

MEMORANDUM

Staff Summary Item No. 8

Date: August 28, 2019

To: Members of the California School Finance Authority

From: Thomas Dear, Staff Services Manager II

Subject: Consideration of Appeal Regarding the Charter School Facility Grant Program for ICEF Inglewood Middle Charter Academy

Background: On February 21, 2019 and July 16, 2019, the California School Finance Authority (Authority or CSFA) received a Good Standing Letter (GSL) from Inglewood Unified School District (IUSD), for ICEF (Inner City Education Foundation) Inglewood Middle Charter Academy's (CDS 13631230121855) (ICEF Inglewood), which found ICEF Inglewood not in good standing with IUSD, its Chartering Authority, nor in compliance with the terms of its charter (See Attachments #1 and #5). Pursuant to Section 10170.3(f) of Charter School Facility Grant Program (Program) regulations, a charter school is eligible for a grant if "the charter school is in good standing with its Chartering Authority and is in compliance with the terms of its charter at the time of application submission, and without interruption throughout the term of the grant." As a result of the February 21, 2019 certification from IUSD, ICEF Inglewood was found ineligible for the 2018-19 Program Award (totaling \$180,000), and an ineligibility letter was sent to the school on March 19, 2019 (See Attachment #2).

ICEF Inglewood's Position: On July 15, 2019, ICEF Inglewood submitted an appeal claiming "Inglewood Unified School District's decision to deny a certification of good standing was in error" and requested CSFA members to overturn the CSFA staff decision regarding ICEF Inglewood's eligibility for a 2018-2019 Program Award." (See Attachment #7)

At the May 29, 2019 IUSD Board Meeting, ICEF Inglewood requested the Chartering Authority to reverse its good standing determination. The Board Minutes cited ICEF's history of inadequate academic performance as the reason for denial and a requirement of ICEF Inglewood's charter. (See Attachment #4)

Authority Position: Since 2016, the Authority has utilized its Good Standing Letter to establish eligibility for program funding. Schools that have received negative responses from their Chartering Authority have requested the Authority to intervene on their behalf.

The Authority does not arbitrate or mediate when schools are facing issues with their Chartering Authority. Under the current regulations approved in 2016, "The Authority will rely on information from the Chartering Authority regarding the charter school's good standing and compliance with the terms of its charter. Charter schools may appeal any response by the chartering authority's staff directly to the chartering authority's governing board. It shall be the charter school's responsibility, and not the Authority's, to ensure that the good standing and compliance response letter is received by the stated deadline."

In the case of ICEF Inglewood, Authority staff directed the school representatives and its advocates to appeal to the IUSD Board since the Authority staff, nor Board, is charged with certifying a school's good standing with its Chartering Authority or compliance with its charter.

Analysis: It appears from the May 29, 2019 IUSD Board Meeting, IUSD's decision to deny a certification of good standing was not made in error. Further, both certifications dated February 21, 2019 and July 16, 2019 were intended to report that ICEF Inglewood was not good standing with its Chartering Authority nor in compliance with the terms of its charter through the 2018-19 school year. Pursuant to Section 10170.3(f) of Program regulations, the applicant must maintain continuous good standing designation with its authorizer throughout the funding round.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that for the 2018-19 Program funding round, ICEF Inglewood remain ineligible for the 2018-19 Program Award.

Attachments:

1. IUSD Good Standing Letter February 21, 2019
2. Ineligibility Letter March 19, 2019
3. ICEF Inglewood Appeal letter to Authority May 15, 2019
4. IUSD Board Meeting May 29, 2019
5. IUSD Good Standing Letter July 16, 2019
6. Authority Appeal Response June 17, 2019
7. ICEF Inglewood Appeal letter to the Board July 15, 2019