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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Members, Utah State Board of Education

**FROM:** Martell Menlove, Ph.D.  
Chief Executive Officer

**DATE:** May 9, 2014

**ACTION:** Amendment request from George Washington Academy

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### **Background:**

George Washington Academy opened as a charter school in Washington in fall 2006 and serves 1,024 students in grades K-8. The school requests to add 50 students in fall 2015 to accommodate the current enrollment through all grades served. The State Charter School Board has reviewed and approved the school's revised request and forwards it to the State Board of Education for consideration.

### **Key Points:**

George Washington Academy requests to modify its charter to add 50 students in fall 2015 to accommodate the current enrollment through all grades served. These student enrollments can be accommodated in the total number of new students authorized by the Utah Legislature. The executive summary report is included and additional information submitted by the school can be found at <http://schools.utah.gov/charterschools/State-Charter-School-Board/2014-Board-Meetings/April-2014.aspx>.

### **Anticipated Action:**

The Law and Licensing Committee will consider approving George Washington Academy governing board's request to add 50 students in fall 2015, as outlined in the amendment request. If approved by the Committee, the Board will consider approving the applications.

**Contact:** Brenda Hales, Deputy Superintendent, 801-538-7515  
Marlies Burns, Director of Charter Schools, 801-538-7871

# AMENDMENT

## Utah State Board of Education Charter School Board Executive Summary Report

The Utah State Charter School Board (SCSB) is charged with authorizing, monitoring, evaluating, and dismissing charters of public schools in Utah. Its work is under the direct supervision of the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) per Utah Code 53A-1a-501.5.

This summary report shall be completed by the SCSB and submitted to Brenda Hales, Deputy Superintendent, Utah State Office of Education, two weeks prior to the regularly scheduled USBE meetings for approval and inclusion in the board's agenda materials. Only that which is in writing, and included in the agenda materials, as ratified for recommendation by the SCSB, shall be considered by the USBE in its final approval process. Attachments, by way of clarification, or elaboration, may be included.

1. Charter School George Washington Academy

2. Website www.gwacademy.org

Board Chair: Shannon Greer Email sgreer@gwacademy.org

School Administrator: Anya Yeager Email ayeager@gwacademy.org

3. The Charter school is located in which school district? Washington

4. Requested amendment to charter (summary – full report can be found on State Charter School Board website at <http://www.schools.utah.gov/charterschools/State-Charter-School-Board/2014-Board-Meetings/April-2014/Amendment-request---George-Washington-FINAL.aspx>)

Add 50 additional students in grades 7-8 beginning in 2015-2016 (1,075 students total); technical changes to application.

5. Charter school mission and purpose(s):

The main purpose at George Washington Academy is to provide a rigorous and comprehensive education for its students that improves the learning experience and challenges its students.

Primarily, the school offers a comprehensive, solid, sequential curriculum known as Core Knowledge. This program stresses the importance of background knowledge and functional literacy in promoting effective national communication. The school seeks to establish a traditional reference point of literate culture that enables its students to express themselves in academic and non-academic settings. As part of the Core Knowledge Curriculum, weekly lesson plans include time for art, music, social studies, science, and physical education. In addition, the school offers a variety of enhancement activities that enrich the learning opportunities of its students.

George Washington Academy is different not only in the curriculum that its teachers teach, but also in the instructional methods that the teachers use. The school offers direct, hands-on instruction, with a variety of modalities to reach every learning type. Teachers consider it their responsibility to keep

students engaged and enthusiastic. Teachers provide scaffolding, by building on prior knowledge, and continue with direct instructions, opportunities for guided and independent practice, appropriate homework activities, formal and informal assessments, and continued independent practice as students work towards mastery. Whenever possible, teachers find opportunities to challenge advanced students as well as to support those who need additional help. George Washington Academy improves student learning by *what* it teaches and *how* teachers teach.

6. Charter school student demographics (2013-2014 data):

- 1,024 students in grades K-8
- 17.6% ethnic/racial minority
- 30.4% students are economically disadvantaged
- 0.0% students are learning English
- 7.4% students with disabilities

Washington district student demographics (2013-2014 data):

- 27,099 students in grades K – 12
- 19.2% ethnic/racial minority
- 43.4% students are economically disadvantaged
- 5.4% students learning English
- 11.8% students with disabilities

7. What is the position of the local district regarding the amendment request? Who was the contact at the local district? (Attachment of letters, if necessary)

The school submitted this entire amendment request to Superintendent Larry Bergeson, Washington County School District in February 2014. No concerns from the district have been received to date.

8. Please provide a summary of the Utah State Charter School Board discussion pertaining to this amendment request, including points it would like the Utah State Board of Education to consider when making the decision to approve the amendment.

None

9. Votes of the SCSB in approving the charter school application:

(Listing of charter board members' vote)

Tim Beagley, Howard Headlee,  
Dean Brockbank, Robert Enger  
Kristin Elinkowski, Bruce Davis

Recommended full approval

\_\_\_\_\_

Did not recommend approval

\_\_\_\_\_

Recommended alternate approval\*

\*Provide detailed explanation of alternate approval

The Utah State Charter School Board assures the accuracy of this report, supports this application, and submits it to the Utah State Board of Education for final approval.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, SCSB Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

The Utah State Board of Education considered this application on

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

This application is: ( ) Approved ( ) Not Approved, for the following reasons:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, USBE Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date