

Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

March 13, 2026

Agenda Item: Charter School Contract Amendment Request –
Distinctive Innovation Academy

**State Board
Goal:** Goal 5

**State Board
Role/Authority:** The State Board of Education is the sole authorizer of
Iowa charter schools Iowa Code section 256E.1(4).

Presenter(s): Tom Bredfield, Education Program Consultant
Bureau of School Improvement

Erin Lanoue, Chief Operating Officer
Distinctive Schools

Attachment(s): One

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board approve the
amendment request for Distinctive Innovation Academy.

Background: 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 Iowa Code sections 256E.9 and 256E.10 and
the other rights and duties of the parties of Iowa Code
subsection 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.

Distinctive Innovation Academy has submitted contract
amendment language, rationale and a desired outcome
for the specific amendment request.

Iowa Charter School Amendment Request Distinctive Innovation Academy

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.

1. Requested Amendment

A. Cite existing contract language to be amended.	B. Provide specific proposed amended language.
Distinctive Innovation Academy (DIA) would like to postpone the school opening to the 2027-2028 school year and not the 2026-2027 year. Multiple sections throughout the contract reference a fall 2026 opening that will need to be updated to a fall 2027 opening, if approved. No additional elements of the current contract are proposed to change.	The charter school will open in the 2027-2028 school year. Multiple sections throughout the contract reference a fall 2026 opening that will need to be updated to a fall 2027 opening, if approved. No additional elements of the current contract are proposed to change.

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

The extension will allow DIA to ensure the school can acquire and likely renovate a safe, sustainable and mission-aligned school launch. DIA has been working with a real estate broker to secure a suitable school site; however, we have been unsuccessful finding a building that can be renovated prior to the launch of the 2026-2027 school year. DIA does not want to recruit students and staff if we are not able to open in August 2026.

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

The additional time will allow DIA to secure financing to acquire a building, complete renovations and increase community and philanthropic support.

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?

DIA will continue to work with a local real estate broker to find a suitable school location. The additional time will also allow for more time to secure additional financial support and philanthropy to support the long-term financial picture of the school. Deferring the opening to 2027-2028 will ensure that a facility is ready to welcome staff and students and the commitment to the community is honored without concerns about construction delays or a missed school start.

5. Documentation

- a. The amendment is approved by the charter school governing board (meeting agenda and minutes reflecting approval of the amendment request).
- b. A public meeting with stakeholders addressing the proposed change/s to the charter contract. 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.

Since DIA is in the pre-opening phase and a location has not been finalized, a public meeting was not held because DIA has not enrolled students. Additionally, the board has not been finalized. DIA wants to ensure there is proper community representation and will identify the community first. The facility has been a barrier to opening in fall 2026 and is why DIA is seeking an amendment to open in fall 2027.