AGENDA ITEM: Transfer Application – The Charter Foundation, Inc.

Issue
The Charter Foundation, Inc., a non-profit entity, submitted a complete Transfer Application for the transfer of the site, AmeriSchools College Preparatory Academy – Tucson, to a separate charter contract. The Charter Foundation, Inc. was granted a charter in 1998 and opened AmeriSchools College Preparatory Academy – Tucson the same year. In addition to operating AmeriSchools College Preparatory Academy – Tucson, The Charter Foundation, Inc. operates four other schools.

The Charter Foundation, Inc. was recently eligible for renewal. Because a school or schools under the charter did not meet the Board's level of adequate academic performance, the charter holder was required to submit a Performance Management Plan as a part of the renewal application. The Charter Foundation, Inc.'s renewal application, including the Performance Management Plan, was approved on January 23, 2012. The approved plan included AmeriSchools College Preparatory Academy – Tucson and will be transferred with the approval of a transfer to its own charter. Schools continuing to operate under The Charter Foundation, Inc. will also continue to implement the approved plan.

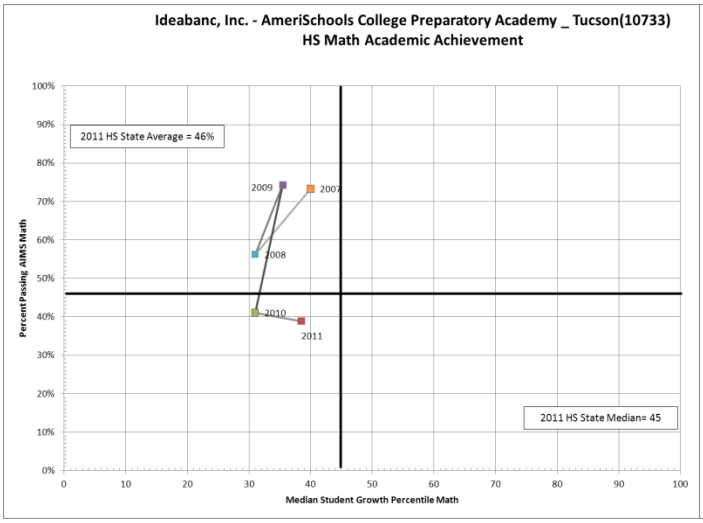
As stated in Board policy, prior to a charter school being placed on an agenda, staff conducts a compliance check as part of the approval process. With the exception of not meeting the Board's level of adequate academic performance for all schools, the charter holder is compliant in all other areas.

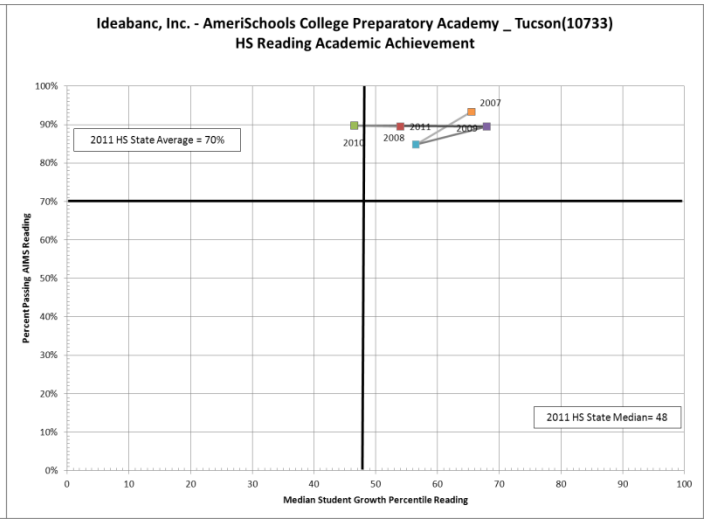
Curricular Emphasis:
The Charter Foundation, Inc. dba AmeriSchools Academies practices a multi-age, skill-based program of instruction built around incorporation of individualization and inquiry-based learning. Each campus builds a curriculum based around the Common Core Standards in an interdisciplinary model for delivering content.

AmeriSchools College Preparatory Academy (ACPA) provides a multi-age, continuous progress format for instruction in its college prep program. ACPA's students participate in inquiry-based, seminar-style classes which draw upon the research conducted by NCTM and NCTE. The instructional leaders at the high school have developed skill level and content benchmarks that are used to monitor student progress. The staff design and conduct ongoing formative assessments aligned to their core curriculum that are then used to inform instruction. These assessments are an integral part of the overall instructional model. ACPA uses the student level data from AIMS as well as PSAT and SAT to assess student progress in the curriculum. ACPA plans to maintain small class sizes, a low teacher to student ratio, advisory and mentoring programs to support a rigorous academic program with personalization and small learning communities.

Governance Structure:
The corporate board of directors for The Charter Foundation, Inc. is responsible for policy and operational decisions concerning the charter. Members of the board have extensive background and service in the field of education, serving in both teaching and administrative positions. The board of directors for The Charter Foundation, Inc. contracts for professional management and leadership services with EdVenture, Inc., an Arizona corporation. The leadership of EdVenture, Inc. implements policy and operational decisions as determined by the board of directors of The Charter Foundation, Inc.

The graphs shown below provide academic achievement data for AmeriSchools College Preparatory Academy – Tucson for the previous five years in math and reading.





Board Options

Option 1: The Board may approve the transfer application. Staff recommends the following language for consideration: I move to approve the site transfer application of The Charter Foundation, Inc. and grant a separate charter to The Charter Foundation, Inc. for the purpose of operating AmeriSchools College Preparatory Academy – Tucson.

Option 2: The Board may deny the transfer application. The following language is provided for consideration. I move to deny the site transfer application of The Charter Foundation, Inc. to transfer a site to its own charter for the following reason(s)…