StrengthBuilding® Training & Coaching
P.O. Box 91313 Tucson, AZ 85752
520-546-9296 office 520-884-0037 fax
www.strengthbuilding.org

StrengthBuilding Partners' Request for a one-time Good Cause Extension to execute a Charter, Model Community Learning Center

As the authorized representative of StrengthBuilding Partners I am submitting a written request for a one-time good cause extension to execute a charter to the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools. It is anticipated that we will be able to execute our charter on or before August 1, 2014.

The following is the three point explanation for this request,

1. **Explain and provide evidence of why the applicant is unable to implement the plans contained in the application package and execute the charter within the allotted 12 months.**

Our explanation for why StrengthBuilding Partners (SBP) was unable to implement the plans contained in the application package and execute the charter within the allotted 12 months is two-fold: (1) acquisition of facility (2) recipient of AZ CSP grant. The explanation is as follows:

(1). In order to accommodate the philosophy of our school, The Model Community Learning Center (MCLC), with community partners as integral players, the facility must allow for the presence and participation of these partners. Space requirements would include space for components of the school such as: a financial institution, institutions of higher learning, an early childhood learning center, adequate space for high family involvement as well as large and open spaces that will accommodate project based learning.

In addition to finding a facility that possesses the unique characteristics that would appropriately provide the academic setting as described in our application, it is also our goal to acquire the **right** facility at the outset so that we can establish our footprint in the community and remain there as the school grows. A facility was found that encompasses every essential space requirement and became our #1 choice as a facility.

In anticipation of being granted a charter in 2011, SBP, with the assistance of our realtor, Russ Hall of Picor Commercial Real Estate Services, communicated with Texas Instruments (TI), the owner of the desired property, in August 2010 through a Letter of Intent, expressing our interest in their property (please refer to attachment 1, SBP's Letter of Intent from Picor to TI).

On October 5, 2010 SBP received a counter offer from TI via their representative, Doug Heller of Binswanger. On November 11, 2010 SBP responded with a counter offer to TI. Please refer

to these two pieces of communication: Attachments 2 and 3, respectively. SBP was not granted a charter at this time. As a result, negotiations stalled as SBP set about to re-group and begin the process of preparing to re-apply for a charter in the next application cycle.

In January 2013 SBP was granted a charter and knowing that the TI property was still available, SBP approached Mr. Hall about the possibilities of acquiring it. At that time, negotiations were underway for the final sale of the property and we were advised to postpone any approaches until the sale was complete. In February 2013 the SBP Board of Directors voted to postpone the opening of the MCLC until August 2014 both to attempt to obtain the TI property (or another appropriate facility) and, being optimistic about the possibility of being granted an AZ CSP grant, to be able to take advantage of the grant monies to maximize our ability to prepare for its opening (please see "Second" below for more details regarding the AZ CSP grant). Please refer to Attachment 4: SBP Board Meeting Minutes, February 28, 2013.

In November 2013, Mr. Hall arranged an appointment between the realtor, Bill DiVito, representing the new owners, HSL Properties, and SBP. Please refer to Attachment 5: emails setting up the appointment.

On December 9th, 2013 SBP met with the representatives of HSL Properties to pursue the possibility of leasing the "TI campus". It is at this time that it was revealed that there may be an EPA issue re: a contamination of the land at the property that, although being treated, was still on the EPA charts as land that was not available for use with children. SBP pursued this issue through its community contacts to determine the viability of using this property for its charter. It is at this time that Mr. DiVito sent SBP the attached email (Attachment 6) indicating that this would not be viable for us to continue to pursue.

(2). SBP was one of the grantees for the Arizona Charter Starter Program (AZ CSP). Funding began April 1, 2013 (Please refer to Attachment 7, Award letter from AZ CSP office). Current research regarding the successful start-up of charter schools cites the advantage of postponing opening of the new charter school to take the time to develop a strong foundation of systems (financial, curricula, IT, business office systems, garnering additional community support, and student recruitment).

Decision-making

Having been granted an AZ CSP grant and taking heed from research identified above, the SBP board discussed and approved the delay of the opening of MCLC until August 2014 in order obtain the appropriate facility, to optimize the planning process, and open our doors with our systems firmly in place.

2. **Explain the applicant's new timeline for implementing the plans contained in the application package, and why the timeline is viable and adequate for achieving the proposed start-up date of the school and appropriate for operating a charter school in accordance with the performance frameworks adopted by the Board and requirements of statute and rule.**

In April, 2013, a planning guide with action steps and person(s) responsible for the activity was developed that is aligned with the Charter Board Performance Frameworks and the requirements of statute and rule. This timeline includes all the components necessary for the development and operation of a charter school. It is guiding the actions of the board, the Chief Academic Officer and the Chief Operating Officer as well as the staff that have been hired to date. This timeline and accompanying action plan has proven to be not only viable but valuable for achieving the proposed charter start-up date of August 2014. As part of this action plan, steps are identified regarding the acquisition of an appropriate facility for the school, be it the first choice facility as described above or a similar facility soon to be identified by February, 2014 or, as our Plan B indicates, a facility that will work for 3 – 5 years as the optimal facility is located and renovated to better accommodate the growth that is expected of Las Puertas. This planning guide is included as evidence of progress made and targets for when key decision factors will be completed in order to assure a timely and successful school opening in August, 2014.

3. **Provide clear and specific action steps with target completion dates that will enable the applicant to implement the plans contained in the application package in accordance with the timeline provided and begin providing educational instruction starting no later than fiscal year 2016.**

Attached (Attachment 8) please find the planning guide with target completion dates and person(s) responsible for the activities. This document will support SBP in the implementation of critical steps necessary to open the charter school as described in our application to the Arizona State Board of Charter Schools. Educational instruction will begin in August 2014.

Sincerely,

Pamela Clark-Raines

President