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ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Michael Gawthrop-Hutchins, Management Analyst III, Financial and Organizational Performance
SUBJECT: Sage Collegiate Request for Amendment to Increase Enrollment and Adjust Grade Levels Beginning in Year 1
DATE: November 5, 2021

Summary of Request and Recommendation

On September 20, 2021 the Governing Board of Sage Collegiate Public Charter School approved its leadership submitting a Request for Amendment, to the State Public Charter School Authority to seek approval to adjust their enrollment for Year 1 and subsequent years until they are at capacity. This request also included a change in grade levels offered beginning in Year 1.

SPCSA staff have reviewed application requests and recommend that the Authority approve the amendment request with conditions.

Background

Sage Collegiate was approved by the SPCSA Board at the November 6, 2020 Board meeting to open in the fall of 2021. At the time of application, the school planned to locate in the 89107, 89108 or 89146 zip codes. Subsequently, Sage Collegiate requested and received approval from the SPCSA Board during the October 1, 2021 Board meeting to locate in a facility that is partially located outside of their previously approved zip codes.

The school has also been spending this time with community outreach to enroll students for their inaugural year. The school reports receiving consistent feedback from families in their community that the biggest barrier to enrolling was the limited grade range to be offered by the

school. In particular, it was a serious concern for families that they would not be able to enroll multiple siblings due to higher elementary grades not being offered for older siblings in Year 1. Additionally, Sage Collegiate has encountered barriers with regards to teacher recruitment as some prospective teachers have expressed their intent to work at a school that their child can also attend. A parallel concern of the school is their financial viability, in their identified facility, with a full build out of 500 students.

For these reasons, Sage Collegiate is requesting the SPCSA Board to approve additional grades and enrollment as shown in the table below.

Applicant Eligibility

When reviewing a Request for Amendment, the SPCSA reviews the academic, financial and organizational performance of the applicant charter school. Since Sage Collegiate has yet to open, SPCSA staff finds that the school is meeting pre-opening expectations, is compliant and fiscally sound.

Summary and Recommendation

Overall, SPCSA staff find the proposal to increase enrollment and add additional grades to be consistent with the mission and vision of the State Public Charter School Authority and will allow Sage Collegiate to serve a community of need. This proposal intends to reduce barriers to enrollment and will allow for greater long-term stability for the school. SPCSA staff does have concerns about approving increases to enrollment prior to a school opening and demonstrating their capacity for growth. It is noteworthy that Sage Collegiate was approved to offer Kindergarten through 8th grade, so the proposed changes only seek to offer pre-approved grade levels earlier in the school’s growth trajectory. SPCSA staff is confident that additional grade levels can be offered beginning in Year 1 of operations given the strength of the academic plan, which was rated as ‘Meets the Standard’ at the time of authorization.

For these reasons, SPCSA staff recommends that the Authority grant the Request for Amendment of Sage Collegiate.

Proposed Motion

Approve the Sage Collegiate request to increase enrollment and add additional grades as proposed in the amendment application.

The previously approved enrollment caps for Sage Collegiate are as follows:

School Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
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Total Enrollment Cap	168	224	280	336	400	460 ¹
Grade Levels	K – 2	K – 3	K – 4	K – 5	K – 6	K – 7 ²

The requested enrollment caps for Sage Collegiate are as follows:

School Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Total Enrollment Cap	224	308	392	476	532	588
Grade Levels	K – 5	K – 6	K – 7	K – 8	K – 8	K – 8

² The school was approved to operate as a K-8 school under a slow-growth model. As such, the 7th year of operation would be the first year to operate with K-8.