

Attachment #1 Justified Need for Requesting a New Satellite Online School

Context: After moving to online learning during the Covid 19 Pandemic in March of 2020, Freedom Preparatory Academy successfully reintroduced in-person learning for the 2020-2021 school year, marking a significant step towards normalcy. Simultaneously, recognizing the ongoing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Freedom began an online virtual school, with State Charter Board Office approval. Freedom invested substantial time and resources in developing a robust online learning alternative for students in grades K-12. This initiative not only addressed concerns of currently enrolled families hesitant to return to in-person classes but also resonated with families, who had ties to Freedom Prep statewide who sought to enroll in our online school.

Over the two years of operation, the online school proved to be a valuable educational option, facilitating learning progress for many students. Furthermore, it became a lifeline for several students, enabling them to graduate when they might have faced challenges otherwise. Unfortunately, the program was discontinued due to USCB staff compliance concerns related to geographical boundaries. Notwithstanding this decision, Freedom Prep remains committed to adapting and meeting the evolving needs of its diverse student body and their families.

Need:

1. **Requests:** In the spring of 2022, Freedom Prep Administration proactively communicated with families enrolled in the online virtual school, informing them of the program's discontinuation and assisting in a smooth transition for the upcoming school year. Subsequently, a number of families opted to return to in-person learning, while others chose alternative online school options or decided to pursue homeschooling. The staff involved in these transition meetings reported positive interactions, with many expressing an interest in being notified should Freedom Prep decide to relaunch the online program in the future. This feedback was one of the communications that helped the Governing Board recognize a need to apply for an online satellite school.
2. **Previous experience:** Given our past success in offering an online virtual school, Freedom Prep has a well-established infrastructure, experienced staff, and the necessary resources already in place. We are confident in our ability to deliver an authentic and enriching educational experience for all students, especially for elementary students enrolled in the online program. A unique advantage lies in our strategic positioning, with existing elementary schools in Utah County and Saint George. This geographical location allows online students the opportunity to actively engage with their peers through field trips, assemblies, and various school-wide events, fostering a sense of community and connection.
3. **Opportunities for High School Students:** A primary focus at Freedom Prep High School is to equip students for success beyond graduation. Our goal is for every student to not only earn a diploma but also develop a five-year plan and compile a comprehensive resume of experiences and classes. Over the past three years, we've been proactive in enhancing our curriculum, introducing concurrent enrollment courses and distance learning options through UVU. Additionally, we've fostered partnerships with MTECH to provide valuable vocational opportunities, while actively developing a capstone and internship program. Given the school's size constraints and limited space, facilitating flexible scheduling for students to meet graduation requirements and engage in additional opportunities has proven challenging.

To address this, students often enroll in online core classes from other state-approved programs, creating space for distance learning or off-site classes. The introduction of an online Freedom Prep satellite school will significantly broaden opportunities for our high school students, allowing them to take online classes from teachers and advisors attuned to their unique circumstances. Moreover, on-site counselors and advisors will have increased accessibility to monitor and support students concurrently enrolled in both online and in-person classes or programs. This expansion aligns with our commitment to providing a diverse range of educational pathways to meet the individual needs and aspirations of our students.