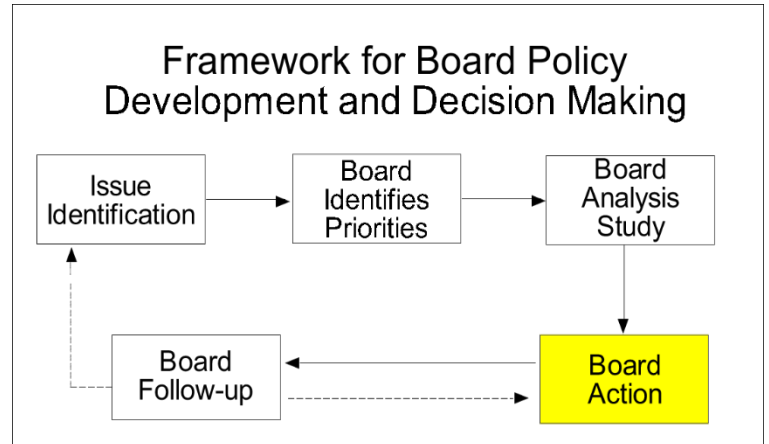


# Iowa State Board of Education

## Executive Summary

April 17, 2025



<b>Agenda Item:</b>	Charter School Contract Amendment Request, Empowering Excellence
<b>State Board Priority:</b>	Goal 5
<b>State Board Role/Authority:</b>	The State Board of Education is the sole authorizer of Iowa charter schools 256E.1(4).
<b>Presenter(s):</b>	Deborah Elder Chief Operating Officer
<b>Attachment(s):</b>	Three
<b>Recommendation:</b>	It is recommended that the State Board approve the amendment requests for Empowering Excellence.
<b>Background:</b>	<p>After authorization, “an enforceable and renewable charter school contract shall be executed between the founding group and the state board setting forth the academic and operational performance expectations and measures by which the charter school will be evaluated pursuant to sections 256E.9 and 256E.10 and the other rights and duties of the parties 256E.6(1).” As the authorizing agent for the State Board, the Department of Education has reviewed the charter school contract amendment request and provides a recommendation.</p> <p>Empowering Excellence submitted contract amendment language, rationale, desired outcome, governing board approval and evidence of a public meeting.</p>

# • Iowa Charter School Amendment Request Form

## Exhibit 1

The **Iowa Charter School Amendment Request Form** is completed by an authorized Charter School that requests consideration of a proposed contract amendment to the State Board of Education. To submit this document, make a copy and submit the completed form to [charters@iowa.gov](mailto:charters@iowa.gov) labeled: **Amendment Request Form\_2024\_NAME OF YOUR CHARTER.**

### 1. Requested Amendment

A. Cite existing contract language to be amended.	B. Provide specific proposed amended language.
<p>Section 8: Admission and Enrollment (Maximum Enrollment) Proposed vision and mission) page 14:</p> <p><i>'The Governing Board has indicated a maximum number of students who may be enrolled in the Charter School in the Application.'</i></p> <p>Per the application:</p> <p><u>Year 1</u> Planned: 70 students Maximum: 78 students</p> <p><u>Year 2</u> Planned: 94 students Maximum: 102 students</p> <p><u>Year 3</u> Planned: 118 students Maximum: 126 students</p> <p><u>Year 4</u> Planned: 142 students Maximum: 150 students</p> <p><u>Year 5</u> Planned: 166 students Maximum: 174 students</p>	<p><a href="#">Link to Min/Planned/Max Enrollment</a></p> <p><b><u>Year 1</u></b> <i>9th Grade</i> Min: 6 Planned: 13 Max: 14</p> <p><i>10th Grade</i> Min: 15 Planned: 34 Max: 38</p> <p><i>11th Grade</i> Min: 25 Planned: 56 Max: 63</p> <p><i>12th Grade</i> Min: 54 Planned: 122 Max: 135</p> <p><b><u>Year 2</u></b> <i>9th Grade</i> Min: 13 Planned: 14 Max: 24</p> <p><i>10th Grade</i> Min: 34 Planned: 38 Max: 60</p>

*11th Grade*

Min: 56

Planned: 63

Max: 100

*12th Grade*

Min: 122

Planned: 135

Max: 216

**Year 3**

*9th Grade*

Min: 14

Planned: 16

Max: 30

*10th Grade*

Min: 38

Planned: 41

Max: 75

*11th Grade*

Min: 63

Planned: 69

Max: 125

*12th Grade*

Min: 135

Planned: 149

Max: 270

**Year 4**

*9th Grade*

Min: 16

Planned: 18

Max: 30

*10th Grade*

Min: 41

Planned: 45

Max: 75

*11th Grade*

Min: 69

Planned: 75

Max: 125

	<p><i>12th Grade</i> Min: 149 Planned: 162 Max: 270</p> <p><b><u>Year 5</u></b></p> <p><i>9th Grade</i> Min: 18 Planned: 19 Max: 30</p> <p><i>10th Grade</i> Min: 45 Planned: 48 Max: 75</p> <p><i>11th Grade</i> Min: 75 Planned: 82 Max: 125</p> <p><i>12th Grade</i> Min: 162 Planned: 176 Max: 270</p>

2. **Rationale** Describe the rationale for the language revision from 1A to 1B. Provide sufficient detail to explain the need for the amendment.

Empowering Excellence Charter School (EECS) opened the 2024-25 school year with an anticipated enrollment of 70 students but quickly surpassed expectations with 100 enrollments, growing steadily by an average of 10 students per month. The school's alternative framework effectively addresses critical needs for Iowa families, supporting students with behavior challenges, credit recovery, and placements referred by organizations such as Foundation 2, Four Oaks, and Tanager. Additionally, EECS has become an option for students in the juvenile court system, offering a pathway to earning their high school diploma. This sustained growth highlights the significant demand for a supportive, innovative educational option and underscores EECS's commitment to delivering tailored learning experiences for all students.

#### **Enrollment Success and Growing Demand**

- EECS launched the 2024-25 school year with an unexpected surge in enrollment, starting with 100 students instead of the anticipated 70.
- Monthly enrollment increases of approximately 10 students highlight the community's recognition of EECS as an educational option.

#### **Addressing Community-Specific Needs**

- By partnering with organizations such as Foundation 2, Four Oaks, and Tanager, EECS effectively serves students facing behavior challenges, credit gaps, and placement requirements.

- The school’s tailored support framework is uniquely designed to meet the distinct needs of underserved students.

#### **Opportunities for At-Risk Youth**

- For students in the juvenile court system, EECS has been an accessible path to earn their high school diploma through our unique framework.
- This approach establishes EECS as an option for families seeking equitable and transformative educational solutions.

#### **Summary**

EECS has exceeded enrollment projections for the 2024-25 school year, reflecting its growing impact and demand. Through strong partnerships with organizations such as Foundation 2, Four Oaks, and Tanager, EECS has been able to support critical student needs, including behavior support, credit recovery, and placement services, while providing a pathway for students in the juvenile court system to earn their high school diploma. This success underscores the effectiveness of EECS’s innovative learning framework, which prioritizes communication and collaboration with students and families, further highlighting the unique value charter schools bring as alternative educational solutions tailored to diverse student needs.

### 3. **Desired Outcome** Describe the desired outcome of the amendment.

Empowering Excellence Charter School (EECS) is dedicated to serving Iowa's families by addressing the clear demand for our framework for student and family support. Our updated enrollment numbers align with current growth projections, provide flexibility to adapt to possible shifts in community needs, and establish an accurate maximum enrollment capacity based on demonstrated demand.

#### **Responsiveness to Community Needs**

- EECS is adapting enrollment capacity to reflect shifting community demands.
- Flexibility to ensure we continue to be a resource for families across Iowa.

#### **Transparent and Accurate Enrollment Practices**

- Updated enrollment numbers provide a realistic view of maximum capacity.
- Data-driven adjustments align with observed growth trends and proven demand.

#### **Commitment to Long-Term Growth and Stability**

- Aligning enrollment with demand ensures sustainable growth for the school.
- Strategic planning supports continued excellence in serving Iowa’s families.

### 4. **Best Practices** Describe how previous practices that led to the established contract language (1A) will change to support the current amended language (1B). How will the charter ensure effective implementation of the proposed amendment?

In January 2025, Empowering Excellence Charter School (EECS) received approval to expand its enrollment criteria from grades 10–12 (ages 16–21) to grades 9–12 (ages 14–21). As part of the approval process, EECS was asked to submit an amendment addressing maximum enrollment, ensuring alignment with our upcoming facility expansion scheduled for later in the year.

The updated maximum enrollment more accurately aligns with the evolving needs Iowa families are expressing for our framework for school learning. Further, it upholds a transparent, data-driven approach through our ongoing and annual budgeting process. By consistently monitoring enrollment and adapting to community needs, we are able to strengthen our commitment to offering a responsive and

successful high school alternative that prioritizes student achievement and opportunity.

5. **Documentation**

- a. The amendment is approved by the charter school governing board (meeting agenda and minutes reflecting approval of the amendment request - attachment labeled ***GBAmendment Approval***)
- b. A public meeting with stakeholders addressing the proposed change/s to the charter contract (attachment labeled ***PMAmendment***). Note that a designated public comment specific to the amendment on the governing board agenda may fulfill the public meeting requirement. Include names and roles of each individual that participated in public comment and a summary of their input.

[GBAmendment Approval](#)

[PMAmendment](#)

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>9th Grade</b>	<b>9th Grade</b>	<b>9th Grade</b>	<b>9th Grade</b>	<b>9th Grade</b>
Min: 6	Min: 13	Min: 14	Min: 16	Min: 18
Planned: 13	Planned: 14	Planned: 16	Planned: 18	Planned: 19
Max: 14	Max: 24	Max: 30	Max: 30	Max: 30
<b>10th Grade</b>	<b>10th Grade</b>	<b>10th Grade</b>	<b>10th Grade</b>	<b>10th Grade</b>
Min: 15	Min: 34	Min: 38	Min: 41	Min: 45
Planned: 34	Planned: 38	Planned: 41	Planned: 45	Planned: 48
Max: 38	Max: 60	Max: 75	Max: 75	Max: 75
<b>11th Grade</b>	<b>11th Grade</b>	<b>11th Grade</b>	<b>11th Grade</b>	<b>11th Grade</b>
Min: 25	Min: 56	Min: 63	Min: 69	Min: 75
Planned: 56	Planned: 63	Planned: 69	Planned: 75	Planned: 82
Max: 63	Max: 100	Max: 125	Max: 125	Max: 125
<b>12th Grade</b>	<b>12th Grade</b>	<b>12th Grade</b>	<b>12th Grade</b>	<b>12th Grade</b>
Min: 54	Min: 122	Min: 135	Min: 149	Min: 162
Planned: 122	Planned: 135	Planned: 149	Planned: 162	Planned: 176
Max: 135	Max: 216	Max: 270	Max: 270	Max: 270

# Empowering Excellence Charter School

## Board Meeting Minutes, April 2, 2025

I. **Lauren White, Board Chair** called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

II. **Roll call—Carol Gorman, Board Secretary.**

A. Present: Lauren White, Board Chair; Joe Nguyen, Board Vice-Chair; Tom Darden, Finance Chair; Maurice Davis, Marketing Specialist, Carol Gorman, Board Secretary; Dee Swayze, LaToya Harrington, and non board members: Charles Mausser (Principal) and Jonathan Gillen (Charter Impact), and Sarah Swayze (Executive Director)

III. **Board Chair—no report**

IV. **Community Feedback (No communities member joined the meeting)**

V. **Presenting Agenda: Lauren White**

VI. The President opened the meeting to the public at 4:36 P.M. and closed it to the public at 4:50 with no public feedback. The president shared a conversation with the board that Sarah Swayze was allowed to purchase 6 additional laptop computers from Best Buy immediately. The additional laptops were needed to meet the needs of new enrollments.

VII. **President close meeting to the public at 5:29 pm**

A. **Board Meeting Summary**

The purpose of the board meeting was to review and discuss financial documents and to vote on 2 amendments and 1 update to be approved by the Iowa Board of Education. The amendments and update addressed the following



items:

1. Maximum enrollment
2. Approval of lease agreement
3. Offer and Teach
4. Policies

These topics were deliberated to ensure compliance with state regulations and to support the organization's ongoing operations.

B. Charles explained Offer and Teach to the Board and what its intended purposes are. Joe N. made the proposal to approve the amendment and Dee S. second. The Board voted to approve Offer and Teach.

C. Charles M. explained the policies and procedures that were submitted to the Board two weeks in advance. A motion was made by Joe N and seconded by Dee S.. The motion was subsequently approved by the Board..

D. Sarah presented the proposed amendment which involved relocating from 1918 St. Andrews Court NE at a price of \$6500 monthly for five years. She explained that a building with a total of approximately 5100 square feet would be adequate due to increasing enrollment numbers, and the need to hire additional staff. A motion to approve the relocation was made by Lauren W. and seconded by Joe Nguyen subsequently approved by the Board. The Board voted to approve the relocation and lease.

E. Sarah presented the last proposed amendment, which involved maximum enrollment. A motion to approve the maximum enrollment was made by Joe N. and seconded by Thomas D. subsequently approved by the Board.

F. Lauren addressed the Board concerning the letters of resignation. Three members are stepping down from the Board. The members are Lauren W. on May 29, 2025, Carol G. (Secretary, immediately at the end of the meeting), and LaToya H. (will be submitting her letter later in the week).

**VIII. Meeting adjourned at 5:27 p.m.**