

APPENDIX A

AMENDMENT REQUEST AND SUPPORT

MATERIALS

1. PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION AND MISSION AMENDMENT REQUEST FORMS
2. AMENDMENT REQUEST DOCUMENTS

Charter Mission Amendment Request

Charterholder Info

Charter Holder

Name:
Avondale Learning

CTDS:
07-86-14-000

Mailing Address:
7318 West Lynwood
Phoenix, AZ 85035
> [View detailed info](#)

Representative

Name:
Patrick Finn

Phone Number:

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Mission

Change From


In its desire to help students reach their maximum potential for a successful life in the 21st century, the mission of Precision Academy is to prepare students for postsecondary education and to lay the foundation for entry into professional/business careers.

Change To

In its desire to help students reach their maximum potential for a successful life, the mission of Avondale Learning dba Precision Academy is to prepare students for postsecondary education and to lay the foundation for entry into professional/business careers. Avondale Learning dba Precision Academy intends to serve students identified as dropouts; students in poor academic standing who are either severely behind on academic credits or have a demonstrated pattern of failing grades; and students who are pregnant and/or parenting students.

Attachments

Board Minutes

 [Download File](#) – Board minutes that show the change of mission statement.

Additional Information*

No documents were uploaded.

Signatures

Charter Representative Signature
Patrick Finn 04/24/2019

Program of Instruction Amendment Request

Charterholder Info

Charter Holder

Name:
Avondale Learning

CTDS:
07-86-14-000

Mailing Address:
7318 West Lynwood
Phoenix, AZ 85035
> [View detailed info](#)

Representative

Name:
Patrick Finn

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Description of changes

Change From:


Precision Academy was started as a college prep school focusing on an interdisciplinary approach and hands on projects. Upper-level students studied at least one course at a community college. The courses were driven by both the state standards and the state university requirements. Our program of instruction was developed with the goal of ensuring our students were well prepared to succeed at the college level and become life long learners.

Change To:

The program of instruction will change to one focusing on individual instruction. This one-on-one attention will be at a pace geared towards students who have not had much success in pre-high school courses. The attention that our students require to successfully advance toward graduation is a catalyst for the new program of instruction. There will be an informal algebra-geometry course and a life skills course. These are examples of changes that will be made to the instruction and curriculum.

Attachments

Board Minutes

 [Download File](#) – Board minutes approving the change to the program of instruction.

[Narrative](#) –  [Download File](#)

Additional Information*

No documents were uploaded.

Signature

Charter Representative Signature
Patrick Finn 04/17/2019

Precision Academy has determined that a change in the program of instruction is needed. This determination has been reached by analyzing data gathered from school records, student records, student surveys, and student interviews.

Precision Academy started as a high school that would prepare driven high school students with stable home support for college. Many of the strategies that were laid out in the original program of instruction were geared toward this type of student. For example, junior and senior level students were to study one course per semester on a community college campus. This was designed to prepare the students for college level work and to earn credit toward their college degree. In the first graduating class, approximately 75% of the students continued to higher level learning. In contrast, only 20% of the current students plan on attending college.

From that initial class of 2003, one student became a lawyer, one works in the film industry following his college graduation, one is a hospital computer programmer, and another is involved in law enforcement.

The demographics of the school have changed dramatically over the course of the past ten years. Years ago, students assigned homework completed the work; they were involved in after-school activities; they eagerly participated in community projects. Today our students simply do not have the time for such activities due to necessary employment and family obligations; homework is no longer assigned, because students cannot or will not fit it into their schedules.

Until recent years, progress reports distributed to students every three weeks were returned to the school with parent signatures; we could tell it was crucial to parents that their children finish high school. Ninety percent of the progress reports given to students now never

leave their backpack. Parents are aware of the report cards, but for various reasons, the report cards are not looked at.

Many current students must work to help their families pay their bills. Of the 37% of students who work, 88% of them work nights until eleven p.m. or midnight (to close the fast-food restaurants) which has led to a major impact on absenteeism. Forty-four percent of our current students have been absent more than ten days so far during the 2018-19 school year. Of that 44%, we have seen 79% absent more than 20 days.

Another area that we have seen a change in the demographics is in the student's home life. This is shown in the 22% of students who come from either a single parent home or live with extended family such as grandparents and aunts or uncles. When Precision Academy started, we saw 6% of the students living in this type of family dichotomy. Thirty percent of our students report to school late because they are taking care of their younger siblings before school, because the teens are the sole caregivers in the mornings.

Yet another concern are students who transfer regularly from school-to-school. As of now, 53% of the students who attend Precision Academy have attended more than one high school. Sixty-nine percent of the students enrolled at Precision Academy are behind in credits for their cohort year.

At the beginning, we regularly saw our student population participate in spirit weeks and various performances. This eagerness to participate has dwindled over the years. Discipline issues have risen over the years at Precision Academy as well. For the first four years of the school, there were no drug violations. This year alone twenty percent of the students have been suspended for various violations; of those students, 63% have been suspended for drug

offenses. These suspensions are long term in nature, which is another hurdle that needs to be overcome to move towards graduation.

Other important demographic changes include 99% of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch compared to 30% when the school first started. Twenty-five percent have had family problems regarding jail and deportation, and 25% are in or have attended counseling.

In the early years of Precision Academy, the school was a chapter member of the national honor society. There are no longer qualifying members.

The school was designed for a demographic that no longer exists. Even when the school has awarded scholarships, the students are not taking advantage of them. In the past two years, 100% of the students granted scholarships have not used them.

Our goal of providing a high level of education and assisting our students reach graduation remains the same. With these new demographics, we realize it is time for a new program of instruction.

As for curriculum, from the start, Precision Academy developed a curriculum that would enhance the learning for ambitious, motivated students. With the changes that we have witnessed within our student population, we need to change to better meet the needs of this new student body. For example, the creation of a debate course that devotes time to developing arguments through research will be created. This course will align to Arizona College and Career Ready Standards in a variety of ways. Students will evaluate evidence and consider the strength of claims and counter claims. The students will have to determine the validity of the source from which they gather evidence and compare and contrast these sources. The students will consider such factors as the author's purpose, whether or not it is a primary or secondary

source, and the nuance of the words being used. Within this course, students will present information, evidence, and supporting evidence. The debate course will align to many of the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards.

Other curriculum changes will be found within core classes as well. For example, students taking social studies classes will increase the amount of primary and secondary sources that describe historical events. The students will have to analyze various formats, including media to determine the author's point of view. Students who are taking English courses will be using technology more often. With this use of technology in the English courses, students will produce and update their work. Gaining new information and with continued feedback from the teacher, our students will be in courses that align to Arizona College and Career Ready Standards.

Mathematics is an area that we have seen our current students struggle with at an alarming rate. To combat this issue, Precision Academy will offer an informal algebra/geometry math course. This course will help the students who need the additional help to ensure they are moving toward grade level in mathematics. The creation of a life skills course will prepare our students for a variety of situations that they will encounter post high school. Some of the topics addressed in this course include credit cards vs. debit cards, savings accounts, budgeting, sewing, spackling, and income taxes.

The original curriculum was developed for students who would excel in project or group based work; many of the instructional strategies used during the early years of the school included student led classes, projects, and demonstrations. These strategies worked well years ago. Now there needs to be less group work and more individual assignments will allow for more

one-on-one instruction. Many students now do not function well in the group dynamic setup, because many simply do not do the work they are required to do. Less project-based assignments will help our students succeed at Precision Academy. Many of the projects that our students have done in the past required time spent at home to complete the work. With our students family obligations, they do not have the time to spend on this type of work.

Students leading the classes was another of the original instructional strategies that does not work for our new demographic. Many of our students lack the leadership skills, confidence, or desire to take the lead. In the past, guest speakers came to Precision Academy to discuss topics that were important for students who were planning on attending college. Guest speakers that visit the school now will be discussing topics important for trade jobs and other careers such as nursing or cosmetology.

Regarding formative and summative assessments, the changes will be made to enhance the student's ownership over their own learning. In the earlier years of the school, parents would receive a progress report every three weeks and would review the progress report. With the students that are currently enrolled at the school, we have found that parent involvement is extremely low. This occurs for a variety of off-campus reasons, so it is important that we now have our students track their own progress. Formative assessments will be given once per month which the students will record and monitor over the course of the year. This will allow them to see their progress and what areas they need to improve. Without the family support of the past, it is important that current students are well informed of their own progress. The summative assessments will include a final exam but also an individual assignment that displays the growth of the student in the skills they have gained throughout the year. For example, the students will have to write an essay using data they have gained through research from the internet. They will

write an argumentative essay that forces them to take a stance and show evidence for that stance. This will align to the state standards and show that the student has gained the skills from within those standards. These proposed changes will support the growth of our students and help them toward graduation.

The changes stated above have been designed to align to the school's proposed alternative school mission statement in a number of ways. First, overall changes in lessons and assessments will allow students who have demonstrated a pattern of failing grades to thrive in an environment that they have not been exposed to in the past. A significant change in how work is to be completed will not only allow students to develop a stronger understanding of the material, but will also allow instructors to scaffold these students in a more individualized way, producing both positive growth as well as positive assessments. Precision Academy will also continue to offer eight credit hours per year, which will allow those students that have enrolled in the school severely behind on credits, an opportunity to succeed at a faster pace than available at many other schools. Furthermore, the proposed changes will allow for students that are primary caregivers, and/or financially responsible for part or all of the family's well being, to continue to focus on their jobs while no longer being burdened with an exorbitant amount of homework, and exploring other professional opportunities that they once did not know were available to them through guest speakers.

The proposed changes will align to the educational philosophy of Precision Academy by allowing students that face problems not envisioned when the school began, to find success in their post-academic lives. While the student needs, demographics, and motivations may have changed since the school's inception, the philosophy will remain the same -- to always seek the best for our students so that they can seek the best for themselves. Proposed changes will allow

for teachers to change the methods and structure in which they teach, in order to serve the modern needs of our student body.

We believe these changes will not only improve pupil achievement in the target population, but allow the pupils to excel. The proposed changes will focus on a more individualized learning experience. Through professional development and educational courses, teachers will learn new and innovative ways to reach the non-traditional students that Precision Academy has been home to in recent years -- the same students who often slip through the cracks at larger traditional schools. Progress will not only be monitored by teachers and staff, but also by the students, instilling a sense of pride and accomplishment that is so often missing from our current students. Classes that were once designed to accommodate students with natural leadership skills and promote collaborative projects will be retooled to focus on the specific needs of the individual students. And finally, new courses will be created to target the modern needs of our student body, preparing them not for a traditional post-secondary path for the conventional student, but for a path that will benefit the immediate needs and desires of our alternative population.

Implementation of these changes will begin immediately upon approval of alternative status. Over the summer, returning teachers will be required to attend professional development classes and meetings as well as create individual lesson plans as part of an overall curriculum map designed to reach our current students' needs. New teachers, if needed, will be required to do the same upon hiring. New course curriculum maps and lesson plans will be required to be completed and approved by August. Fortunately, few, if any, materials will need to be purchased at the current time to implement these changes. Multiple classrooms with computers and internet access already exist for students to begin their technology work. Administration will closely

monitor possible workshops and professional classes for teachers to attend who are in need of any possible training that cannot be completed by current staff. Professional development meetings held by the administration will take place beginning at the end of 2018-19 school year as well as the weeks prior to the beginning of the coming school year. Trainings will be designed to help teachers and staff understand the problems and struggles of the student body that they themselves are unable to relate to, as well as the best ways to educate, encourage, and help these students succeed.