Tertulia
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:

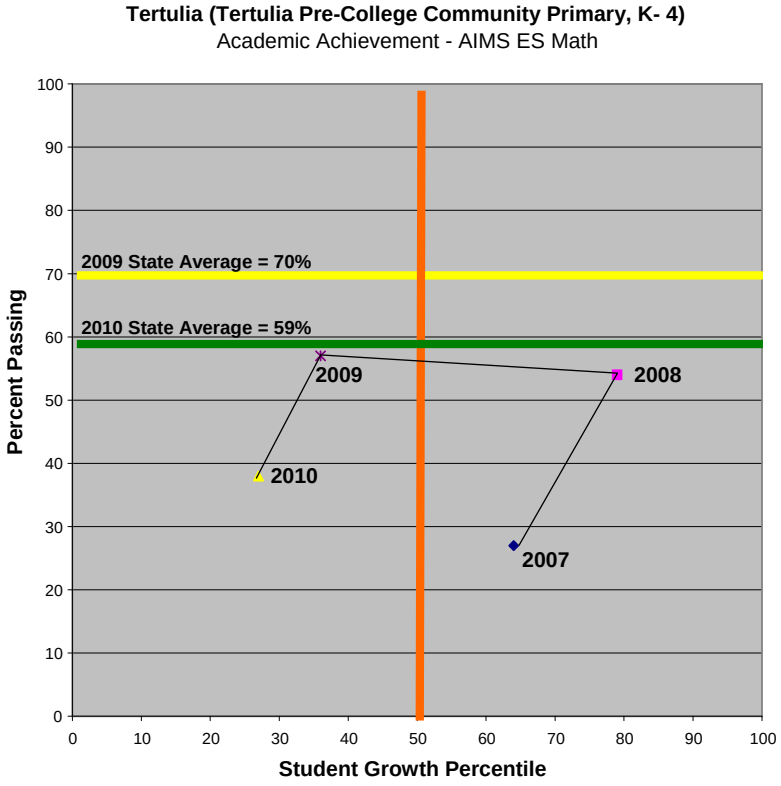
- Written application for renewal
- Student performance data
- Independent financial audits
- Five year interval summary reviews
- Site visit reports
- Monitoring reports

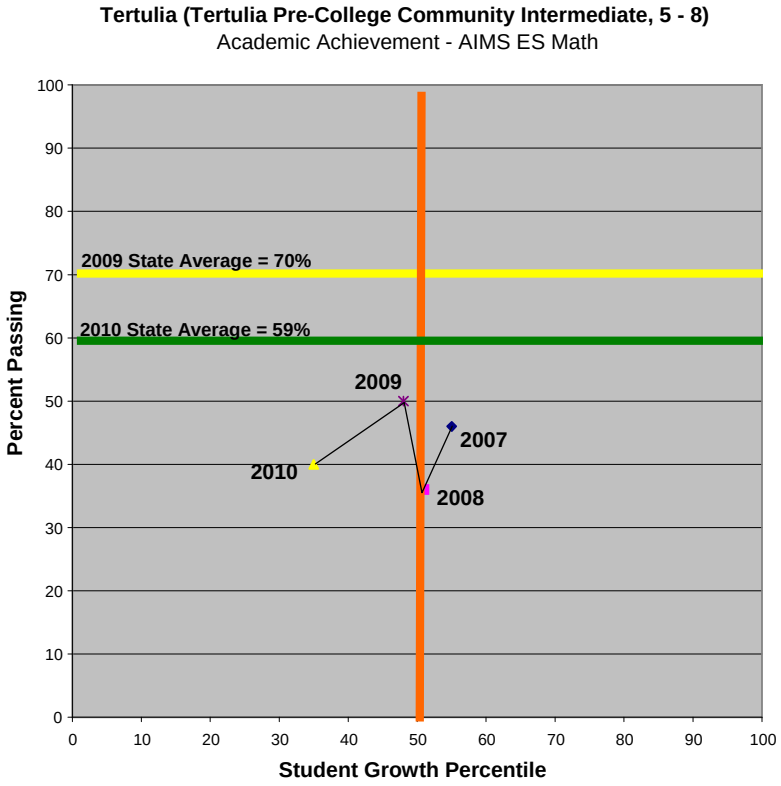
II. School Profile

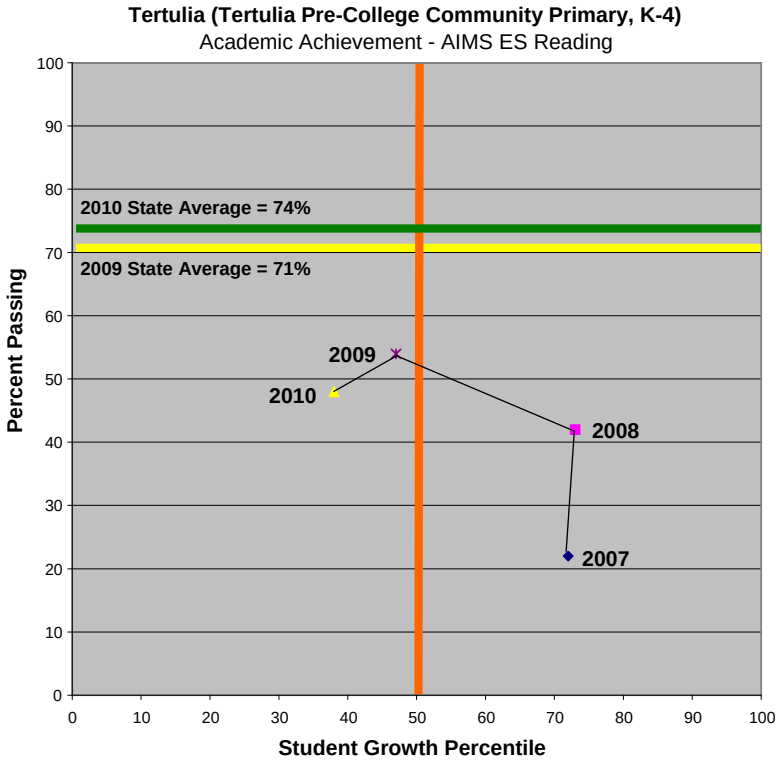
Tertulia was granted a charter by the ASBCS, effective on September 3, 1996. Tertulia is a non-profit in good standing with the Arizona Corporation Commission. The charter representatives are Jesus Aguirre, Monica Aguirre, and Gabriella Ketcham. The charter holder operates two schools located in the Phoenix area: Tertulia Pre-College Community Primary Campus (K-4) at 812 S. Sixth Avenue and Tertulia Pre-College Community Intermediate Campus (5–8) at 1145 E. Washington Street. Both campuses had a combined FY10 100th day ADM of 190.852.

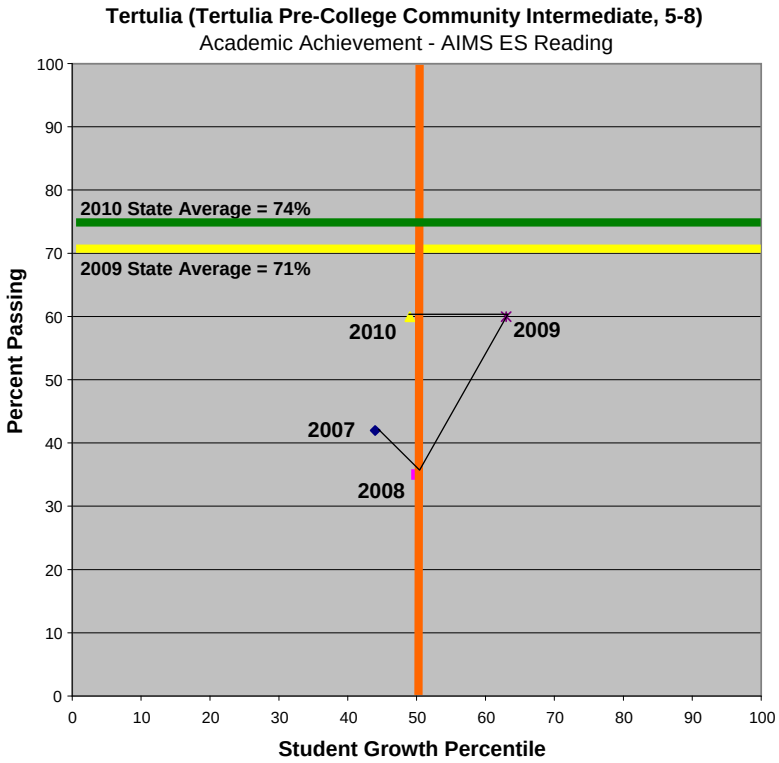
Mission Statement (as provided in the contract):
Tertulia Pre-College Community is a school dedicated to ensuring that all students matriculate into four-year colleges or universities. Every member of our community (students, parent's and staff) commit to doing whatever is necessary to ensure that we must meet our mission.

III. Academic Performance






Tertulia (Tertulia Pre-College Community Primary, K-4)
Academic Achievement - AIMS ES Reading
2010 State Average = 74%
2009 State Average = 71%
2009
2010
2008
2007
Percent Passing
Student Growth Percentile
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100


Tertulia (Tertulia Pre-College Community Intermediate, 5-8)
Academic Achievement - AIMS ES Reading
2010 State Average = 74%
2009 State Average = 71%
2010
2009
2007
2008
Percent Passing
Student Growth Percentile
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100

Fiscal Year	AZ LEARNS	Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
2010	Primary: Underperforming Intermediate: Performing	No
2009	Primary: Performing Plus Intermediate: Performing	No
2008	Primary: Performing Plus Intermediate: Performing	No
2007	Primary: Performing Intermediate: Performing	No

IV. Fiscal Compliance

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

- The charter holder has failed to timely submit its annual audit for one or more years.
- No issues were identified which required a corrective action plan.
- The fiscal years 2005 through 2008 audits each identified a repeat issue.

Tertulia 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 failed to timely submit the Annual Financial Report for one or more years.
- The charter holder has timely submitted the Budget.
- All Declarations were submitted to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) in a timely manner.
- As of February, 2010 ADE reported the 2141 Memorandum of Agreement for the Highly Qualified Teachers Equity Plan had not been received by the October 1, 2009 deadline.
- The Highly-Qualified Teacher report, updated on July 6, 2010, indicated 16 core teachers with one being reported as non-highly qualified.
- Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 Child Left Behind (NCLB) Compliance Monitoring for 2008-09 and 2009-10, respectively, have not been completed. Cycle 1 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Compliance Monitoring in 2007-08 identified noncompliance findings. In 2006-07, Cycle 6 did not meet compliance and as of May 1, 2009 compliance had not been attained. Cycle 5 in 2005-06 met compliance.
- ADE required an LEA team attend a NCLB Training for Compliance Issues in May 2008 due to failure to document the implementation of a Title I program in a Title I school.
- ADE determined the LEA to be a “high risk” subgrantee due to failure to comply with the monitoring requirements of NCLB in July 2008.

In October 2004, the Board voted to issue a Notice of Intent to Revoke (NOIR) Tertulia’s charter contract for failure to timely submit its fiscal year 2003 audit, for failure to comply with federal

regulations regarding reporting requirements for federal Title IV (Safe and Drug Free Schools) grants, and for the charter holder's historical failure to comply with the requirements to timely submit its audits for fiscal years 2000, 2001 and 2002. The audit was submitted in October 2004 and the grant compliance report issue was resolved in December 2004. In January 2005, the Board voted to dismiss the NOIR pending the receipt of a written assurance or corrective action plan from the charter holder. The written response was to describe the policies and/or procedures put in place by the charter holder to ensure the timely submission of its annual audit for fiscal year 2004 and thereafter. The charter holder timely provided the information requested by the Board and the NOIR hearing was vacated.

Previous Withholding:
In November 2007, the Board voted to withhold 10% of the charter holder's monthly State aid for failure to timely submit the fiscal year 2007 audit. No withholding occurred as audit was submitted prior to the December 2007 payment.

In November 2005, the Board voted to withhold 10% of the charter holder's monthly State aid apportionment for failure to timely submit the fiscal year 2005 audit. The withholding occurred for four months.

In April 2004, the Board voted to withhold 10% of the charter holder's monthly State aid apportionment for failure to timely submit the fiscal year 2003 audit. The withholding occurred for six months.

VI. Renewal Application

A. Education Plan

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 demographics, socioeconomics, mobility rates, ELL proficiency levels, Terra Nova, and AIMS. Based upon the data analysis, the school determined to focus the plan on teacher quality, student readiness, viable curriculum, and parent involvement.

Indicator: **Math (3rd grade)**
Duration of the Plan: July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2014
Strategies:

- Maximize the use of the current Math curriculum to improve student achievement.
- Integrate effective Math instructional strategies into daily teaching.
- Develop effective Math teachers through proper school support.

Involve parents in the school wide effort to increase student achievement in Math.

ANNUAL BENCHMARK TARGETS:

CURRENT STATE	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Target For This Plan 2013-14
58% meet or exceed	63% meet or exceed	68% meet or exceed	72% meet or exceed	Percentage of students who meet or exceed on AIMS (Math) will meet or exceed the state average.	Percentage of students who meet or exceed on AIMS (Math) will meet or exceed the state average.

Indicator: **Reading (3rd grade)**
Duration of the Plan: July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2014
Strategies:

Maximize the use of the current Reading curriculum to improve student achievement.
Integrate effective Reading instructional strategies into daily teaching.
Develop effective Reading teachers through proper school support.
Involve parents in the school wide effort to increase student achievement in Reading.

ANNUAL BENCHMARK TARGETS:

CURRENT STATE	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Target For This Plan 2013-14
49% meet or exceed	55% meet or exceed	63% meet or exceed	70% meet or exceed	Percentage of students who meet or exceed on AIMS Reading will meet or exceed the state average.	Percentage of students who meet or exceed on AIMS Reading will meet or exceed the state average.

In the Performance Management Plan Tertulia 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

The application package includes a description of the organization's flow of accountability, communication, and team structure. The Board of Directors operates as a policy board and holds the Executive Director accountable for all aspects of the school. The Executive Director is responsible for the operation and performance of all schools within the charter and also acts as the Principal's immediate supervisor. The Principal of the school oversees the daily school level operations and supervises the certified and classified staff assigned to the site. The organizational chart provided with the application package visually represents the relationships as described.

Sustainability

Fiscal Viability

Tertulia's renewal application describes its purchasing and depositing procedures. The operating budget is adopted and revised within the guidelines set forth by the State and reflects both operational budgetary decisions and programmatic budgetary decisions. According to the application's "Governing Body Strength and Stability" section, one responsibility of the board of directors is to ensure financial viability, which it does, in part, by ensuring the funds necessary to pay for the activities in the annual plan through setting a budget. The board of directors has established various committees, including a Finance Committee. At the site level, there are two people with fiscal authority – the principal and the executive director. Each is authorized to make decisions regarding purchases as long as those decisions are based on the budgets approved by the board of directors.

Throughout its history, Tertulia has received financial support from many organizations. The Dial Corporation donated a playground, National Council of la Raza has sponsored extensive professional development, and the Make a Difference organization has completed many projects for the school. More recently, the Hunt Corporation has offered its services to help Tertulia develop a recreation area for the intermediate students, and Phoenix Sky Harbor airport is including Tertulia in its Sound Insulation and Mitigation Service project that includes facilities renovations to reduce noise from the flight path to Sky Harbor. This plan is detailed in the facilities portion of the application.

For fiscal year 2008 and fiscal year 2009, the independent certified public accountant issued an unqualified (or "clean") opinion on Tertulia's financial statements. In each fiscal year, the charter holder ended the year with positive net assets. However, in fiscal year 2008, expenses exceeded revenues by $57,468.

Tertulia did not submit the required Budget Plan or the month-by-month projection for fiscal year 2011. The latter was required due to the charter holder's performance management plan (PMP). Tertulia's PMP included expenses associated with the PMP's implementation.

Strength and Stability of the Governing Body
Strength and Stability of the Corporate Board

Tertulia is managed by an Executive Director who is accountable to the Board of Directors, a volunteer board that oversees policy development, fundraising, and charter compliance. Specific responsibilities, outlined in the application package, include supporting the mission, supervising the Executive Director, ensuring financial viability, promoting student achievement, approving policies, and building community partnerships. The Board of Directors acts as the Governing Board and the Corporate Board.

The application package states Tertulia's Board of Directors is currently being developed to include constituents from the following categories: education, business/corporate, legal, and local communities. A minimum of seven members will make up the Board. Meetings are held every third Thursday of the month and members are expected to attend 10 out of the 12 yearly board meetings. According to the applicant, a board development initiative to increase the Board of Directors' effectiveness will be implemented this year. The initiative will focus on member participation, internal governing structures, equitable representation, and expectations of the Executive Director.

Tertulia Board of Directors members:

Jesus Aguirre, President
Monica Liang Aguirre, Secretary
Dr. Eugene Garcia- Member
Steve La Femina, Member

Succession Plan

Charter Holder: No information was provided regarding the succession plan for the entity holding the charter.

Instructional Leadership: The application package reports the succession plan for the school's instructional leadership team focuses on staff retention, ongoing professional development, and a clear career course for potential leaders. According to the applicant, individuals who have stayed at the school and proven to be successful in growing professionally will be placed in a career plan that includes required activities such as conducting and presenting an action research project, demonstrating success in two leadership roles, and interning with an immediate supervisor.

Facilities Plan

Tertulia operates two separate sites located in downtown Phoenix. Future planning for facilities includes combining the K-5 and 6-8 sites into one K-8 site. According to the applicant, the plan is in the early stages of development.

VII. Staff Recommendation

Based upon a review of the information provided by the applicant and the contents of the application which includes the academic performance, the fiscal compliance, and legal and contractual compliance of the charter holder over the charter term, I move to deny the request for charter renewal and to not grant a renewal contract for Tertulia. Specifically, the charter holder, during the term of the contract, failed to meet the obligations of the contract or failed to comply with federal or state law when it:

1. Failed to provide a learning environment that will improve pupil achievement in accordance with A.R.S. § 15-181(A) and failed to include a Budget Plan and month-by-month projection that demonstrates a viable plan for improving pupil achievement in accordance with the requirements of the renewal application;
2. Failed to timely submit the annual financial audits in accordance with A.R.S. §§ 15-183(E)(6) and 15-914.
3. Failed to comply with federal monitoring and reporting requirements for the receipt of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) monies.