

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Issue: Arizona Charter School Program Awards, Project Years 2017 - 2019

Action/Discussion Item

Information Item

Background and Discussion

On October 1, 2015, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) Charter School Program (CSP) awarded the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) \$23.6 M to increase high quality public school options for Disadvantaged Students in Arizona. Arizona was one of only eight states awarded this highly competitive grant. The Arizona Charter Schools Program (AZ CSP) unit in the agency's Highly Effective Teachers and Leaders Division (HETL) will administer the grant.

AZCSP Subgrantee Program Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the Arizona Charter Schools Program is the following:

Objective 1 - Increase the number of high quality charter schools in Arizona focusing on supporting and improving the academic outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students. Educationally disadvantaged students are defined in this application as 1) racially and ethnically diverse students, economically disadvantaged or neglected/homeless students; 2) students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELL).

Objective 2 - Close the achievement gaps for all educationally disadvantaged students in AZ CSP schools.

Objective 3 - Improve educationally disadvantaged high school student achievement and graduation rates in AZ CSP schools.

The subgrantees selected will serve an enrollment consisting of at least 40% Free and Reduced Lunch students or Racial/Ethnic minorities or students with identified disabilities or English Language Learners. All subgrantees have a variety of strategies to improve student achievement. All of them have data driven strategies to continuously monitor student progress and in-house programs to align school staff with enhanced outcomes.

Much of the funding will go to support the material startup expenditures of opening a school. At the same time, considerable funding will go to building leadership and staff capacity to create school-wide cultures of learning.

Contract Amount:

The award for the initial project year will not exceed \$250,000. Additional awards for up to two additional years are dependent upon the availability of funds, the school's

Contact Information:

Dr. Cecilia Johnson, Associate Superintendent, Highly Effective Teachers and Leaders

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enrollment and the success of the school in meeting stated objectives. In any event the total awarded to any school will not exceed \$750,000 over three project years.

Source of Funds:

Authorizing Legislation: No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), Public Law 107-110, Section 5201, Index No. 02451

CFDA: 84.282A

Funding Number: UA282150009

Responsible Unit at Department of Education:

Highly Effective Teachers and Leaders:

Division Associate Superintendent: Dr. Cecelia Johnson

Deputy Associate Superintendent, Charter Schools Program: Dr. Mark Francis

Dates of Contract:

Each AZCSP subgrant is up to three years in duration for Planning and Implementation of a new or replicated school. The agreements shall take effect when approved by the Board, and shall terminate on January 31, 2019.

Explanation of the Subgrant:

The Arizona Charter Schools Program start-up award is a competitive, discretionary grant. Successful replicated or new charter entities which describe in their application a compelling, school-wide vision for challenging curriculum, engaging instruction and rigorous assessment geared to Disadvantaged Students which will increase Arizona student achievement are encouraged to open new schools.

Previous Subgrant History

Each subgrantee is an independent LEA with its own CTDS number and Entity ID. No subgrantee has previously received an AZ CSP award.

Number Affected (Students, Teachers, and Public, as appropriate) 30,000 students

These awarded subgrantees are serving students in low socio-economic areas with a history of low academic performance.

Selection Process:

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A competitive application was reviewed by a 4 person panel consisting of, two founding leaders of highly successful charter schools, an independent financial/operational contractor and a member of an education non-profit. (ARS § 41-2702. Solicitation and award of grant applications)

Method of Determining Contract Amount:

1. To be eligible for the full \$250,000 per school per annum award, schools must identify in their application that they expect to enroll 200 students by their third year of operation. Schools who indicate less than that will be awarded a reduced amount.
2. Schools that fail to meet their enrollment targets in the third year may have their awards reduced to reflect the lower enrollment.
3. Contingent upon their estimated and actual enrollment and continued federal funding, the award shall not exceed \$750,000 total per school through March 31, 2017.
4. After the first year award funding is dependent upon the availability of funds and the success of the charter school in meeting the stated enrollment and objectives in their application.
5. Schools must maintain a good faith effort to meet the goals described in its awarded application and must be in compliance with state and federal charter rules and regulations.
6. All charter awardees agree to participate in regular monitoring by state and federal officials over the life of the grant as well various AZCSP activities. All state and federal compliance is spelled out in the Grant Award Notification sent to and signed by a representative of the governing body of the charter entity.

Evaluation Plan:

Each awarded charter entity is periodically monitored over each Project Year for academic, financial and operational compliance with its grant application and the following:

1. The US ED Charter Schools Program SEA monitoring instrument;
2. Education Department General Administration Uniform Guidance;
3. The Arizona Charter Schools Program evaluation instrument which assesses the following:
 - a. Governance,
 - b. Leadership,
 - c. Business and Financial Practices.

The results of that monitoring are evaluated using the AZCSP Uniform Guidance Risk Assessment Framework. Schools that meet the framework required benchmarks will still be subject to annual monitoring and participation in AZCSP mandated technical assistance. Schools that do not meet the Framework benchmarks will be placed in

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Corrective Action status as High Risk and subject to mandated AZCSP corrective assistance and/or Administrative Hold of Funds.

A key strategy in the evaluation process is regular on-site visits by the AZ CSP staff to awarded schools to evaluate effectiveness and identify leading indicators (predictors) of success.

Recommendation to the Board

It is recommended that the Board approve the following Arizona Charter School Program, Project Years 2017 - 2019 Subgrantees

Awards, not to exceed \$250,000 per Project Year, are supported by a US Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, Charter School Program. This contract obligates only one year of payments with the option to funds years two and three dependent upon fund availability and annual review of school progress to meet its goals. All schools are Title I schools. Three schools are eligible for only two Project Years (PY) .

Subgrantee	PY 16-17	PY 17-18	PY 18-19	Total
*Academy of Math and Science - Camelback	\$250,000	\$250,000	N/A	*\$500,000
Academy of Math and Science – Mesa	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$750,000
*Archway Classical Academy Trivium East	\$250,000	\$250,000	N/A	*\$500,000
Arizona Autism Charter Schools, Inc.	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$750,000
ASU Preparatory Academy, Casa Grande	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$750,000
Empower High School	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$750,000
*Espiritu Schools	\$250,000	\$250,000	N/A	*\$500,000
Highland Prep	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$750,000
Pensar Academy	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$750,000
Synergy Public Schools	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$750,000
Vista College Preparatory, Inc.	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$750,000
Subtotal	\$2,750,000	\$2,750,000	\$2,000,000	\$7,500,000