

SUBJECT

Sage International School of Boise Proposed Charter Amendments

APPLICABLE STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

I.C. §33-5206(8)
IDAPA 08.02.04.302

BACKGROUND

Sage International School of Boise (Sage) is a public charter school authorized by the Public Charter School Commission (PCSC) and located in Boise since 2010. Sage serves grades K-10 and has an approved growth plan that includes expansion to grade 12.

DISCUSSION

Sage has submitted proposed charter amendments.

The proposed amendments remove the school's existing, per-grade enrollment caps and replace them with a school-wide enrollment cap of 1,200 students. The Sage board has proposed this increase to allow the school to address community demand, improve teacher collaboration, further stabilize the school's budget, and enhance individualized instruction and enrichment opportunities for students. Sage has been awarded a \$350,000 Expansion Grant by the J.A and Kathryn Albertson Foundation.

For purposes of the enrollment lottery, the Sage board of directors will establish overall and per-grade enrollment caps on an annual basis. The board will set these caps no later than two (2) months before the school's lottery application deadline and will post them on the school's website within five (5) days of the vote that establishes the annual caps.

If this amendment is approved, Sage's school-wide enrollment cap will increase from a maximum of 712 to 1,200. In accordance with statute, the PCSC notified Boise Independent School District #1 of Sage's proposed enrollment capacity increase. Boise School District did not provide comments regarding the proposed amendment.

IMPACT

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

STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of Sage's consistently high academic results, quality governance and administration, strong community support, and continued fiscal

December 12, 2013

stability, PCSC staff recommends approval of the proposed charter amendments as submitted by Sage International School of Boise.

COMMISSION ACTION

A motion to approve the proposed charter amendments as submitted by Sage International School of Boise.

OR

A motion to deny the proposed charter amendments as submitted by Sage International School of Boise on the following grounds: _____.

Moved by _____ Seconded by _____ Carried Yes _____ No _____

December 12, 2013

Dear Charter Commission:

After careful consideration, per the recommendation of Sage International's Administration, our Board voted to seek a charter amendment increasing our K-12th enrollment capacity 712 students to 1,200 students. Our current plans envision growing Sage to 1,200 students over the next three school years. Last week, we provided the proposed charter amendments in legislative format for your review and consideration. We believe the requested enrollment increase improves and strengthens Sage International as follows:

1. Offer our Services to More Area Children (Meet Demand): Our mission in establishing Sage International is to provide a world class public education to children in our area. We currently have approximately 450 students on our wait list, primarily at the lower grade levels. Our current enrollment capacity does not afford us the ability to offer additional spaces to these prospective students. As an example, last year we filled 20 of our 22 all-day kindergarden seats with children of staff and siblings. We had 80+ families apply for our 2 available seats. Our Board, Administration, and teaching staff are excited to, and believe we are prepared to, expand our capacity to meet this demand per our mission.
2. Improved Teacher Collaboration: Sage currently offers two classes per grade level in our elementary school. Increasing our enrollment capacity will allow Sage to add a 3rd class per grade level. Teacher collaboration is a critical aspect of Sage's educational model; our students attend school Monday through Thursday with Fridays reserved for teacher development and collaboration. Based on our experience over the last three plus school years, and input from our elementary teaching staff, we believe that three teachers collaborating together in each grade level, rather than our current two teachers, will greatly strengthen the dynamics and depth of the collaboration and information-sharing opportunities.
3. Economies of Scale: As we have grown from 280 to 550 students over the last three years, and as we project our budgets and staffing looking forward, it is clear to us that a larger school population provides us with additional financial strength and stability and also allows us to deepen our educational staff. Simply put, we are able to distribute certain fixed costs and staffing elements among a larger student population which allows us to broaden our educational offerings. For instance, this year, with 550 students, we were able to add a counselor to our staff and were able to add staff to assist with establishing Outdoor Program rooted in social-emotional learning. At 1,200 students, Sage would have (approximately) a 480 student (K - 5th) School, a 400 student (6th - 9th) School, and a 320 student (10th - 12th) High School. Based on our experience, we believe schools of this size provide the 'economies of scale' needed to support and enhance our educational model.
4. Classroom Enrichment / Student Socialization: Increasing the number of students and classrooms per grade level affords our elementary teaching staff the opportunity to split students among three teachers and classes each year. With only two classes

per grade level (44-50 students), we are somewhat limited each year with respect to mixing up our students into productive and manageable class groupings that address the unique social, behavioral, and learning traits and levels of our students. We believe growing to 66-75 students per grade, with three classrooms, will enable us to establish higher-functioning classrooms. Also, as our students grow older, social interactions and opportunities become increasingly important. Under our current enrollment capacity, our Middle School would grow to 240 students and our High School would have 180 students - both would have a maximum of 60 students per grade. Based on our own observations and input from parents, we are concerned that keeping Sage at this size will limit social/extracurricular opportunities to the detriment of our students and school, leading to increased attrition at these upper grade levels. We believe increasing our capacity as proposed will enable Sage to offer our students a more meaningful 'high school experience' and will prevent students from leaving our school in search of broader social opportunities.

5. Sage is Prepared to Manage Proposed Growth / JKAF Expansion Grand Award:

JKAF has awarded Sage a \$350,000 Expansion Grant to facilitate our proposed growth for next year. The JKAF grand award is specifically tied to expanding Sage's enrollment to meet JKAF's goal of increasing the number of seats at high performing charter schools. These funds become available to Sage upon Commission approval of Sage's request to increase capacity. Sage will use these funds to ensure successful expansion, as follows: (1) Implement a Marketing Plan to ensure we fill all available seats; (2) Establish a staffing plan and structure; (3) Hiring new teaching and administrative staff as early as possible (during this school year) to allow new staff to participate in professional development, begin collaborating with our existing staff, and to meet the students this year - they will know their students and will be at full speed on day one of next year; and (4) outfitting the new classrooms. With this JKAF assistance we are confident we can not only manage this growth, but that we can strengthen and improve Sage as we grow.

6. Annual Board Vote to Establish Enrollment Capacity and Grade-Level Enrollment

Limits: Our amendment requests asks that the Commission establish a school-wide capacity limit of 1,200 students without establishing annual capacity limits. Instead, each year the Administration will make a 'Growth Plan' recommendation to the Board and the Board will vote to establish overall and grade level limits within the 1,200 student cap established by the Commission. The administration will then conduct the lottery and admission process in compliance with the Board vote. With this approach, the Commission is assured Sage will remain at or below the Commission-established 1,200-student cap while allowing our Administration and Board to retain the discretion, on an annual basis, to modify grade-level growth/capacity targets based on wait list figures, staffing decisions, attrition rates, and other important factors. Our proposed approach allows this process to take place annually without charter amendment requests that would be needed if we specified grade-level numbers in our charter document. As an example, as we grow to 12th grade we may discover that the academic rigor of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program results in relatively high attrition rates in 10th - 12th grades. This approach would allow us to

December 12, 2013

increase our middle school levels in preparation for planned attrition during high school. We believe allowing our Administration and Board to retain that flexibility and discretion absent a charter amendment is appropriate and beneficial.

We hope you find this information helpful and please do not hesitate to let us know if we can provide anything further to assist in your decision. We are excited to receive authorization to offer more seats to more children and look forward to having our amendment request heard and voted on. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Metzgar
Board President
Sage International School of Boise

TAB 2: Proposed Operation and Potential Effects of the Public Charter School: Target Population, Facilities, Administrative Services, Potential Civil Liability, and Insurance for Liability and Property Loss

Primary Attendance Area

The primary attendance area for Sage International School will be identical to the Boise School District.

Target Student Population & Enrollment Capacity of the Charter School

Sage International will open in the fall of 2010 with grades Kindergarten through 7th. The school will start with 2 classrooms of Kindergarten (1 full-day and 1 half-day) and 2 classrooms of 1st grade. Each year thereafter, we plan to add an additional class to each grade (i.e. in Year 2 we will add a second classroom of 2nd grade) and an additional grade (i.e. in Year 2 we will add an 8th grade) up to 12th grade. Expansion in Year 2 and beyond will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors based on enrollment demand and adequate finances. Our long-term goal is to provide kindergarten through 12th grade education.

Note: the IB Primary Years Program is designed for ages 3 thru 12; however Sage will only use the curriculum for grades K – 5 (approximately ages 5 through 10) initially. The Board of Directors will look into the feasibility of extending the IB program to grades 6 through 12 after establishing the PYP.

The anticipated Year 1 enrollment at Sage International School will be capped at 254 students.

Sage International School will offer ~~two~~ three (3) kindergarten classes - two (2) full-day classes and one (1) half-day class. For the 4 two (2) full-day kindergarten classes, parents will cover the difference in cost from a state funded half-day to full-day.

Should enrollment approach the minimum for financial viability, the Board of Directors shall take action including, but not limited to, the following:

- Increase enrollment demand through a marketing campaign
- Increase fundraising from external sources
- Eliminate or defer expenses

Potential Impact on Boise School District

We are aware that opening Sage International School will have a potential impact on the Boise School District; however our unique program of offering an International Baccalaureate program will offer a new opportunity for parents seeking school choice and innovative curriculum. In Year 1 of opening, Sage will have a maximum of 254 students. However, the impact on the Boise School District will likely be lower than 254 because Sage students will also come from out of the district, home schools, students moving from out of state, etc. Overall, demand for charter schools is high. Based on the 2006 "Charter Schools in Idaho" Report by Dale Ballou, there were 4,671 students on charter school waiting lists in the 2005-2006 school year; recent data from the Idaho Charter School Network indicates that there were over 6000 students on charter school waiting lists in the Treasure Valley in 2007-2008.

Data gathered during our first four (4) years of operation indicates approximately 65% of our student population is made up of students coming from Boise School District schools. 35% of students are from other charters, private schools, home schools, virtual schools, and from out of district.

Facilities

"Whatever good things we build end up building us."

-Jim Rohn

Sage International School will begin operations in a lease-based facility in the Boise School District attendance area. Once the charter petition is approved, Sage International School will enter into a lease agreement in spring of 2010.

Please see Tab 10 for further discussion of facilities and Appendix F for example lease options considered for the school's opening. As the school grows, additional facilities may be secured as needed and as finances allow. In addition to financial and physical needs, priority will be given to keeping lower and upper grades in close proximity, and to securing locations that allow students access to cultural, natural and/or educational amenities in the surrounding community.

Administrative Services

Administrative services and day-to-day operations will be provided by Sage International School of Boise Principal (State Certification required) in coordination with the school's board of directors. The principal shall assume broad responsibilities concerning but not limited to:

- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Instructional materials and supplies
- Resource allocation
- State charter school requirements

- School-wide community building
- Special services
- Contracted services
- Disciplinary support
- Public and media relations
- Business and community partnerships
- Professional development
- Employment and personnel issues
- Enrollment and attendance
- Staff evaluations
- Facility conditions
- School climate
- District/Board liaison

Insurance for Liability and Property Loss

The Public Charter School Commission shall have no liability for the acts, omissions, debts or other obligations of any charter schools.

Sage International School will procure and maintain a policy of general liability insurance and errors and omissions insurance. The Board of Directors will be responsible for soliciting bids for insurance on behalf of Sage International School. Insurance companies who have maintained a rating of "A" according to the A.M. BEST COMPANY will provide insurance. Sage International School will have the same role as a traditional public school in matters of civil liability. The appropriate insurance and legal waivers of all district liability will be obtained as required of other nonprofit users of district resources and facilities. A copy of the proof of insurance will be given to the Public Charter School Commission each time it is renewed for continuous coverage.

Tab 7: Admission Procedures; Disciplinary Procedures (Including Alcohol/Controlled Substance Policy and Plan for Denial of School Attendance); Public School Attendance Alternative; Enrollment Opportunities; Student Handbook

Admission and Enrollment Procedures

Enrollment Opportunities

Sage International School will take the following steps to ensure the primary attendance area is aware of the enrollment opportunities at Sage International School (per Section 33-5205 (3)(s) Idaho Code). While taking into consideration the language demographics of the attendance area, at least three (3) months in advance of the enrollment deadline established by Sage International each year, information will be posted in highly visible and prominent locations within the area of attendance. In addition, Sage International School shall ensure that such process includes the dissemination of press releases and/or public service announcements, to media outlets that broadcast within, or disseminate printed publications within the attendance area for Sage International School. Sage International School will ensure that such announcements are broadcast or published by such media outlets on not less than three (3) occasions, beginning not later than fourteen (14) days prior to the enrollment deadline each year. The outlets chosen for dissemination of information will be focused on the age range of students for which the greatest number of openings is anticipated. Finally, such enrollment information shall advise that all prospective students will be given the opportunity to enroll in the public charter school, regardless of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, social or economic status, or special needs (4-11-06).

Enrollment Deadline

Each year Sage International School shall establish an enrollment admissions deadline, which shall be the date by which all written requests for admission to attend Sage International School for the next school year must be received. The enrollment deadline cannot be changed once the enrollment information is disseminated.

Requests for Admission

Sage International School will comply with Section 33-5205 (3)(j) Idaho Code. A parent, guardian, or other person with legal authority to make decisions regarding school attendance on behalf of a child in this state, may make a request in writing for such child to attend Sage International School. In the case of a family with more than one (1) child seeking to attend Sage International School, one written request for admission must be submitted on behalf of all siblings. The written request for admission must be submitted to, and received by, Sage International School on or before the enrollment deadline established by Sage International School. The written request for admission shall contain the name, grade level, address, and telephone number of each prospective student. If the initial capacity of Sage International School is insufficient to enroll all prospective students, a lottery shall be utilized to determine which prospective students will be admitted to Sage International School. Only those written requests for admission submitted on behalf of prospective students that are received prior to the enrollment deadline established by Sage International School shall be permitted in the lottery. Written requests for admission received after the established enrollment deadline will be added to the bottom of the final selection list for the appropriate grade.

Admission Preferences for Initial Enrollment

If the initial capacity of Sage International School is insufficient to enroll all prospective students, a lottery shall be utilized to determine which prospective students will be admitted to Sage International School. Sage International School will follow Idaho Code Section 33-502 (j). Prospective students will be placed in priority groups as follows:

First Priority: The first priority group of Sage International School will include the children of full-time employees, children of the Founders (provided that this admission preference shall be limited to not more than ten percent (10%) of the initial capacity of Sage International School).

Second Priority: The second priority group is siblings of pupils already selected by the lottery.

Third Priority: The third priority group is students who reside in the primary attendance area of Sage International School..

Fourth Priority: The fourth priority group includes students who reside outside of the primary attendance area of Sage International School.

Admission Preferences for Subsequent Enrollment Periods.

First Priority: Pupils returning to Sage International School in the second or any subsequent year of operation. Returning students are automatically enrolled in the appropriate grade and do not need to be selected by lottery.

Second Priority: To children of founders and full time employees, provided that this admission preference shall be limited to not more than (10%).

Third Priority: Siblings of pupils already enrolled in Sage International School.

Fourth Priority: Prospective students residing in the primary attendance area of Sage International School.

Fifth Priority: Prospective students residing outside the primary attendance area of Sage International School.

Proposed Attendance List for Lottery.

Sage International School will comply with Idaho State Board of Education Rules Governing Public Charter Schools IDAPA 08.02.04 for the Proposed Attendance List for Lottery.

Equitable Selection Process.

Sage International School will comply with Idaho State Board of Education Rules Governing Public Charter Schools IDAPA 08.02.04 for the Equitable Selection Process.

Final Selection List

Sage International School will comply with Idaho State Board of Education Rules Governing Public Charter Schools IDAPA 08.02.04 for the Final Selection List.

Notification and Acceptance Process.

December 12, 2013

Sage International School will comply with Idaho State Board of Education Rules Governing Public Charter Schools IDAPA 08.02.04 for the Notification and Acceptance Process.

Subsequent School Years

Sage International School will comply with Idaho State Board of Education Rules Governing Public Charter Schools IDAPA 08.02.04 for Subsequent School Years.

Enrollment Capacity of the Charter School:

~~The anticipated Year 1 enrollment of Sage International School will be capped at 254 students. This figure is derived from a first year of operations configuration of:-~~

- ~~Kindergarten (two classes): 22 students each (44 total) (one full day; one half-day)-~~
- ~~1st grade (two classes): 22 students each (44 total)~~
- ~~2nd grade: 24 students~~
- ~~3rd grade: 24 students~~
- ~~4th grade: 24 students~~
- ~~5th grade: 30 students~~
- ~~6th grade: 30 students~~
- ~~7th grade: 30 students~~

~~These numbers are maximum number of students in each grade.~~

~~It is our intent to allow the school to grow using a controlled growth plan on a ten-year schedule. Estimated enrollments through the school's first 9 years of operation are projected as follows (see table below):~~

Sage International School of Boise expected enrollment and growth (maximum numbers per grade)									
Year:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Kindergarten (half-day)	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
Kindergarten (full-day)	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
1 st Grade	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
1 st Grade	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
2 nd Grade	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
2 nd Grade		24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
3 rd Grade	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
3 rd Grade		24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
4 th Grade	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
4 th Grade		24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
5 th Grade	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
5 th Grade			30	30	30	30	30	30	30
6 th Grade	30	40	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
6 th Grade			20-30	30	30	30	30	30	30
7 th Grade	30	40	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
7 th Grade			20-30	30	30	30	30	30	30
8 th Grade		12	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
8 th Grade			20-30	30	30	30	30	30	30
9 th Grade			20-30	30	30	30	30	30	30
9 th Grade				30	30	30	30	30	30
10 th Grade				30	60	60	60	60	60
11 th Grade					30	60	60	60	60
12 th Grade						30	60	60	60
Total	250	354	462-502	562	622	682	712	712	712

Sage International School's enrollment is capped at 1,200 students in grades K-12th.

Annually, no less than two (2) months prior to Sage International School's lottery application deadline, the Board of Directors will establish, at its regularly scheduled meeting, by motion and vote, an 'Annual Enrollment Capacity', as follows: Based on recommendations from the Administration, the Board will establish: (1) an annual school-wide enrollment capacity not to exceed 1,200 students; and (2) an annual enrollment capacity for each grade. Each year, the Administration will: (1) Post the

December 12, 2013

Annual Enrollment Capacity information on the Sage International web site within five (5) days of the Board vote; and (2) conduct the lottery and enrollment process in compliance with the limits established in the Board's Annual Enrollment Capacity motion and vote.

Should enrollment approach the minimum for financial viability, the Board of Directors shall take action including, but not limited to, the following:

- Increase enrollment demand through a marketing campaign
- Increase fundraising from external sources
- Eliminate or defer expenses

Sage International School will offer ~~two~~ three kindergarten classes (~~one~~ two full-day and one half-day). For the full-day classes parents will cover the difference in cost from a funded half-day to full-day.