



Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminister Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Enclosure c24
September 22, 2014

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TO: Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education
FROM: Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner
RE: **Segue Institute for Learning - Request for Charter Amendment**

Segue Institute for Learning (SIFL) is an independent charter public school focused on fostering a community where students take ownership of their education. Segue scholars receive a rigorous academic experience that prepares them to excel in the high school and eventual college setting of their choice. The school opened in 2009 and currently enrolls 230 students in grades six through eight. All students reside in Central Falls. Ninety-three percent (93%) of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch, 16% are students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and 15% are English language learners (ELLs).

Amendment Request

SIFL requested an amendment to its charter to increase the school's enrollment effective July 2015.

In accordance with C-2-1 (a) of the Board of Regents Regulations Governing Rhode Island Public Charter Schools, such major changes in the school's operations require the action of the Board of Education.

Segue Institute for Learning has not achieved sustained high academic performance.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT, the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to reject Segue Institute for Learning's amendment permitting the school to enroll 655 students.

RI Charter Public School Amendment Request: **Segue Institute for Learning**

Enrolling Communities: Central Falls

Grade Level: 6-8

Location of School: Central Falls, RI

Charter Type: Independent

Mission

The mission of the Segue Institute for Learning (SIFL) is to foster a community where students take ownership of their education. Segue scholars receive a rigorous academic experience that prepares them to excel in the high school and eventual college setting of their choice.

School Overview

Segue Institute for Learning (SIFL) is an independent charter public school. The school opened in 2009 and currently enrolls 230 students in grades six through eight. All students reside in Central Falls. Ninety-three percent (93%) of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch, 16% are students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and 15% are English language learners (ELLs).

Amendment Request

Pursuant to Regulation C-2-1(a) of the *RI Board of Regents Regulations Governing Charter Schools*, SIFL requests permission from the Board of Education to:

- **expand its program to operate an elementary school in addition to its middle school;**
- **expand to serve additional enrolling communities, to include Woonsocket and Pawtucket.**

The school proposes to enroll additional students in grades K, 1, and 5 beginning in Fall 2015, and then increase enrollment over time. The maximum proposed enrollment is six hundred fifty-five (655) students, or a maximum enrollment increase of four hundred twenty-five (425) students.

Evaluation Procedures

For charter schools seeking amendments that increase maximum enrollment, RIDE's Office of Charter Schools looks to answer three key questions:

- Does the charter public school have a track record of sustained high performance?
- Is there sufficient demand for the school?
- Has the school developed an operational plan that will enable it to expand with fidelity?

To evaluate academic performance, RIDE conducts a comprehensive review of available evidence, including RIDE school classifications, NECAP proficiency, growth rates, graduation rates (for high schools), and results from recent charter renewal decisions.

To evaluate demand, RIDE examines lottery data over multiple years to assess whether the school has sufficient demand to meet proposed enrollment targets.

To evaluate a school's operational plan, RIDE reviews board meeting minutes, school materials (including staffing plans and budgets), and other strategic planning documents. The purpose of the review is to understand whether the school will be able to carry out its expansion plan.

Commissioner's Recommendation

At the present time, the Commissioner recommends that the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education deny the proposed amendment to expand SIFL into a K-8 program, and encourage SIFL to delay its expansion request until it has demonstrated sustained high academic performance. The decision is primarily based on evidence indicating mixed academic performance at SIFL to date.

In 2012, Segue Institute for Learning (SIFL) received a "Warning" classification. In 2013, SIFL's classification dropped to "Focus" status. Most recently, in 2014, SIFL again received a classification of "Focus."

The school's charter was renewed for a five-year term in 2013.

Demand: In 2013, SIFL reported receiving 123 applications for 80 available spots. While this evidence indicates a level of oversubscription at the middle school level, it is unclear whether demand exists to fully enroll a new elementary school as proposed.

Operational planning: Segue has provided an operational plan for expansion, the details of which have been comprehensively reviewed. RIDE is committed to following up with SIFL regarding its operational plan for expansion, in order to support Segue in the revision of its proposal for future consideration.