

AMENDMENT REQUEST

Utah State Charter School Board

Charter schools are public schools governed by independent boards and held accountable to a legally binding written contractual agreement with their chartering entity. The Utah State Charter School Board (SCSB) is a statutory chartering entity charged with authorizing, monitoring, evaluating, and holding accountable charter schools to compliance with federal and state laws, rules, and regulations, and their contractual agreement. If a time comes when a charter school governing board requires a change to its charter, then the contractual agreement may be modified by mutual agreement of the chartering entity and the governing body of the school.

Amendment requests, including all required attachments and supporting documentation, are due electronically no later than three weeks prior to the upcoming State Charter School Board meeting. A schedule of State Charter School Board meetings can be found at <http://schools.utah.gov/charterschools/State-Charter-School-Board.aspx>. Incomplete requests will not be considered.

Prior to inclusion on the agenda, the State Charter School Board recommends charter school governing boards schedule an appointment with Charter School Section staff to discuss the request and provide clarification to any staff questions. Appointments can be scheduled by emailing marlies.burns@schools.utah.gov

1. Charter School: Jefferson Academy

Website: www.JeffersonAcademy.org

Board Chair: Keith Facer Email: kfacer@jeffersonacademy.org

School Administrator: Nicole Jones Email: njones@jeffersonacademy.org

2. The charter school is located in which school district? Davis School District

3. Name(s) and title(s) of district personnel to whom you provided a copy of your entire amendment request, as well as the date of contact.

Submitted to **Sheri Suave** who works at **Davis School District** on **April 14, 2014**.

4. Duly elected or appointed governing board members of the school, with titles.

Keith Facer, Chair
Neal Harris, Vice Chair
Shelley Young, Secretary
Joshua Spilker, Financial Coordinator

5. School mission and purpose(s) (limited to one page):

Mission

Jefferson Academy will offer an academically challenging and content-rich history-centered curriculum that incorporates the study of American citizenship and is based on the Core Knowledge Sequence. Jefferson Academy will provide an environment in which every student has the opportunity to gain a strong foundation of knowledge in world and American history, classic literature, science, math and fine arts.

It is the desire and mission of this school to have every child be challenged, experience success and master basic skills, grow in academic ability and content knowledge, and develop an understanding and appreciation for our nation's heritage and founding principles.

Philosophy

At Jefferson Academy, we believe in a content-rich educational program that develops the mind, cultivates a strong, moral character and instills an appreciation for our nation and its founding principles. We believe children gain knowledge by building on what they already know. We value a curriculum that encompasses a specific and systematic sequence of content and allows students to consistently build on that content from year to year. We believe in traditional education, with an emphasis in phonics and a liberal arts curriculum that includes study of world and American history, classic literature, science, math and fine arts.

As did our founding fathers, we also believe the study of history and citizenship should be at the core of an American education. We believe a deep understanding of history instills in students valuable knowledge that benefits all areas of learning.

We believe all children should be given access to the same knowledge base that assures equality in learning and future educational success. We believe in meeting the needs of all learners through direct instruction, ability grouping, and other research-based practices.

To maximize student progress, we believe parental involvement should be encouraged and opportunities given for hands-on involvement in the education of their child. It is our hope and expectation that through this school, every child will receive the knowledge, skills and discipline necessary to become a successful lifelong learner and an active, informed citizen.

6. Requested amendment to charter (check all that apply). Provide requested details and supporting documentation in Attachment 1. If the request requires a budget, include it as Attachment 2. If the governing board has developed a corrective action plan, include it as Attachment 3.

Requires Utah State Board of Education (USBE) Approval (2 months)

_____ **Change to school mission or purpose(s).** Include a redline version showing new additions and ~~removed language~~ in school mission and/or purpose(s). Describe the process the governing board followed when making this decision, as well as why a change to mission and/or purpose(s) is necessary for the governing board to meet the terms and conditions in its contractual agreement.

_____ **Waiver from Board Rule** _____ (include rule number and title). Describe why the waiver is necessary to meet the mission of the school and help the governing board meet the terms and conditions in its contractual agreement.

_____ **Expansion of student enrollment.** Indicate the number of students in grade K, 1 – 6, 7 – 8, and 9 – 12 being requested. Describe whether or not this expansion of student enrollment will require a new facility or a significant structural change to an existing facility (i.e., requires a USOE facility project number)? If so, provide a detailed facility plan (e.g., floor plans, date when the documents pertaining to the financing of the facility project will be submitted to USOE for advice, date when the necessary pre-construction documents will be submitted to USOE for a project number, date the facility project will be completed, etc.). Also provide a copy of the projected budget for all years where student growth is planned.

New students requested (duplicate grade band enrollment information for all school years that new students are requested)

SY _____ Grade K: _____ Grades 7 – 8: _____
Grades 1-6: _____ Grades 9-12: _____

_____ **Expansion of grade levels served, if requested grades will include students in different weighted pupil unit grade level category.** Indicate the new grade levels being requested. Describe whether or not this expansion of grades served will require a new facility or a significant structural change to an existing facility (i.e., requires a USOE facility project number)? If so, provide a detailed facility plan (e.g., floor plans, date when the documents pertaining to the financing of the facility project will be submitted to USOE for advice, date when the necessary pre-construction documents will be submitted to USOE for a project number, date the facility project will be completed, etc.). Also provide a copy of the projected budget for all years where grade level expansion is planned.

New grades requested – check all that apply (duplicate information for all school years that new grades are requested)

SY _____ Grade K: _____ Grades 7 – 8: _____
Grades 1-6: _____ Grades 9-12: _____

_____ **Revolving Loan.** If school is recommended by the Charter School Revolving Account Committee for a loan, then the recommendation requires both SCSB and USBE approval. Loan documentation to the SCSB and USBE will be provided by Charter School Section staff. No additional documentation is required.

Requires State Charter School Board Approval with discussion at meeting (1 month)

_____ **Change to educational program or methods of instruction.** Provide supporting documentation of new, evidence-based choice, as well as anticipated improvement in student performance.

_____ **Relocating to a new school district (operational school) or municipality (planning school).** Operational schools must provide evidence supporting the decision to move, including the projected impact on enrollment. Planning schools must provide a detailed market analysis of newly proposed location, including corresponding capital facility plan and revised budget for the planning year and first three operational years.

_____ **Matriculation agreement.** Describe the purpose for the matriculation agreement and provide a copy of the school's proposed matriculation agreement signed by all participating charter school(s).

Requires State Charter School Board Approval via consent calendar (1 month)

_____ **Change to contractual agreement performance measures.** Include a redline version showing new additions and ~~removed language~~ in contractual agreement performance measures and provide supporting documentation for the requested change.

_____ **Postponement of opening year.** Describe the reason for postponing the school's opening year. Provide a copy of the revised budget for the planning year and first three operational years. Include additional supporting documentation as necessary.

_____ **Change to Bylaws specific to number of board members or board member election / appointment process.** Include a redline version showing new additions and ~~removed language~~ in Bylaws.

Requires Executive Director approval (up to 1 month)

_____ **Change name of school.** Provide the school's proposed new name and provide a statement of understanding of requirement to submit paperwork for and receive change of name with IRS.

X _____ **Decrease grades served or student enrollment.** Summarize the governing board's discussion that led to the decision to reduce grade levels or number of students served.

- _____ **Technical corrections.** Include a redline version showing new additions and ~~removed language~~. Technical corrections include changes such as spelling, grammar, title for school employees, name of committees / groups, etc. It may also include re-ordering sections of the application for improved readability and use by the governing board.
- _____ **Acceleration of approved growth model, with no additional students.** Briefly describe the need for an acceleration of growth model approved for a future school year.
- _____ **Other.** Please describe amendment requests that do not fall into any identified category above. Provide details and supporting documentation as appropriate. Additional information may be requested following review and request may require SCSB or USBE approval.

7. Complete *Minimum Standard* and *Charter Contractual Agreement Goal* tables and provide statement of school adherence to State Charter School Board minimum standards and charter agreement, as found in R277-481 and contractual agreement, respectively. If the school is not meeting any of the SCSB minimum standards or any of its charter contract agreement goals, include governing board corrective action plan as appropriate as Attachment 3. (Corrective action plan(s) limited to two pages.)

Minimum standards

<i>Indicator – Board performance & stewardship</i>			
Measure	Metric	Performance 2012	Performance 2013
Ethical conduct	Number of board violations of statute, State Board rule, or charter agreement as of date of amendment request submission.	No Violations	No Violations
Regulatory and reporting compliance	Percentage of teachers properly licensed and endorsed for teaching assignment as of date of amendment request submission.	100%	100%
Regulatory and reporting compliance	Percentage of employees and board members with completed criminal background checks as of date of amendment request submission.	100%	100%

<i>Indicator – Financial performance and sustainability</i>			
Audit findings or recommendations	Number of material findings, financial condition findings, or repeated significant findings in prior fiscal year	None	None
Current assets to total annual operating expenses (Days Assets on Hand)	$\frac{\text{Current Assets}}{\text{(Total Annual Operating Expenses} \div 360)}$	64.3	80.5

Charter Contractual Agreement goals

<i>Instructions: Insert all charter school goals found in your charter agreement with the State Charter School Board, which are not found in other indicator areas. Make certain to include the section and page number where these measures, metrics, and board goals can be found. Also, include the fiscal year for the board performance value. Insert rows as needed.</i>				
Measure	Metric	Board Goal	Performance 2012	Performance 2013
1a) 85% on Language Arts CRT's. 1b) 85% on Math CRT's. 1c) 85% on the DWA. 1d) 75% on Science CRT's.	End of Level testing in Language Arts, Math, and Science, as well as the February testing of the Direct Writing Assessment.	Improve student learning.	1a) 85.5% 1b) 77.8% 1c) 80.9% 1d) 68.5%	1a) 82.5% 1b) 83.1% 1c) 80.4% 1d) 73.7%
2a) 100% of JA teachers will have and maintain appropriate Utah licensure or be enrolled in an ARL. 2b) Director will evaluate faculty performance.	2a) Cactus report. 2b) Teacher evaluations.	Highly qualified staff.	2a) 100% of teachers for school year 2011-2012 had appropriate licensure or were ARL. 2b) The Administration evaluated 100% of the JA faculty.	2a) 100% of teachers for school year 2012-2013 had appropriate licensure or were ARL. 2b) The Administration evaluated 100% of the JA faculty.
3a) Emergency plans in place and students know emergency procedures. 3b) Behavior instances will be tracked and decrease annually.	3a) Regularly scheduled emergency drills with teacher observation on student proficiency. 3b) Safe School Policy implemented.	JA will be a safe school.	3a) Emergency plans are in place and a report on emergency drills is given to the state and Board annually. All requirements were met for school year 2011-2012. 3b) 171 behavior instances were tracked and reported.	3a) Emergency plans are in place and a report on emergency drills is given to the state and Board annually. All requirements were met for school year 2012-2013. 3b) 156 behavior instances were tracked and reported. There was a 28% drop in behavior actions from the previous year.

8. Additional information you would like the SCSB to consider:



Governing Board Chair Signature

04/11/14

Date

State Charter School Board
Amendment Request

Nicole Jones

Charter School Principal/Director

04/11/14

Date

ATTACHMENT 1

Grade Configuration

Jefferson Academy is authorized by the State Charter School Board to serve students in grades K-9. The school is not seeking to permanently change the approved grade configuration, only to temporarily move to an elementary model in order to establish a solid student base before again serving junior high students.

Jefferson Academy is committed to providing the highest quality education possible to their students. The Board and administration want to cultivate the elementary program and will continue to evaluate student attendance, within-year enrollment, and retention rates in order to determine the appropriate integration of junior high students back into the Jefferson Academy community.

Board Meeting Discussions

On Friday, January 31, 2014 the following took place:

The Board reviewed the enrollment figures and trends over the past few years. Student attrition and retention in the junior high school was reviewed. The limitations of a small junior high were discussed, including course offerings and extra-curricular activities. The junior high teachers are outstanding and their contribution to providing the highest quality education was lauded. Keith Facer made a motion to limit the student enrollment at Jefferson Academy to grades K-6 for the 2014-2015 school year; Shelly Young seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

At the next Board Meeting held in March 2014, the Board entertained public comment. Five members of the public were present at the meeting and only three chose to address the Board regarding grade configuration.

In addition, regular discussions on enrollment and grade configuration have been held to determine the viability of the junior high program as well as the projected enrollment throughout the school. Some retreat discussions included: July 2011 when the Board reviewed attrition and grade bubbling in the elementary to meet enrollment; June 2012 when the Director reviewed enrollment increases in all grades but the junior high; and July 2013 when grade configuration, bubbles, and student numbers were reviewed and goals were created to enrich the junior high program.

The Board has tried to look at alternate means of enhancing the junior high program in the past. Attempts included researching the integration of an International Baccalaureate Program (February 2011), integrating Enrichment Fridays and NWEA MAP testing (2011-2013), researching membership in the Challenge Foundation charter school network (2012), and running a junior high program composed of grades 6-9 (2012-2014).

After making the decision to move to an elementary model temporarily, the Davis School District was notified along with the school employees, the school community, and the Utah State Charter School Board. The administration has been supporting faculty in the junior high by writing letters of recommendation, contacting potential employers with references, as well as providing substitutes to allow the teachers to attend employment fairs. The school has been working with the current students in sixth grade through eighth grade to make a smooth transition to another school for the 2014-2015 school year.

Letter to Employees

Dear Faculty and Staff,

The Board of Directors wanted me to make you immediately aware of changes to the grade configuration at Jefferson Academy. For the 2014-2015 school year Jefferson Academy will only be

enrolling students in the elementary, grades K-6. The Board has had this conversation for multiple years based on the lack an increase in junior high enrollment. Davis School District has two neighboring elementary schools that will be going to a year round schedule next year. Due to this change, many families are looking for other options with a traditional school calendar and this will give Jefferson Academy an opportunity to build our elementary population and program.

We are grateful for your service to our community and the time and effort you have contributed to make the school a success. Please know that we appreciate all your hard work and continued dedication to Jefferson Academy. We have an outstanding faculty and staff and are grateful for your continued support.

For our junior high faculty, the Board and administration are committed to supporting you in making this transition and working to meet your individual needs. We recognize that this decision directly impacts our junior high staff and we will not be renewing junior high faculty employment agreements for next fall. As the administration we are committed to help ease you through this transition.

We appreciate all you have done and will continue to do for Jefferson Academy. Thank you in advance for your help through this change. We know that this decision will have a direct impact on you, your family members, your students, and all members of our faculty and staff. The Governing Board of Directors will be communicating with parents and students to make them aware of the change.

Please know that this decision was very difficult for the Board to make as they recognize the strengths and the outstanding accomplishments of our junior high staff and students.

Warm regards,

Valerie Shaw

Letter to Community

Dear Parents,

This is an exciting time for Jefferson Academy as we work to improve student learning. We continue to receive positive feedback from teachers, students, and parents as they express their delight at being a part of something wonderful here at Jefferson Academy. The sense of community that is fostered in our classrooms under the direction of our outstanding teachers is inspiring.

Many people have worked hard to make the school a success, including our junior high staff. With such an accomplished staff, it is with a heavy heart that we notify you that Jefferson Academy will be discontinuing the junior high program at the end of this school year.

For the 2014-2015 school year, Jefferson Academy will be strictly an elementary school serving grades K-6. However, we are committed to serving our current junior high students for the rest of this school year and helping those who were planning to attend our junior high program find alternatives for next year.

The Governing Board of Directors came to this decision after careful consideration of many factors and has chosen to move forward with an elementary model at this time in order to ensure the highest quality education to the students we will serve. We will be focusing on cultivating our elementary program, enriching technology, and providing a rigorous curriculum based on the Core Knowledge Sequence and American History.

We appreciate the continuing support of our families and staff at Jefferson Academy. If you have any questions about this information, please feel free to contact any member of the Board of Directors.

Yours in education,

Jefferson Academy Board of Directors
board@jeffersonacademy.org

Letter to State Charter School Board

State Charter Board Members and Ms. Burns,

In an effort to maintain open communication with the State Charter School Board, I would like to share some upcoming changes for Jefferson Academy and the current direction the Governing Board has taken to assure continued success for students and the school.

On January 31, 2014 the Jefferson Academy Governing Board of Directors voted unanimously to not continue the Junior High program (7-9th grades) for the school year 2014-2015. The Board did not arrive at this decision lightly.

Jefferson Academy's Board has been fiscally responsible and was able to purchase their building in 2010. The Jefferson Academy Governing Board made the difficult decision, for next year, to just serve K-6 students based on projected enrollment, cost of programs, teacher certification, previous years Board enrollment discussions, retention rates, and a variety of other factors.

The Board did not see this issue as a charter change, as we maintain that at some point in the future Jefferson Academy may again serve 7-9th grades. Again, in an effort to communicate, a colleague called Ms. Burns to let her know of the Board action and give her information in case she was contacted concerning the decision. Ms. Burns, during the conversation shared that it was her opinion, that even though there are other schools that have made similar changes without the consent of the State Charter Board, that those schools are out of compliance. This letter is to assure you that our intention was never to be out of compliance and we of course are willing to answer any questions you might have. I would invite any State Charter Board member to call me directly.

This decision will impact the 2014-2015 school year, and although we anticipate that it will take a couple of years to measure the progress of our elementary program, without the Junior High, our intention is to annually evaluate when and if the Junior High should be reinstated. We will continue to communicate with Ms. Burns our intentions on grade configuration and projected enrollment numbers. The State Charter Board, as well as the USOE charter school office under Ms. Burn's direction, has always been very supportive of Jefferson Academy and the decisions we have made to continue to improve student outcomes. Thank you in advance for your continued support and again feel free to contact me directly with any questions.

Sincerely,

Keith Facer
Jefferson Academy Board Chair