

SUBJECT

Idaho Science and Technology Charter School Proposed Charter Amendments

APPLICABLE STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

I.C. §33-5206(8)
IDAPA 08.02.04.302

BACKGROUND

Idaho Science and Technology Charter School (ISTCS) is a public charter school authorized by the Public Charter School Commission (PCSC) and located in Idaho Falls since 2009. ISTCS serves approximately 225 students in grades 6-8.

DISCUSSION

ISTCS will present proposed amendments to the school's charter.

ISTCS has proposed amendments to Tab 2 and Tab 7 of the charter. The proposed amendment in Tab 2 is removes enrollment information in order to isolate the enrollment capacity language to Tab 7 and prevent conflicting language within the charter.

The proposed amendments in Tab 7 increase the school's overall enrollment cap from 300 to 320 students. The 6th grade enrollment cap will be increased from 100 to 120 students; the 7th and 8th grade caps will be maintained at 100 per grade. These changes are based on ISTCS's historical enrollment patterns in order to allow the school to be more prepared for student attrition between 6th and 7th grade. However, the proposed language gives the school flexibility to adjust the caps as needed if the returning student population for 7th or 8th grade exceeds 100. In these cases, the ISTCS board would establish adjusted grade-based caps no later than one (1) month before the school's lottery application deadline and would post them on the school's website within five (5) days of the board vote.

IMPACT

If the PCSC approves the proposed amendments, ISTCS will immediately begin operating under the amended charter. If the PCSC denies the amendments, ISTCS could appeal this decision to the State Board of Education, or could decide not to proceed any further.

STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As part of the performance certificate development process, the PCSC approved a general standard that schools whose accountability designation falls below "good standing" will not be eligible for expansion.

February 13, 2014

ISTCS does not yet have a performance certificate or formal accountability designation. However, if the school were to be evaluated with the Performance Framework using 2012-2013 school year data, it is likely that ISTCS would earn either a "remediation" or "good standing" status. ISTCS received a 3 Star Rating for both 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.

Staff recommends that the PCSC approve ISTCS's proposed amendments in light of the school's academic outcomes in recent years.

COMMISSION ACTION

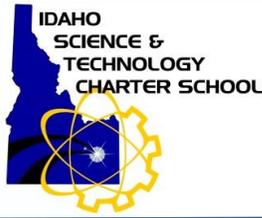
A motion to approve the proposed charter amendments as submitted by Idaho Science and Technology Charter School.

OR

A motion to deny the proposed charter amendments as submitted by Idaho Science and Technology Charter School on the following grounds:

_____.

Moved by _____ Seconded by _____ Carried Yes _____ No _____



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Idaho Public Charter School Commission

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Commissioners:

Idaho Science and Technology Charter School is formally requesting a change in the school's 6th grade enrollment cap. The cap is currently 100. We are proposing that it change to 120, effectively changing the school's overall enrollment cap to 320. A change in this CAP would benefit both the school and its stakeholders in the following ways:

- ISTCS is able to fill 6th grade openings easier than 7th-8th grade openings. This trend has been consistent throughout the school's history. Parent survey data shows that student attrition is a result of the natural transition in local school districts between 6th and 7th grades rather than parent and/or student dissatisfaction.
- ISTCS would be more fiscally sound with additional students.
- During the last two board meetings, stakeholders have expressed a high level of anxiety about their students being admitted to ISTCS for 6th grade. This change might alleviate some of that anxiety.

Even with this change in enrollment CAP, the school would not expect to reach the CAP for two years. While we would like to reserve the right to enroll the full 320 students during the 2014-15 school year, we would base budgets on the following enrollment assumptions based on historic enrollment trends and current data on the lottery to be held in March:

	6 th grade	7 th grade	8 th grade	Total
2014-15	120	85	65	270
2015-16	120	100	85	305
2016-17	120	100	100	320

Tab 2

Primary Attendance Area

~~The total anticipated enrollment for ISTCS is 300 students. This would include approximately 100 students within each grade level. It is recognized that initial enrollment will include significantly fewer students. It is also recognized that few eighth graders will be attracted to a school for just one year; consequently, the initial year budget is projected on a student population of approximately 57% capacity.~~

Tab 7

Enrollment Capacity

The total anticipated enrollment for ISTCS is ~~300~~ 320 students. This would include ~~approximately 100~~ 120 ~~students within each grade level~~ in 6th grade and 100 students in both 7th and 8th grades. It is recognized that enrollment consistently drops 20 – 25% between 6th and 7th grade; however, in the event that more than 100 students choose to return in 7th or 8th grade, ISTCS will adjust the number of student openings in 6th grade to ensure that total student enrollment remains 320. When grade-based caps must be adjusted based on returning enrollment, the ISTCS Board of Directors will establish grade-based enrollment caps no less than one (1) month prior to ISTCS's lottery application deadline and will post the Annual Enrollment Capacity information on the Idaho Science and Technology Charter School website within five (5) days of the Board vote.

~~It is recognized that initial enrollment will include significantly fewer students. It is also recognized that few eighth graders will be attracted to a school for just one year; consequently, the initial year budget is projected on a student population of approximately 57% capacity.~~