

## Documentation for Charter Amendment Requests

**Rationale:** We are requesting to change the grade configuration at Friendship Aspire North Little Rock Elementary from K-5 to K-3 beginning the 2024-2025 school year. Students currently in grades 3-5 at our North Little Rock campus will be bused to our Friendship Aspire Little Rock Elementary (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders) and Friendship Aspire Little Rock Middle Schools (6<sup>th</sup> graders).

The enrollment at Friendship Aspire North Little Rock Elementary is on a steady increase in the early grades. Friendship Aspire North Little Rock Elementary is currently situated on a floodplain. As a result, there is no allowable space to expand. The campus has run out of space to house additional scholars. The approval of the amendment would allow current 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> graders to continue receiving high-quality instruction in the Friendship Aspire Academy Network. We would therefore like to turn Friendship Aspire North Little Rock into an Early Learning Center serving grades K through 3.

Friendship Aspire North Little Rock Elementary is located in a high poverty neighborhood. The benefits of offering an Early Learning Center in that neighborhood would be life-changing for the families. Early learning centers in high poverty neighborhoods offer numerous benefits, contributing to both the immediate and long-term well-being of children, families, and communities. Here's a detailed list of key advantages:

1. **Educational Foundation:** Early learning centers provide children with a strong educational foundation, helping them acquire basic literacy, numeracy, and social skills. This early start can set the stage for lifelong learning and success in later education.
2. **Closing Achievement Gaps:** Children from high poverty neighborhoods often face educational disparities. Early learning centers can help close these gaps by offering quality education and resources that might otherwise be inaccessible.
3. **Social-Emotional Development:** These centers promote social-emotional skills, teaching children to interact positively with others, manage emotions, and build self-confidence. This development is crucial for their future relationships and personal growth.
4. **Improved School Readiness:** Early learning centers prepare children for the structure and expectations of formal schooling. This preparation can lead to smoother transitions into elementary school and reduce the likelihood of academic struggles later on.
5. **Parental Support:** Early learning centers often engage parents in their children's education. This involvement can strengthen family bonds, improve parenting skills, and create a supportive home environment for learning.
6. **Community Resources and Support:** Many early learning centers provide access to additional community resources, such as health services, nutrition programs, and social services. This comprehensive approach addresses the broader needs of children and their families.
7. **Reduction in Future Crime and Delinquency:** By offering positive early experiences, these centers can reduce the likelihood of children engaging in criminal activities or delinquent behavior as they grow older, contributing to safer communities.

8. **Economic Benefits:** Early learning centers can positively impact the economy by allowing parents to work, seek employment, or pursue education. This can lead to greater economic stability for families in high poverty neighborhoods.

9. **Breaking the Cycle of Poverty:** By providing children with quality early education, these centers contribute to breaking the cycle of poverty. Children who start with a strong educational foundation are more likely to achieve higher levels of education and secure better job opportunities in the future.

10. **Improved Public Health:** Early learning centers often focus on health and nutrition, promoting healthy habits and providing meals to children in need. This focus on health can lead to improved overall well-being for the community.

Early learning centers in high poverty neighborhoods are vital in creating equitable opportunities for children, supporting families, and fostering community development. The benefits of an early learning center in a high poverty neighborhood is showing great promise at our Friendship Aspire Academy Downtown Pine Bluff Campus. The scholars have shown significant growth both academically and personally. Our desire is to replicate that successful model.

Charter Name: <b>Friendship Aspire Academy Arkansas</b>			
2023 - 2024	Friendship Aspire North Little Rock Elementary  (3544710)	Friendship Aspire Little Rock Elementary  (3544704)	Friendship Aspire Little Rock Middle  (3544702)
Current Enrollment	125	241	57
Enrollment by Race and Grade	African American: 120 Hispanic/Latino: 3 White: 1  Kindergarten: 18 Grade 1: 20 Grade 2: 26 Grade 3: 22 Grade 4: 15 Grade 5: 24	African American: 215 Hispanic/Latino: 25 Two or more races: 2  Kindergarten: 25 Grade 1: 45 Grade 2: 43 Grade 3: 36 Grade 4: 60 Grade 5: 32	African American: 34 Hispanic/Latino: 22 White: 1  Grade 6: 12 Grade 7: 23 Grade 8: 22
Free and Reduced Lunch	90%	92%	90%