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BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Patrick Gavin
SUBJECT: Agenda Item 3A—Renewal Timeline
DATE: October 21, 2016

Background:

Current statute does not prescribe a process, timeline, format, or contents for the renewal of written charters. There are currently no regulations in place which govern such renewals and the Authority does not have the power to adopt regulations related to such renewals.

The Authority has previously utilized a bifurcated process for considering renewal decisions. The Authority Performance Framework provides for schools which are designated as high performing to be eligible for expedited renewal. Under that system, eligible schools are invited to submit a letter requesting expedited renewal based on previously published data. Based on current academic performance, several schools are eligible for expedited renewal in 2016-17:

- Oasis Academy
- Imagine School at Mountain View
- Somerset Academy

Somerset already received early renewal as a condition of its expansion amendment.

Additionally, Discovery Charter School is up for renewal this year, but its academic performance is not sufficiently high achieving to merit expedited renewal.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Authority invite Oasis and Imagine to submit letters requesting expedited renewal between now and December 31, 2016.

Should either school not request expedited renewal, they would have the option of submitting the regular renewal application form. The current form has been updated to reflect new interim accountability categories and designations adopted by the Department of Education based on recent legislation. Specifically, the form now reflects the state's identification of elementary and middle schools that are among the lowest five percent of schools statewide. It also includes the state's new Rising Stars designation, which identifies schools eligible for accountability sanctions pursuant to laws adopted in 2015.

Based on best practice from other charter authorizers nationwide, the Board has previously adopted a data-driven approach to written charter renewal decisions which considers academic, financial, and organizational performance. The attached renewal application template requires schools to focus on performance and outcomes over anecdote and sentiment. It is predicated on the values and beliefs which are foundational to charter schooling: autonomy in exchange for results. It prescribes common data elements that schools are required to report and staff are required to verify prior to making a renewal recommendation. The application also delineates the data and evidence which will be considered by the Board in making renewal decisions, separating the decision to grant a renewal from the decision to make changes to the new agreement, the charter contract, based on lessons learned during the previous term.