



Small Expansion Application

Charter School Name:

Franklin Discovery Academy

Charter School Director:

Jennifer Price

Does this request meet the definition of a small expansion, as found in R277-550, which is: 100 or fewer students; would not necessitate a significant renovation; and is for no more than one additional grade?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Explanation from the charter school of justified need, as allowed by R277-552-5.

Franklin Discovery Academy respectfully requests a small expansion to include 8th grade, building on the momentum of our recently approved 7th grade. While our 7th grade program officially begins this coming school year, enrollment has already confirmed that the demand is real—and the students signing up reflect exactly the demographic we expected: those not quite ready for the large junior high experience, or simply not desiring it. We don't anticipate all students will stay through 8th grade, but we know many would benefit from an additional year in a familiar, nurturing environment before making that transition. Our goal remains to send students on when they are ready—confident, prepared, and resilient.

Although unconventional, we respectfully request that this 8th grade addition be considered under the small expansion process. We have previously completed the large expansion request and are familiar with that path, but we believe this request qualifies for and is better suited to the streamlined process, for four key reasons:

- 1) The lack of flexibility in the long application process makes it prohibitive in our case.
- 2) We are not seeking a large expansion—we only wish to serve a unique population of students with legitimate needs for more of a “middle school” transition than a “mega” jr high transition. We have no intention of becoming a new, separate full-fledged junior high. Our intent is to be a K-8 school, not two schools with one K-6 and one junior high.
- 3) The uncertainty created by the Alpine District split adds urgency and complexity to the educational landscape; our students need more stable, predictable options.
- 4) The small expansion law does not limit a school to only one submission.

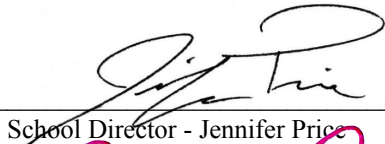
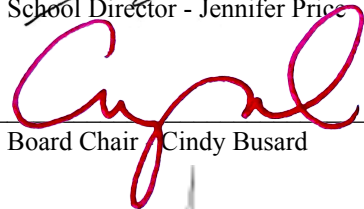
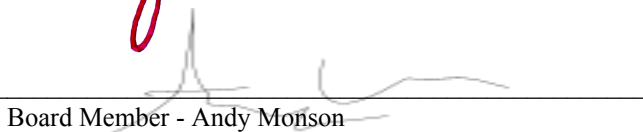
The “mega” junior high experience can be an especially challenging time for adolescent development. As we know, social-emotional growth doesn't happen on a uniform timeline. Some students are ready at 11, others not until 13 or 14. Those on the younger or more immature side often struggle in larger, less personalized settings. We are proud to be a “softer landing” for these students. While our 7th grade program is generally attracting students who are a little different, more sensitive, or not quite ready for a traditional junior high, we're also seeing families choose to stay for other reasons: some value the smaller environment, which tends to have fewer language and behavior issues than larger schools, and others simply want to continue in a model they know and love.

We also want to be clear: we have no interest in expanding beyond 8th grade. Our community has ample charter and non-charter options for 9th grade and beyond. We lack both the space and the institutional desire to pursue high school expansion or manage the additional regulatory and accreditation burdens that 9th and beyond would entail. Our request is targeted and limited—we only seek to serve up to fifty 8th grade students as part of a K-8 experience, not launch a separate junior high school.

Franklin Discovery remains strong in all key areas—fidelity to our charter, financial health (with 166 days cash on hand), enrollment growth, and demand. Our programs are vibrant, creative, and student-centered (see www.franklindiscovery.org and our YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/@franklindiscoveryacademy> to see our extensive performance programs. We would also be happy to report on the resolution of the minor issues that previously kept our satellite application from advancing, all of which have been addressed.

We appreciate your consideration of this request and welcome any questions. We're excited to continue offering a small, intentional, developmentally appropriate middle school experience for those students who truly need it.

Signature from the school's governing board chair and director, as allowed by R277-552-5. Add additional pages or lines as needed.


School Director - Jennifer Price
Board Chair - Cindy Busard
Board Member - Andy Monson
Board Member - Naya Puntsag

For SCSB Informational Use Only:

- ☐ No concerns, move to board meeting
or
- ☐ On-going remediation
- ☐ Corrective action plan (CAP)
- ☐ State turnaround
- ☐ System of Support
- ☐ Comprehensive Support and Improvement
- ☐ SCSB Warning
- ☐ SCSB Probation