

MEMORANDUM

Staff Summary No. 4

Date: September 10, 2014

To: Members of the California School Finance Authority

From: Katrina M. Johantgen, Executive Director

Subject: Consideration of Appeal 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.

Staff currently has four schools appealing their ineligibility for the Program. Below we have highlighted three schools' appeals (the fourth was received after the agenda was posted). Appeal letters have been attached for your review and consideration.

1. Yuba Environmental Science Charter Academy's application was received on May 13, 2014 (the submission deadline was May 12, 2014). The school alleges it did not believe it was eligible to apply because they were in discussions to purchase the site they are housed. On May 12th, the school's back office provider – Charter School Management Corporation – notified the school on May 12th that they were eligible to apply for the grant. The school believed the application needed to be postmarked on the 12th, not received on the 12th. School personnel tried faxing or e-mailing the application, and were notified that the application needed to be mailed, and that faxed or e-mailed applications were not accepted. School officials are appealing staff's determination that the application is not eligible.
2. Ipakanni Early College Charter School believed that the due date for the application was September 9th, like it was last year. The school is a former recipient of the grant and claims that they never received an e-mail notification from CSFA about the application due date of May 12, 2014 for 2014-15. Based on staff's review of the e-mail notification, Ipakanni was sent the e-mail notification, but school representatives claim they never received it.
3. Learning Community Charter School has experienced tremendous staff turnover and therefore the school's application failed to get completed and submitted by the due date. School officials report that these grant funds have been an integral part of the school's annual budget since 2009 – "the school would suffer a substantial financial hardship without the grant."

Recommendation: Staff is recommending that the board deny the appeal by the aforementioned schools. 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.