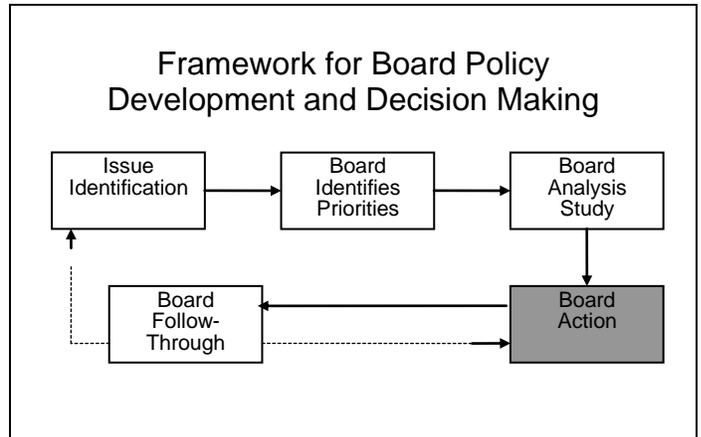


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

May 10, 2012



Agenda Item: Iowa Central Charter School - Renewal

Iowa Goal: All PK-12 students will achieve at a high level.

Equity Impact Statement: Iowa Public Charter Schools are required to be open to all students in accordance with Iowa's nondiscrimination policies and federal Charter School Guidelines.

Presenter: Janet Boyd, Consultant
Bureau of Accreditation and Improvement Services

Attachments: 1

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Iowa Central Charter School for Southeast Webster-Grand Community School District be approved for a one-year renewal through the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

Background: The Southeast Webster-Grand Community School District received approval in 2004 for Iowa Central Charter School. The charter was renewed in 2008.

IOWA CENTRAL CHARTER SCHOOL

Renewal – May 2012

SCHOOL/DISTRICT INFORMATION

Iowa Central Charter High School
30850 Paragon Ave.
Burnside, IA 50521

Southeast Webster-Grand Community School District
Administrator: Launi Dane, Superintendent
l_dane@se-webster.k12.ia.us

MISSION OF THE CHARTER

To develop a fast track program that will assist students in working toward an associate in arts degree in a specific vocational area or toward a four-year degree program.

DESCRIPTION OF CHARTER

Iowa Central Charter High School is a school within the Southeast Webster-Grand Community School District. It is available to all junior and senior level students and incorporates a partnership between Iowa Central Community College and Southeast Webster-Grand High School to provide students unlimited opportunities to enhance and perpetuate a student's course of study. Students are given an opportunity to take college courses to begin their college educational track. The charter school is a school within a school.

CHARTER HISTORY

First Year of Charter: 2004-2005
Charter Renewal: 2007-2008, 2011-2012

THE CHARTER SNAPSHOT

Students Enrolled in charter:
11th/12th grade: 33

Financial Stability: This district does not have a negative unspent authorized budget.

Number of Teachers: 20.5 (FTE for district high school)

Qualifications: All teachers hold Iowa licenses.

Number of Administrators: 1 (FTE)

Qualifications: Administrator holds an Iowa license.

IOWA CENTRAL CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL GOALS

ACADEMIC GOALS:

GOAL 1: Increase the number of graduates who complete postsecondary training.

Progress: According to surveys, the students are attending college more, either as a two-year or four-year student, due to the fact that they believe they can do the work at the college level.

Trend data show an increase in the number of graduates who complete postsecondary training. The success of the program is determined by the number of students who are participating and the number of credits each has earned. All juniors and seniors participated in the charter school either on the high school campus or college campus.

| | Class of 2005 | Class of 2006 | Class of 2007 | Class of 2008 | Class of 2009 | Class of 2010 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Class Size | 53 | 39 | 47 | 48 | 46 | 42 |
| Percent completing postsecondary training | 96 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 96 | 100 |

(Source: December 2011 Charter Report)

| Year | Average # of classes per student | Average # of credits per student |
|------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2007 | 8.4 | 27.9 |
| 2008 | 8.5 | 25.4 |
| 2009 | 8.7 | 26 |
| 2010 | 8.8 | 26.6 |
| 2011 | 6.4 | 19.1 |
| 2012 | 4.3 | 12.9 |

(Source: Charter Renewal)

GOAL 2: Increase math, science, and reading ITED scores at grade 11.

Progress: Juniors show improved scores in reading as compared to the 2004-05 school year, but results have been inconsistent. The charter data indicates a drop in the mathematics scores; the administrator is working with staff to improve student achievement in this area.

Percentage of Iowa Central Charter High School Grade 11 Students on ITED

| | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Reading | 67 | 65 | 69.3 | 83 | 71.4 | 76.1 | 80.0 | 69.39 |
| Math | 83 | 80 | 85.7 | 76.6 | 75.5 | 78.5 | 82.3 | 77.55 |
| Science | 76 | 85 | 93.8 | 87.2 | 76.6 | 83.3 | 81.8 | 79.59 |

(Source: 2007 & 2011 Charter Reports)

GOAL 3: Improve ACT composite scores.

Progress: The charter reported the last three years have been very challenging for junior/senior classes. Scores fell below the state average and Southeast Webster-Grand High School's staff is aware of this decline. Professional development offered by the district has included items and reviewing of these tests and the expectations of the tests.

| | 2003 - 04 | 2004- 05 | 2005- 06 | 2006- 07 | 2007- 08 | 2008- 09 | 2009- 10 | 2010- 11 |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Average Composite Score on ACT | 21.4 | 21.0 | 21.8 | 24.1 | 23.5 | 22.3 | 21.1 | 20.2 |

(Source: 2007 & 2011 Charter Reports)

NON-ACADEMIC GOALS:

GOAL 4: Provide local business and industry with qualified workers.

Progress: The school reports this goal has been dropped because of the lack of businesses available in the area.

GOAL 5: Increase the course offerings available to all students and individualize instruction to meet individual needs.

Progress: The school reports course offerings have greatly increased over the years. Allowing students to attend classes at Iowa Central Community College with the ability to take up to 15 credits per semester, the students have a greater opportunity to enroll in classes that are of high interest to them for future studies. The charter school has allowed several students to attend Iowa Central full-time and complete their freshman year while in high school.

GOAL 6: Continued or increased participation in high school extra-curricular activities.

Progress: The charter school reported early concerns included the ability for students to participate in both the charter and extra-curricular activities. The district continues to offer all past programs with very little change in numbers. The high school principal and guidance counselor work diligently on ensuring the fine arts programs are being offered in the time frame which most seniors are on site.

OTHER CHARTER INFORMATION

The district noted in the renewal document, the Charter Advisory Committee meets every year to review the rules and expectations of the students in the charter. This committee continues to make decisions or recommendations to the Board of Education regarding policy and other concerns that need to be dealt with throughout the year. If at any time that administrative team or students request a need to review an expectation, the Charter Advisory Committee meets to discuss the possible expectation changes. For example, this year the committee met to discuss the increasing cost of transportation and student/parents requesting to drive to Iowa Central in Fort Dodge. Much discussion occurred before the decision or recommendation was made to allow students to drive with parent permission also to continue to provide a bus one trip up and one trip back for second semester of the 2011-2012 school year. The Board of Education approved the recommendation at the January 2012, regular meeting.

When asked why the charter school is requesting renewal, the district reported the following information: In the past eight years, Southeast Webster-Grand has been able to offer juniors and seniors a wide range of college courses at no cost to the parents or students. Because of the limitation in staff, students are able to begin their college career earlier and finish it sooner. The district continues to hope students will take advantage of the college opportunity in high school and be able to finish their degree with little cost to the family. By partnering with Iowa Central Community College, which is only twenty miles away, the charter can offer a range of courses to students that would exceed even the largest high school in the state of Iowa and surpass the credit limitation of 24 credits per year. District personnel changes has resulted in a reduction of college credit courses offered at the high school site. The district wants to offer upper level courses or college level courses; they report the charter school allows the flexibility to accomplish these courses.

The district reported the charter school is successful. For example, all juniors and seniors have participated in the program, and the parents want the program to continue. In addition, the district noted through conversations with the advisory committee and board of education, parents have expressed a positive opinion regarding the continuation of the charter school. It appears students work diligently to meet their core requirements prior to their senior year in order to take non-required courses at Iowa Central Community College. Another example noted by the district was the local newspaper printing the board agenda for the public hearing stating the future of the charter would be discussed; several patrons attended the meeting to express their support. The district reported the desire to maintain the charter school regardless of the cost. The district has had graduates complete their associate degree within a year of starting the college in the following fall.

Future Plans/Goals

The district reported a commitment to the charter noting every student is engaged in college level courses at some level and continuing their education postsecondary. In addition, it appears the positive perception of the charter is being communicated. Examples included: Students hearing about other students positive experiences has enhanced other student's interest in fields they may wish to pursue. Parents hearing about students finishing or close to finishing a year of college within their high school career is a cost saving. Students are able to try areas that they believe they have an interest in and find out that it is not the field for them without losing a year of college costs.

| | Department of Education | Department of Education |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| GOAL 1: Increase the number of graduates who complete postsecondary training. | The data shows an increase of percent completing postsecondary training in the first year as compared to the base line year of class of 2005. This is the primary goal of the charter and ties the most closely with the charter's mission. The average # of classes per student and the average 3 of credits per student are both show a downward trend. | Data are inconclusive. |
| GOAL 2: Increase math, science, and reading ITED scores at grade 11. | The data provided by the district indicates an up and down trend in reading scores, but an overall decrease over the past 7 years. Math scores are declining. Science scores are up and down with an overall downward trend. | Data are inconclusive. |
| GOAL 3: Improve ACT composite scores. | Through conversations with the charter it appears this goal is not an optimal measure of charter effectiveness as not all charter students are taking the ACT. In future years, all charter students shall take the ACT. | Data are inconclusive. |
| GOAL 4: Provide local business and industry with qualified workers. | Prior year end report data and visits to the charter have determined this goal to be difficult to measure and is in fact an action step. The Department recommends the charter drop the goal. | Not measurable. |
| GOAL 5: Increase the course offerings available to all students and individualize instruction to meet individual needs. | The charter needs to find ways to evaluate how they are meeting the needs of special needs students and all student individual needs. Evidence was anecdotal and inconclusive. The charter reported an inability to report the current status of students in the VESS program which serves students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). | Not measured. |
| GOAL 6: Continued or increased participation in high school extra-curricular activities. | Prior year end report data and visits to the charter have determined this goal monitoring has been weak. The goal does not appear to relate to the overall mission of the charter which is to provide students with increased opportunities to take college credit courses. | Data are inconclusive. |

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Improve student learning. §256F.1(3)"a" | The Department notes fluctuations in scores in 11 th grade Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED) and no conclusive data to show an upward trend. The ACT scores are lower than the baseline year of 2003 – 2004. | Data are inconclusive. |
| Increase learning opportunities for students. §256F.1(3)"b" | The increase in Iowa Central courses available to students is positive and is providing an increase in learning opportunities for students. | Met. |
| Encourage the use of different and innovative methods of teaching. §256F.1(3)"c" | The methods of teaching remain traditional. | Not measured. |
| Require the measurement of learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes. §256F.1(3)"d" | The charter shall consider different methods of measurement for goals such as college readiness and achievement. | Not met. |
| Establish new forms of accountability for schools. §256F.1(3)"e" | Although the charter is a school within the high school, it would benefit the charter school program to develop a formalized charter evaluation. | Not met. |
| Create new professional opportunities for teachers and other educators, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site. §256F.1(3)"f" | The charter has had a fluctuation of staff who are qualified to teach college credit courses on site. The district does encourage staff to continue their education and experience in order to teach college credit courses. | Data are inconclusive. |
| Create different organizational structures for continuous learner progress. §256F.1(3)"g" | The district continues to work with charter students regarding schedules and transportation to provide a structure conducive for participation. | Met. |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <p>Allow greater flexibility to meet the education needs of a diverse and constantly changing student population. §256F.1(3)“h”</p> | <p>The charter originally focused on the needs of students with IEPs. Review of data and conversations with personnel indicated this shall be a renewed focus.</p> | <p>Data are inconclusive.</p> |
| <p>Allow for the allocation of resources in innovative ways through implementation of specialized school budgets for the benefit of the schools served. §256F.1(3)“i”</p> | <p>The charter continues to receive district support for continued operation through allocation of financial and personnel resources.</p> | <p>Met.</p> |

Recommendation:

The School Improvement Charter Team convened a group of Department of Education personnel to review the Iowa Central Charter School renewal data. The group recommends the Iowa Central Charter School be granted a one-year approval through the end of the 2012-2013 school year with the following stipulations:

- Engage in continuous improvement with the Department of Education to refine measurable goals.
- Discontinue un-measurable goals.
- Align itself to newly emerging data systems at the Department of Education.

The charter shall continue to evaluate how they will meet the nine purposes of a charter school which are spelled out in Iowa Code 256F.1:

Authorization and purpose.

3. The purpose of a charter school or an innovation zone school established pursuant to this chapter shall be to accomplish the following:

- a. Improve student learning.*
- b. Increase learning opportunities for students.*
- c. Encourage the use of different and innovative methods of teaching.*
- d. Require the measurement of learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes.*
- e. Establish new forms of accountability for schools.*
- f. Create new professional opportunities for teachers and other educators, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.*
- g. Create different organizational structures for continuous learner progress.*
- h. Allow greater flexibility to meet the education needs of a diverse and constantly changing student population.*

i. Allow for the allocation of resources in innovative ways through implementation of specialized school budgets for the benefit of the schools served.