



Sage Collegiate Public Charter School

Our Mission: Driven by excellence for all in a supportive, rigorous, and ambitious school community, Sage Collegiate Public Charter School educates K-8 students for academic achievement, college success, and a life of opportunity.

TO: Melissa Mackedon, SPCSA Board Chair
Rebecca Feiden, SPCSA Executive Director
Mark Modricin, SPCSA Director of Authorizing

FROM: Alejandro Rodriguez, Board Chair, Sage Collegiate
Jennifer Braster, Board Vice Chair and Chair-Elect, Sage Collegiate
Sandra Kinne, Executive Director, Sage Collegiate

RE: Request to defer opening until 2022-23 school year

DATE: Thursday, June 24, 2021

We write to inform the State Public Charter School Authority that following the state Enrollment Audit last week and after several conversations and considerable thought, the Board of Sage Collegiate has voted to defer opening of Sage Collegiate to the 2022-23 school year. This was not an easy decision, but we think it is the most reasonable and prudent choice at this point in the year. We want our scholars to have a strong start, and as an independent charter, we also need to ensure financial viability.

We have identified three key factors in our enrollment challenges that we plan to address in the coming few months through a revised incubation plan of action.

1. **A delayed securement of a Year 1 facility.**

While we were excited to partner with a local organization and had secured a temporary Year 1 space, the reality of not having that finalized until a month ago had a far greater impact on enrollment than anticipated. Families' number one question for months had been, "Where are you located?" and not being able to provide specifics on a site created reluctance for families to commit. While we had increased our enrollment significantly over the last month, we did not see a guaranteed path to meeting our goals or ensuring minimum viability to open our doors in just six short weeks. We also wanted to ensure transparency and open communication with families who had enrolled their scholars in our school and with staff that had committed to being founders in Year 1 and be able to help them find other options for the 2021-22 school year.

2. **The global pandemic.**

The impact of COVID and gathering restrictions has been felt by many schools with regards to enrollment, community outreach, and family engagement. While we had increased our in-person outreach efforts in recent weeks, including through tabling, door-to-door canvassing, and participation at community events, the challenge of a decreased number of community engagement opportunities, combined with facility issues, were problematic. Even at one early May community event, at which there are typically 1300 participants, fewer than 100 people turned out. The pandemic has made community engagement difficult, while also reinforcing the importance of community and relationship building with families.

3. **Our slow growth model.**

We planned our slow growth model based on best practices and the model of other small, independent schools. We were intentional with planning to only open with K-2. However, we heard from several families about this model's challenge. Families want to be able to have their elementary-age children on a single campus; they want their 1st

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grader in the same school as their 4th grader, especially after a year of online learning. We will likely follow up in the next few months with an amendment request, but this has been the most surprising and unanticipated challenge with regards to enrollment given the success of the slow growth model in other regions.

Deferring a year is not at all ideal and was not an easy choice. However, deferring a year – when COVID restrictions have been lifted – allows us to focus more on family outreach and community engagement; solidify additional and strengthen existing community partnerships; and finalize our long-term facility.

We appreciate the continued support of the SPCSA as we work to open Sage Collegiate’s doors, provide a high-quality option in a community where there is none, and work to fulfill the mission our school.

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Alejandro Rodriguez, Board Chair
Sage Collegiate PCS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Braster", written over a horizontal line.

Jennifer Braster, Board Vice Chair and Chair-elect
Sage Collegiate PCS