

**AGENDA ITEM: Replication Application – Valley Academy, Inc.**

**Valley Academy, Inc. – Norte Academy  
Replication Application Summary Report**

Valley Academy, Inc., a non-profit entity, submitted a complete application for the replication of its Valley Academy school site in Phoenix. The new contract will be held by Valley Academy, Inc. and the proposed new charter school will be named Norte Academy, with a planned opening in August 2012.

Valley Academy, Inc. was granted a charter by the State Board of Education in 1995 and opened its first site in Phoenix in the fall of 1995. In 2003 Valley Academy, Inc. submitted a transfer application to the Board that was approved, and serves grades K-8. In June 2010, Valley Academy, Inc. was granted a 20-year renewal of their charter.

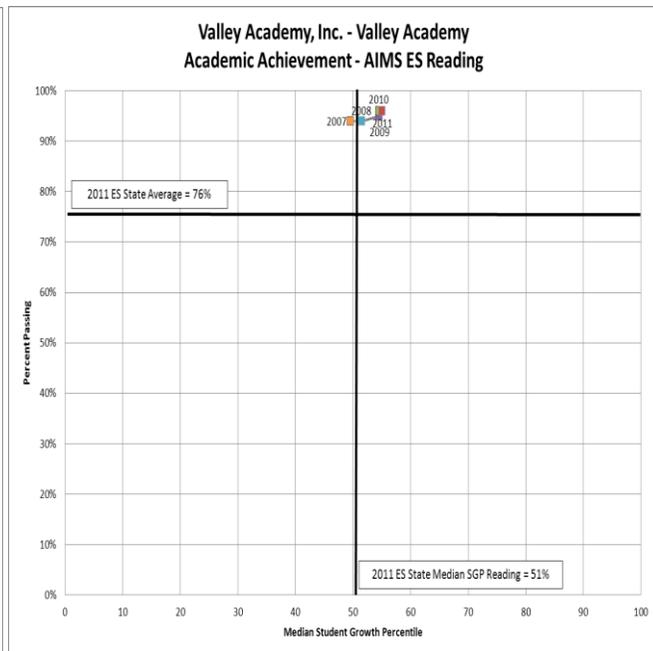
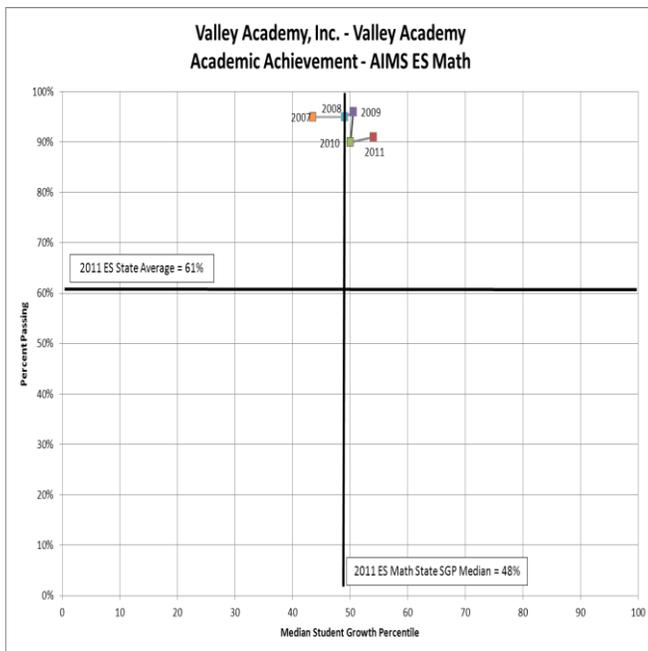
**Replication Model – Valley Academy**

**Academics:**

Valley Academy has experienced the following success as measured by state and federal academic accountability systems.

Valley Academy		
School Year	AZ LEARNS	Adequate Yearly Progress
2010-2011	Excelling	Met
2009-2010	Excelling	Met
2008-2009	Excelling	Met
2007-2008	Excelling	Met

The graphs below depict the charter holder’s academic performance using the Board’s Level of Adequate Academic Performance.



The following statements were excerpted from the Valley Academy, Inc. replication application regarding the Program of Instruction of the school to be replicated. “Valley Academy uses a direct teacher instructional model for all grades. It is a back-to-basics school with a focus on phonics-based reading instruction, memorization of math facts, acceptance of structure, and adherence to a strict code of conduct. In addition to core subjects, the school teaches social studies, science, physical education, music, visual arts, technology and foreign language. The school utilizes the Spalding program for language arts and an accelerated Saxon curriculum for math.”

Valley Academy uses the Acuity Assessment system, which includes quarterly predictive assessments, diagnostic assessments, and custom curriculum-specific assessments, as well as state mandated standardized tests, to track and measure academic performance. They offer multiple remediation opportunities in different modalities. Some of these programs are classroom remediation, targeted homework, personalized tutoring and Opportunity Club, which is a supervised time for students to make up work or study. The Board of Directors reviews AIMS results annually. AIMS scores are analyzed by current grade level and by cohort, comparing previous years. When scores dip below 90% in any subject area in any grade level, administration develops and presents to the Board of Directors plans to increase performance. The Board of Directors reviews the development of reading skills at the primary level through an annual report of DIBELS testing results.

**Academic Choice:**

All data in this section is supplied by applicant.

**A. Enrollment:** Valley Academy has experienced increasing enrollment since opening in 1996 with 477 students. The following table shows enrollments over the last five years:

Year	ADM
2006-07	663
2007-08	707
2008-09	737
2009-10	770
2010-11	751

**B. Retention Rate:** Valley Academy strives to maintain a student retention rate of 90% or higher. The following table shows the retention rate from one year to the next when a subsequent grade level is offered:

Year	Retention Rate
2006-07	93%
2007-08	92%
2008-09	93%
2009-10	92%
2010-11	89%

According to the application, the slight dip in 2010 is due to the decline in the economy, with families relocating to find jobs and struggling with transportation costs.

An increasing number of students who complete Valley Academy’s 8<sup>th</sup> grade have been enrolled continuously since Kindergarten, as shown in the following table:

<b>Continuously Enrolled K-8</b> Percent of students finishing 8 <sup>th</sup>
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Grade	
2006-07	39%
2007-08	49%
2008-09	35%
2009-10	53%
2010-11	56%

**C. Enrollment Practices:** Valley Academy is an open enrollment public charter school which does not charge tuition. If space is available in a grade level, students are enrolled in the school. In kindergarten and grades where enrollment is oversubscribed, parents may place their children’s names on an interest list. In February, the school conducts a public lottery. The lottery is used to draw a waiting list number for each child on the interest list. Applications received after the lottery are processed on a first come basis, with applicants either being offered enrollment or being placed on the bottom of the waiting list. Applicants on the waiting list will roll over to the next year. Applications that roll over are given priority over new applications.

**Replication School – Norte Academy**

**School Mission Statement:**

“Norte Academy’s mission is to offer back-to-basics, traditional education by providing a challenging, sequential, teacher-directed, standards-based, textbook-driven curriculum supported by individual accountability and high academic and behavioral standards.”

**Market Analysis:**

As provided in the application, Valley Academy, Inc. states, “It is strongly considering a site five miles south of the current campus, in the Washington School District. The population within 5 miles of this site has an overall population of 390,089, with 51,492 between the ages 5 and 14(according to the 2010 census). None of the area schools have AIMS scores as high as Valley Academy.” Census data supplied by the applicant suggests that the population surrounding the new site is demographically similar to the current site, as shown in the table below:

2010 Census Demographic Information – 5 mile radius	Proposed Site	Current Site
Median Household Income	\$59,131	\$63,573
Race: white alone	77.4%	81.6%
Race: Hispanic	22.5%	18.6%
Race: Black	4.1%	3.2%

According to the applicant, “There are no traditional, back-to-basics schools in the area of the proposed site.” Because the proposed facility is near the current site, the applicant feels that many of the 550 students on the current waiting list will be interested in attending the new school.

**Governance Structure:**

Valley Academy, Inc. is an Arizona non-profit corporation and is the charter holder. It is governed by a Board of Directors that presently has five members. The single board serves as both the Corporate and Governing Board. The Board of Directors has designated Heidi Mitchell and Cuyler Reid as charter representatives. The Board of Directors, in its capacity as the governing body, is responsible for those functions required by Arizona law, pursuant to ARS §15-183, including adopting and directing school policies and procedures and assuring

that policies and procedure are implemented. The Board of Directors will continue maintaining compliance with its Charter Contract, applicable state and federal laws and the organization’s accounting requirements.

	Valley Academy	Norte Academy
<b>Instructional Program</b>		
Grade Levels	K-8	K-8
Special Emphasis	Back to Basics Traditional	Back to Basics Traditional
Methodology	Direct, Teacher-Centered Instruction	Direct, Teacher-Centered Instruction
<b>Demographics</b>		
Location	1520 W. Rose Garden Lane Phoenix, AZ 85027	10 mile radius of the 85085 zip code – Desert Hills Drive to the north, Deer Valley to the south, 67 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to the west, Cave Creek Road to the east
Enrollment	Up to 850 students	Up to 1400 students
<b>Organizational Structure</b>		
Authorized Representative(s)	Heidi Mitchell Cuyler Reid	Heidi Mitchell Cuyler Reid
Corporate Principals	Angela Fischer Mark Mettes Cuyler Reid Letha Warner Katie Whitchurch	Angela Fischer Mark Mettes Cuyler Reid Letha Warner Katie Whitchurch
Governing Board	Angela Fischer Mark Mettes Cuyler Reid Letha Warner Katie Whitchurch	Angela Fischer Mark Mettes Cuyler Reid Letha Warner Katie Whitchurch

**Suggested Motion:** Accept the replication application package and grant the replication charter for Valley Academy, Inc. to operate Norte Academy.