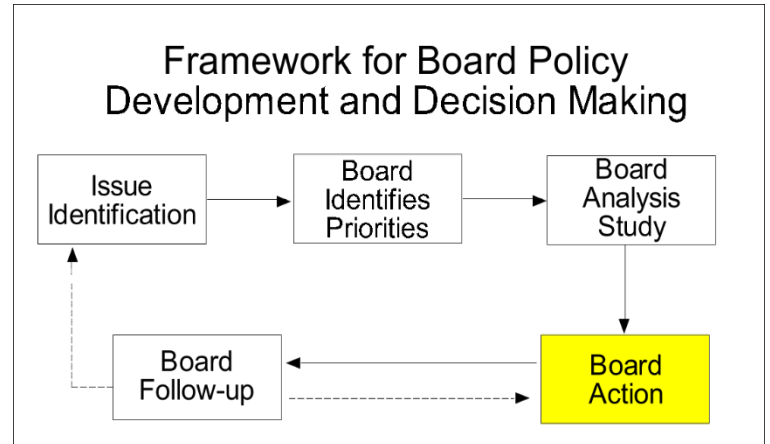


# Iowa State Board of Education

## Executive Summary

May 8, 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>	One
<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.
No amendment to this Contract will be valid unless ratified in writing by the SBE and the Governing Board and executed by the authorized representatives of the Parties.	No amendment to this Contract will be valid unless ratified in writing by the SBE and the Governing Board and executed by the authorized representatives of the Parties, and the Charter School is submitting a waiver request for all of the Offer and Teach requirements

### 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) respectfully requests an amendment to its contract for full exemption from Offer and Teach requirements. This adjustment will continue to allow EECS to deliver individualized and innovative learning experiences tailored to the unique academic and developmental needs of our students.

#### **Unique Student Population**

- A majority of EECS students are over the age of 17, which typically places them as 12th grade students. However, many have credit completions equivalent to typical 9th or 10th grade students, indicating significant credit gaps.
- The mandates within Offer and Teach can make it difficult to address the varying credit completion needs of these students requiring flexible and targeted approaches.

#### **Offer and Teach Challenges**

- Adhering to Offer and Teach mandates can necessitate scheduling courses that may not align with the individualized need(s) or goal(s) of our students, detracting from the personalized support central to EECS's mission.
- Balancing compliance with these requirements can inadvertently shift focus from our student-centered framework, leading to less optimal outcomes for academic growth and engagement.

#### **Keeping Student Progress as the Focus**

- EECS students often require substantial support in developing academic stamina due to the

challenges they face in their traditional school settings. Providing courses that strategically foster incremental success is essential to strengthening this stamina.

- The Offer and Teach mandates can lead to the scheduling of courses that hinder the development of these essential skills. Additionally, given many of our students' history of challenges, setbacks can significantly impact their ability to re-engage with their classes, further complicating their academic progress.
- Students with significant credit gaps thrive in an environment that fosters momentum through carefully tailored class schedules, enabling them to build self-advocacy skills and regain their comfort, confidence, and competence as successful learners. Maintaining full flexibility to prioritize this focus is essential to supporting their path to graduation.

### **Summary**

EECS is committed to maintaining rigorous educational standards while ensuring the flexibility required to meet the diverse needs of our students. This exemption will allow us to continue our success in serving our population while continuing to align with the broader goals of Iowa's educational system.

We currently use the Offer and Teach mandates as a guideline for designing our class offerings and establishing a baseline for well-rounded student supports. However, the waiver provides the flexibility to adjust when necessary to better address the unique needs of individual students.

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

Empowering Excellence Charter School (EECS) seeks to maintain the autonomy necessary to tailor support to our students' unique academic needs effectively. This includes aligning our course offerings directly with students' specific learning goals, ensuring a focused, needs-based approach to their educational experience.

#### **Autonomy in Educational Support**

- Our course catalog is reviewed and developed to connect directly to specific student needs.
- This approach fosters targeted learning opportunities and enhances student outcomes.

#### **Alignment of Course Offerings**

- Our course catalog is reviewed and developed to connect directly to specific student needs.
- This approach fosters targeted learning opportunities and enhances student outcomes.

### **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?

Current practice prioritizes compliance with course offerings, limiting flexibility to fully address student's individualized academic needs. Moving forward, course development and scheduling will be intentionally aligned with students' credit attainment, academic stamina, and specific life circumstances, such as age and housing stability. The amended language enables EECS to deepen its investment in a targeted, student-centered course catalog designed to foster momentum, re-engagement, and credit completion for students with significant academic gaps. Implementation planning will begin in late May, with full implementation ready for the start of the 2025–2026 school year.

EECS ensures effective implementation by individualizing each student's course schedule through a

personalized learning plan meeting at enrollment. These meetings involve authentic conversations about the student's current life situation, academic stamina, credits completed, and personal interests. As credits are completed, continual communication with students allows for regular adjustments to course loads, with particular attention to prior experiences in core subjects and connections with career interests. As a result, students receive a customized, supportive pathway aligned with both academic success and real-world applicability. Further, these adjustments are centered on ongoing and continuous student feedback.

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 **GBAmentment Approval**)
- b. A public meeting with stakeholders addressing the proposed change/s to the charter contract (attachment labeled **PMAmentment**). 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.

[GBAmentment Approval](#)

[PMAmentment](#)