AGENDA ITEM: Adding Grade Levels to Charter Amendment Request – International Charter School of Arizona, Inc.

Issue

On May 30, International Charter School of Arizona, Inc. (ICSA), requested to add grades 9-12 to the charter currently authorized for grades 5-8. As ICSA was in its first year of operation and had no academic data for 2012, the charter holder was required to submit a Demonstration of Sufficient Progress (DSP).

Summary of Narrative Provided

Rationale for the expansion request

The narrative (presented in the charter holder's amendment portfolio: b. Amendment request materials) states the purpose of the expansion is to continue with the 2012-2013 8th grade class by offering them the same academic advantages at the high school level as they received at the middle school level.

Support for methods of instruction and mission of the charter

The narrative describes ICSA offering an environment that prepares students for citizenship in an increasingly global society, living and learning among peers whose perspective and experiences differ from their own. It further states that students learn to manage time well, think independently and critically, cultivate their own creativity, value diversity, evaluate information, develop a personal opinion, and defend it respectfully. The narrative states that ICSA has hired teachers certified to teach 7-12, and provides training in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program curriculum to all teachers. The narrative provided a menu of course offerings, graduation requirements, and a policy for accepting transfer credit consistent with statutory requirements.

Background

ICSA was granted a charter in January 2011. It operates one school: International Charter School of Arizona, which served grades 5-8 in Scottsdale from August 2012 to May 2013. The charter has notified staff that the school has moved 7 miles from its current location for the upcoming school year, but has not yet submitted a School Site Location Notification Request. The charter is authorized to serve grades 5-8, and the current enrollment cap is 200. According to ADE, the 100th day ADM for FY13 was 32.3. ICSA operates on a 180 day calendar.

Academic Performance

As stated in the Board's *Academic Performance Framework and Guidance* document, a charter holder's academic performance will be evaluated by the Board when considering expansion requests. ICSA opened in August 2012 and does not yet have state assessment data. ICSA has not been in operation long enough to receive an Overall Rating and was required to submit a Demonstration of Sufficient Progress (DSP). A DSP was submitted by the charter representative (presented in the charter holder's amendment portfolio: c. Demonstration of Sufficient Progress). The DSP was evaluated using the criteria provided in Appendix D of the Board's *Academic Performance Framework and Guidance* document (presented in the charter holder's amendment portfolio: d. DSP Evaluation Instrument).

The initial DSP submitted by the charter holder for ICSA provided a narrative describing the beginning stages of systems for implementation of curriculum, monitoring implementation of Standards in instruction, assessment, and professional development that contribute to increased student growth and proficiency in Math and Reading, and which provided minimal data to support sufficient progress for students overall and in subgroups, resulting in a determination of Not Acceptable for each measure.

On June 28, staff conducted a site visit and met with Kris Johnson (Executive Director) to review the information presented in the DSP and collect additional information and documentation to be considered in the final evaluation (presented in the charter holder's amendment portfolio: d. DSP Evaluation Instrument). During the site visit, in addition to reviewing evidence described in the DSP, staff also reviewed evidence and documentation for ICSA (presented in the

charter holder's amendment portfolio: e. DSP Evidence) regarding all areas not sufficiently addressed in the submitted DSP in the following areas:

- Curriculum: Staff reviewed evidence described in the DSP, and additional documentation provided by the charter holder including pacing guides, curriculum maps, materials for differentiating instruction, and supplemental materials for student intervention. Staff determined the curriculum demonstrated sufficient progress towards meeting the Board's academic performance expectations.
- Instruction: Staff reviewed evidence described in the DSP, and additional documentation provided by the charter holder including curriculum maps, teacher binders, and teacher evaluation instruments. Staff determined the plan for monitoring integration of Arizona Standards into instruction demonstrated sufficient progress towards meeting the Board's academic performance expectations.
- Professional Development: Staff reviewed evidence described in the DSP, and additional documentation provided by the charter holder including a list of PD topics, teacher sign-in sheets, and PD materials. Staff determined the professional development plan acceptably demonstrated sufficient progress towards meeting the Board's academic performance expectations.
- Assessment: Staff reviewed evidence described in the DSP including proficiency and growth analysis in Reading based on AIMS 2012 data for 16 students and AIMS 2013 data for 22 students, and an item analysis based on AIMS 2013 data. The charter holder was not able to provide analysis of classroom-created assessments due to technical issues but did submit two printouts of test results from 5th grade Math. Staff reviewed additional documentation provided by the charter holder including AIMS pretest results from March 2013. The charter holder did not provide evidence of collection or analysis of student data before January 2013 in Math, or between AIMS 2012 and March 2013 in Reading. Ms. Johnson stated that due to the small size of the school they were unable to purchase Galileo this past year but will be able to through a process developed by the Arizona Charter School Association for the upcoming school year. Staff determined the assessment system presented demonstrates progress towards meeting the Board's academic performance expectations.

The charter holder provided additional evidence and documentation (presented in the charter holder's amendment portfolio: e. DSP Evidence) regarding a majority of areas not sufficiently addressed in the submitted DSP including systems and processes in the areas of curriculum, monitoring instruction, and professional development at ICSA in their first year of operation, and assessment data demonstrating they are approaching a comprehensive system of documenting student growth and proficiency.

Following the site visit, staff determined, through an evaluation of the information and documentation collected at the site visit, that the charter holder demonstrated sufficient progress toward meeting the Board's academic performance expectations. The final evaluation of the DSP resulted in a determination of Acceptable.

Board Options

1. The Board may approve the amendment request for International Charter School of Arizona, Inc. Staff recommends the following language for consideration: I move, based on the information contained in the Board materials and presented today, that the Board approve the request to add grades 9-12 to the charter held by International Charter School of Arizona, Inc.
2. The Board may deny the amendment request for International Charter School of Arizona, Inc. The following language is provided for consideration: I move, based on the information contained in the Board materials and presented today, that the Board deny the requests to add grades 9-12 to the charter held by International Charter School of Arizona, Inc., for (Other specific reasons the Board may have found during its consideration including…)