

Enrollment Cap Amendment Request

Purpose: To request a change in the number of students served as described in the charter contract. An enrollment cap is not effective until approved by the PEC.

Submission Deadline: The form must be approved prior to the change being implemented. Amendments completed 28 days prior to the next PEC meeting will be placed on the next agenda.

PEC Direction:

When requesting an enrollment cap increase of more than 20% of the school's present enrollment, the school must provide

1. data demonstrating that the school's educational model is working and is effective in the school and/or in schools throughout the state or nationally and
2. data demonstrating a need for increased enrollment in the community.

A school should be in operation for three years prior to seeking an enrollment cap other than requested in the original application. A school requesting an enrollment cap prior to the end of the third year in operation must provide sufficient data demonstrating effectiveness and need as set forth in 1 and 2 above, identify why the enrollment cap was not requested in the original application, and why the enrollment cap is needed at this point.

Explore Academy - Las Cruces is seeking an enrollment cap increase in conjunction with an amendment request to add grades K - 5 to the existing charter contract. The current contract authorizes the school to serve 700 students in grades 6-12. The Governing Board respectfully requests that the enrollment cap be increased to 1,200 to accommodate the addition of six elementary grade levels (K-5).

Enrollment was ~85 students in grades 6-8 during the first year of operation (2021-2022) and increased (more than doubled) to ~180 students in grades 6-9 for this school year (2022-2023). The school expects continued growth as it establishes itself in the community.

As pointed out last year by CSD, the school did not meet its original projected enrollment during the first year. This is primarily due to the late approval of the new charter school and the need to complete implementation and planning in under six (6) months. Additionally, the school was unable to secure its preferred facility due to the delay in approval. As a result, the school was housed in a temporary facility. The late start and the less-than-ideal facility made recruitment much more difficult than anticipated.

The school has since relocated to 850 N. Telshor Blvd, Las Cruces, NM, literally a few doors down from the temporary facility, for the 2022-2023 school year. The facility was a former community college and was remodeled specifically for the needs of the charter school. The students and staff are very proud of, and happy to be in, this beautiful building.

Please note that the school has included all details and data for both amendment requests within the accompanying Grade Level Change Amendment Request document, including the rationale for the change (in both the grade levels served and the enrollment cap

increase) and a narrative addressing items 1-7 listed below.

Also, if approved, the school's facility and administration are prepared to cope with the addition of a K-5 program. For a potential soft launch in the fall of 2023, the school's facility is equipped to handle a shift to partially house students in K-5 with adequate separation from its existing 6-10 population. For future expansion, the school is negotiating, pending approval by the PEC, for the long-term use of a nearby site to split the K-5 students from those in grades 6-12 while still maintaining shared use of bus transportation. (If/when that is finalized, the school will submit the appropriate amendment request for school relocation and/or additional square footage.)

Data provided by CSD:

CSD will

- provide PEC with performance data (academic, organizational, and financial) for the contract term, including any outstanding compliance or investigations, and
- highlight information relevant to the amendment request.

Data and Information provided by the School:

X Fully completed form

X Approved board minutes or certification of the vote taken by the board

X Rationale for the change - *Please see the Grade Level Change Amendment*

X Concise narrative addressing how the proposed changes may affect: (1) staffing; (2) enrollment targets; (3) advertising and marketing; (4) the curriculum, assessment and instruction; (5) resources and budget; (6) the community; and (7) the capacity of the facility - *Please see the Grade Level Change Amendment*

The documents listed below if an additional facility will be utilized to accommodate expanded enrollment:

NOT APPLICABLE AT THIS TIME; However, assurances by the Governing Board are attached.

- Certificate of Occupancy, approved for educational use; OR an assurance that the school will not occupy any space until the school possesses a Certificate of Occupancy and an assurance that a copy of the Certificate of Occupancy will be provided to the CSD within a 30-days of occupancy;
- Letter from PSFA stating that the facility meets the NMCI;
- Documentation of the capacity load of the existing or new facility to document capacity that can sustain the enrollment increase; and
- An assurance that the school will not occupy any space that does not meet the ownership and leasing requirements of Section 22-8B-4.2 NMSA 1978.

Contact charter.schools@ped.nm.gov if you have questions about completing or submitting documents.