



NOSOTROS ACADEMY

GRADE LEVEL EXPANSION AMENDMENT REQUEST - NARRATIVE

Nosotros Academy
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Arizona State Board for Charter Schools
Charter Grade Level Amendment Request

October 24th, 2014

Having met the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools' requirements of receiving an overall rating of *Meets* or *Exceeds* on our most recent and prior Academic Dashboards, Nosotros Inc. respectfully submits our application to amend our charter to add primary school grades of Kindergarten, First, and Second.

Rationale

The Nosotros business plan, since 2007, has been to become a K-12 facility. The need to add primary grades was born out of concerns of neighborhood families who would be affected by the closures of nearby Tucson Unified School District elementary schools. In the Fall of 2013, the concerns became a reality with the closure of Menlo Elementary, Brichta Elementary, and other nearby schools.

Currently in grades 3-5 we have additional capacity, as well as having a waiting list for grades 6-8. By adding grades K-2, we will be better able to establish a strong academic focus with these students by providing them a standards-based, articulated curriculum as they move from one grade level to another. As well, our faculty will have the opportunity to build positive, caring relationships with these students and parents; as they have done repeatedly with students and parents in grades 3-12.

Most important, data shows that students who stay with us longer have higher achievement and make faster progress recovering from past gaps. Essentially our data shows that the earlier we are able to enroll students, the fewer academic problems they experience in later grades.

Mission, Philosophy and methods of instruction

The addition of grades K-2 is aligned with Nosotros Academy mission and philosophy by giving us the opportunity to strengthen community to keep families together and to meet academic challenges at an earlier age.

- **Nosotros Academy's Mission Statement:** Nosotros Academy dedicates itself to bringing a quality alternative education to at-risk students that will promote empowerment of the student, engagement of the family, and community building through mutual commitment to academic success by providing individualized services in a safe, user-friendly atmosphere that meet the needs of students so they can excel as members of the greater community.
Nosotros Academy understands and provides for the unique needs of at risk students such as credit recovery, small class size, and caring teachers, so the students may transition from at risk to college bound.
- **Nosotros Academy's Vision Statement:** Nosotros Academy believes all students have the right to discover, set and realize high academic, post-secondary, professional and personal goals.
- **Nosotros Academy's Philosophy** is and always has been: All Students can meet high standards and expectations when immersed in a small, positive and supportive educational environment. The Nosotros curriculum is based on individual skill mastery. Students are not simply passed along – students do not move forward until they have mastered the current unit. Our highly individualized and predominantly self-paced curriculum facilitates this goal. Students receive one-on-one instruction from highly qualified teachers and teacher assistants to assess understanding. Students who master the material quickly are able to move forward to the next unit.

Method of Instruction

The overarching method of instruction has an emphasis on differentiation and individualized learning. Nosotros Academy (9-12) is a method blend of individualized instruction with the curriculum customized for the students' math and reading level. The K-8 program offers a blend of teacher-lead instruction, demonstrations, practical exercise and independent work; all rich in hands-on, collaborative and explorative activities.

The foundations of higher order thinking are developed through student-centered mathematics and reading instruction. Our goal is to create an effective classroom environment, offering an articulated curriculum that is aligned to the AZ College and Career Ready Standards.

Levels of Proficiency

In order for a student to be promoted to the next grade level the student must demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the three basic subjects: Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. In reading and writing, students must be at an Intermediate Level according to the (Common Core Language Proficiency Skill, see attached matrices). At the very minimum the student must demonstrate grade appropriate academic mathematics, participate in discussions, respond to stories, and provide simple sentences with correct writing conventions. The student must also demonstrate the ability to distinguish between types of literature, make generalizations and indicate grade appropriate comprehension of understanding oral directions.

In mathematics, students should be at Development Level III, as indicated by the attached matrices. These students should possess the ability to use pictures and verbal explanations to experiment and manipulate numbers. Students who are in 2nd grade should also be able to include written responses. Furthermore, those in K-2 will also have the ability to represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction fluently within a given set of values based on their current grade.

Students that function below intermediate level will be assigned to intervention activities such as one-on-one tutoring, after school services and/or our academic summer school.

Staffing

- Because of high demand, Nosotros Inc. and El Rio Preschool and Daycare have developed a private, tuition free pilot program of 12, K-2 students taught by a highly qualified teacher

Timeline

- Staffing and curriculum already complete
- August 10th, 2015, 1st day of school

Summary

Adding grades K-2 enhances the educational environment and promotes continual improvement on a greater scale. It provides a wider focus for educational success that benefits students in all grade levels served. Nosotros has expanded its community outreach, engaging more parents and community members in the educational process. Tucson's west side is a

better place to live and educate students because of the educational commitment Nosotros Inc. has made to the community.

We ask that our application be approved.

Sincerely,

Paul M. Felix
Principal / CEO

K-2 LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVELS
(Expectations based on student's grade level)

	K-2	Listening/Speaking	Reading	Writing
Level 1	Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited understanding of English • Learns to distinguish and produce English phonemes • Uses words, gestures, and actions • Practices repetitive social greetings • Imitates verbalizations of others to communicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Basic needs ○ Participate in discussions and activities ○ Respond to simple directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses self using words, drawings, gestures, and actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sequence simple text ○ Answer literal questions ○ Make simple predictions • Hears and produces familiar sounds • Reads sight words • Uses and comprehends highly contextualized vocabulary • Listens to text read aloud • Begins to understand concepts of print 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws, labels, copies familiar words • Writes to name, describe, or complete a list • Begins to use invented spelling, capital letters, participates in group editing • Identifies an intended audience • Sequences pictures to assist with organization • Participates in group writing process
	Advanced Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses words and/or phrases • Uses appropriate social greetings • Participates in social discussions on familiar topics • Participates in academic discussions on familiar topics • Develops correct word order in phrases • Begins to use academic vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses self using words and/or phrases to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify characters ○ Identify setting ○ Compare and contrast • Hears and produces familiar and unfamiliar sounds • Increases sight vocabulary Uses word-meaning strategies Reads patterned and repetitive text • Applies concepts of print 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writes sight words and phrases • Demonstrates inconsistent use of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Capitals ○ Punctuation ○ Correct spelling • Identifies an intended audience • Begins to write based on a model • Brainstorms and writes rough draft • Participates in group revision

K-2 LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVELS
(Expectations based on student's grade level)

	K-2	Listening/Speaking	Reading	Writing
Level 2	Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses simple sentences with inconsistent use of syntax, tense, plurals, and subject/verb agreement: • Recalls details in stories and expository text read aloud using cues • Participates in social discussions • Participates in academic discussions • Begins to use academic vocabulary • Selects appropriate social and academic vocabulary for different audiences with teacher guidance (register) • Asks questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses self using simple sentences to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Describe images from text ○ Connect text to prior knowledge • Makes generalizations based on text • Monitors for comprehension • Produces unfamiliar sounds • Decodes word patterns • Reads sight words • Reads familiar words in context • Increases vocabulary through reading • Uses text features to gain meaning • Distinguishes between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fiction/non-fiction ○ Fact/opinion ○ Fantasy/reality • Follows simple written directions (e.g., color, cut, glue) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writes simple sentences • Demonstrates increasing control of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Capitals ○ Punctuation ○ Correct spelling • Writes for self, family, friends, and teacher • Writes individually and in a group process
Level 3	Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses descriptive sentences with common grammatical forms with some errors • Participates in social discussions • Participates in academic discussions • Retells stories using descriptive sentences • Begins to use word patterns to determine the meaning of new words • Uses appropriate social and academic vocabulary for different audiences with teacher guidance (register) • Asks questions to clarify 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses self using descriptive sentences to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify theme ○ Recognize literary devices • Uses a variety of strategies to monitor comprehension • Recognizes phonemes within multi-syllabic words • Uses word parts to determine word meanings • Reads with increasing fluency • Independently confirms word meanings • Follows multi-step written directions • Text increases in length and complexity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses simple and descriptive sentences • Begins to adjust register for different audiences • Uses grade level conventions inconsistently • Needs assistance in editing and revising

K-2 LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVELS
(Expectations based on student's grade level)

	K-2	Listening/Speaking	Reading	Writing
Level 4	<p>Transitional</p> <p>Has met criteria for exiting Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program (TBIP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks clearly and comprehensibly using standard English grammatical forms with occasional errors • Gives oral presentations • Uses appropriate social and academic vocabulary for different audiences (register) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjusts reading rate as appropriate • Uses academic vocabulary, uses multiple meaning words appropriately • Follows increasingly complex written directions • Reads and comprehends grade level text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses academic vocabulary across content areas • Uses standard grammar and conventions with teacher support as needed

Grade K Standards to Determine Proficiency

Know number names and the count sequence.	
Count to tell the number of objects.	
Compare numbers.	
Understand addition as putting together and adding to, and understand subtraction as taking apart and taking from.	
Work with numbers 11-19 to gain foundations of place value.	
Describe and compare measurable attributes.	
Classify objects and count the number of objects in categories.	
Identify and describe shapes.	
Analyze, compare, create, and compose shapes.	

Grade 1 Standards to Determine Proficiency

Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction.	
Understand and apply properties of operations and the relationship between addition and subtraction.	
Add and subtract within 20.	
Work with addition and subtraction equations.	
Extend the counting sequence.	
Understand place value.	
Use place value understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract.	
Measure lengths indirectly and by iterating length units.	
Tell and write time.	
Represent and interpret data.	
Reason with shapes and their attributes.	

Grade 2 Standards to Determine Proficiency

Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction.	
Add and subtract within 20.	
Work with equal groups of objects to gain foundations for multiplication.	
Understand place value.	
Use place value understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract.	
Measure and estimate lengths in standard units.	
Relate addition and subtraction to length.	
Work with time and money.	
Represent and interpret data.	
Reason with shapes and their attributes.	