

Adding Grade Levels to Charter Amendment Request

Charterholder Info

Charter Holder

Name:
Sonoran Desert School

CTDS:
07-87-86-000

Mailing Address:
6724 S. Kings Ranch Road
Suite 102
Gold Canyon, AZ 85118
> [View detailed info](#)

Representative

Name:
Patricia Dalman

Phone Number:
480-396-5463

Fax Number:
480-396-4980

Downloads

 [Download all files](#)

Current Grade Levels

Current Grade Levels Served

- 9th Grade
- 10th Grade
- 11th Grade
- 12th Grade

New Grade Levels

For each grade level being added, provide the following as a representation of a program of instruction aligned to the State's approved academic standards and to methods of instruction described in the charter. Please note that a separate upload must be prepared for each grade level and content area and be named as such. Additionally, applicants must restate the name of the file in the Brief Description box (e.g., First Grade Reading, HS Algebra II).

For K-8

Language Arts & Math: A completed curriculum sample for reading, writing, and math for each grade level being added including all attachments as outlined on the required [template and instructions](#).


For 9-12


Language Arts & Math: A completed curriculum sample for reading, writing, and math coursework for each grade level being added including all attachments as outlined on the required [template and instructions](#). Each course must align with the State's graduation requirements.

Add Grade Levels

5th
6th
7th
8th

Curriculum Samples

 [Download File](#) — Eligibility/Exclusions Form

 [Download File](#) — Agenda Request


Effective Date

07/01/2015

Attachments

Board Minutes —  [Download File](#)

Narrative —  [Download File](#)

Timeline for implementation —  [Download File](#)

Additional Information*

No documents were uploaded.

Signature

Charter Representative Signature

Patricia Dalman 09/10/2014

Sonoran Desert School
Board Meeting Minutes

Date: May 9, 2014

Time: 9:00 AM

Place: 6724 S. Kings Ranch Road

A. Board Members Present (underlined)

Patricia Dalman	<u>Present</u> or Absent
Shawn Dalman	<u>Present</u> or Absent
Don Tucker	<u>Present</u> or <u>Absent</u>
Jean Tucker	<u>Present</u> or Absent
Charlotte Zulkowski	<u>Present</u> or Absent

Note: The required quorum of three board members was present

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Consent Agenda

Includes a general description of the matters discussed or considered as well as a description of all legal actions proposed, discussed or taken and the names of members who proposed each motion:

1. Review of the Financials

Bank statements and Profit and Loss statement were reviewed. Charlotte Zulkowski made a motion to approve the financial statements. Jean Tucker seconded the motion. Motion passed through a majority vote.

2. Review of Revised Mission Statement

Shawn Dalman read the mission statement to the board as follows:

“Our mission is to provide an alternative educational setting that emphasizes individualization supported by technology in order to assist students with overcoming academic, behavioral, and social challenges while increasing academic performance and facilitating the earning or recovery of academic credits as a precursor to achieving a high school diploma and successfully transitioning to postsecondary studies.”

Charlotte Zulkowski made the following motion: I move to approve revising the mission statement. Jean Tucker seconded the motion, Motion passed through a majority vote.

3. Review of the Revised Budget

Each board member reviewed the revised budget. Patricia Dalman asked if there were any questions on the revised budget. Jean Tucker, Charlotte Zulkowski, and Shawn Dalman all replied “no”. Jean Tucker made a motion to approve the revised budget. Charlotte Zulkowski seconded the motion. Motion passed through a majority vote.

4. Discuss and Vote on Revised Contracts that include the Prop 301 funds listed and Summer Stipends.

Patricia Dalman stated that the revised contracts include the Prop 301 funds. For summer stipends all staff are going to be working either doing office work, curriculum and/or computers in July for the summer stipend of \$2000.00 for each employee. Jean Tucker made the following motion: I move to approve the revised contracts that include the Prop 301 funds and the summer stipends. Charlotte Zulkowski seconded the motion. Motion was passed through a majority vote.

5. Discuss and Vote on Adding a New Board Member: Angela Zibert

Patricia Dalman introduced Angela Zibert to the board, and stated that Angela meets all of the following qualifications that are stated in the Bylaws; she is over the age of eighteen, she has completed the fingerprint check, and she has significant experience and qualifications to enhance our board of directors in educational skills, counseling, teaching, and fund-raising skills.

Charlotte Zulkowski made the following motion: I move to approve Angela Zibert as a board member. Jean Tucker seconded the motion. Motion was passed through a majority vote.

6. Discuss and Vote on Adding Grades 5,6,7, and 8

A discussion was held on adding grades to Sonoran Desert School. Patricia Dalman made the comment that a lot of parents in the Gold Canyon vicinity are excited about bringing their children to our school. Jean Tucker agreed that they should be and that the enrollment would increase dramatically with the excellent facility and teachers. The board reviewed the application that was submitted to the State Board for Charter Schools.

Jean Tucker made the following motion: I move to approve adding grades 5 through 8 based on the information that was completed for the State Board for Charter Schools. Motion passed through a majority vote.

D. Call to the Public

Names of persons making statements or presenting material to the public body and a reference to the specific legal action addressed by the person:

No individuals addressed the board.

E. Adjourn

S. Dalman

Shawn Dalman, Secretary

5/9/14

Date

Adding Grade Levels to Charter Amendment Request Narrative

Thank you for the opportunity to apply for an amendment to our charter. Please find below our rationale for adding grades; the implications for our mission, philosophy, and instruction; our proposed policies and procedures for content mastery and course promotion; an overview of how coursework would be managed; and implications for school staffing.

Rationale

Our school moved to an improved facility in 2012. One reason we saw a need to add grades was to better serve the needs of the immediate community, which at the time had only a K-6 school. Adding grades 5- 8 to our existing program would provide students with a bridge of instruction between educational options in their local community.

Another compelling reason to expand grade levels is to create an opportunity for greater continuity in the educational program. In order to support the academic standards that provide the framework for accountability and school improvement, it is critical that students have a structured path through the standards. We seek to provide a program that ensures middle school students are fully prepared to perform in grades 9-12, earn a diploma, and make a successful transition toward their postsecondary goals.

Mission, Philosophy, and Instruction

The following is Sonoran Desert School's mission statement:

Our mission is to provide an alternative educational setting that emphasizes individualization supported by technology in order to assist students with overcoming academic, behavioral, and social challenges while increasing academic performance and facilitating the earning or recovery of academic credits as a precursor to achieving a high school diploma and successfully transitioning to postsecondary studies.

We believe that a key reason the charter movement has been successful is because it offers students educational choices, so our approach to instruction is intended to provide an alternative to that found in a traditional school. Adding grades would allow us to help students begin preparing at an earlier age to function as self-directed, participatory learners who are able to meet the challenge of excelling in grades 9-12 and beyond.

Our mission is predicated on the philosophy that students should share responsibility for their own learning. We see a need to add grades so that students can become more self-directed and goal-oriented from an earlier age so that these habits are instilled as they become more independent. We also believe that from an early age students should understand how cause and effect results in natural consequences for choices and actions. Students should also learn in ways that fit a modern world that is defined by sweeping

advances in information and communication technologies, resulting in an increased need for prioritization, problem-solving, and communications skills.

While the structure of our school requires students to be active and responsible in their learning to be successful, it also allows the school's teachers act as facilitators to help students reach their goals. Instructors already provide individualized support for learning and progress within a challenging curriculum. Direct instruction is also offered to accommodate students who benefit from teacher-led instruction and group work. Technology is currently integrated into all of the classes at Sonoran Desert School. This approach will benefit younger learners as they are beginning to encounter more complex content that requires differentiated instruction.

The late elementary and middle school years should prepare students to be successful at the high school level and beyond. This preparation should include the skills, habits, and attitudes that will help students become self-disciplined learners who understand and act upon the reality that education is crucial to improving their lives as individuals as well as contributing to society as a whole.

Mastery and Promotion

All coursework will be based on and aligned to the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards. All course mastery and grade-level promotion will be based upon the completion of standards-based course requirements that include formative and summative assessments that measure competency on these state standards.

Coursework that is the basis for mastery and grade-level promotion will include the following summative assessments:

- Chapter or selection tests
- End-of-unit tests
- Mid-term exams
- End-of-term or semester exams
- Benchmark assessments

School staff will implement formative assessments to continuously monitor incremental progress toward mastering course objectives, including the following:

- Summaries and Reflections
- Lists, Charts, and Graphic Organizers
- Visual Representations of Information
- Collaborative Activities
- Projects
- Surveys
- Questioning Guides
- Self-assessments
- Checklists
- Observations

- Worksheets
- Quizzes
- Journals

Formative assessments should be designed not only to assess student work, but also to provide feedback that will show students how to improve and evaluate their own performance. Formative assessments that provide feedback include the following:

- Pretests
- Evaluation rubrics
- Self-assessment rubrics
- Writing process
- Completion checklists

For each required class, course assessments will create a cumulative percentage score and assigned a grade based on the following scale: 90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; 59 and below=F. Students must achieve a cumulative score of 60% or better to advance.

Coursework

To support of state and federal initiatives to improve performance through increased organization and accountability, all coursework will be based on and aligned to the Arizona Common Core State Standards.

Course Offerings

Grade 5 Classes	Grade 6 Classes
Language Arts 5A & 5B	Language Arts 6A & 6B
Mathematics 5A & 5B	Mathematics 6A & 6B
Science 5A & 5B	Science 6A & 6B
Social Studies 5A & 5B	Social Studies 6A & 6B
Health 5A & 5B	Health 6A & 6B
Computer Literacy 5A & 5B	Computer Literacy 6A & 6B
Art 5A & 5B	Art 6A & 6B

Grade 7 Classes	Grade 8 Classes
Language Arts 7A & 7B	Language Arts 8A & 8B
Mathematics 7A & 7B	Mathematics 8A & 8B
Science 7A & 7B	Science 8A & 8B
Social Studies 7A & 7B	Social Studies 8A & 8B
Health 7A & 7B	Health 8A & 8B
Computer Literacy 7A & 7B	Computer Literacy 8A & 8B
Art 7A & 7B	Art 8A & 8B

Students who were previously enrolled in a private school, charter school or school district shall be eligible to transfer credits earned in courses or instructional programs at

the previous school or school district. Administrators will analyze transcripts and course descriptions to determine whether a credit earned by a student who was previously enrolled in another school will be assigned as an elective or core credit.

Any such students will be provided with a list that indicates which credits have been accepted as an elective credit and which credits have been accepted as a core credit. Within ten school days after receiving the list, the student may request to take an examination in each particular course in which core credit has been denied. The school will accept the credit as a core credit for each particular course in which the student takes an examination and receives a passing score (60% or higher) on a test designed and evaluated by a highly qualified teacher in the school who teaches the subject matter on which the examination is based.

Staffing

Teachers implementing the SDS curriculum must be highly qualified. To be deemed highly qualified, teachers must have the following:

- A bachelor's degree
- Full state certification or licensure
- Proof that they know each subject they teach

Teachers must prove that they know the subject they teach with one of the following:

- A major in the subject they teach
- Credits equivalent to a major in the subject
- Passage of a state-developed test,
- An advanced certification from the state
- A graduate degree

Current teachers with a bachelor's degree and a state secondary certification will not require a change in staffing, but they will require professional development to address the instructional and curricular requirements of the added grades. If enrollment requires the recruitment of additional staff members, recruited staff will also be required to meet the Highly Qualified federal guidelines.

Adding Grade Levels to Charter Amendment Request Timeline for Implementation

Projected number of students per year:

	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
2015-16	5	5	5	5
2017-18	10	10	10	10
2019-20	15	15	15	15

October 2011-September 2014

- Discussion and planning for adding grade levels
- Review of requirements and educational materials
- Development of curriculum for added grade levels
- Governing Board Meeting for adding grade levels 5-8
- Completion of “Adding Grade Levels to Charter Amendment Request” online

October 2014-July 2015

- ASBCS Board consideration of Adding Grade Levels amendment request
- Continued acquisition and development of classroom resources
- Continued development and refinement of expanded curriculum
- Staff professional development for new grades and curricula
- Finalize classroom resources
- Community meetings
- School marketing

August 2015

- School starts
- Community meetings
- School marketing
- Student registration
- Student Pretesting
- Implementation of expanded curriculum
- Monitor student and staff performance

September 2015 –May 2016

- Community meetings
- School marketing
- Student registration
- Implementation of expanded curriculum
- Monitor student and staff performance
- Benchmark Testing
- Review and evaluation of student performance in added grades
- Review and evaluation of program for added grades