M E M O R A N D U M **Staff Summary No. 10**

Date: September 28, 2023

To: Members of the California School Finance Authority

From: Katrina M. Johantgen, Executive Director

Subject: Resolution No. 23-49 – Approval of a Charter School Revolving Loan Fund Program Loan in an amount not to exceed $150,000 for Phoenix Charter Academy College View located in Shasta County (Action Item)

Overview: The California School Finance Authority (Authority) opened the application period for the 2023-24 Funding Round of the Charter School Revolving Loan Fund Program (Program) in August 2023. The Program has approximately $25 million available to award for this funding round. The Authority has received one (1) application, thus far, with a funding request totaling $150,000.

Authority staff has assessed the application from the Phoenix Charter Academy College View (Phoenix) in accordance with the framework established by statute and regulations. Phoenix is a Priority Two School that opened in August 2022, and has already received a loan under the Program for $100,000 under the 2021-22B Funding Round. Staff is recommending the school receive the maximum loan amount of $150,000.

Staff Review Process: Since the Authority began administering the Program in 2013-14, Staff and our advisors have worked, through regulation, policy, and underwriting criteria, to mitigate Program defaults and maintain the balance of the fund to ensure future loan awards. Below is an outline of our application review and loan underwriting and funding process.

1. **Application Eligibility & Package Review:** Confirmed the submittal complied with application terms such as:
   - Met application deadline;
   - Eligibility requirements set forth in regulations (Section 10170.18);
   - Submitted required documentation with signatures, where applicable;
   - Requested a loan amount equal to or less than $250,000; and
   - Requested a loan repayment period of five years or less.

2. **Operational Analysis**: Determined whether minimum qualifications were met such as:
   - Articles of Incorporation are in place;
   - Approved charter is in place or is in process;

- Projected enrollment and ADA are supported by student enrollment and/or waiting lists;
- Student population was deemed representative of the demographic in the school's proposed location; and
- A facility has been secured or is in the process of being secured.

3. **Financial Analysis:** Conducted fiscal evaluation based on a variety of indicators and critically analyzed financial data and ratios against benchmarks and industry practice using an internally created financial model to identify fiscal strengths and weaknesses such as:
    - Availability of other sources of funding;
    - Reasonableness of budget assumptions (Staff applied uniform LCFF funding rates to all applicants);
    - Alignment of revenue and expenditure projections with comparable data available from the California Department of Education (CDE);
    - Consideration of sale of apportionments to third parties ("factoring"); and
    - Adequacy of debt service coverage (DSC) metrics relative to threshold levels, with and without net assets.

Staff's financial analysis utilizes three DSC metrics: (1) DSC from total state aid subject to CSFA intercept; (2) DSC from net revenues; and (3) DSC from net revenues plus beginning net assets. Threshold levels are set for each of these three metrics. If the applicant attains these threshold levels during the years of loan repayment, then a maximum 70 points are recorded. The applicant may receive up to an additional 30 points, for a maximum score of 100 points, if the DSC threshold levels are attained under a scenario wherein projected attendance levels are reduced by 25% (the stress test). Applicants that meet or exceed the 50-point threshold qualify as passing in the context of the Program's loan underwriting standards. Staff also reduced loan amounts for applicants that do not otherwise meet the threshold underwriting DSC standards, with a minimum $100,000 loan.

The financial model also determines the risk profile of an applicant with a passing score. Applicants with scores ranging from 50.0 to 75.0 are viewed as "higher risk", while applicants with scores ranging from 74.9 to 89.9 are deemed "medium risk", and applicants with scores ranging from 90.0 to 100.0 are considered "lower risk". Schools assessed as medium risk and lower risk have attained DSC threshold levels in some or all years under the stress test scenario. Additionally, any application, which includes a loan guarantee from an affiliated organization deemed credible by Staff, has its risk profile improved by one level, such as from "higher risk" to "medium risk".

4. **Loan Recommendations:** Staff considered all operational and financial information and assumptions for each loan and performed the following:
    - Assigned risk profiles—low, medium, or high;

- Sorted applicants by priority in accordance with California Code of Regulations §10170.17(o) through (r) and §10170.20(c) through (e); and
- Based on the availability of funds, recommended specific loans for approval or non-approval.

5. **Amount and Term:** Furthermore, Staff used Section 10170.21(b)(1) of the Program regulations to identify the recommended loan amount and repayment period of each loan. The regulations state the Authority shall consider the term of the charter as well as the loan amount in determining the repayment period.

   To further mitigate default risk, Staff based the recommended loan amount and repayment period on the school's charter term. Staff recommended each applicant have a repayment period that does not exceed the school's charter term. Additionally, staff recommended each applicant be awarded a loan that can be repaid within the loan term based on the results of the financial analysis described above.

6. **Disbursements:** In an effort to reduce losses to the Program, Staff will continue to reduce loan defaults by (1) increasing the frequency of attendance monitoring in the year of loan award, and (2) limiting loan disbursements to borrowers with attendance certified at levels consistent with previously submitted projections. For any loan amount approved by the board for lower risk applicants, the first of two potential loan disbursements would occur after loan documents are executed, up to a maximum amount of 40% of loan amount. A subsequent disbursement of the remaining 60% will occur once CDE certifies the applicant's attendance, typically in mid to late December. For any loan amount approved by the board for medium or higher risk applicants, the first of three potential loan disbursements would occur after loan documents are executed, up to a maximum amount of 40% of loan amount. The two subsequent disbursements would be up to 30% of the remaining amount. Each disbursement will occur in the months after CDE certifies attendance in late December, and mid-February. Borrowers reporting attendance at levels which are not adequate to repay the loan will have future disbursements downsized or eliminated.

For your review and consideration, Staff provides summary findings for each recommended school in the attached Exhibit A – RLF Board Matrix. In order to receive funding through the Program, schools must meet the following criteria, once approved by the Authority board:

- Continue to meet all eligibility criteria;
- Have an approved charter in place;
- Have a Charter Number from CDE;
- Have been assigned a County-District-School Code from CDE; and
- Provide an executed loan agreement and related governing board resolution to the Authority.

<u>Recommendation</u>: Staff recommends the Board adopt Resolution No. 23-49, approving Phoenix Charter Academy College View in the amount of $150,000. Once approved, staff will notify the school of the conditional loan approval, confirm the school meets all funding criteria before releasing funds, distribute and execute the loan agreement, and carry out all other necessary steps to disburse funds to this charter school.