



DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION

Open Enrollment Public Charter School Renewal Application for



Friendship Aspire Academies of Arkansas

Deadline for Final Submission: 5:00 PM on November 14, 2022



**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Charter School Office
Four Capitol Mall**

Little Rock, AR 72201
501.682.4472

Event/Deadline	Renewal Applications
Initial Applications Due by 5:00 p.m. s submitted to ade.charterschools@arkansas.gov	September 30, 2022
Application Reviews with DESE	October 17-28, 2022
Application Revision Window	October 31-Nov. 14, 2022
Final Application Due by 5:00 pm Submitted to ade.charterschools@arkansas.gov	November 14, 2022
Charter Authorizing Panel Hearings	December 13-14, 2022
State Board of Education Meeting- Review of Charter Authorizing Panel Decisions	January 12, 2023

Charter Information

Name of Charter:	Friendship Aspire Academies of Arkansas
LEA Number:	3544700
Authorization Date:	July 1, 2018
Expiration Date:	June 30, 2023
Enrollment Cap:	2,285
Grades Served:	K-12
Superintendent/Director:	Dr. Phong Tran
Charter Mailing Address:	300 South IZard Street Little Rock, AR 72201
Charter Physical Address:	300 South IZard Street Little Rock, AR 72201
Sponsoring Entity:	Friendship Education Foundation
Charter Management Organization	Friendship Education Foundation
Contact for Application:	Dr. Phong Tran – primary Virginia Perry Henry - secondary
Contact Email:	Ptran@friendshipusa.org Vperry@friendshipusa.org
Contact Phone:	(504) 458-4512

School Campuses

School Name	LEA Number	City	Grades Served
Friendship Aspire Academy Pine Bluff	3544701	Pine Bluff	K-4
Friendship Aspire Academy Southeast Pine Bluff	3544703	Pine Bluff	5-12
Friendship Aspire Academy Downtown Pine Bluff	3544707	Pine Bluff	K-3
Friendship Aspire Academy Little Rock Elementary	3544704	Little Rock	K-5
Friendship Aspire Academy Little Rock Middle School	3544702	Little Rock	6-8

Number of Years Requested for Renewal (1-20): 10

Section 1: Charter Data

Current Accreditation Status: Accredited

Level of Support: Level 4 / Directed Support

Enrollment (3rd Quarter ADM)

	Friendship Aspire Academy Pine Bluff	Friendship Aspire Academy Southeast Pine Bluff	Friendship Aspire Academy Little Rock	TOTAL
SY 2021-2022	400	37.07	267.57	704.64
SY 2020-2021	301.63	65.90	203.06	570.59
SY 2019-2020	236.67	n/a	219.38	456.05
SY 2018-2019	112.65	n/a	n/a	112.65

Graduation Rates

	Friendship Aspire Academy Pine Bluff	Friendship Aspire Academy Southeast Pine Bluff	Friendship Aspire Academy Downtown Pine Bluff	Friendship Aspire Academy Little Rock
SY 2021-2022	n/a	100%	n/a	n/a
SY 2020-2021	n/a	100%	n/a	n/a

Letter Grades

Friendship Aspire Academy Pine Bluff	Friendship Aspire Academy Southeast Pine Bluff	Friendship Aspire Academy Downtown Pine Bluff	Friendship Aspire Academy Little Rock Elementary	Friendship Aspire Academy Little Rock Middle School
C	N/A	Not Started	C	D

ESSA School Index

2021-2022	Friendship Aspire Academy Pine Bluff	Friendship Aspire Academy Southeast Pine Bluff	Friendship Aspire Academy Little Rock Elementary	Friendship Aspire Academy Little Rock Middle School
Overall Index	67.48	N/A	68.33	57.39
Weighted Achievement	56.36	N/A	47.76	28.46
Growth	78.3	N/A	83.13	81.57
SQSS	57.34	N/A	66.8	44.31

2020-2021	Friendship Aspire Academy Pine Bluff	Friendship Aspire Academy Southeast Pine Bluff	Friendship Aspire Academy Little Rock Elementary	Friendship Aspire Academy Little Rock Middle School
Overall Index	78.19	45.1	59.32	55.56
Weighted Achievement	71.43	1.47	23.93	23.93
Growth	83.07	76.98	82.18	82.18
SQSS	77.68	40.61	65.7	40.65

2019-2020	Friendship Aspire Academy Pine Bluff	Friendship Aspire Academy Southeast Pine Bluff	Friendship Aspire Academy Little Rock Elementary	Friendship Aspire Academy Little Rock Middle School
Overall Index	Due to impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, data is not available.			
Weighted Achievement	Due to impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, data is not available.			
Growth	Due to impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, data is not available.			
SQSS	Due to impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, data is not available.			

2018-2019	Friendship Aspire Academy Pine Bluff Elementary	Friendship Aspire Academy Southeast Pine Bluff	Friendship Aspire Academy Little Rock Elementary	Friendship Aspire Academy Little Rock Middle School
Overall Index	No data available.			
Weighted Achievement	No data available.			
Growth	No data available.			
SQSS	No data available.			

Section 2: Charter Mission Statement

Previous mission statement:

The mission of Friendship Aspire Academy is to provide a world-class education that motivates students to achieve high academic standards, enjoy learning and develop as ethical, literate, well-rounded and self-sufficient citizens.

If the mission statement for the charter will change, please provide the new mission:

What type of educational model does the school follow?

Alternative Learning Environment

Traditional

Virtual Only

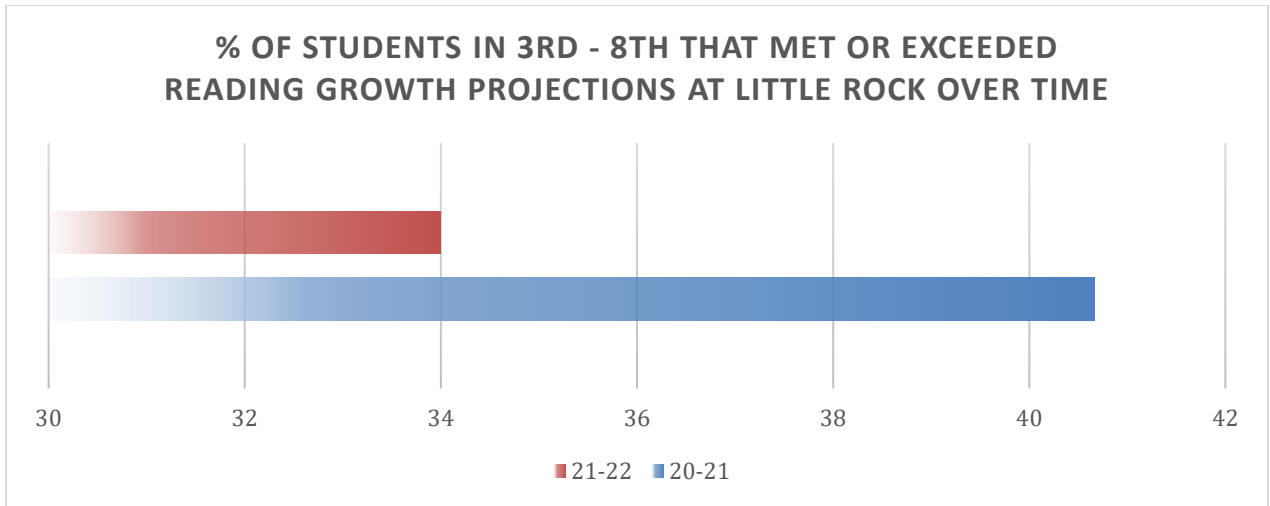
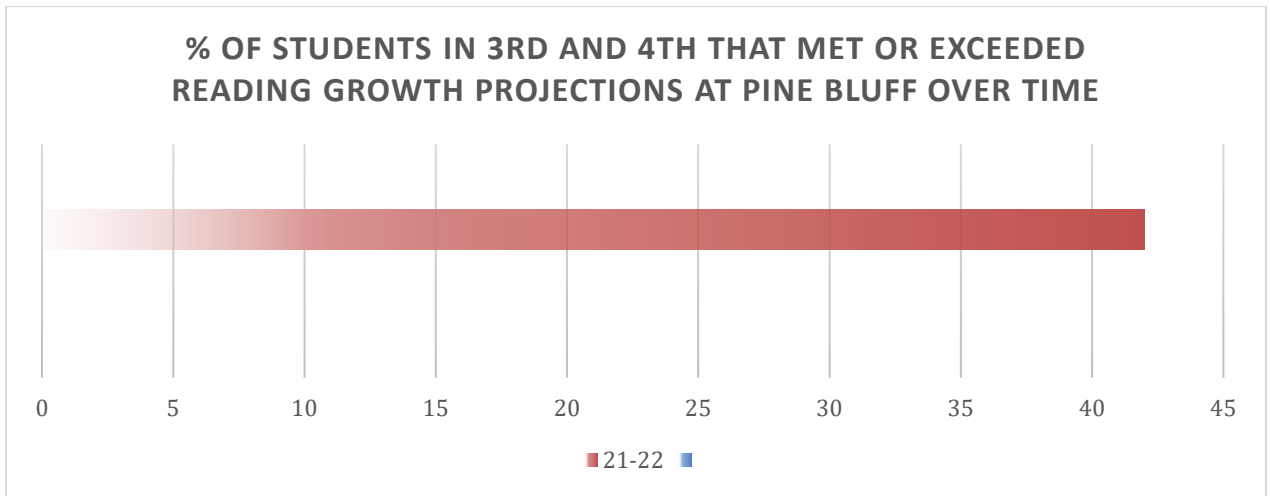
College Prep

Credit Recovery

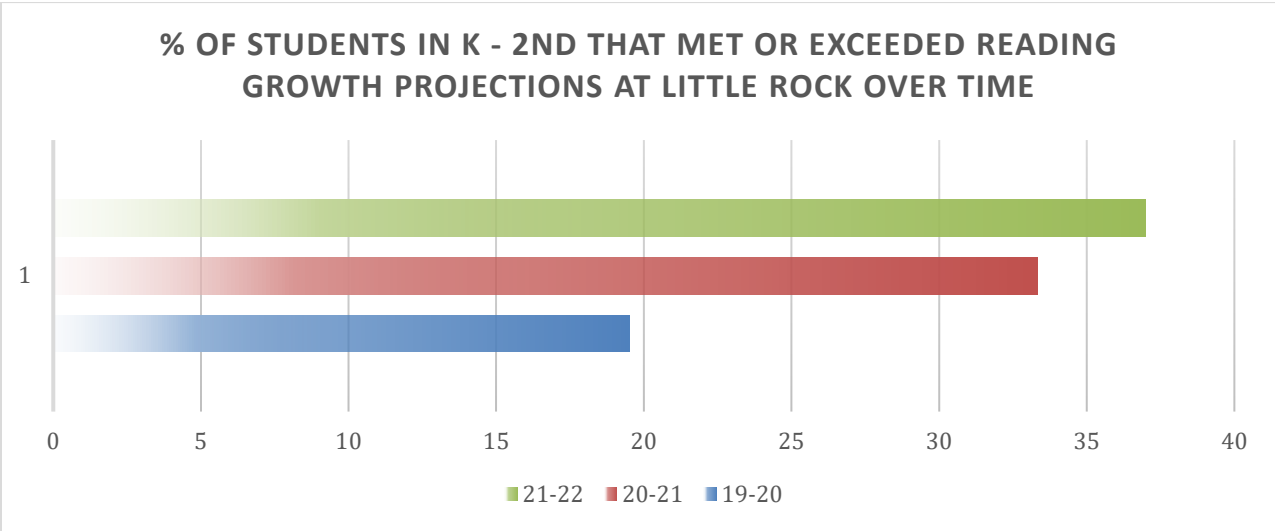
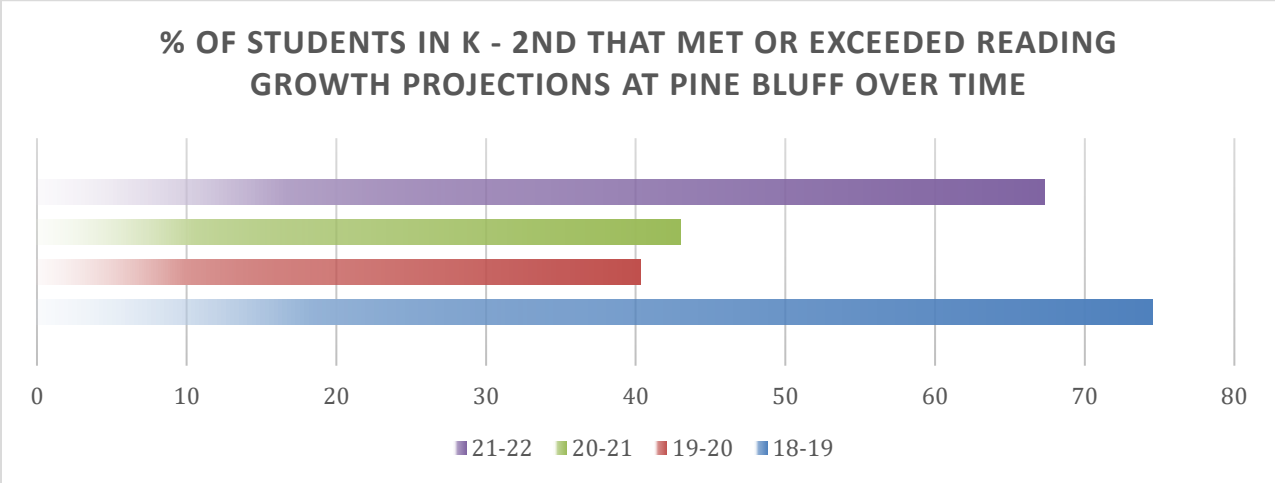
Other Focus Area: College Exploration

Section 3: Charter Goals

Goal 1	Metric	Evaluation of Goal	
Achieve academic growth for students in reading for grades 3-8: Analysis of each grade level's average student growth annually with 50% of grade levels exceeding the state average over a 5 year period.	NWEA MAP	PB 3 – 32% 4 – 51% STATE	LR 3 – 26% 6 – 27% 7 – 42% 8 – 41%

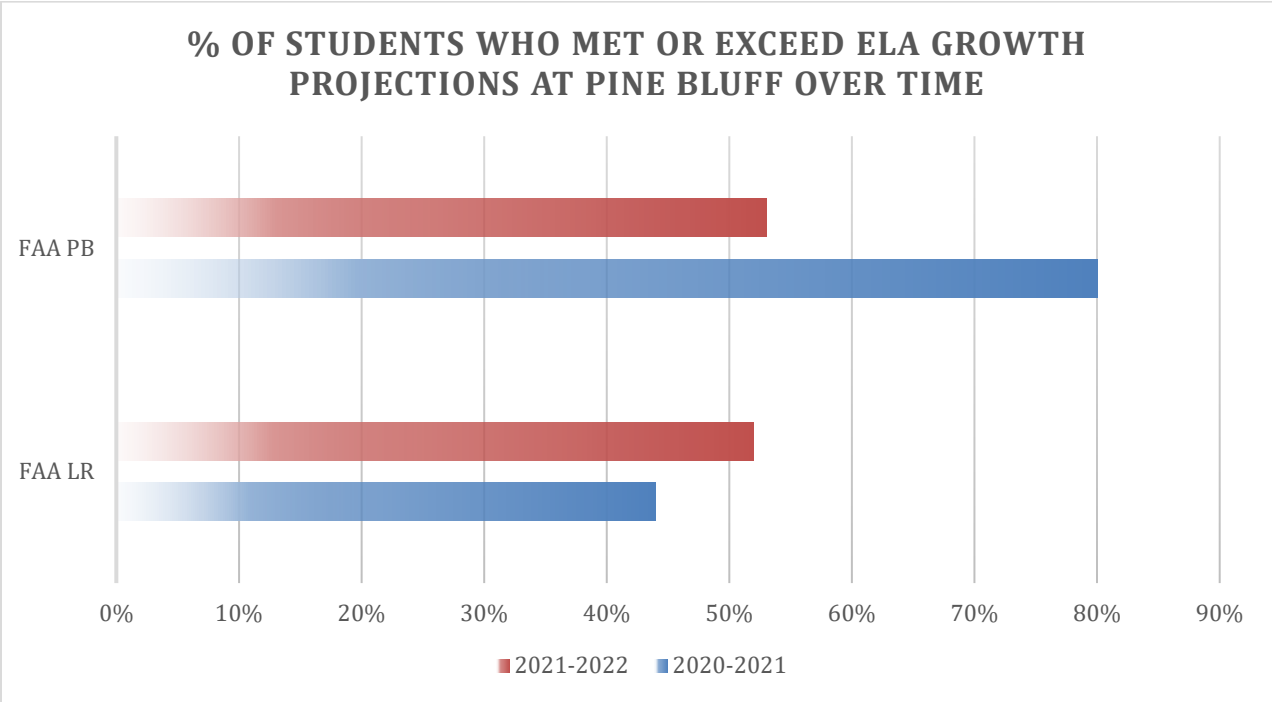


Goal 2	Metric	Evaluation of Goal	
Achieve academic growth for students in reading for grades K-2: 80% of students will meet or exceed individual growth goals.	NWEA MAP	PB K – 57% 1 – 73% 2 – 72%	LR K – 33% 1 – 40% 2 – 38%



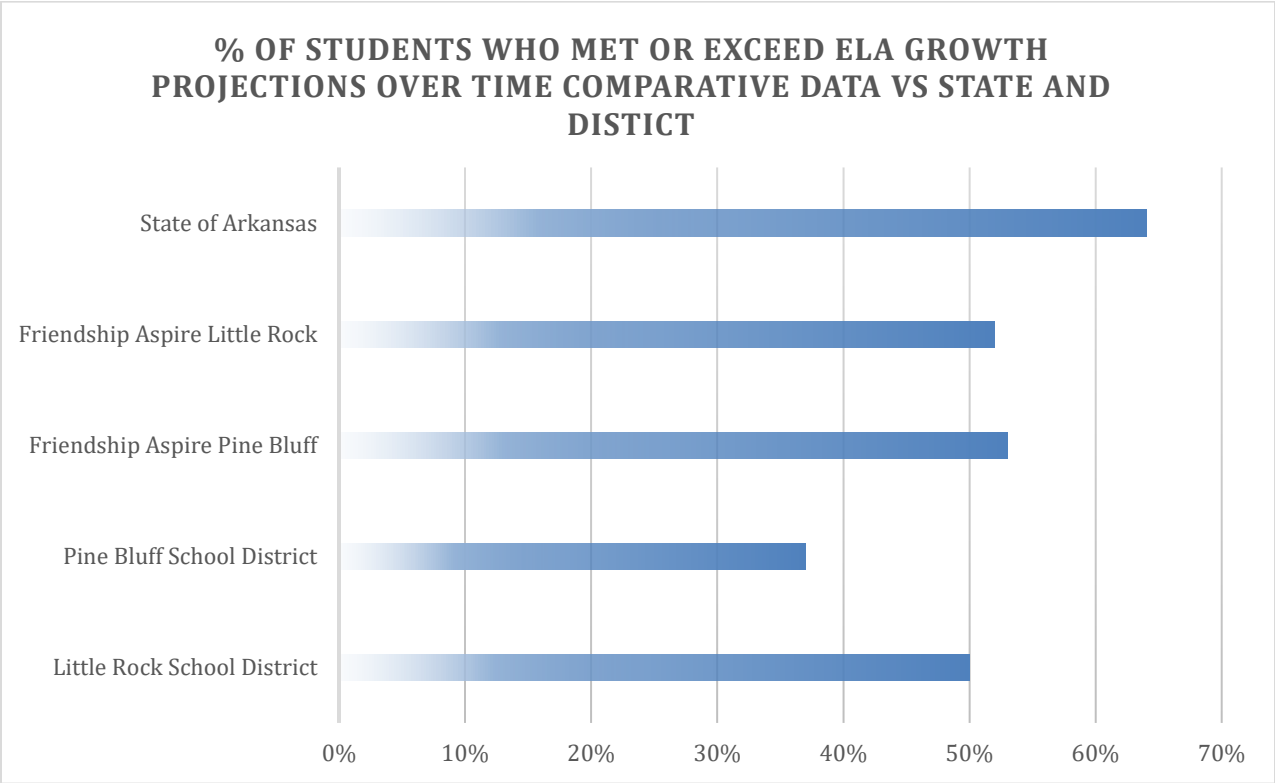
Goal 3	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
Achieve academic growth for students in English: 80% of the Friendship Aspire students will meet or exceed their individual growth targets annually.	ACT Aspire	<p>Only data from 2020-21 and 2021-22 exist.</p> <p>2020-2021: FAALR - 6-8th grade – 44% Ready or Exceeding FAAPB – 3rd grade – 80% Ready or Exceeding</p> <p>2021-2022: FAALR - 3rd – 8th grade – 52% Ready or Exceeding FAAPB – 3rd & 4th grade – 53% Ready or Exceeding</p>

*Insert graph or data table below reflecting the progress toward the goal over the last five years.

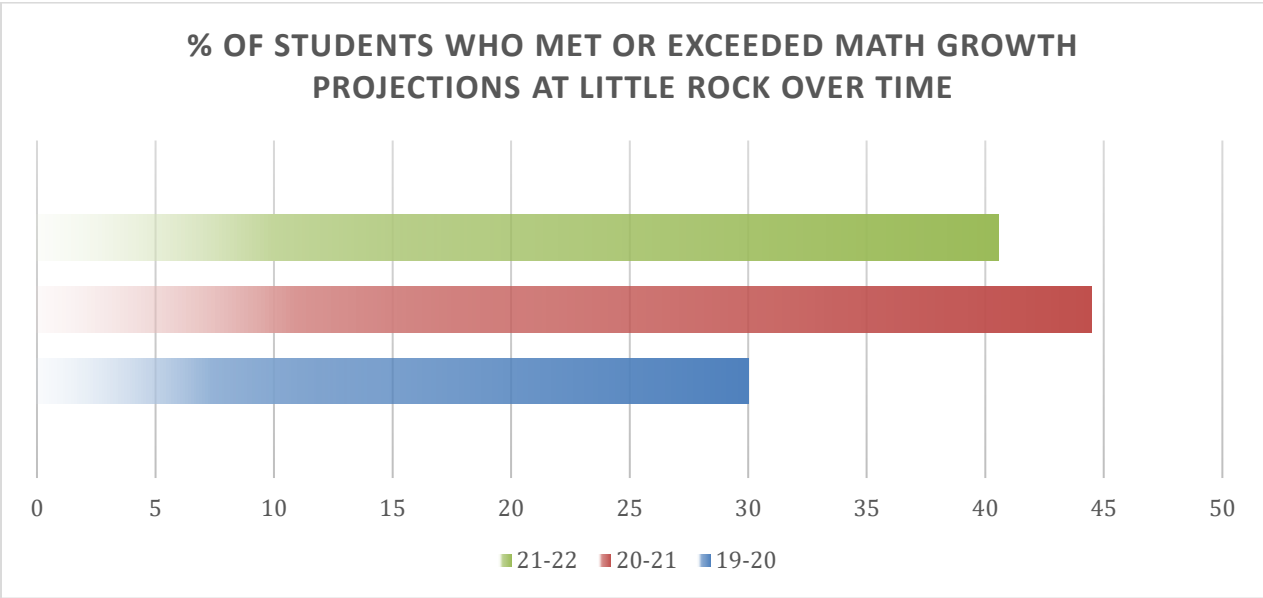
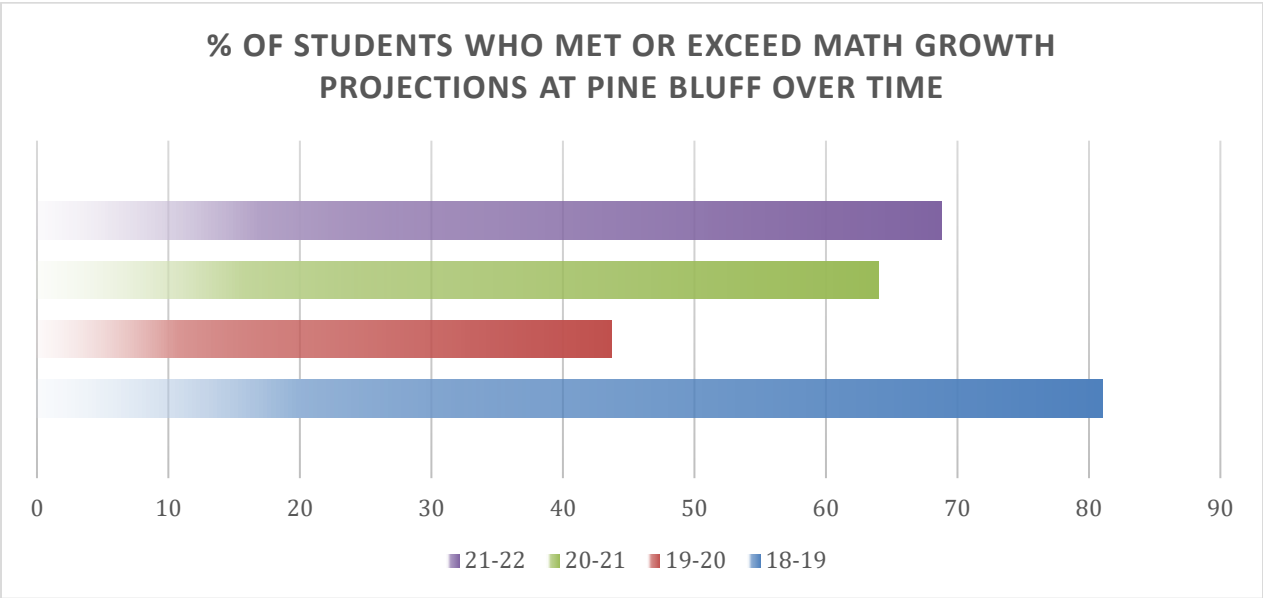


Goal 4	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
Achieve academic growth for students in English: Friendship Aspire students will meet or exceed the average of Little Rock schools with similar demographics. In addition, in year 4, Friendship Aspire students will meet or exceed the state average for students who had been enrolled for two or more years.	ACT Aspire	<u>Met English Benchmark 2022</u> LRSD PBSD FAAPB FAALR 50.1% 37.4% 53.2% 51.8% State Average 64%

*Insert graph or data table below reflecting the progress toward the goal over the last five years.

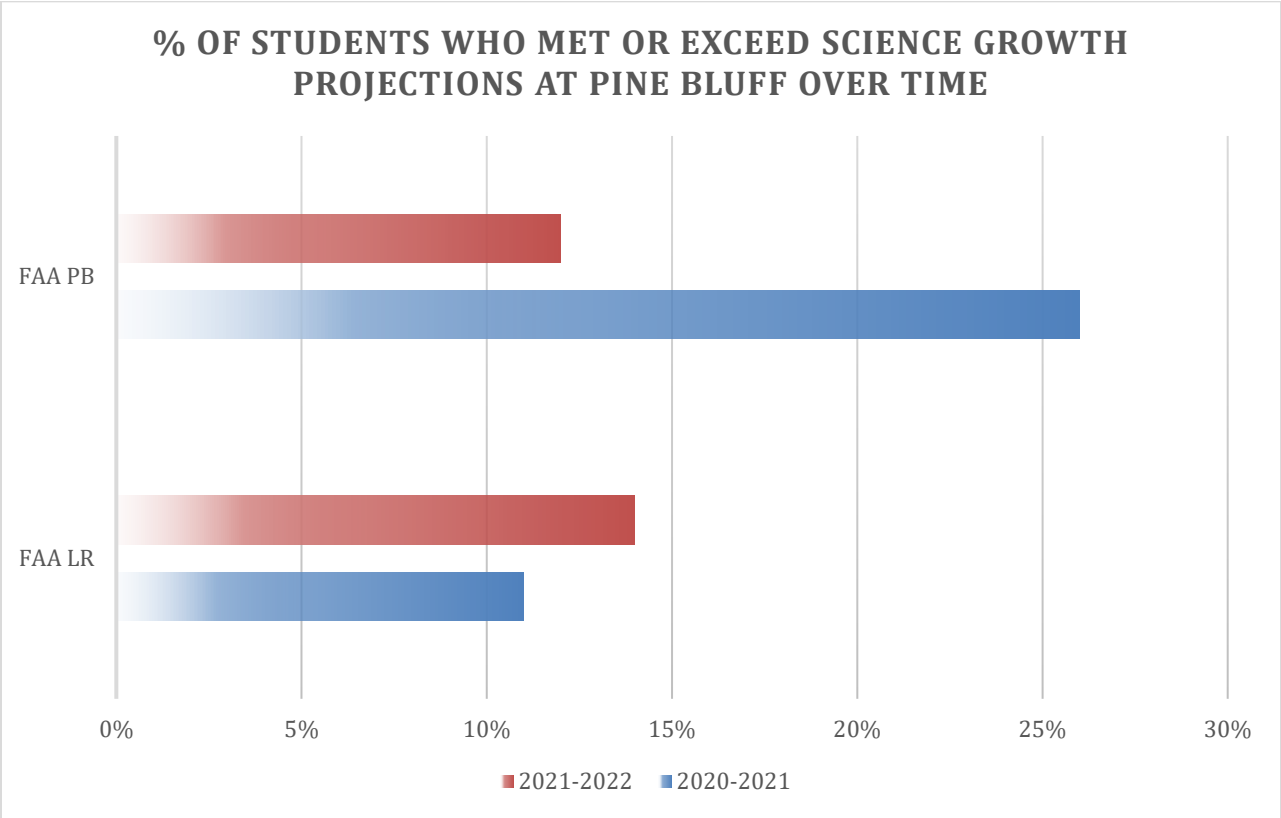


Goal 5	Metric	Evaluation of Goal	
Achieve academic growth for students in mathematics: Analysis of each grade level's average student growth annually with 50% of grade levels exceeding the average.	NWEA MAP	PB K – 86% 1 – 84% 2 – 94% 3 – 38% 4 – 42%	LR K – 52% 1 – 57% 2 – 36% 3 – 27% 6 – 25% 7 – 35% 8 – 52%



Goal 6	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
Achieve academic growth for students in science: Science scores will show a positive growth over a 5 year trajectory.	ACT Aspire	<p>Only data from 2020-21 and 2021-22 exist.</p> <p>2020-2021: FAALR - 6-8th grade – 11% Ready or Exceeding FAAPB – 3rd grade – 26% Ready or Exceeding</p> <p>2021-2022: FAALR - 3rd – 8th grade – 14% Ready or Exceeding FAAPB – 3rd & 4th grade – 12% Ready or Exceeding</p>

*Insert graph or data table below reflecting the progress toward the goal over the last five years.



Goal 7	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
Assessment of Implementation of PBIS: School will demonstrate a lower annual suspension and expulsion rate than the district average.	eSchool Discipline Reports	<p><u>FAA</u> 18/19 – 1 Suspension / 0 Expulsion 19/20 – 0 Suspension / 0 Expulsion 20/21 – 29 Suspension / 0 Expulsion 21/22 – 104 Suspension/ 0 Expulsion</p> <p><u>LRSD</u> 18/19 – 5735 Suspension / 408 Expulsion 19/20 – 3944 Suspension / 308 Expulsion 20/21 – 1226 Suspension / 57 Expulsion 21/22 – 5116 Suspension/ 428 Expulsion</p> <p><u>PBSD</u> 18/19 – 3119 Suspension / 27 Expulsion 19/20 – 1081 Suspension / 8 Expulsion 20/21 – 40 Suspension / 0 Expulsion 21/22 – 1986 Suspension/ 29 Expulsion</p>

Suspension Comparison Chart

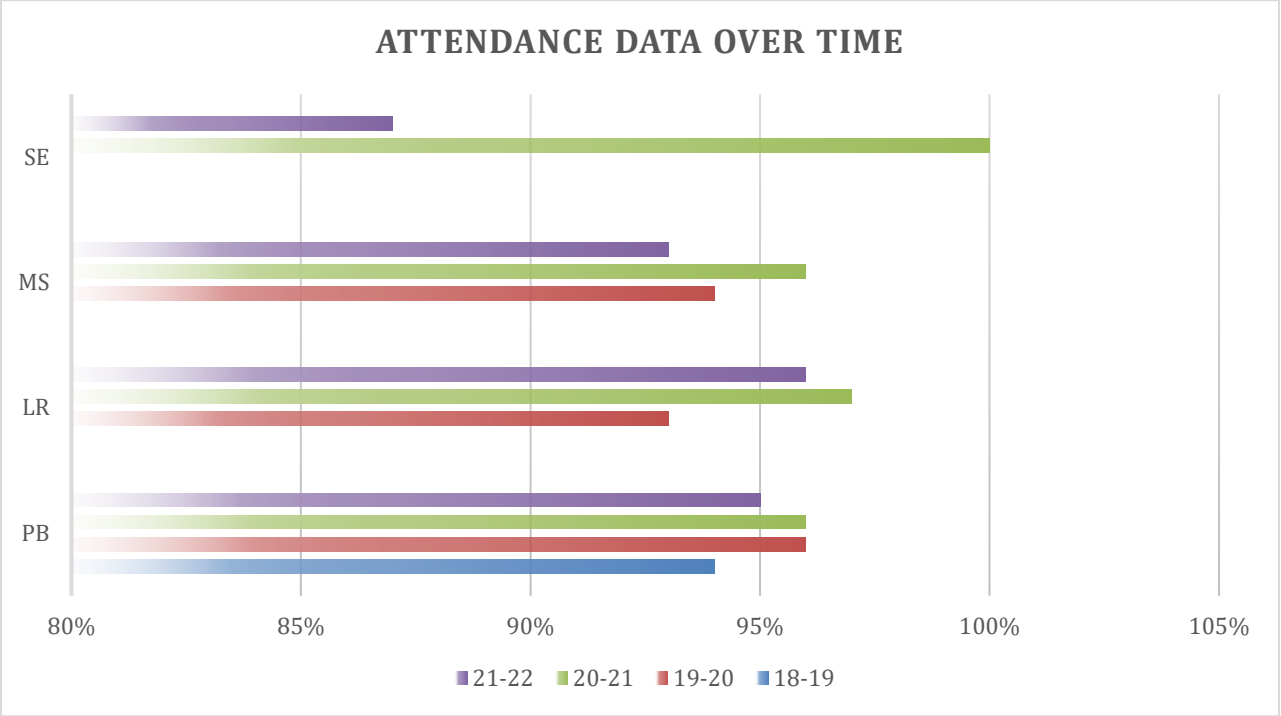
District	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	Total
Friendship Aspire Academies of Arkansas	1	0	29	104	134
Little Rock School District	5735	3944	1266	5116	16,061
Pine Bluff School District	3119	1081	40	1986	6,226

Expulsion Comparison Chart

Campus	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	Total
Friendship Aspire Academies of Arkansas	0	0	0	0	0
Little Rock School District	408	308	57	428	1,201

Pine Bluff School District	27	8	0	29	64
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Goal 8	Metric	Evaluation of Goal				
Student attendance and promotion: School will maintain a 95% attendance rate and 98% promotion rate.	eSchool Attendance data		PB	LR	MS	SE
		18-19	94%			
		19-20	96%	93%	94%	
		20-21	96%	97%	96%	100%
		21-22	95%	96%	93%	87%



Section 4: New Goals

Select performance goals for the period of time requested for renewal that are related to the specific mission of the charter.

SMART Goal
Academics Reading - FAAA student cohorts achieving ready or above on the state reading assessment will increase by 2% each year of the charter.
Academics Math - FAAA student cohorts achieving ready or above on the state math assessment will increase by 2% each year of the charter.
Attendance – FAAA will average 95% or higher attendance each year of the charter.
Parent & Community Engagement – The annual percentage of parents engaged in family and community engagement activities will increase by 5% each year of the charter.

Section 5: Waivers

Waiver #1	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
<p>Alternative Learning Environment,</p> <p>Alternative Learning Environment,</p> <p>Alternative Learning Environment – Environment,</p> <p>Alternative Learning Environment – Environment,</p> <p>Alternative Learning Environment - Required Program</p>	<p>DESE Rule - Student Special Needs Funding,</p> <p>Standard 2-I.1,</p> <p>Statute A.C.A §§ 6-48-101 et seq.,</p> <p>Statute A.C.A §§ 6-18-503(a)(1)(C)(i),</p> <p>Statute A.C.A §§ 6-15-1005(b)(5),</p>	<p>Reduce waiver to just Section 4.01.1</p> <p>Continue</p> <p>Reduce waiver to just §§6-48-102-103</p> <p>Continue</p> <p>Continue</p>
<p>Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.</p>		
<p>This waiver allows Friendship Aspire to enhance student learning and increases equitable access to effective teachers by allowing our school leaders to keep all scholars in the classroom with their peers. We believe an environment that is student centered, engaging and rigorous is best for all students.</p> <p>Additionally, interventions are provided which may eliminate traditional barriers to learning for all Friendship scholars. Teams knowledgeable of individual scholars address student academic and social needs. Friendship partners with SEARK College to provide concurrent courses and technical education options for academic learning to scholars at the high school level.</p>		
<p>If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?</p>		
<p>The needs of scholars who might find themselves in an alternative learning environment at a different LEA will not be excluded from a Friendship Aspire classroom. These scholars will be supported in the classroom with their peers.</p>		

Waiver #2	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
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Board of Directors,	DESE Rules - School Board Zones and Rezoning,	Continue
Board of Directors - Attend Meeting Remotely,	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-13-619(d),	Continue
Board of Directors - Authority to Convey Section Lands,	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-13-621	Continue
Board of Directors - Effect of Minority Population on Election,	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-13-631	Continue
Board of Directors - Election by Zone and At Large,	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-13-630	Continue
Board of Directors - Election from Single-Member Zones,	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-13-615	Continue
Board of Directors - General Election Laws,	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-14-101 et seq.	Continue
Board of Directors - Meeting Attendance,	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-13-619(c)(1)(A)	Continue
Board of Directors – Qualifications	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-13-616	Change to just §6-13-616(a)
Board of Directors - Reimbursement for Training and Instruction,	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-13-629	Rescind
Board of Directors - Review and Approval of Salary Increases,	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-13-635	Continue
Board of Directors – Size,	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-13-634	Continue
Board of Directors – Vacancies	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-13-611(b)	Continue
Board of Directors - Vacancy Due to Felony Conviction	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-13-612(c)	Continue

Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.

Being very intentional about the talent and skillset needed by board members to hold a school leader accountable for garnering academic achievement, operations, teacher recruitment, training and retention, Friendship Aspire Academy would like to take an innovative approach to securing board members representative of the school community by using an application and appointment process in lieu of board elections.

Friendship wishes to have the ability for board members to attend meetings remotely / because we have board members in various parts of state. Additionally, Friendship request the ability to have board members attending remotely to be counted in the quorum and have the ability to vote.

If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?

Friendship Aspire Academy will have an active and competent board by using its application and appointment process in lieu of board elections.

Waiver #3	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Class Size and Teaching Load,	DESE Rule Class Size and Teaching Load	Continue
Class Size and Teaching Load,	Standard 1-A.5	Continue
Class Size and Teaching Load – Compensation	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-812	Continue

Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.

Given the current teacher shortage, Friendship Aspire would like the ability to adjust the class size by 10% if circumstances require, in an effort to ensure our scholars will be in front of a highly effective teacher and not a substitute teacher or a long-term substitute teacher, thus increasing equitable access to effective teachers.

If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?

Friendship Aspire school leaders will only implement use of this waiver if the alternative would result in scholars being in front of anything less than a highly effective teacher.

Waiver #4	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Employ Full-Time Superintendent	Standard 4-B.1	Continue

	Standard 4-B.2	Continue
	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-13-109	Continue
	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-427	Rescind
	DESE Rule Superintendent Mentoring Program	Rescind

Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.

Friendship Aspire Academies of Arkansas contracts with the CMO Friendship Education Foundation for the services of the superintendent. Friendship Aspire Academies would like to retain the ability to hire a Superintendent based on experience regardless of licensure. Friendship Aspire superintendents go through a rigorous internal training program that provides them with the skill set they need to run an effective school using the innovative Friendship Aspire Academy model.

The current Friendship Aspire Academies of Arkansas superintendent did complete the Superintendent Mentoring program within the first 12 months of employment. Any and all future Friendship Aspire Academies of Arkansas superintendent's will also complete the Superintendent Mentoring program with the first 12 months of employment.

If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?

Friendship Aspire Academy ensures the responsibilities of a superintendent are completed.

Waiver #5	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Employ Principal	Standard 4-C.1	Rescind
	Standard 4-C.2	Continue

	Statute A.C.A §§6-17-302	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>Friendship employs full-time principals at each campus, regardless of size, and assistant principals with campuses with over 150 scholars. A full-time principal will continue to be employed when enrollment reaches three hundred. Schools with an enrollment exceeding five hundred will have, at a minimum, a full-time principal and a full-time assistant principal.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		

Waiver #6	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Gifted and Talented	DESE Rule Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards,	Continue
Gifted and Talented - Annual Reporting	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-42-109	Continue
Gifted and Talented – Expenditures	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-20-2208(c)(6)	Continue
Gifted and Talented Services	Standard 2-G.1	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>This waiver allows Friendship Aspire to enhance student learning and increases equitable access to effective teachers by allowing our school leaders to keep all scholars in the classroom with their peers. We believe an environment that is student-centered, engaging and rigorous is best for all students.</p> <p>Although we do not currently have a GT program, we are open to eventually designing a program once we have the capacity in human capital and programmatic resources to facilitate the program. Currently, there is differentiation within the classrooms. We are asking for this waiver for the duration of the charter, but will continue to provide</p>		

<p>enrichment activities to students.</p> <p>Our model and student population have yet to demand AP courses. We do provide training on differentiation. As we grow, we will develop a plan for AP supports.</p>
<p>If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?</p>
<p>Teachers focused on individual student needs both academically and emotionally will fulfill the needs of scholars in the classroom.</p>

Waiver #7	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Grading Scale	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-15-902(a)	Continue
Grading Scale - Weighted Credit	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-15-902(c)(2)	Continue
<p>Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.</p>		
<p>Friendship Aspire Academy uses a holistic, standards-based grading system which is enhances student learning opportunities and promotes innovation in teaching and learning. Focusing on competency over completion ensures scholars have mastered a standard and not an academic task alone.</p>		
<p>If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?</p>		
<p>Scholars will be graded utilizing a holistic grading system which includes standards-based assessments (cumulative and summative), college readiness exams, and a comprehensive student portfolio. A waiver is sought from Ark. Code Ann. §6-15- 902 (c) (2) to give us the ability to send its teachers to alternative AP trainings that are not necessarily certified AP Summer Institutes.</p>		

Waiver #8	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Library Media Specialist Licensure	Standard 4-F.1	Continue

Library Media Services - Library Media Specialist Licensure	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-25-104	Continue
Library Media Services – Program	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-25-103	Continue
Library Media Specialist Ratio	Standard 4-F.2	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>Having rich text classroom environments, as opposed to a centralized library/media center, enhances student-learning opportunities within the classroom. It provides scholars with more frequent and accessible access to media under the supervision of their classroom teacher. Library media standards will be taught in the ELA classrooms. ELA teachers will be trained on library media standards in their PLCs.</p> <p>Additionally, Friendship Aspire partners with the Pine Bluff Public Library to provide areas for classes and instructional extension, access to training labs, and access to the children’s computer lab.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
Library Media services will be provided via class libraries or by local library partners in lieu of traditional library media centers.		

Waiver #9	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Personnel - Daily Planning Period	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-114	Continue

Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.

Though Friendship Aspire Academy will recommend that the master schedule provide a minimum of two hundred minutes of planning time for each week, we wish to have the ability for the minutes to be provided (if necessary) in a manner different than that required by the statute. Again, this waiver would be utilized to ensure that scholars are supervised by a highly effective teacher in lieu of a substitute teacher.

If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?

Friendship Aspire Academy leadership will do its best to ensure that teachers are allowed adequate planning time to manage their workload. FAAA does not intend to waive the requirement of allotting the 200 minutes, just the 40 minute increment mandate.

Waiver #10	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Personnel Policies - Classified Personnel Policies,	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-2301 et seq.	Continue
Personnel Policies - Minimum Teacher Compensation Schedule,	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-2403	Continue
Personnel Policies - Committee for Each School	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-203	Rescind
Personnel Policies - Incorporation into Contracts	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-204	Rescind
Personnel Policies - Organization and Duties of Committee	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-205	Rescind
Personnel Policies - Public School Employee Fair Hearing Act	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-1701 et seq.	Continue
Personnel Policies – Requirements	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-201 et seq.	Continue
Personnel Policies - Teacher Fair Dismissal Act	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-1501 et seq.	Continue
Personnel Policies,		

Salaries/Compensation	DESE Rule School District Requirements for Personnel Policies, Salary Schedules, Minimum Salaries, and Documents Posted to District Websites (sections 5 – 9)	Update the waivers to Sections 5.01.4 and 6.01 of the current Website Posting Rules and not sections 5 - 9.
Personnel Policies, Salaries/Compensation	DESE Rule School District Requirements for Personnel Policies, Salary Schedules, Minimum Salaries, and Documents Posted to District Websites (sections 4 – 8)	Continue
<p>Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.</p>		
<p>Friendship Aspire will develop human resource policies and procedures that are best suited to serve our innovative education model, including, but not limited to the following: terms and conditions of employment; salary schedule, fringe benefits, and other compensation issues: annual school calendar, including workdays and holidays; evaluation procedures; leave; grievance procedures; termination or suspension' reduction in force and assignments.</p> <p>Classified employees are paid at or above the minimum salary requirements, and we have a compensation schedule that we feel is competitive and fits our model. This schedule does not look like a traditional district salary schedule however. Although we do not follow the requirements of 6-17-1701 and 6-17-1501, we do allow hearings and due process.</p>		
<p>If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?</p>		
<p>Friendship Aspire Academy maintains and updates an employee handbook that outlines personnel policies.</p>		

Waiver #11	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Principal Licensure	Standard 4-C.2	Continue
Principals - Qualifications and Responsibilities	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-302	Continue

Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.

Friendship Aspire Academy would like the ability to attract and retain an individual who is highly skilled and eager to develop and grow an innovative project-based learning, technology integrated school of the future with a unique schedule. The selected individual will receive additional training and coaching to fulfill this role. An innovative year-round leadership development program supports the growth of principals in effective leadership.

The current Friendship principals are attending the Charter Leadership Institute with APSRC, and any future principals will complete the program as well.

If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?

Friendship Aspire Academy school leaders go through a rigorous and internal training program that provides them with the skill set they need to run an effective school using the innovative Friendship Aspire Academy model.

Waiver #12	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Salaries - Additional Days	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-807	Rescind
Salaries - Classified School Employee Minimum Salary Act	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-2203	Rescind
Salaries - Teacher Definition	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-902	Continue
Salaries - Warrants Void Without Valid License and Contract	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-919	Continue
Salaries/Compensation	DESE Rule School Election Expense Reimbursement	Continue

Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.

Friendship Aspire Academy uses the Friendship compensation policy, which includes a salary schedule that is intended to be competitive in the marketplace and fair to all employees. Using this schedule will ensure that the school is able to pay teachers

fairly and hire enough effective teachers to ensure equitable access to them across the campus.

All Friendship core and fine arts teachers meet and will continue to meet AQT requirements.

If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?

Friendship Aspire Academy uses the Friendship compensation policy, which includes a salary schedule that is intended to be competitive in the marketplace and fair to all employees.

Waiver #13	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
School Calendar	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-10-106	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
Friendship model uses more time on instruction to accelerate student achievement and enhance student learning opportunities. A longer school day and year requires that the start date and end date of school may be extended. The extra instructional time at the beginning of the year may be needed to address summer learning loss.		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
Friendship will continue to provide more than the required number of state required days of instruction to support student learning opportunities.		

Waiver #14	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
School Counselor Licensure	Standard 4-E.1	Continue
School Counselor Ratio	Standard 4-E.2	Continue
	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-18-	Continue

	2003(2)(A)	
<p>Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.</p>		
<p>Friendship Aspire Academy employs a social worker instead of a school counselor to support our scholars and their emotional needs. The decision to employ a social worker instead of a school counselor is based on the unique needs of our scholar population. In terms of academic advisement, that work is done by the principal due to the student population. The ability of the social worker to support our scholars and connect them with outside resources increases the likelihood of scholars spending more time in front of effective teachers, enhancing their learning opportunities.</p> <p>Currently, monitoring credits and graduation requirements, and guiding students on career options is the shared responsibility of the campus registrar and principal. The social worker and principal are responsible for student success plans. When the high school has 9th and 10th grade a counselor will be retained. The current plan is to start with 9th grade next year, then add a grade each year until the high school is 9 – 12.</p>		
<p>If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?</p>		
<p>Friendship Aspire Academy employs a social worker instead of a school counselor to support our scholars and their emotional needs. In terms of academic advisement, that work is done by the principals.</p>		

Waiver #15	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Superintendent	DESE Rule Superintendent Mentoring	Rescind (completed)
Superintendent – Licensure	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-13-109	Continue
Superintendent - Superintendent Mentoring Program	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-427	Rescind (completed)
Superintendent Licensure	Standard 4-B.2	Continue
<p>Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.</p>		
<p>Friendship Aspire Academy would like the ability to hire a Superintendent based on experience regardless of licensure. Friendship Aspire Academy understands that a great fit leader for an innovative school model might not be a traditionally trained superintendent, and those we would like to take this innovate approach to securing a great fit executive director.</p> <p>The current Friendship superintendent has completed the Superintendent Mentoring program, and any future superintendents will complete the program as well.</p>		
<p>If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?</p>		
<p>Friendship Aspire superintendent goes through a rigorous and internal training program that provides them with the skill set they need to run an effective Friendship Aspire school. The current Arkansas superintendent holds a doctorate degree in Ed Leadership, and has completed the AAEEA Beginning Superintendent program, which includes the mentoring program.</p>		

Waiver #16	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Teacher Licensure	DESE Rule Educator Licensure	Continue
Teacher Licensure	Standard 4-D.1	Continue
Teacher Licensure - Licensure Requirements	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-401	Continue
Teacher Licensure - Qualified Teachers in Every Classroom	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-15-1004	Continue
Teacher Licensure - Waivers	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-309	Continue
	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-902	Continue
	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-17-919	Continue
<p>Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.</p>		
<p>Friendship Aspire selects educators based upon grit, classroom and culture management, high expectations, commitment to data-driven instruction, and past achievement. Continuous targeted support and development is critical in closing the achievement gap and enhancing student-learning opportunities and increasing equitable access to effective teachers. All of our core and fine arts teachers will meet the AQT requirements and will meet specific and rigorous Friendship network hiring standards. All Friendship teachers must have a bachelor's degree at a minimum and have evidence, per AQT requirements, of competency in the content area.</p> <p>However, within those requirements we want our principal to have the autonomy to hire the best possible teachers, even if some of those candidates' qualifications do not include an Arkansas teacher license. The school will be committed to recruiting and hiring quality staff members. Furthermore, Friendship builds human capital through annual training for all new principals and other leaders team members. The training addresses the fundamentals of school organization, student management, and student achievement.</p> <p>Due to the current teacher shortage, Friendship will need this waiver for the duration of the charter. We are committed, however, to assisting our teachers obtain certification.</p>		
<p>If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?</p>		

Friendship will continue to hire and retain Arkansas Qualified Teachers, and provide training to further develop content and pedagogical skills associated with quality teaching. Additionally, Friendship will promote certification attainment of all instructional staff.

Waiver #17	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Adopt and implement school safety policies and procedures	Standard 6-A.2	Rescind
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		

Waiver #18	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Clock Hours	ACA 6-15-216 Standard 1-A.2	Rescind Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
Friendship Aspire Academy uses a holistic, standards-based grading system which is enhances student learning opportunities and promotes innovation in teaching and learning. Focusing on competency over completion ensures scholars have mastered a standard and not an academic task alone.		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		

Services may be provided utilizing technology assisted learning mechanisms or project based learning initiatives that will exhibit student competency and acquisition of standards.

Waiver #19	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Ability in Awarding Course Credit	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-15-216	Continue
<p>Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.</p>		
<p>Friendship Aspire Academy uses a holistic, standards-based grading system which is enhances student learning opportunities and promotes innovation in teaching and learning. Focusing on competency over completion ensures scholars have mastered a standard and not an academic task alone.</p> <p>Standards based grading is for elementary and middle school students. High school students may utilize an online platform such as Edmentum for instruction and awarding of credits.</p>		
<p>If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?</p>		
<p>Friendship will offer alternative coursework, assessments or performance that demonstrate proficiency needed to be awarded equivalent credit.</p>		

Waiver #20	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Health and Safety of Students, Employees, and Visitors	Standard 2-E.2	Rescind
Health Services - School Nurse	Statute A.C.A §§ 6-18-706	Continue
Health Services Program	Standard 2-E.1	Continue
<p>Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.</p>		

Friendship Aspire of Arkansas employs an RN to oversee the LPN's that support the individual campuses. This is an innovative model that ensures scholars receive care from trained medical professionals whilst ensure an affordability. This affordability allows Friendship Aspire to spend more funds on enhancing student learning opportunities (paying effective teachers, purchasing manipulatives, paying for learning experiences outside of the classroom, etc.).

If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?

One RN will support LPNs on multiple campuses if needed.

Waiver #21	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Student Services	DESE Rule Public School Student Services (Section 3.01.6)	Rescind
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		

Section 6:

Provide information on new waivers that are being requested.

Waiver Topic	Statutes/Standards/Rules	Rationale
Board of Directors	Add Statutes A.C.A §§ 6-13-608; 6-13-611; 6-13-620(5)(A)(ii)(b); 6-13-624, and 6-13-628.	Friendship Aspire Academy Board of Directors are not elected officials. Therefore, Friendship seeks these waivers to allow latitude in filling vacancies so we can find those candidates that would present holistic value to the board. Additionally, the Friendship Board has an agreement with the CMO to provide the services of the superintendent, thus the superintendent's contract would not directly fall under the Boards purview.
Class Size and Teaching Load,	Add waiver request for Standard 1-A.6	Given the current teacher shortage, Friendship Aspire would like the ability to adjust the class size by 10% if circumstances require, in an effort to ensure our scholars will be in front of a highly effective teacher and not a substitute teacher or a long-term substitute teacher, thus increasing equitable access to effective teachers.
School Counselor	Add Statute A.C.A §§ 6-18-2003(A)	An individual or team of individuals who do not possess a Counselor's certification will provide counseling supports. Annually, a comprehensive school counseling plan is developed and placed on the school website.
Grading Scale	DESE Rules Grading and Course Credit	Friendship Aspire Academy uses a holistic, standards-based grading system, which enhances student learning opportunities and promotes innovation in teaching and learning. Focusing on competency over completion ensures scholars have mastered a standard and not an academic task alone.

Section 7: Amendment Requests

List any amendment requests and provide a rationale for each (i.e., changes to grade levels, enrollment cap, location, addition of campus)

	Topic	Rationale

Section 8: Desegregation Analysis

Describe the impact, both current and potential, of the public charter school on the efforts of affected public school district(s) to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools.

Friendship Aspire Academies of Arkansas Desegregation Analysis

Friendship Aspire Academies of Arkansas (Friendship) is seeking the renewal of its open-enrollment charter from the State’s charter authorizer. Friendship has schools located within the boundaries of both the Little Rock School District and Pine Bluff School District and, as an open-enrollment public charter school unconfined by district boundaries, expects to continue to obtain most of its students from within the boundaries of the Little Rock (LRSD), North Little Rock (NLRSD), Pulaski County (PCSSD), Jacksonville-North Pulaski (JNPSD), Pine Bluff (PBSD), Watson Chapel (WCSD), and White Hall (WHSD) School Districts.

I. The Status of Pulaski County Desegregation Litigation

Friendship is providing this desegregation analysis in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 to review the potential impact that its charter renewal application would have upon the efforts of all four (4) of the Pulaski County school districts to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools. In conducting its review, Friendship has substantiated that the LRSD and the NLRSD have been declared unitary in all respects of their school operations. The Pulaski County desegregation litigation was first filed in 1982. *Little Rock School District, et al v. Pulaski County Special School District, et al.*, Case No. 4:82:cv-00866-DPM. In 1989, the parties entered into a settlement agreement (the “1989 Settlement Agreement”) under which the

Arkansas Department of Education, the then-three (3) Pulaski County school districts, and the intervenors agreed to the terms of state funding for desegregation obligations.

LRSD successfully completed its desegregation efforts in 2007 and was declared fully unitary by the federal court in 2007. *Little Rock School District v. Pulaski County Special School District*, Case No. 4:82-cv-0866 (E.D. Ark.), Order filed February 23, 2007. In 2010, LRSD filed a motion to enforce the 1989 Settlement Agreement. The motion contended that operation of open-enrollment public charter schools within Pulaski County interfered with the “M-M Stipulation” and the “Magnet Stipulation.” On January 17, 2013, Judge D.P. Marshall Jr. denied LRSD’s motion, stating:

“The cumulative effect of open enrollment charter schools in Pulaski County on the stipulation magnet schools and M-to-M transfers has not, as a matter of law, substantially defeated the relevant purposes of the 1989 Settlement Agreement, the magnet stipulation, or the M-to-M stipulation.”

Little Rock School District v. Pulaski County Special School District, Case No. 4:82-cv-0866 (E.D. Ark.), Order filed January 17, 2013. LRSD appealed to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

One (1) year later, on January 13, 2014, Judge Marshall approved a Settlement Agreement that included a provision stipulating to the voluntary dismissal with prejudice of LRSD’s pending appeal concerning the charter school issues. In light of LRSD’s unitary status and the parties’ 2014 Settlement Agreement, Friendship’s requested charter renewal cannot interfere with the purposes of the Pulaski County desegregation litigation, which has been fully concluded as to LRSD. After the dismissal and the settlement agreement, the case was completely concluded for all purposes as to LRSD, and the federal court terminated all jurisdiction in the matter. Because of that, there is no possibility that Friendship’s requested charter renewal could impact LRSD’s unitary status. To be clear, Friendship’s charter renewal application cannot impact LRSD’s unitary status because 1) there is no case in which LRSD’s unitary status could be an issue; 2) LRSD made a claim regarding operation of open-enrollment charter schools in federal court in 2010 and lost it; and 3) as a consequence of the 2014 Settlement Agreement, the LRSD released any claims it had concerning the charter school issues. On January 30, 2014, the Court also approved a stipulation among the parties that PCSSD is unitary in the areas of Assignment of Students and Advanced Placement, Gifted and Talented and Honors Programs. Based on the stipulation, the Court released PCSSD from supervision and monitoring in these areas. Thus, as of January 30, 2014, LRSD, NLRSD and PCSSD are unitary in the area of student assignments. On April 4, 2014, the court found that PCSSD is unitary in the areas of Special Education and Scholarships. Subsequently, PCSSD was also found to be unitary in the areas of Staff and Monitoring. Pursuant to Judge Marshall’s order on May 6, 2021, both PCSSD and JNPSD are unitary in all areas except School Facilities.

Upon review, Friendship believes that its request to obtain the renewal of its open-enrollment public charter shall have no negative effects on the efforts of the PCSSD and JNPSD to attain unitary status.

II. Data

According to last year’s third-quarter Average Daily Membership enrollment figures as maintained by the DESE Data Center, LRSD had a student population of 20,518 students, of

which 59.94% were Black/African- American; 19.57% were White, and 16.02% were Hispanic. NLRSD's student population was 7,640 students, of which 57.19% were Black/African- American; 25.75% were White, and 11.45% were Hispanic. PCSSD's student population was 11,227 students, of which 44.37% were Black/African- American; 38.61% were White, and 10.17% were Hispanic. JNPSD's student population was 3,841 students, of which 54.81% were Black/African-American; 33.85% were White, and 7.54% were Hispanic. Friendship's student population at its Little Rock Campus was 267 students, of which 84.6% were Black/African-American, and 14.2% were Hispanic.

Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 requires that Friendship's continued operation will not serve to hamper, delay, or in any manner negatively affect the desegregation efforts of a public school district or districts within the state. As explained in more detail above, Friendship's careful review of the relevant statutes and court orders affecting the LRSD, NLRSD, PCSSD, and JNPSD and their student populations, and its own student population, shows that such negative impact is not present here.

III. Jefferson County Data

According to last year's third-quarter Average Daily Membership enrollment figures as maintained by the DESE Data Center, PBSO had a student population of 3,333 students, of which 94.6% were Black/African- American, and 2.7% were White. WCSO's student population was 1,918 students, of which 86.8% were Black/African-American, and 10.3% were White. WHSO's student population was 3,003 students, of which 64.9% were White, and 25.7% were Black/African-American. Friendship's student population at its Pine Bluff campuses was 438 students, of which 95.4% were Black/African-American.

Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 requires that Friendship's continued operation will not serve to hamper, delay, or in any manner negatively affect the desegregation efforts of a public school district or districts within the state. As explained in more detail above, Friendship's careful review of the relevant statutes and court orders affecting the LRSD, NLRSD, PCSSD, JNPSD, PBSO, WCSO, and WHSO and their student populations, and its own student population, shows that such negative impact is not present here.

IV. Conclusion

Friendship submits that upon the basis of its review, neither any existing federal desegregation order affecting the PCSSD, LRSD, NLRSD, and JNPSD, nor the 1989 Settlement Agreement prohibit the State's charter school authorizer from granting its renewal application to continue operating an open-enrollment public charter school within the geographic boundaries of the LRSD.

Friendship further submits that upon the basis of its review, nothing would prohibit the state's charter school authorizer from granting its renewal application to continue operating an open-enrollment public charter school within the geographic boundaries of the PBSO.

Section 9: Disclosures

Provide the names and contact information for each board member and administrator.

List Board Members and Administrators Name, Contact, and Title	Provide any Relationship to Another Board Member or Administrator
Jeffrey Pulliam, Board Chair Jeff.Pulliam@friendshipaspire.org	None
Chad Froud, Board Member Cfroud@friendshipaspire.org	None
Chris Bell, Board Treasurer Cbell@friendshipaspire.org	None
Dr. Phong Tran, Superintendent Ptran@friendshipusa.org	None