets or Exceeds level.

B. Detailed Business Plan

Organization
Information provided in the application package for the structure of the organization and communication patterns indicate that the members of the school board hold dual functions as corporate board members. Board members are selected by recommendation to the Director and approved by the Mingus Springs Charter School Board. The board offices consist of President, Clerk and three members.

Sustainability
Fiscal Viability
Mingus Springs Charter School, Inc. follows GAAP. The charter holder receives financial guidance and director from its business services provider and audit firm. Additionally, Mingus Springs has installed a board member with a financial background. The Director provides the initial recommendations in the school's fiscal decision making. Input is also provided by the Board President and others as special occasions may require. According to the application, final fiscal decisions, as required by law, are approved by the charter school's board. The school's office administration consists of the Director, Administrative Secretary and Attendance Secretary. The Director oversees and approves all fiscal issues. The two administrative assistants have limited financial decision-making authority. Finances are managed under dual approval procedures, according to the application. The charter holder states in the application that it has working capital of $120,000. Additionally, the charter holder states that the school maintains a reserve of $100,000 for emergencies and in case of revenue reduction.

The school is considered a small charter school in a small, rural community. However, the applicant states, based on the percentage of support from the community to the school size, the

charter school enjoys an above average support in its various fundraising activities, not only in dollars raised but especially by fundraising volunteers.

For fiscal year 2008 and fiscal year 2009, the independent certified public accountant issued an unqualified (or "clean") opinion on Mingus Springs Charter School's financial statements. In each fiscal year, the charter holder ended the year with positive net assets. However, in fiscal year 2009, expenditures exceeded revenues by approximately $53,000. The application's "Sustainability" narrative indicates that this was primarily due to the charter holder reducing its notes payable. The Budget Plan submitted as part of the renewal application indicates that the charter holder's ending net assets will increase between fiscal years 2010 and 2012. The Budget Plan uses an ADM of 165 for fiscal years 2010 through 2012. Even though no assumptions/notes were included, it appears that the Budget Plan's state equalization assistance amount for fiscal year 2011 reflects known cuts to charter school funding.[2]

Strength and Stability of the Governing Body

The MSCS Governing Board is the same as the MSCS Corporate Board. Governing board members are sought through the school's families and community members. If a member chooses not to return at the end of a two year term or upon resignation, a search for a new member begins through advertising of an opening on the board. The director interviews prospective members and makes a decision based on the applicant's experience of the educational system, knowledge of and interest in the school, and a desire to impact the students positively. New board members are nominated by the director at a governing board meeting and voted on by the existing board members. After the appointment of a new member, he/she is given a copy of the charter, a MSCS policy manual, information on how the MSCS governing board operates, and training, as needed, by the director and board president. Members are also given the opportunity to attend board trainings through the county and the Arizona School Board Association (ASBA).

Mingus Springs Charter School (MSCS) Governing Board and Corporate Board members:

Chris Igel - President
Lupe Ocampo – Vice President
Karen Black-Passmore - Clerk
Janeen Rainwater - Member
Dawn Gonzales - Member

Strength and Stability of the Corporate Board

The MSCS Corporate Board is the same as the MSCS Governing Board. The corporate board meets once a year to review and accept any changes in the corporation and to accept the annual report and certificate of disclosure from the State of Arizona Corporation Commission. The application package states that, since the Corporate Board and the Governing Board share the same members, the Corporate Board is aware of the school's academic performance. The director is responsible for reporting on the school's academic performance during a scheduled

[2] In reviewing the month-by-month projection for fiscal year 2011, please note that under the State's new payment schedule, charter holders will not receive a July 2010 state equalization assistance payment, but will receive two payments in June 2011.

board meeting. The Board evaluates the information. Actions for improvement or continued success are discussed and delegated to the appropriate person or committee.

Succession Plan

Charter Holder: Since the corporate board and governing board consist of the same members, the same plan that is used to fill an opening on the governing board is used to fill an opening on the corporate board.

According to the application package, in the event of the retirement of the director of Mingus Springs Charter School, the director chooses, with the board's approval, a suitable replacement from the current staff. A suitable replacement requires a minimum of 15 years of teaching experience, a master's degree in the field of education, and a minimum of five years of service at MSCS. The replacement will intern with the director for at least one semester, and possibly up to an entire year. If a current staff member is not identified as a suitable candidate, an outside search for a suitable candidate commences. An outside candidate must have a minimum of 15 years teaching experience, a master's degree in the field of education, and knowledge of charter school operations. An interview process with the current director, two certified staff with tenure of five years or more, and the governing board takes place to narrow the possible candidates. After narrowing the candidates to the final three, a second interview is conducted. The team then makes a decision based on the candidate's qualifications, experience, and knowledge of charter school operations.

In the event the director is unable to participate in the selection of a new director, the governing board and three certified staff with tenure of five years or more will identify and select a new director using the same procedures as outlined above.

Instructional Leadership: According to the application package, when a teaching position comes open, an interview committee is chosen by the director. Open positions are advertised in the local newspaper, on the ADE website, and on the MSCS website. The director screens applications to determine qualified applicants to interview. The interview committee uses the MSCS interview form for the appropriate position during the interview process. After the interviews and consideration, the committee chooses the most qualified applicant for the position. Teachers at the school are required to hold an Arizona teaching certificate. Each year, teachers seek professional development in an area that they have identified as a goal for improvement.

Facilities Plan

In 2004, Mingus Springs Charter School purchased the land and buildings that house the school at 3600 N. Sunset Drive. There are no plans for expanding the existing school. The buildings will continue to be maintained and repaired as needed throughout the years. The current facility includes three classroom buildings, one central office building, one multipurpose room building which includes the kitchen and library, and three storage buildings. These buildings are sufficient to meet the needs of MSCS.

VII. Staff Recommendation

Based upon the information in the application, academic performance over the charter term, fiscal compliance, and legal and contractual compliance, I move to approve the renewal application and grant a renewal contract for Mingus Springs Charter School, Inc.