

MEMORANDUM

Staff Summary No. 4

Date: August 13, 2014

To: Members of the California School Finance Authority

From: Katrina M. Johantgen, Executive Director

Subject: Consideration of Appeal on Behalf of Western Center Academy Regarding the Charter School Facility Grant Program

Background: On April 10, 2014, all California charter schools were notified via-email of the deadline for application submission for the 2014-15 funding round under the State Charter School Facility Grant Program (Program). Section 10170.5(b) of the Program regulations sets forth an application deadline of May 10, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. As May 10, 2014 fell on a Saturday, the application deadline was extended to Monday, May 12, 2014 which was stated in the email.

Since the July 24, 2014 California School Finance Authority (Authority) board meeting, at which time the board advised staff to accept four late applications, staff received another late application for the 2014-15 funding round of the Program from Western Center Academy located in Riverside County. School representatives were notified that their application was late, and that late applications would not be deemed eligible for Program funding. The school responded with the following statement via e-mail and formalized their appeal in the attached letter to Authority staff.

“Western Center Academy is a charter school in Riverside County that has participated in the SB 740 Facility Grant Program since we opened in fall 2010. During that time we have always worked with CDE and then CSFA during the month of August to complete the facilities grant application. When I went online today to look to see if the application had been posted yet I read that the applications had already been made available and that the deadline for submitting an application was May 12th of this year. The Facility Grant Program is a critical part of our funding and not being able to participate would have dire implications for our academic program. I am requesting the opportunity to discuss this situation and/or submit a late application for our school. We have had nothing but positive experiences working with your office and have been very pleased with what I'm sure was a challenging transition in taking over this program from CDE. To my knowledge we received no notification of the change in timeline for the application and our staff were working within the timeline from our previous experience with the grant program.”

Authority staff was able to identify that an e-mail was sent to the school in April (along with all other California charter schools) but the school stated they did not receive the e-mail notification. At this time, the school is formally appealing staff's finding of ineligibility, and is exercising its right to appeal staff's determination to the Authority board.

Recommendation: Staff is recommending that the board deny the appeal by Western Center Academy. Program regulations clearly state the submission deadline. Whereas we are empathetic to the financial ramifications this denial may have on the school, we cannot violate Program regulations or make exemptions for some schools.