



## Hawthorn Academy Model Amendment Action Summary June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Action:** Hawthorn Academy amendment to change the model of their school.

**Context:** A change to the model is considered material to the school's authorization, and thus requires consideration from the board before a change is made.

**Statute or Rule:**

[R277-552-5](#) which explains that the authorizer should have a process for consideration of proposed amendments to a school's charter agreement.

[53G-5-303](#) which describes the requirement for changing the charter agreement.

**Background of the Issue:** The International Baccalaureate (IB) program was introduced to Hawthorn Academy through its charter in 2009. The school states that "IB's original intent was to create inquiry and build character in the primary years (k-5) and provide a transdisciplinary thematic approach to instruction." The Hawthorn Academy charter states that, "IB is not a program of curriculum content, but rather a highly respected method for organizing and teaching the curriculum of a school's choosing." The IB methodology is created around six transdisciplinary themes that are to be embedded into the state core or the school's curriculum of choice. IB is an inquiry-based problem-solving methodology.

At Hawthorn Academy, the IB methodology is only incorporated at the elementary level or Primary Years. The lack of IB inclusion at the secondary level, or Middle Years has created a gap or disconnect in the continuity of the program's implementation as students have moved from elementary to middle school.

Hawthorn Academy believes that because IB does not create a targeted instructional approach emphasizing proficiency and academic growth but rather a transdisciplinary thematic methodology with a separate curriculum mapping structure, IB has not proven useful to a student's academic success at Hawthorn Academy.

Further, Hawthorn Academy believe that STEM also espouses this same methodology type but without the focus on themes and planners and a separate curriculum mapping structure, which has proven cumbersome for elementary teachers. A shift to a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) focus at all grade levels, K-9, would allow for full integration with a single curricular emphasis and aligns with state standards providing for targeted instruction in the areas of science, math, and literacy and prioritizes academic achievement and a well-rounded, research-based, approach to student learning is a more inclusive and productive approach.



Hawthorn Academy students need more targeted and systematic learning and instruction where key assessments would lead to higher academic achievement and allow for comprehensive standards-based instruction.

**Possible Motion:**

**1. Approve Hawthorn Academy's request to change its model from IB to STEM.**

**Rationale:** The school has shown that there is a disconnect within the school in the IB program. A STEM emphasis will allow more continuity for students and teachers. Stakeholders appear to have been actively engaged in this decision.

**2. Deny Hawthorn Academy's request to change its model from IB, and encourage the school to add the Middle Years Program to the school.**

**Rationale:** The school was authorized as an IB school and should continue as such. The IB program does offer a Middle Years Program, and Hawthorn Academy should be encourage to go after this designation as well.

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