



**New Satellite School or Large Expansion Application**

Charter School Name:

Syracuse Arts Academy

Charter School Director:

Dale Pfister

The request is for: (select one)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Satellite School</b> Grade levels currently served: <u>K-9, 2 campuses:</u> <u>Antelope Campus (K-9), North Elementary</u> <u>Campus (K-6)</u> Grade levels requested for satellite school: <u>K-6</u> Current max enrollment: <u>1,753</u> Max enrollment requested for satellite school: <u>756</u> Current LEA location(s): <u>Syracuse (Davis District)</u> Requested location for satellite school (city and district): <u>Syracuse/west Layton (Davis District)</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Large Expansion</b> Grade levels currently served: _____ Grade levels requested for satellite school: _____ Current max enrollment: _____ Max enrollment requested for satellite school: _____
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*I certify that this request is being made by the governing board and has been discussed in an open and public meeting.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Chair/ Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director/ Date

Please select one response per requirement:

- Yes  No      1. The charter school complies with the requirements of federal and state laws, regulations, and Board rule.
- Yes  No      2. The charter school meets the academic and other standards and requirements of the charter school authorizer.
- Yes  No      3. The charter school is in good standing with the SCSB.
- Yes  No      4. The charter LEA, as a whole, qualifies as high performing under the SCSB’s approved definition of high performing.
- Yes  No      5. The school complies with all public school legal obligations.
- Yes  No      6. The charter school has no outstanding corrective action that has not yet been resolved by the completion of a corrective action plan.
- Yes  No      7. The charter school has a hiring plan in place to ensure there are adequate qualified administrators and staff to meet the needs of the proposed student population.

**REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Provide a 1-page explanation of the justified need for the requested new satellite school or large expansion. (See, **ATTACHMENT 1**, below.)
2. Provide a 1-page overview describing how the new satellite school will provide educational services consistent with state law and Board rule. (See, **ATTACHMENT 2**, below.)
3. Provide a 1-2 page plan for the new satellite school to administer and have the capacity to carry out statewide assessments, including proctoring statewide assessments. (See, **ATTACHMENT 3**, below.)
4. Provide a 1-3 page detailed description of the evidence-based instruction for special populations that will be provided to students as required by federal law. (See, **ATTACHMENT 4**, below.)
5. Provide a 1-3 page market analysis. (See, **ATTACHMENT 5**, below.)
6. Provide a 2-4 page response addressing if the charter school is “operationally successful” as defined by Utah Admin. R277-552(7) (See, **ATTACHMENT 6**, below.)

**ATTACHMENT 1**  
Rationale for Satellite School Request

Syracuse Arts Academy (“SAA”) has enjoyed and benefited from a longstanding and supportive relationship with the Utah State Charter School Board (“SCSB”) as we have worked together to serve the individual needs of students and to offer a substantive choice in public education to families in our growing community. Beginning in 2005, the SCSB approved SAA’s charter to begin operations in the fall of 2006. At that time, SAA was authorized to serve 525 students in grades K-6, and we successfully opened our first campus (the “Antelope Campus”). In 2008, we successfully petitioned the SCSB to expand the Antelope Campus’ offering to include grades 7-9 and to increase our enrollment capacity to 1,025 students.

As SAA’s program grew to serve more families in our community, the population of school-aged children continued to increase in the surrounding neighborhoods. This population growth coupled with our reputation for providing academic excellence resulted in even more demand for enrollment at SAA. In an effort to meet that demand, we petitioned the SCSB once again. In 2014, the SCSB granted our application for a K-6 satellite school (the “North Elementary Campus”), and we successfully opened our first satellite campus in the fall of 2015.

Syracuse Arts Academy has been in operation for over 17 years, and 1,740 students now benefit from our educational program. While each campus is unique, the Syracuse Arts Academy vision is the same: “SAA develops respectful, confident citizens in a solid educational environment enriched by artistic expression.” We believe our collective dedication to this vision is one of the primary reasons SAA continues to attract students. However, we currently find ourselves in a situation where Davis School District is struggling to meet the enrollment demands of one of the fastest growing areas in the district, and our school does not have the capacity to enroll additional students. Moreover, there are no indications that this growth will decrease in the foreseeable future. In fact, as noted below in **ATTACHMENT 5 – Market Analysis**, a significant increase in the rate of new home construction is rapidly approaching with the completion of the West Davis Corridor.

As noted above, Syracuse Arts Academy has a history of working to expand its program to meet new enrollment demands. After maintaining our current enrollment capacity for almost a decade, our board and administration have discussed the need to expand SAA once again. We have thoughtfully considered the educational options for existing and future residents of our community and the impact on our existing program. We have thought through timelines, administrative structures, benefits/costs, resource allocation, and the financial commitment of opening a new satellite. However, it is our unanimous belief in the proven benefits of our academic model that convinced us to submit this application for a new satellite school. We have done this before, we understand the commitment, and we hope to receive the SCSB’s approval to expand our capacity to impact students’ lives and improve student outcomes by attending a new Syracuse Arts Academy satellite school.

## **ATTACHMENT 2**

### **Summary of Satellite School Educational Services**

For over 17 years, SAA has provided its students with a challenging, differentiated curriculum where academic excellence, character development, and individual growth are nurtured in a safe, orderly, and pleasant environment. All of this has been accomplished with a commitment to ensuring that the educational services we offer are consistent with state law and board rule. There are a host of rules and laws that govern the educational services provided at SAA. Our governing board and administration closely monitor and update our policies, ensure appropriate staff/board trainings are conducted, and perform classroom observations throughout the year to ensure the operation and delivery of our program remains in compliance.

We believe our ability to remain in good standing with the SCSB, the Utah State Board of Education, and our stakeholders is based, in part, on our ongoing effort to align our research-based curricula with state standards and our focus on student data and accountability. If approved by the SCSB, all curriculum courses at the satellite school will be aligned with the Utah Core Standards and enhanced with an emphasis on the arts in the same way they are currently offered at SAA's existing campuses. A wide spectrum of activities will also be integrated into the curriculum to support our educational goals and the overall academic success of students that attend the new satellite school. Additionally, we will offer an emphasis on student proficiency in reading which increases the likelihood of student success across the curriculum. Instruction at the satellite school will also promote student character education to reaffirm values and qualities of character which promote an upright and desirable citizenry. As is our current practice, students at the satellite school will also receive civic education to help cultivate informed students, encourage responsible participation in political life, and promote the fundamental values and principles of representative democracy in Utah and the United States.

## ATTACHMENT 3

### Administration of Statewide Assessments

Syracuse Arts Academy's administration and teaching staff are very familiar with their obligation to administer annual standards assessments as required by Utah Code Ann. § 53E-4-303 and Utah Admin. R277-404. Our administrative leadership team has 17 years of experience with the coordination, administration, and proctoring of the standards assessments in mathematics, English, science and writing to our students in the appropriate grade levels.

Syracuse Arts Academy will continue to follow its current procedures and plans for the effective administration of statewide assessments as follows:

*Testing materials accessibility.* Our administration will ensure that each campus has access to all the necessary testing materials, online student log-in information, scratch paper, assessment booklets if applicable, student testing materials, etc. These materials are provided by the USBE and assessment providers. Our administration will coordinate with the appropriate entities to ensure each campus has what is required.

*Identify testing locations and procedures.* Our administration will assist campus staff to identify the best locations within the school to administer the assessments and ensure that the location has suitable ease of use, is quiet, comfortable, and away from the distractions of regular school business. SAA will have clear procedures in place at each campus that will allow ease of students moving in and out of the testing space and inform staff of the testing procedures.

*Staffing.* Our administration will identify and train staff that will act as testing proctors. This includes training on ethical testing standards. Our staff will be familiar with the testing procedures and maintain the security and integrity of the assessments.

*Schedule and Logistics.* Our administration will develop a testing schedule that aligns with state testing deadline windows. The schedule will specify which students and staff will be completing the assessments on specific dates and at specific times. Logistics will also include the correct way to distribute and collect testing materials in a secure manner.

*Supporting Technology.* Our administration will ensure that each campus has the necessary technology and infrastructure to support online assessments, including stable internet connection, compatible devices, and technical support.

*IDEA.* Our administration and staff will identify students who require accommodation due to special needs and ensure that these accommodations comply with IEPs and IDEA.

*Testing Security.* Our administration will implement measures to prevent cheating and materials tampering. This includes, but is not limited to, secure storage of test materials, monitoring of testing areas, and adherence to test proctoring protocols.

*Training.* Our administration will provide test administration training to all staff who will be proctoring the assessments. This will ensure that our staff understands applicable rules

### ATTACHMENT 3

#### Administration of Statewide Assessments

and procedures. This training will include how to handle incidents, verify student identities, and maintain test security.

*Communication.* Our administration and/or staff will communicate with families and students about the assessments that will be administered. This communication will include, among other things, when the assessments will be taken, the testing process, and the importance of participation.

*Plan Evaluation.* Our administration will continually evaluate the effectiveness of the testing plan and process. They will make improvements, as needed, to ensure that the process is fair and consistent for all students.

**Special Populations: Description of Evidence-Based Instruction**

Federal law mandates that special populations, including students with disabilities and English language learners, receive evidence-based instruction tailored to their individual needs. To meet these requirements, SAA uses a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support approach.

All students at SAA have equal access to quality Tier I instruction. This core Tier I instruction aligns with SAA's clear academic focus and commitment to effective teaching strategies. All students are taught using and have access to evidence-based curriculum and materials.

**Clear Academic Focus**

- a. Learning goals will be performance based which will contribute to increased student learning by focusing instruction on targeted outcomes.
- b. Learning goals will be based on high academic standards and measured periodically.
- c. Instruction will be task oriented with an emphasis on completing work.
- d. Accelerated curricular opportunities.
- e. *Data informed decision making*. Information taken from participation in standardized tests/ongoing classroom assessments will provide the information needed to diagnose learning needs and degrees of mastery.

Teaching Strategies - high quality instruction will have a strong impact on student learning.

- a. Establishing high standards and expressing a willingness to help students achieve these standards, with teacher practices associated with higher achievement.
- b. Assessments will be implemented to measure progress toward goals and to inform practice.
- c. Applying a deep understanding of subject matter.
- d. Promoting critical thinking and higher order thinking.
- e. Learning in context with integrated arts and interdisciplinary practices.
- f. Implementing mastery learning.
- g. Promote task-oriented student engagement by using effective questioning techniques, motivation, and aligned homework.
- h. Using small groups and individual attention by engaging students in cooperative learning.

Tier 1 instruction also includes differentiated instruction, adapted teaching methods and materials to meet accommodations and modifications to address the diverse learning needs of special populations.

Students at SAA identified as part of special populations and other students at risk of academic failure also participate in Tier 2 instruction as part of an RTI program. Tier 2 instruction includes research-based intervention that addresses the unique needs of students in special populations. These targeted interventions are provided using evidence-based instruction and strategies that have demonstrated effectiveness in improving academic outcomes for students with disabilities, students who are English language learners, and students who are affected by poverty. These Tier

**Special Populations: Description of Evidence-Based Instruction**

2 interventions are based on assessment data for each individual student and can be flexible based on specific student need and growth.

Students identified as members of special populations also receive Tier 3 instruction. This instruction includes Special Education instruction according to each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), and targeted instruction for English language learners identified by WIDA, and is provided by teachers and staff specifically trained and licensed in those specialized areas of instruction.

For students with disabilities (IEPs and 504s), an individual plan is created with a team, including parents or caregivers, to outline the specific needs of each student and how SAA staff will use evidence-based interventions, accommodations, and instructional strategies to support each student's growth and learning.

Specialized language support is provided for students identified as English Language Learners. Syracuse Arts Academy uses evidence-based strategies such as, sheltered instruction, language support programs, and specialized instruction by a highly qualified teacher who provides specific language instruction to those students.

All Tiers of instruction conduct ongoing assessments and progress monitoring, including state mandated assessments, to track the development of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students affected by poverty. Data-driven decision-making about instruction and interventions are an integral part of our PLCs in adjusting instruction and ensuring student academic growth.



## Target Area Description

### *Target Area Demographics & Educational Landscape*

As noted above, SAA serves 1,740 students that attend one of two campuses. Our Antelope Campus is located at 2893 W. 1700 S. in Syracuse and serves 1,002 students in grades K-9. Our North Elementary Campus is located at 357 S. 1550 W. in Syracuse and serves 738 K-6 students.



The target area for the satellite is broadly defined as southwest

Syracuse and west Layton near the crossroads of 2700 S. and 2000 W. in Syracuse. The target area falls within the boundaries of Davis School District. This analysis includes the closest 10 elementary schools and two junior high schools.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 10,133 students attend district elementary and junior high schools in the target area.<sup>2</sup> According to the USBE's 2022-2023 *Fall Enrollment by Demographics and Grade Levels* report, 18% of students residing in the target area are racial/ethnic minorities, 15% are economically disadvantaged, and 3% are English Learners. In comparison, Syracuse Arts Academy reports a minority enrollment of 24%, economically disadvantaged enrollment of 19%, and 1% of its enrollment are English Learners. Inasmuch as many current SAA students reside in the target area, it is not surprising that SAA's current (and targeted) enrollment resembles the surrounding schools' demographics.

### *Population & Development Trends*

The city of Syracuse is one of the fastest growing cities in Utah in terms of both absolute population increase and percentage increase.<sup>3</sup> In fact, Syracuse is one of only four cities that ranks in the top 10 fastest growing cities for *both* absolute increase and percentage increase of population.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the majority of growth is occurring in the center of our target area.<sup>5</sup> Within one mile of the target area crossroads identified above, the Syracuse City Community and Economic Development Team has identified seven new developments that are currently selling or in the development phase and will consist of 1,458 new single family homes with an

<sup>1</sup> The schools referenced in this analysis include the following: Antelope School, Bluff Ridge School, Buffalo Point School, Cook School, Ellison Park School, Holt School, Lakeside School, Legacy Jr High, Sand Springs School, Syracuse Jr High, Syracuse School, and West Point School.

<sup>2</sup> See, USBE report, *Fall Enrollment by Grade Level and Demographics, Oct 1, School Year 2022-2023*, <https://www.schools.utah.gov/data/reports?mid=1424&tid=4>

<sup>3</sup> Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, May 2023, *Fact Sheet, U.S. Census Bureau Estimates for Cities and Housing Units*, <https://gardner.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/SubCountyEst-FS-May2023.pdf?x71849#:~:text=The%20fastest%20growing%20large%20cities,1%2C000%20people%20experienced%20population%20declines>

<sup>4</sup> Id.

<sup>5</sup> City of Syracuse, <https://www.syracuseut.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=335>

additional 158 townhomes when completed.<sup>6</sup> With a median of 3.71 persons per household, these seven new communities will be home to an estimated 5,995 residents which will include over 1,800 school-aged children according to census-based projections.<sup>7</sup>

One of the primary drivers of future growth in the target area is the approaching completion of the West Davis Corridor. As depicted in the map to the right, the West Davis Corridor is a State-funded highway that will bisect Syracuse and will reduce commute times for current and future residents. The introduction of this new state highway has unlocked significant opportunities for intensive land uses and housing types with minimal traffic impact on the local roads and neighborhoods. In a recent media interview, UDOT officials indicated that completion of the West Davis Corridor is ahead of schedule and could occur by the end of 2023.<sup>8</sup>



Davis School District has a history of analyzing growth data and planning for the future needs of its community. In November of 2022, voters approved a \$475 million bond that would be utilized to construct one new elementary school and one new junior high school, to rebuild two schools, and to remodel/expand seven schools.<sup>9</sup> Originally it was undecided whether the new elementary school would be located in Syracuse or West Point. Inasmuch as the district has a limited number of financial resources, it could only choose to build one new elementary school, and it chose to build that school in West Point. It is anticipated that this new elementary school will be completed in the fall of 2025.

The information above provides a general sense of the educational and demographic landscape we intend to serve with our new satellite school. Moreover, we believe SAA is well-positioned to meet the needs of students in the area because we understand our community, we have a track record of student success, we have a long history of meeting/exceeding our enrollment goals, and we have experience planning, operating and governing a successful satellite school.

### *Competitive Advantage & Outreach*

All parents want the best education for their children regardless of their circumstances. Parents want their children to be treated as capable individuals, and they want their children to have the

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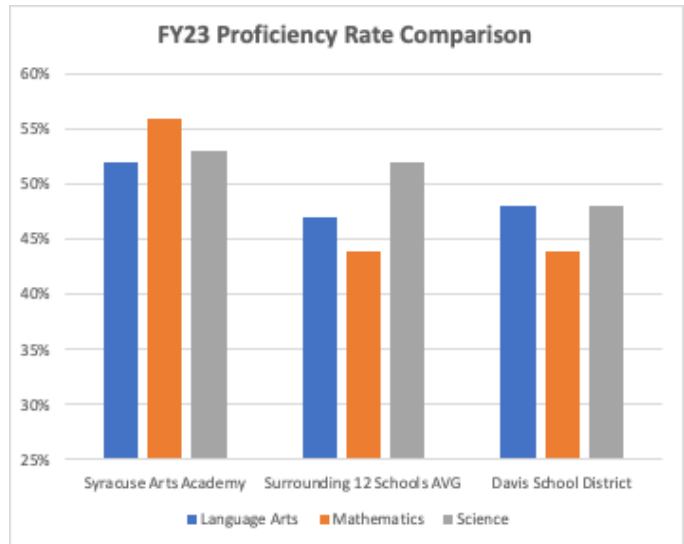
<sup>6</sup> Stillwater (700 homes), Parkview at Shoreline (186 homes), Shoreline RPC (400 homes), Sadies Glen (21 homes), Parkwest (94 townhomes and 42 single family homes), Village at the Bluff (39 single family homes and 64 townhomes), Legacy Park Estates (70 homes)

<sup>7</sup> See, United States Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/syracusecityutah>. (Calculation based on census data indicating that the median household size in Syracuse City is 3.71, and 31% of the city's population is between the ages of 5-18.)

<sup>8</sup> KSL News Radio, Derrick Jones. <https://kslnnewsradio.com/2043674/the-west-davis-highway-is-set-to-finish-early/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CWe've%20been%20saying%20that,of%20Public%20Relations%20John%20Gleason>

<sup>9</sup> Davis School District Building Construction Plan, <https://www.dsdbond.org/>

greatest chance to succeed in life. Parents in our community know that SAA's educational program will provide their students with these opportunities. Our reputation for academic excellence is supported by comparing SAA's proficiency data to our closest surrounding schools and Davis School District. The table on the right compares SAA to the 12 closest surrounding schools and the district. SAA outperformed its surrounding schools' average proficiency rates by 5 percentage points in Language Arts, 12 percentage points in Mathematics, and 1 percentage point in Science. SAA outperformed the district's average proficiency rates by 4 percentage points in Language Arts, 12 percentage points in Mathematics, and 5 percentage points in Science.



The target area represents a community we know well, and we have served students throughout the area for the past 17 years. There are two important indicators that demonstrate our capacity to open a successful satellite school: (i) we have already planned, opened, administered and governed a satellite school; and (ii) we have a group of committed and loyal stakeholders who are proud to call SAA their school of choice. SAA's network of stakeholders will provide significant support to the satellite school's year one marketing efforts. To the extent that word of mouth marketing is one of the most effective drivers of year-one enrollment, SAA's current stakeholders will significantly improve our ability to inform families in new and existing communities about the enrollment opportunities that will be made available at the satellite school. For many established charter schools like SAA, this is an untapped and somewhat unnecessary marketing resource. Successful charter schools often report high student retention, and consequently, there are limited opportunities for families to enroll new students. Major marketing campaigns with established schools often fall flat due to the likelihood of being placed on a waitlist. SAA is in this situation. For FY22, SAA reported 91% student retention from FY21 and is currently enrolled at 99.8% of its authorized capacity. This new satellite school will provide an otherwise unavailable choice for families to enroll at a school that has a proven track record with years of supporting data.

While there are many advantages to the new satellite, there are also challenges. One obvious challenge is the amount of time it will take to successfully launch a new school. Whether it is hiring, purchasing, recruiting, marketing or planning, we recognize the commitment we are making. Notwithstanding, we have weighed the effort against the benefit to students, and we are resolute in our support of opening a new satellite school if approved.

**ATTACHMENT 6**

Indicators for Assessing “Operational Success” (Utah Admin R277-552[7])

At SAA, we are proud of our track record for operational and academic success. Syracuse Arts Academy operates in compliance with the terms of our charter agreement and is one of the strongest, most financially successful schools in the portfolio of the SCSB. Over the past 4 years, we have experienced the additional challenge of being directly affected by the largest road construction project ever undertaken in the area (West Davis Corridor). While this project is largely responsible for future growth in our area, it has also required us to make significant modifications/improvements to the Antelope Campus parking lot, entrance and exit routes, and building design.

The table below illustrates SAA’s financial strength which was critical to the success of the school as we managed the cost fluctuations of our site renovations while maintaining our required financial covenants. During this time, SAA qualified to issue an additional \$7.7 million of tax-exempt bonds under the State’s Credit Enhancement program.

The table below also includes the traditional metric calculations and the revised metric calculations we have tracked during this period. The metrics along with the accompanying notes have been integral to our efforts to ensure SAA had sufficient resources to provide services to our students while also tracking the monetary intricacies of the West Davis Corridor project which involved state and local agency reimbursements and funding procedures and timelines.

Metric	Standard	4 Prior FY	3 Prior FY	2 Prior FY	Prior FY
Fiscal Year		Jun-20	Jun-21	Jun-22	Jun-23
Unrestricted Days Cash	≥ 30	196 Days	105 Days - <i>155 Days with UDOT Receivable</i>	191 Days	200 Days
Net lease-adjusted debt burden ratio	<25%	16.2%	16.50%	15.20%	17.30%
Revenues exceeded Expenditures	Yes	Yes	Yes	No*	Yes
Retention Rate	80%	90%	89%	89%	91%
Debt to Asset Ratio	≤ 1	0.822	0.770	0.811	0.805
Current Ratio	≥ 1	5.74	4.80	6.83	5.62
Debt Service Coverage Ratio	≥ 1.05	1.61x Coverage	2.68x Coverage <i>1.65x Coverage without UDOT Cost to Cure</i>	1.13x Coverage <i>1.32x without Bond Issuance Costs</i>	1.21x Coverage <i>1.16x without additional UDOT Cost to Cure Funds</i>
Audit Findings	0	0	0	0	0

\*FY22 calculation includes \$365,458 of bond issuance costs related to SAA's FY22 Bond Series. Without these one time expenses, SAA's revenues exceed expenses.

While cash and coverage numbers fluctuated during the duration of the project between FY20 and FY23, SAA reported an increase in unrestricted days cash during that period, an overall decrease in debt to asset ratio, a current ratio above 5.5x, and had no audit findings. A review of SAA’s prior year AFRs, APRs, and audited financial statement provide additional assurances as to the financial stability of our school. In addition, SAA has maintained an investment grade

## **ATTACHMENT 6**

### Indicators for Assessing “Operational Success” (Utah Admin R277-552[7])

rating of BBB- with Standard & Poor’s Global Ratings service. While adding to our cash position and decreasing our debt to asset ratio, SAA also acquired 14 additional acres of land from the city of Syracuse, installed one of the finest charter school sports fields in the state, and added more square footage to our buildings for increased student programs.