

SUBJECT

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy Proposed Charter Amendments

APPLICABLE STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

I.C. §33-5206(8)

IDAPA 08.02.04.302

BACKGROUND

North Idaho STEM Academy (NI STEM) is a public charter school authorized by the Public Charter School Commission (PCSC) and located in Rathdrum. NI STEM is in its second year of operation and serves students in grades K-8.

DISCUSSION

NI STEM has submitted proposed charter amendments.

The proposed amendments are focused on the addition of high school grades to NI STEM. The expansion is being proposed in response to community interest and NI STEM's desire to ensure continuity of high-quality instruction that will prepare students for college and STEM careers, a suggestion originally made by the PCSC during the petitioning process.

The school intends to partner with IDLA and IDEA to dually enroll high schoolers, thereby allowing students to take hands-on STEM courses at NI STEM and while enrolling in other courses through IDLA and IDEA. (Appendices S and T provide coursework examples.) To demonstrate the school's ability to remain fiscally stable during expansion, NI STEM has provided a revised budget including high school revenue and costs.

Amendments to the school's enrollment caps and growth plan adjust per-grade and school-wide enrollment caps. If these amendments are approved, NI STEM's school-wide enrollment cap will increase from 315 to 724 over the next nine years.

In accordance with statute, the Lakeland Joint School District #272 was notified of NI STEM's proposal and invited to provide comment. A letter from the district is included with these materials.

IMPACT

If the PCSC approves the proposed amendments, NI STEM will immediately begin operating under the amended charter. If the PCSC denies the amendments, NI STEM 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 NI STEM's high academic results, quality governance and administration, strong community support, and continued fiscal responsibility, PCSC staff recommends approval of the proposed charter amendments as submitted by North Idaho STEM Charter Academy.

COMMISSION ACTION

A motion to approve the proposed charter amendments as submitted by North Idaho STEM Charter Academy.

OR

A motion to deny the proposed charter amendments as submitted by North Idaho STEM Charter Academy on the following grounds:
_____.

Moved by _____ Seconded by _____ Carried Yes _____ No _____

December 12, 2013

December 12, 2013 Materials



North Idaho STEM Charter Academy
P.O. Box 434
Rathdrum, Idaho 83858

October 17, 2013

Chairman Reed & Commissioners:

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy respectfully requests that you approve the following amendments to our Charter:

TAB 2 – expected enrollment and growth

TAB 3 – addition of high school educational program, project-based curricular approach, textbooks, dual enrollment

TAB 4 – measuring student progress, graduation requirements, accreditation

TAB 6 – background checks

TAB 7 – admission procedures

Appendices R, S, T

Budget – the budget includes worst case scenarios for growth in high school and below expectations for K-8. We did this to demonstrate that the hybrid model, combined with our low overhead for facilities and good fiscal management, make this model workable at 5 ninth-graders or 30. It is easily scaled up without significant costs.

We have included a copy of our sufficiency review from the State Department of Education as well as our proposed Charter revisions shown by legal formatting.

As always, we would like to thank you and your staff for your continued guidance to make North Idaho STEM Charter Academy successful academically and fiscally. Both positively impact our students' success.

Sincerely,



Darrell Richardson, Chairman
North Idaho STEM Charter Academy School Board of Trustees

December 12, 2013



November 22, 2013

Idaho Public Charter School Commission
650 W. State Street
Boise, ID 83720-0037

Dear Chairman Reed, Charter Commissioners and staff:

On behalf of the board of directors of STEM Charter Academy #480, the 312 students we serve and the over 200 students on our waiting list, I respectfully request that you approve our proposed expansion of opportunities for the students of North Idaho.

This expansion is an answer to the repeated, and constant, requests from our patrons, community and business leaders as well as the Charter Commission's own concerns during the authorization process about what would happen to our 8th graders after years of being in a school with a dynamic project based STEM program. Now they will be able to continue with this program through high school and stay on the advanced track towards college readiness and STEM careers.

We have tremendous support from the community as evidenced by the attached letters from parents, community leaders and state representatives as well as a letter of support from IDEA director Jason Bransford, as he is excited about the potential opportunities this model will help provide for some of their rural students in the area. I have also included the survey results from our parents regarding their desire for us to expand in to high school. More than two-thirds of our families responded and 100% of them want this opportunity for their child.

In our first year of existence our school was also a winner of the Albertson's ID 21 award for innovative learning and is seen statewide as a true STEM model. Teachers from our school recently presented at the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) Conference in Minneapolis as an example of true STEM Education in a project based delivery model.

As for our high school program, our "Hybrid" model actually creates GREATER efficiencies of tax dollars by utilizing already existing models to create additional educational choices for students in our area at no additional cost to local taxpayers. This school is the only STEM program in the county and this model is very different than any other school in the area.

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy
PO Box 434, 15633 Meyer Rd, Rathdrum, ID 83858
(208) 687-8002

December 12, 2013

Less than half of our current students are from Lakeland school district and the impact to any one district is minimized due to the fact that most of our growth is organic as the increases in enrollment will take place over a period of years and will overwhelmingly be opening up seats for previous year's students. As per charter school law, priority will be given to our current 8th graders for next year's 9th grade class. Any empty seats will provide MORE opportunities for other students.

Thank you for your consideration.

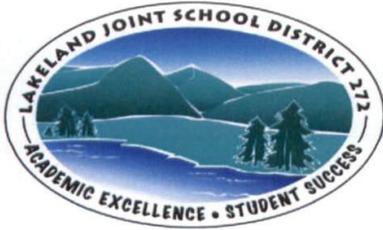
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Thomson', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Scott Thomson
Charter School Administrator
STEM Charter Academy
A Free K-8 Public School of Choice

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy
PO Box 434, 15633 Meyer Rd, Rathdrum, ID 83858
(208) 687-8002

December 12, 2013



LAKELAND JOINT SCHOOL DISTRICT #272

15506 N. Washington Street P.O. Box 39

Rathdrum, Idaho 83858

Phone: 208.687.0431 Fax: 208.687.1884 Web: lakeland272.org

November 25, 2013

Tamara L. Baysinger
Idaho Public Charter School Commission
650 W. State Street
Boise, ID 838720-0037

Dear Ms. Baysinger:

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Lakeland Joint School District #272 Board of Trustees regarding the request from STEM Charter Academy (NI STEM) to increase the charter school's maximum enrollment by up to 409 students more than the previously approved cap.

Our relationship with Mr. and Mrs. Thompson has always been very positive. We admire their work and respect them as professionals. Unfortunately, we were not notified of this request in advance and are somewhat caught off guard because we were told by Mr. Thompson that the charter would not exceed grades K-8. This is the first time we have heard about the change.

As a district, we feel it is important to communicate our concerns with this request:

1. As previously mentioned, this request is a surprise. For a new high school to succeed it should have the support of the community. I am not aware of any communication with our patrons regarding neither this request nor whether there is support for it.
2. Increasing the charter's enrollment by an additional 409 students will divert funding from Lakeland's public schools putting programs at risk and making inefficient use of limited tax dollars. Creating three undersized public high schools in the community with redundant administrative staff and overhead is contradictory to saving tax dollars.
3. Lakeland High School and Timberlake High School have ample capacity for at least a decade of growth within our school boundaries. Lakeland High School currently has approximately 804 students; Timberlake High School's enrollment is approximately 501 students. Our enrollment directly results in more programming

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December 12, 2013

choices for students, such as dual enrollment courses, professional technical programs, and additional courses in mathematics and science. Adding a charter high school in Lakeland would reduce our opportunities for choice for our students.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments and hope the PCSC will keep in mind the adverse effects this change will have on the students and community.

Sincerely,



Mary Ann Ranells, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

cc Larry Brown
John Shaffer
Tim Skubitz
Brian Walker
Kyle Olmstead

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TAB 2

Target Population and Enrollment Capacity

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will open in the fall of 2012 serving grades kindergarten through eighth. We plan to add additional sections of grades K through & 12th, when appropriate in the future based on enrollment demands and adequate finances. North Idaho STEM Charter Academy would obtain approval from the Public Charter School Commission prior to any expansion.

Primary attendance area is within the Lakeland School District:

The primary attendance boundaries of North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will include: Starting from the Southwest Corner of Interstate 95 and Lancaster road; West along Lancaster Road including all parcels touching Lancaster road to highway 41; North along highway 41 including all parcels touching highway 41 to Scarcello road; East along Scarcello Road including all parcels touching Scarcello Road to Ramsey Road; South along Ramsey Road including all parcels touching Ramsey Road to Chilco road; East along Chilco Road including all parcels touching Chilco Road to Interstate 95; South along Interstate 95 including all parcels touching Interstate 95 to Lancaster Road.

See map in appendix P

~~For now, Enrollment at North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will be capped at 315 students.~~ Enrollment at North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will follow the table in Appendix R. The Board reserves the right to configure classes to maximize enrollment opportunities. Caps for each class will be at no more than the following:

- Kindergarten 22 per class (2 sections)
- 1st grade 22 per class
- 2nd grade 24 per class
- 3rd grade 26 per class
- 4th grade 28 per class
- 5th through 8th 12th 30 per class

Please see Appendix R – Expected Enrollment and Growth

TAB 3

Educational Program I.C. 33-1612 & 33-5205(3) (a)

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy's educational program revolves around science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Imagine a day where student motivation is evident, curriculum is integrated and students see the connections between subjects and to the world around them. They are expanding their skills, taking risks, experiencing trial and error, and using their imagination. Throughout the process, students build a portfolio, create a final product and presentation, and begin to solve real-world problems. This is the goal of North Idaho STEM Charter Academy.

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will utilize The STEM Academy for STEM education curriculum. Recommended by the Department of Education, The STEM Academy's curriculum is aligned with state and federal standards which include student assessments. The STEM Academy meets the requirements to receive ARRA Race to the Top funds and the program must include instructor training on effective utilization of the curriculum. Teachers will have on-site training before the opening of school and on-going training thereafter.

The STEM Academy learning management system collects demographic information about who is engaging in the work and taking the tests to provide future data. Assessments are scored automatically and immediately available to students and instructors. Course outcomes and national standards met through course formative and summative assessments are automatically populated to a student's individual portfolio. This information can suggest areas for remediation or enrichment.

The STEM Academy has a multitude of training opportunities. There is access to on-going training sessions throughout the year that occur at local, regional, and national locations. Online webinars and training sessions are also available. Local consultants and development team experts are available as mentors or to assist on site as needed. Real time and online forums are also available so teachers can collaborate with their colleagues across the United States who are delivering the same content.

Cost for the STEM Academy ranges from \$27,500 to \$45,500 for the program with updates every 3 to 5 years at a cost of \$3,500. That includes initial and on-going training, a data management system that also creates a student portfolio, scaffolding STEM projects designed for each grade level, formative and summative assessments which are tied to specific content of each of the units in the coursework, and the STEM Academy has partnered with the ACE Mentor Program (Architecture, Construction, and Engineering) which is a program that links architectural and engineering professionals with classroom teachers to assist in delivering and evaluation of learning activities, and PCS Edventures.

The learning of specified subject-matter concepts and standards is the focus of North Idaho STEM Charter Academy. In all program areas and at all levels, North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will assess student progress toward achieving learner goals and program area

TAB 3

performance standards including: the content and data; the accomplishment of appropriate skills; the development of critical thinking and reasoning; and attitude.

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy core educational philosophy is that learning occurs when:

- Learners succeed at a high level both socially and academically
- Learners see the connection between what they learn and the real world
- Activities are integrated and meaningful
- Learners work individually and as members of a group
- Character education is modeled and taught
- Learners see themselves as part of the community and find ways to serve the community
- Styles and rates of learning are taken into account, yet expectations for achievement are not compromised

An interdisciplinary, project-based STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and math) curriculum will be the focus of the instructional program. The curriculum will be integrated, so that all subject areas will be connected, rather than artificially separated into discrete disciplines. Authentic project-based, inquiry-based learning will enable students to see the connections between subjects, and the connections between what they are learning and the world around them.

Although a STEM school, we realize that strong reading, writing, and comprehension skills are the gateway to other disciplines, and these skills will be incorporated into all project requirements. The educational philosophy of North Idaho STEM Charter Academy is that of a learning laboratory incorporating inquiry-based and project-based learning experiences, which include all subject areas and place a strong emphasis on the processes of science.

Students at the North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will be engaged in real world problem solving. North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will use project-based learning to engage students and require them to use Bloom's higher order thinking skills to create a response. Teamwork and technology are important elements of project-based learning, with an emphasis on STEM disciplines for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will prepare students to become productive and successful citizens. Popular culture, misconceptions, and peer pressure begin to exert their strong influence early in a child's cognitive and social development. It is critical to provide engaging hands-on education to students in order to open their minds to future career choices, including those in STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and math) areas.

Research supports the effectiveness of project-based learning and STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and math) education. Standards-focused project-based learning has been defined as *a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks* (Buck Institute for Education, 2003). A number of research studies are

TAB 3

posted on the website of the George Lucas Educational Foundation (www.glef.org) which notes, “A growing body of academic research supports the use of project-based learning in schools as a way to engage students, cut absenteeism, boost cooperative learning skills, and improve test scores. Those benefits are enhanced when technology is used in a meaningful way in the projects” (GLEF, 2004).

Project-based learning is not only a potentially effective instructional approach, but it is also an essential component of several current school reform models. A series of studies showed substantial school-wide gains for schools adopting project-based learning methods (Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound, 1999).

The first piece of major legislation dealing directly with STEM education just passed the House of Representatives, H.R. 1709, the STEM Education Coordination Act of 2009, passed overwhelmingly by a vote of 353 to 39. The legislation will coordinate The STEM education programs of such federal agencies as NASA, the Department of Energy, the National Science Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Institutes of Standards and Technology, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Education.

According to the Results of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) (2009), U. S. Students finished 11th in the world in Science. Students in Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, England, Russia, South Korea, Hong Kong, even countries like Slovenia, Czech Republic, and Hungary all outperformed U.S. eighth-graders in science. Most of the same countries also outperformed U.S. students in math. How can we be a technological innovative leader in the world when we can't even finish in the top ten in math and science?

Project-based learning is an inquiry based process for teaching and learning. Students focus on a complex question or problem, then answer or solve the problem through a collaborative process of investigation over an extended period of time. Integrated projects will include the Idaho Content Standards for science, social studies, and language arts. Math will be a separate course to ensure proper skill development and will be integrated into specific projects.

At North Idaho STEM Charter Academy, exploring experiences will have intrinsic academic value since they allow students to practice what they have learned in theory and thus to use their verbal, mathematic and reasoning skills in an applied context. All exploratory programs will clearly reflect the relationship between the exploratory offering and general curricular goals as expressed in the Idaho Content Standards to ensure that academic rigor is ever present.

Project-based cross curricular approach to learning.

Project-based learning incorporates all traditional teaching tools and methods, including lecture, text-books, and conventional assessments. However, the nature of project-based learning requires students to spend the bulk of the project actively working in groups or individually to research the question and come to conclusions. Project-based learning requires students to use specific skills such as collaboration, teamwork, time and task management, and presentation

TAB 3

skills to conclude a project successfully. These same skills prepare them to become productive, capable citizens in a technology-dependent society through comprehensive student assessments including traditional tests, project-based learning presentations and portfolios, and to apply their STEM education with hands-on activities.

Exploration is an opportunity to investigate a variety of approaches to a given topic. Approaching a subject or a topic from different points of view and in different ways is essential for students at the middle level. At North Idaho STEM Charter Academy, our educational approach will require students to stretch their interests into previously unidentified areas.

High School:

In keeping with our Vision and Mission for students to develop higher-level critical thinking skills through a challenging, project-based learning environment in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, North Idaho STEM Charter Academy is excited to offer a high school program for grades 9 through 12. We believe that creativity and innovation positively impact student success. We currently begin with children in kindergarten and connect students across grade levels in a project-based cross curricular environment. The addition of high school is a natural progression and will allow students to continue their STEM education and prepare them to be successful in both the work force and higher education.

An educated person in the 21st century will need to innovate continuously as new technologies and ideas will impact all aspects of the content of our society and world. Project-based learning integrates curriculum so students understand the connections between subjects and their application in the world.

Our program changes the role of student and teacher. Students become problem-solvers and teachers create a culture of inquiry and provide support so students can find their talents and build concrete foundations. We move from standardizing all children and provide opportunities to create many ways to answer a question, to think differently, and exceed expectations. It challenges traditional education through interdisciplinary projects that allow students to see subjects as a bridge to others. They become meaningful to use in life. Students of varying age groups collaborate and realize that great learning happens when learning with others of different ages, abilities, ideas, and skills. This type of learning allows students to discover their natural talents while personalizing education.

As with our K-8 program, high school students will be required to use specific 21st century skills such as collaboration, time and task management, and presentation skills. They will understand that failure is just a step in the process toward success. This gives students the opportunity to demonstrate complex tasks, and become problem-solvers and innovators in life.

STEM education, in a project-based, problem- solving environment for students within a community, leads to prosperity for that community as the students evolve and grow into the entrepreneurs, innovators, manufacturers, business leaders and community leaders of

TAB 3

tomorrow. Creative learning requires innovative teaching. Innovative teaching is both the practice of teaching for creativity and of applying innovation to teaching. Both aspects call for an educational culture which values creativity and sees it as an asset in the classroom and also in the larger community. Students development real-world understanding and applications. It is clear that most jobs of the future will require a basic understanding of math and science, and the U.S. Department of Labor show that of the 20 fastest growing occupations projected for 2014, 15 of them require significant mathematics or science preparation.

We feel it is critical for North Idaho STEM Charter Academy to provide a high school program for both our students as well as those from other programs that are interested in STEM education and have not had that opportunity. By forming a partnership among North Idaho STEM Charter Academy, IDEA and IDLA, students will be able to meet their high school requirements through a combination of course offerings and multiple resources.

In addition to Idaho state graduation requirements, North Idaho STEM's Graduation requirements will also reflect the focus of our program with 2 additional credits in mathematics (STEM Elective), and 2 additional credits in science (STEM Elective including 6 lab credits) which may include basic engineering, and robotics. Students will complete a Capstone STEM Senior Project. Students will also have the opportunity to earn speech credits through project presentations.

Please see Appendix S- "Sample" 4 Year Plan High School to help better define our expectations.

Idaho Core and National Common Core

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy adopted the Common Core Standards prior to opening in 2012 and are currently being taught in the classroom. Our 3 year professional development plan approved by the State Department of Education includes on-going professional development focusing on both Idaho Core and Common Core Standards.

Methods of Instruction

All courses of instruction will comply with state statutes and the rules of the Idaho State Board of Education.

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy's curriculum will encourage children to delve deeply into an idea. This belief of deep exploratory opportunities will be fully developed in interdisciplinary projects. For nearly thirty year, leaders in the middle school movement have acknowledged that learners in the middle grades develop the important ability to organize knowledge and concepts into problem solving strategies. What better way to do this than to give students an actual

TAB 3

problem to solve. Considerable emphasis will be given to a variety of interdisciplinary experiences to provide new interests and to expose students to varied career fields.

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy curriculum subject areas will be integrated into multidisciplinary projects to make learning more meaningful for our students. All exploratory programs will clearly reflect the relationship between the exploratory offering and general curricular goals as expressed in the Idaho Content Standards to ensure that academic rigor is ever present. North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will design projects around rigorous and relevant standards-focused projects that engage students in authentic learning activities that teach 21st century skills and demand demonstration of mastery.

By using multiple methods of instruction with a project-based program, students will be capable of fulfilling their individual potential. Several of the instructional methods will include:

- The Inquiry and Problem-Solving Method suggests that learning occurs when individuals think critically and solve problems. The predominant premise of this method is that it is important to know how to retrieve and use the information, not just to have instant recall and possession of the information.
- The Individualized Learning Method attempts to personalize the learning process to the interests of the individual by allowing students to develop goals for their self-study. The reasons for learning thus become intrinsic
- The Discussion Method encourages learning through sharing of information and concepts within a group, with the thinking process playing an important role.

Curriculum Overview

All students will participate in a common core of learning that will fulfill the goals and curriculum of the Idaho State Standards for reading, language, mathematics, health, social studies, and science.

Students will learn to:

- Explore inquiry based learning to develop skills, think logically, and solve problems
- Develop oral , written, and presentation skills
- Have a working understanding of the scientific method to promote responsible use of scientific information
- Use mathematics as a tool for reasoning and problem solving in relevant ways

By using hands-on activities, The STEM Academy curriculum prepares students for real-world application or their education. The curriculum meets the standards of the International Technology Education Association (ITEA); Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET); National Science Teachers Association (NSTA); and National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM).

TAB 3

Textbooks

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will follow the Idaho State Standards. All curriculum materials will meet or exceed the state standards. Subject area curriculum committees will be in place to evaluate materials on a regular basis and will use supporting data (State IRI, ISAT Assessments, Smarter Balanced Assessments, school benchmark assessments, Adequate Yearly Progress, success of students, etc.) when adopting or recommending curriculum. Curriculum committees will also align curriculum as needed to meet changing requirements of the state. Textbooks will enrich, not drive instruction.

Dual Enrollment I.C. 33-203(7) & 33-5205(3(R))

Students enrolled in North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will be allowed to participate in dual enrollment with traditional public schools as required by Idaho Code 33-203. Dual enrollment options will be subject to district procedures as allowed in Idaho Code 33-203(1).

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will have an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place with IDEA in order to allow students from both schools to take courses from the other. Both schools will claim full enrollment for their students and pay the other entity for courses taken by those students. This will provide a variety of instructional opportunities, course offerings, and allow flexibility in scheduling for students in a rural setting. Students from other programs will also benefit from participating in a project-based STEM setting.

Parents will be provided information concerning dual enrollment options and requirements. State funding of a dually enrolled student will be only to the extent of the student's participation in the public school programs.

Included is Appendix T – “Sample” 4 Year Plan High School Dual Enrollment to help better define our expectations and student opportunities

TAB 4

Measurable Student Educational Standards *I.C. 33-5202 (3) (b)*

Value- Added Assessment:

Value-added assessment is a way to measure teaching and learning by identifying the progress made by individual students and the extent to which individual teachers and schools have contributed to that progress. Based on reviewing student test score gains from previous grades, predictions are made on the amount of growth those students are likely to make in a given year.

Student performance on assessments can be measured in two important ways. Achievement describes the absolute levels attained by a student in their end-of-year tests, and growth describes the progress in test scores made over the school year. Value-added assessment measures growth and answers the question: how much value did the school staff add to the students who live in its community.

Because individual students rather than cohorts are traced over time, each student serves as his or her own “baseline” or control, which removes virtually all of the influence of the unvarying characteristics of the student, such as race or socioeconomic factors. This approach does recognize student-related factors and other extenuating circumstances such as evidence of an external effect related to the student’s home environment or some other variable lying outside the range of a teacher’s influence.

Goals:

We will meet the goals identified in this Charter petition when:

1. 80% of second grade students who have a 90% attendance record and have attended the school for 2 consecutive years will achieve a score of 3 on the spring IRI and by the end of third grade, 85% of students will receive a score of 3.
2. 85% of third through eighth grade students who have a 90% attendance record and have attended the school for 2 consecutive years will score proficient, advanced, or have made more than a year’s growth on their ISAT scores for reading.
3. 85% of third through eighth grade students who have a 90% attendance record and have attended the school for 2 consecutive years will score proficient, advanced, or have made more than a year’s growth on their ISAT scores for math.
4. 85% of fifth and seventh grade students who have a 90% attendance record and have attended the school for 2 consecutive years will score proficient, advanced, or have made more than a year’s growth on their ISAT scores for science.
5. 85% of third through eighth grade students who have a 90% attendance record and have attended the school for 2 consecutive years will score proficient, advanced, or have made more than a year’s growth on their ISAT scores for language.
6. By the end of year one, 90% of students will have raised their science course post-test scores by 10% from the pre-test scores
7. By the end of year two, 90% of students will have raised their science course post-test scores by 15% from the pre-test scores from year one.

TAB 4

8. By the end of year three, 90% of students will have raised their science course post-test scores by 20% from the pre-test scores from year one.
9. By the end of year two, students will show a 10% decrease in student discipline referrals from year one.

Administrative and teacher methods to measure student progress:

1. Use value added information to identify and improve the focus and impact of instruction for each student.
2. Improve data driven decision making by using value added information.
3. Measure the success of the school through growth, not simply achievement.
4. Create student growth trajectories to targets and develop intervention strategies.

Standards and standardization are the basis of assessment. Performance will be assessed on various levels:

1. Student progress relative to previous performance will be assessed following state requirements.
2. Attitudes and personal/academic habits will be assessed through teacher evaluations
3. Performance will be assessed relative to school and state developed standards
4. Content and instructional objectives for each STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) area will specify the exact skill that is to be measured and demonstrated by the student
5. Formative and summative assessments tied to the specific content of each STEM area.

TAB 4

6. Multiple formats of assessments will make certain that the student has the ability to express their knowledge of the content being tested
7. Student portfolios

We will follow the timeline established by the Idaho State Department of Education in administrating student assessments. A student baseline will be established during the first year of testing and will be evaluated each year thereafter. The baseline will include, but not be limited to the following: ISAT and Smarter Balanced Assessments. Tracking of individual student progress is critical to evaluating the success of the curriculum, the instruction, and the climate of the school. This information will be used in on-going strategic and long-term school planning.

Measuring student progress

The Idaho State Achievement Standards clearly define the essential knowledge and skills for learning. The State Standards represent the minimum standards all students at North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will strive to achieve. Students will be encouraged to view assessments as learning experiences and challenges. Student growth and development will reflect understanding, application, and synthesis of the educational standards of the State of Idaho and North Idaho STEM Charter Academy. Students will meet or exceed the statewide performance standards developed by the Idaho Department of Education.

Student progress in meeting the state achievement standards will be measured by the following assessments:

- ~~ISAT in the areas of reading, language, math, for grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8~~ Smarter Balanced Assessment for grades 3 through 8 and 11th grade
- ISAT in the areas of science for grades 5 and 7.
- IRI for kindergarten, first, second, and third grades.
- ACT, SAT, or Compass exam by the end of 11th grade
- Completion of a Capstone STEM Senior Project by the end of 12th grade

The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act has given added impetus for schools to close the achievement gap between high and low performing students. Students with low achievement are often minority, special education, or Limited English Proficiency students. North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will use data from standardized state assessments, which are aligned to the state standards, to show result for various groups of students including specific student subgroups.

Student achievement will be clearly documented on school records. All results of statewide testing will be reported to school patrons as well as the State Department of Education. Test data will be used when placing students. Strategies will be developed and implemented to remedy any accreditation deficiencies focusing primarily on student

TAB 4

achievement. Test data will be used to improve student performance and instructional programs. Student achievement will also be monitored by using multiple testing measures as teacher-made tests, skill check lists, norm referenced tests, criterion referenced tests, and assigned student work.

Other methods of self-assessment include, but are not limited to the following:

- Analyzing weekly/unit assessments in all subject areas
- Results from performance tasks and rubrics in writing
- Parent surveys to determine student/school successes and needs
- Evaluation of presentations skills by students on projects
- Students' abilities to use given data to make predictions
- Student's ability to use available technology to assist in solving problems
- A positive school environment

- Character Education is valued by Board, administration, staff, students, and patrons
- Strategic Planning and Long-term planning are on-going

An annual report of student progress will be made to the Idaho Public Charter School Commission.

Standardized Testing I.C. 33-5205 (3) (d)

Statewide Assessments

The students at North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will be evaluated using the same standardized tests as other Idaho public school students. North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will give the state-mandated assessments during the testing windows outlined by the State Department of Education.

Additional Assessment

Additional yearly assessment tools may be required as determined by the North Idaho STEM Charter Academy Board.

Student assessment evaluation, reported annually, will consist of:

- A student baseline developed during the first year using testing results which will be used to track the individual student
- A comparison of annual results with baseline score to assess progress
- Grade-level and school composite scores
- A graph of annual results showing year to year change
- Comparative results between North Idaho STEM Charter Academy, state, and national averages

TAB 4

Annual Reports to Idaho State Board of Education and Authorized Chartering Entity

Annual reports will be made to the Idaho State Board of Education and Authorized Chartering Entity, providing formative and summative data to demonstrate that the school is meeting all the performance standards prescribed by the state and other standards still under construction. This data can include emerging Idaho State Department of Education standards, benchmarks and/or North Idaho STEM Charter Academy developed criteria.

Accreditation I.C. 33-5205(3)(e), 5210(4)(b) & (IDAPA) 08.02.02.140

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will be accredited through ~~the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS)~~ Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC)/AdvancED in order to ensure North Idaho STEM Charter Academy's K-8 and high school program is properly

accredited. The Board will comply with all accreditation standards established by the NAAS. These standards include:

Teaching and Learning Standards

- Mission, beliefs, and expectations for student learning
- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment

Support Standards

- Leadership and organization
- School Services
 - Student Support Services
 - Guidance Services
 - Health Services
 - Library Information Services
 - Special Education Services
 - Family and Community Services
- Facilities and Finance

School Improvement Standard

- Culture of continual improvement

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will also follow the Idaho State Board of Education Rules Governing Uniformity. This would include developing the following:

- A School/District Strategic Plan
- A Continuous School Improvement Plan
- An aligned and focused plan for the improvement of school and staff capacity (including structure, resource allocation, and teacher skill sets) to increase student achievement
- A plan to meet state approved accreditation standards

TAB 4

- Submitting reports as requested
- Meeting the elements of Thoroughness

TAB 6

Employee qualifications

Employment practices shall be governed by the relevant laws of the State of Idaho. These laws include, but are not limited to Idaho Code Sections 33-513 through 33-518, and sections 33-130, and 33-5205 (3) (g).

These practices include but are not limited to hiring, dismissal, contracts, grievance procedures, certification, criminal history check, and personnel records. Educational experience of certified teachers will accrue for service in a charter school as defined by Department of Education IBEDS rules.

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy full-time staff will meet or exceed qualifications required by state law. Staff will be required to possess personal characteristics, knowledge, and experience consistent with the philosophy, mission, and expectations of this petition.

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will hire teachers who have met the highly qualified standards as set by the State of Idaho for both new teachers and teachers who are not new to the profession. To be compliant with NCLB, all Idaho teachers of core academic subjects, including special education teachers, must additionally demonstrate subject matter competence in each core academic subjects taught.

The administration will make recommendations to the Board of Directors for approval of instructional staff. Each professional staff member (teacher and administrators) will be on a written contract approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction according to 33-5206(4).

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will not discriminate on the basis of any criteria prohibited in federal and state mandates.

Background Checks

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will ensure that all employees and volunteers in direct contact with students complete and pass a background check. The criminal history check shall be based on a completed ten (10) finger fingerprint card or scan and shall include, at a minimum, the following state and national databases:

1. Idaho bureau of criminal identification
2. Federal bureau of investigation (FBI) criminal history check
3. Statewide sex offender register

The State Department of Education shall charge all such individuals a fee of forty dollars (40.00) for undergoing a criminal history check. The fee will be sufficient to cover costs charged by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the state police and the State Department of Education. A record of all background checks shall be maintained at the State Department of Education and

December 12, 2013

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy in a data bank for all employees with a copy going to the applicant upon request.

TAB 6

All substitute teachers must submit for a criminal history check before substituting at North Idaho STEM Charter Academy. Regarding a partnership with other educational entities for grade 9 through 12, North Idaho STEM will additionally require and complete background checks on all teachers with multiple teaching assignments. North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will submit the required forms.

TAB 7

Admission Procedures

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy will follow the model admission procedure identified by the Idaho State Board of Education in the initial year and for every year thereafter.

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy admission procedures, including provision for over enrollment: Such admission procedures shall provide that the initial admission procedures including provision for over enrollment, will be determined by lottery or other random method, except as otherwise provided herein. If initial capacity is insufficient to enroll all pupils who submit that preference shall be given in the following order:

1. North Idaho STEM Charter Academy founders' children as well as children of full-time employees will have first preference for admission to the school, with a maximum of 10% of the student population consisting of founders' and full-time employees children.
2. Siblings of current students will be given admission preference to enroll in the school.
3. Students residing in the primary attendance area will be given admission preference to enroll in the school.
4. An equitable selection process will be in place for remaining students wishing to attend the school.

Enrollment Growth

Enrollment for North Idaho STEM Charter Academy was 264 students in 2012/13 and is at 312 in 2013/14 school year in grades K-8. We expect to methodically add classes each year in a "Natural" growth pattern to both our K-8 and high school levels (9-12) in order to build our enrollment to a maximum of 724 students by the fall of 2022.

Please see the table in Appendix R for Expected Enrollment and Growth

Appendix R Expected Enrollment and Growth Table

North Idaho STEM Charter Academy expected enrollment and growth

Year:	Fall-2012	Fall-2013	Fall-2014	Fall-2015	Fall-2016	Fall-2017	Fall-2018	Fall-2019	Fall-2020	Fall-2021	Fall-2022
Grade											
K (half-day)	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
K (half-day)	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
1 st	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
1 st		22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
2 nd	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
2 nd			24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
3 rd	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
3 rd		26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
4 th	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
4 th			28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
5 th	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
5 th				30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
6 th	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
6 th					30	30	30	30	30	30	30
7 th	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
7 th						30	30	30	30	30	30
8 th	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
8 th							30	30	30	30	30
9 th			30	30	30	30	30	60	60	60	60
10 th				30	30	30	30	30	60	60	60
11 th					30	30	30	30	30	60	60
12 th						30	30	30	30	30	60
Total per year	264	312	394	454	514	574	604	634	664	694	724

(maximum numbers per grade)



FOUR YEAR LEARNING PLAN

APPENDIX S – “SAMPLE” FOUR YEAR LEARNING PLAN

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____ *60 hours of instruction = 1 semester credit*

Career Goal: _____ Post-secondary Goal: *College Technical School Apprentice Workforce*

FRESHMAN									
1st Semester			2nd Semester						
Subject	Class Title	ISEE	Subject	Class Title	Credit/grade				
English	English 9 (IDLA)	01001	English	English 9 (IDLA)	01001				
Math	Geometry (I-DEA)	02072	Math	Geometry (I-DEA)	02072				
Lab Science	Earth Science (I-DEA)	03001	Lab Science	Earth Science (I-DEA)	03001				
U.S. History	US History(STEM)	04101	U.S. History	US History(STEM)	04101				
Elective	Robotics(STEM)	21009	Elective	Lifetime Fitness I (STEM)					
Humanities	Band or Choir(STEM)	05101/05111	Humanities	Band or Choir(STEM)	05101/05111				
SOPHOMORE									
1st Semester			2nd Semester						
Subject	Class Title	ISEE	Subject	Class Title	ISEE				
English	English 10 (IDLA)	01002	English	English 10 (IDLA)	01002				
Lab Science	Biology (I-DEA)	03051	Lab Science	Biology (I-DEA)	03051				
Math	Algebra 2 (I-DEA)	02056	Math	Algebra 2 (I-DEA)	02056				
Elective	Survey of Engineering (STEM)	04201	Economics	Survey of Engineering (STEM)	04201				
Elective	Robotics (STEM)	21009	Elective	Lifetime Fitness II (STEM)	05117				
Humanities	Band or Choir(STEM)	05101/05111	Humanities	Band or Choir(STEM)	05101/05111				
JUNIOR									
1st Semester			2nd Semester						
Subject	Class Title	Credit/grade	Subject	Class Title	Credit/grade				
English	English 11 (STEM)	01003	English	English 11 (STEM)	01003				
Science	Chemistry or Environmental Sci (I-DEA)		Science	Chemistry or Environmental Sci (I-DEA)					
Elective	Pre-Calculus or other Math (IDLA)		Elective (Math)	Algebra 2, Pre-Calculus or other (IDLA)					
Elective	SAT Review (I-DEA)		Elective	Public Speaking(I-DEA or IDLA)					
Humanities	Band/Choir (STEM)		Humanities	Band/Choir (STEM)					
Government	American Government (STEM)		Government	American Government (STEM)					
SENIOR									
1st Semester			2nd Semester						
Subject	Class Title	Credit/grade	Subject	Class Title	Credit/grade				
English	English 12(STEM)	01004	English	English 12(STEM)	01004				
Math (Required)	Personal Finance or other math(IDLA)		Math (Required)	Personal Finance or other math(IDLA)					
Senior Project (Required)	Senior Project(STEM)		Elective	Elective (STEM)					
Elective	Intro to Engineering (STEM)		Elective	Contemporary World Issues (STEM)					
Health	Health(IDLA)		Elective	Elective(IDLA)					
Elective	Elective(STEM)		Elective	Elective(STEM)					
Total = 46									
Subject	Required	Completed	Subject	Required	Completed	Subject	Required	Completed	
Science (4 lab credits)	6		Humanities	2		Government	2		
Algebra I	2		Health	1		Economics	1		
Geometry	2		English	8		US History	2		
Math (during 12 th gr.)	2		Speech	1		Senior Project	1		
PE	2					Electives	15		

Revised 10/9/2013



FOUR YEAR LEARNING PLAN

Appendix T – “Sample” FOUR YEAR PLAN HIGH SCHOOL DUAL ENROLLMENT

Name: _____ Grade: ____ Date: _____ 60 hours of instruction = 1 semester credit

Career Goal: _____ Post-secondary Goal: College Technical School Apprentice Workforce

FRESHMAN: Entering with Algebra I, Health, and at least one elective credit					
1st Semester			2nd Semester		
Subject	Class Title	ISEE	Subject	Class Title	Credit/grade
English	English 9 (IDLA)	01001	English	English 9 (IDLA)	01001
Math	Geometry (I-DEA)	02072	Math	Geometry (I-DEA)	02072
Lab Science	Earth Science (I-DEA)	03001	Lab Science	Earth Science (I-DEA)	03001
U.S. History	US History(STEM)	04101	U.S. History	US History(STEM)	04101
Elective	Robotics(STEM)	21009	Elective	Lifetime Fitness I (STEM)	
Humanities	Band or Choir(STEM)	05101/05111	Humanities	Band or Choir(STEM)	05101/05111
8in6	Lifetime Fitness II (IDLA)		8in6	Pathways to Success (IDLA)	

SOPHOMORE *8in6 students take English 10A(IDLA) over the summer					
1st Semester			2nd Semester		
Subject	Class Title	ISEE	Subject	Class Title	ISEE
English	English 10 (IDLA)	01002	English	English 11 (IDLA)	01002
Lab Science	Biology (I-DEA)	03051	Lab Science	Biology (I-DEA)	03051
Math	Algebra 2 (I-DEA)	02056	Math	Algebra 2 (I-DEA)	02056
Elective	Survey of Engineering (STEM)	04201	Economics	Survey of Engineering(STEM)	04201
Elective	Robotics (STEM)	21009	Elective	Lifetime Fitness II (STEM)	05117
Humanities	Band or Choir(STEM)	05101/05111	Humanities	Band or Choir(STEM)	05101/05111
8in6	DC College Study Skills (NIC)		8in6	COMM101: Public Speaking (NIC)	

JUNIOR *8in6 take English 11B (IDLA) over the summer					
1st Semester			2nd Semester		
Subject	Class Title	Credit/grade	Subject	Class Title	Credit/grade
English	ENGL101 (NIC)		English	ENGL102 (NIC)	
Science	BIOL101 (NIC)		Science	MATH 143 or 144(NIC)	
Elective	MATH108 or 143 (NIC)		Science	DC Lab Science (NIC)	
Elective	SAT Review (I-DEA)		Elective	DC Elective (NIC)	
Humanities	PSYC101 (NIC)		Elective	DC Elective (NIC)	
Government	American Government (STEM)		Government	POLS101 (NIC)	

SENIOR					
1st Semester			2nd Semester		
Subject	Class Title	Credit/grade	Subject	Class Title	Credit/grade
Elective	DC ENGL175 (NIC)		Elective	DC Elective (NIC)	01004
Math (Required)	DC Math or Personal Finance(IDLA)		Math (Required)	DC Math or Personal Finance(IDLA)	
Senior Project (Required)	Senior Project(STEM)			DC Elective (NIC)	
Elective	DC Humanities (NIC)		Elective	DC Elective (NIC)	
Elective	DC Lab Science (NIC)		Elective	DC Elective (NIC)	
Elective	DC Elective (NIC)		Elective	DC Elective (NIC)	

Total = 46								
Subject	Required	Completed	Subject	Required	Completed	Subject	Required	Completed
Science (4 lab credits)	6		Humanities	2		Government	2	
Algebra I	2		Health	1		Economics	1	
Geometry	2		English	8		US History	2	
Math (during 12 th gr.)	2		Speech	1		Senior Project	1	
PE	2					Electives	15	

Revised 10/9/2013

**NORTH IDAHO STEM CHARTER ACADEMY
Projected 3-year Operating Budget including High School**

	Year 2 (FY2014-15)			Year 3 (FY2015-16)			Year 4 (FY2016-17)			NOTES:
	Number	Rate	Amount	Number	Rate	Amount	Number	Rate	Amount	
Number of Students K	40		\$0.00	40		\$0.00	40		\$0.00	All 3 years are based on the current year's funding formulas. Student growth rates are lower than projected growth rates to show that model works at less than optimum enrollment
Number of Students 1-3	130		\$0.00	140		\$0.00	138		\$0.00	
Number of Students 4-6	107		\$0.00	133		\$0.00	160		\$0.00	
Number of Students 7-12	65		\$0.00	80		\$0.00	90		\$0.00	
Exceptional										
Total Number of Students	342			393			428			
Revenues:										
State Salary Apportionment			\$909,538			\$1,058,929			\$1,220,919	Current enrollment is 312 which is 100% capacity for our second year. ADA is 307 students. We budgeted for 90% attendance (282) We have been substantially over projected revenue and under expenses both years of operation and we will continue to budget in this manner to ensure long-term financial stability.
State Benefit Apportionment			\$151,715			\$180,144			\$199,303	
State M & O			\$371,000			\$432,000			\$484,000	
State Transportation		80%	0		80%	0		80%	0	
Special distributions			45,000			0			0	
REAP Federal Grant- Est			0			0			0	
Contributions/Donations										
State Revenue (IRI/LEP/Except/Voc)										
TOTAL REVENUES			\$1,477,253			\$1,671,073			\$1,904,222	
Expenses:										
<u>Salaries:</u>										
Teachers	17.5	sched	\$635,992	19.5	sched	\$746,627	21.0	sched	\$805,627	
Special Ed	0.5	42000	15,500	0.5	42000	31,000	0.5	42000	31,000	
Instructional Aides			15,000			30,000			30,000	
Classified/Office Staff	2.0	20000	70,000	2.0	20000	75,000	2.0	20000	100,000	
Administration	1.2	60000	79,500	1.2	63000	79,500	1.2	63000	85,000	
Maintenance/Other	0.8	20000	15,000	0.8	20000	25,000	0.8	20000	30,000	
Total Salaries			\$830,992			\$987,127			\$1,081,627	
<u>Benefits:</u>										
Retirement/PERSI	12.0%		\$99,720	11.0%		\$108,580	11.0%		\$118,980	
Health/Life Insurance	12.0%		60,000	12.0%		75,000	12.0%		100,000	
Payroll Taxes	8.0%		66,480	8.0%		78,970	8.0%		86,530	
Workers Compensation	0.6%		4,570	0.6%		5,430	0.6%		5,950	
Total Benefits			\$230,770			\$267,980			\$311,460	
<u>Operating Expenses:</u>										
Textbooks			\$5,000			\$5,000			\$5,000	
Supplies			\$12,000			\$15,000			\$20,000	
Equipment			\$10,000			\$10,000			\$15,000	
Contract Services			\$10,000			\$15,000			\$15,000	
Legal			\$5,000			\$5,000			\$5,000	
Accounting			\$12,000			\$12,000			\$12,000	
Advertising/Marketing			\$5,000			\$5,000			\$5,000	
Gas/Electric			\$35,000			\$40,000			\$45,000	
Telephone/ Internet			\$15,000			\$15,000			\$15,000	
Liability & Property Insurance			\$18,000			\$19,000			\$20,000	
Testing & Assessment			\$1,000			\$2,000			\$2,000	
Staff Development			\$3,000			\$5,000			\$5,000	
PFP			\$10,000			\$20,000			\$20,000	
Travel			\$2,000			\$2,000			\$2,000	
Postage			\$1,000			\$1,000			\$1,000	
Rents & Leases			\$120,000			\$120,000			\$120,000	
Debt Retirement			\$36,000			\$0			\$0	
Grounds & Maintenance			\$15,000			\$20,000			\$25,000	
Miscellaneous			\$10,000			\$10,000			\$10,000	
Contingency			\$10,000			\$10,000			\$10,000	
Total Operating Expenses			\$335,000			\$331,000			\$352,000	
<u>Program Expenses:</u>										
Title I N/A			\$0			\$0			\$0	
Title VI-B N/A			0			0			0	
Total Benefits			\$0			\$0			\$0	
TOTAL EXPENSES			\$1,396,762			\$1,586,107			\$1,745,087	
Net Operating Income/(Loss)			\$80,491			\$84,966			\$159,135	
Beginning Fund Balance			72,000			152,491			237,457	
Ending Fund Balance			\$152,491			\$237,457			\$396,592	

December 12, 2013

Scott and Deb,

I am comfortable with the explanation you have below and think there is a great potential to expand course opportunities to students at both schools.

It is my intention for I-DEA to partner with STEM Academy according to the tenets you outlined below.

Thanks.

Jason Bransford
I-DEA Director
Idaho Distance Education Academy
4860 Burley Dr #2
Pocatello, ID 83202
(208) 238-1388
jasonbransford@idahoidea.org

From: Deborah Pence [mailto:deborahpence@idahoidea.org]
Sent: Wednesday, October 16, 2013 1:09 PM
To: Scott Thomson **Cc:** Jason Bransford
Subject: Re: Educational program

Scott Thomson <sthomson@northidahostem.org> Oct 16

to Jason, Deborah

Thanks Jason,

I feel the same way. We have already started the petition process as well as sent in our accreditation application. May I share your letter with the commission?

Thanks again Jason, I look forward to working with you and Deb as we expand opportunities for kids in North Idaho.

Jason Bransford <jasonbransford@idahoidea.org> Oct 17

to me, Deborah

jasonbransford@idahoidea.org

Scott,

Feel free to use my email in your discussions and report to the commission. We wish you the best in this. If there is anything else we can do to help, let us know.

Thanks.

December 12, 2013

Jason Bransford
I-DEA Director
Idaho Distance Education Academy
4860 Burley Dr #2
Pocatello, ID 83202
(208) 238-1388
jasonbransford@idahoidea.org

December 12, 2013

HOME ADDRESS
5675 W. HARBOR DRIVE
COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO 83814
(208) 765-1804



STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 83720
BOISE, IDAHO 83720-0081
bnonini@senate.idaho.gov

Idaho State Senate

SENATOR BOB NONINI

November 1, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: North Idaho STEM Charter Academy

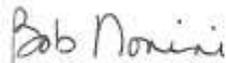
I write this letter to show my strong support for the North Idaho STEM Charter Academy.

I have served for nine years in the Idaho Legislature. In that time I have served every year on the Education Committees. In fact I was the House Education Chairman for six years (2007-2012). Through those committee meetings and legislative action I have had vast experience with charter schools in Idaho. One of the most frustrating issues is being able to provide those options for parents in rural Idaho. And there is a lot of rural Idaho.

The North Idaho STEM Charter School fills a void that has existed in rural northern Idaho. One only needs to attend a science class or talk with a student or parent and the level of interest and excitement over the school is impressive. Equally impressive is the administration and teaching staffs at the school. They are one committed team to the student's success.

Children and parents in rural Idaho deserve the same opportunities in learning that urban children and parents have. The North Idaho STEM Charter School provides that opportunity. The continued success and future growth of the school should be recognized and supported.

Respectfully submitted,


Bob Nonini

State Senator, District 3

December 12, 2013

City of Rathdrum
8047 W. Main Street
Rathdrum, ID 83858
www.rathdrum.org



Mayor Vic Holmes
(208) 687-0261 ext. 115
Fax: (208) 687-1818

October 31, 2013

RE: Support for STEM USDA Loan

To Whom it May Concern,.

On behalf of the City of Rathdrum I convey our support for the proposed North Idaho STEM Charter Academy USDA loan application. STEM provides a much valued and locally appreciated educational option for residents of Rathdrum in offering alternative educational opportunities to prepare students for careers in our increasingly technological world.

STEM also generates an additional infusion of commercial activity in our small city by hosting students (and parents) from throughout the area which is much appreciated.

Sincerely,


Mayor Vic Holmes

December 12, 2013

November 26, 2013

Idaho Charter School Commission,

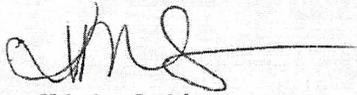
I am writing this letter of support on behalf of the North Idaho STEM Charter Academy in Rathdrum, Id. My daughter has been a student in this school since it opened in September of 2012, entering at the 7th grade level. We have lived in the Lakeland School District for 12 years and in that time we have had 1 son attend Timberlake High School; 1 son attend Spirit lake Elementary, Timberlake Jr. High, & is now a junior at Timberlake High School; and our daughter – who attended Spirit Lake Elementary. In that time we have come to know the schools, their curriculum, and their staff very well. While I believe the Lakeland School District is a good school district in its self, I have had many concerns for our public schools in general, as a whole, in the state of Idaho.

My children have all been afforded the same opportunities in their education thus far. Having said that, I have seen a distinct difference in my daughter's personal growth and academic achievements since attending a school that strives to push our children to levels far above what a regular public school has the ability to offer. With my daughter being in 8th grade, we as a family are having to make the difficult choice of what to do for her come her Freshman year of high school. With all that she has learned and what she has accomplished, I am afraid that if she reintegrates back into the regular public school, she will lose everything she has achieved in the last 2 years of education.

It is my profound belief that in order to make our public schools rise to the level that our children deserve in our education system, it is critical that we provide an alternative option in the interim. Until our local schools make these changes, quality competition such as the STEM Charter Academy will continue to be a necessity. If our families have the ability to provide the type of education to our children that this school can offer, then it is crucial that we continue to provide this opportunity to them through their senior year of high school.

If I were to share with you my biggest regret – it would be that I only wish this school had been established years ago so that it would have been available to my older children. It is with the utmost in convictions that I urge you to approve our school to continue on into the high school level so that other families will have the choice to offer their children the highest level of excellence in education that the North Idaho STEM Charter Academy can offer them.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this very important matter.



Kristine Smith

December 12, 2013

Public Charter School Commission

My name is Shauna Foss and I am the parent of an 8th grader at STEM Charter Academy in Rathdrum, Idaho. For the past 6 months I have been researching where to send my child for school next year. The local High School is not an option, and there are not any science, math and technology driven High Schools in our area. I want my child to have the choice to continue with the high standards for academics and standards the STEM Charter presently provides.

STEM Charter provides opportunities for rural Idaho students that have been previously reserved for only the "Gifted" Students. Given those opportunities children of all levels are thriving. They are being prepared to compete in the global economy, acquiring skills needed to compete for the STEM careers that are increasingly being filled by people from other countries because our educational system doesn't prepare our students to compete.

We have all heard the statistics on the television and radio. Idaho is NOT preparing its students to compete for REAL JOBS. In 10 years 65% of all jobs will require a college education. Currently Idaho is producing 10%....I know that students at our school will do better! They are not only being given the knowledge, they are being taught the skills needed to succeed in an ever changing work environment.

My son Chance is an inquisitive, bright child, who has thrived during his time at STEM. He is constantly being challenged to learn new skills and concepts, to apply them in a project, working usually in a team atmosphere, like we do in the real world. Chance actually is one of the "Gifted" in the regular school district, and was extremely bored most of the time. He would read 2-3 novels a week during school hours and still get straight A's. He is not bored at STEM, and loves to go to school each day to learn new concepts and endless possibilities. I am worried that he will lose this if he is put back into the local school system.

"Possibilities....." That is a wonderful word. That is what students are learning at STEM. To open their minds and think big, that there are many different ways to do things, and so many more that have yet to be discovered. I have read that the jobs that these children will work in have not been invented yet, that is what they are being prepared for at STEM CHARTER.

That is why I think our community needs STEM CHARTER to extend to High School. It offers what the other schools do not, a science, technology and math focused school. A school dedicated to preparing our children to flourish in that milieu. We are truly blessed to have this opportunity, I am asking you to recognize what a gift this is to our community and make it happen.

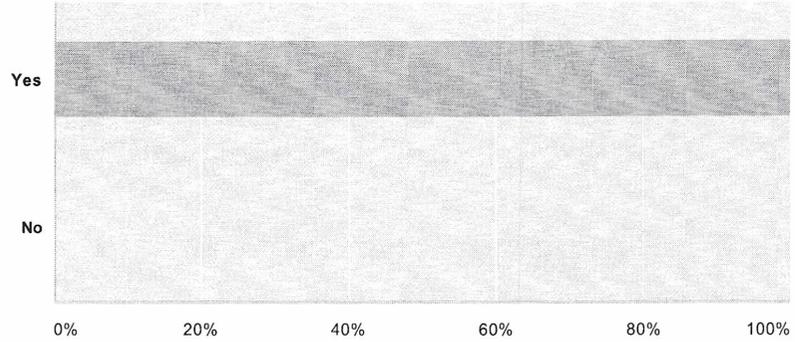
Shauna Foss



STEM Charter High School

Q1 If STEM Charter Academy were to offer high school would you want your child to attend?

Answered: 144 Skipped: 0

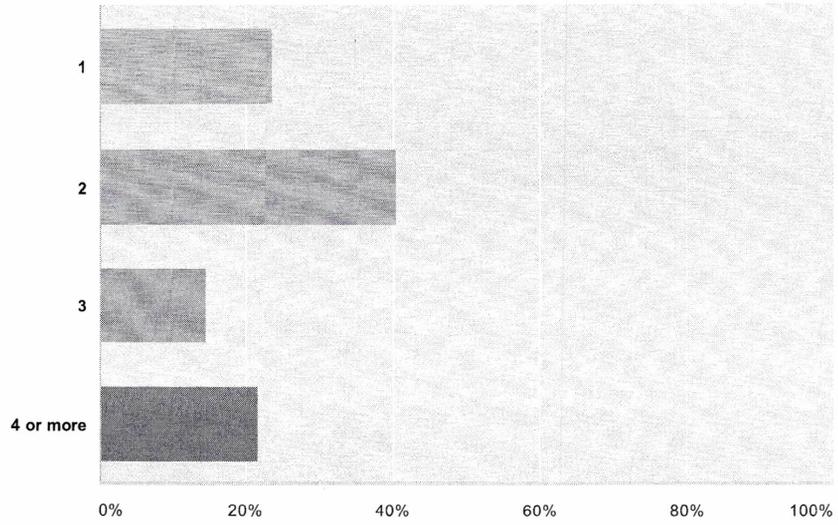


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	100%	144
No	0%	0
Total		144

STEM Charter High School

Q2 How many children do you have?

Answered: 144 Skipped: 0

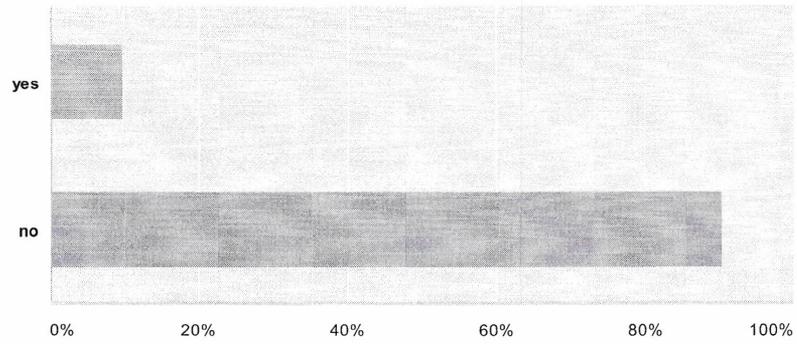


Answer Choices	Responses
1	23.61% 34
2	40.28% 58
3	14.58% 21
4 or more	21.53% 31
Total Respondents: 144	

STEM Charter High School

Q3 Do you have children on the waiting list for STEM Charter?

Answered: 144 Skipped: 0

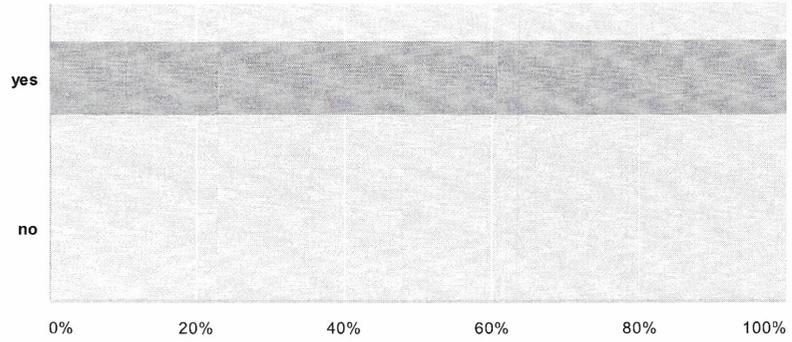


Answer Choices	Responses	
yes	9.72%	14
no	90.28%	130
Total Respondents: 144		

STEM Charter High School

Q4 Do you think STEM Charter High School would be a good addition to the community?

Answered: 144 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
yes	100%	144
no	0%	0
Total Respondents: 144		