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July 21, 2020

Mr. Nick Johnson  
City of Bloomington  
1800 West Old Shakopee Road  
Bloomington, MN 55431-3027

Via Email at  
[nmjohnson@bloomingtonmn.gov](mailto:nmjohnson@bloomingtonmn.gov)

Re: Success Academy Hybrid Learning Expansion (Revised 7.21.20)  
Conditional Use Permit and Final Site and Building Plan Narrative

Dear Mr. Johnson:

This firm represents Success Academy Charter School ("Success Academy"), located at 8201 Park Avenue ("Property") in the City of Bloomington ("City"). The Property consists of Success Academy and Dar Al-Farooq, a place of assembly and community center. Success Academy is seeking to amend its existing conditional use permit to increase enrollment by an additional 50 hybrid middle school ("Hybrid Program") students, in addition to constructing a 692 square-foot greenhouse addition ("Greenhouse") on the south end of the school building. Please accept the enclosed documents as the formal submittal for a conditional use permit (CUP) and Final Site and Building Plan to allow the Greenhouse and enrollment expansion.

### **Introduction and Background**

The Property has historically been used for various institutional uses, including public and private preschools, elementary and high schools. In 2011, the City approved a CUP to allow use of the Property as a community center, place of assembly, a school with 60 students, and a day care. Success Academy has been located on the Property since 2017, when it received City approvals to increase enrollment from 60 to 84 students. In 2018, the City approved a CUP to increase the enrollment from 84 to 130 students, the maximum allowed under the Institutional Use standards with all students attending Monday through Friday. At that time, numerous traffic mitigations measures were implemented to reduce the impacts of the increased enrollment on the surrounding community. Although Success Academy is authorized for kindergarten through 8th grade, due to the limitations on enrollment, the school currently only serves kindergarten through 6th grade. Success Academy is seeking an increase of enrollment from 130 to 180 students to allow for the Hybrid Program for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who will be on campus Monday through Thursday.

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### **Proposed Hybrid Program**

The Hybrid Program is a curriculum authorized under Minnesota Statutes Section 124D.095, Subd. 4 that will consist of a four (4) days on-campus and one (1) day off-campus education model. Hybrid Program students will attend Campus Monday-Thursday from 7:15 AM-2:30 PM. On Fridays, Hybrid Program students will attend virtual classes online from 7:15 AM to 11:30AM, resulting in no increase over the existing on-campus traffic on Fridays. The enclosed narrative provides a more comprehensive summary of the Hybrid Program details.

### **Institutional Use Standards**

The Property is subject to the Institutional Use standards under City Code Section 21.302.06(7)(A), which restricts the expansion of an Institutional Use that exceeds the thresholds below absent a finding by the City Council that the traffic has been mitigated.

(A) *Prohibition.* The establishment of a new institutional use or the expansion of an existing institutional use that creates traffic levels above the following thresholds as documented by a traffic study prepared by a qualified, independent traffic engineering professional under the supervision of the city is prohibited unless the City Council finds that the negative impacts, reasonably attributable to the proposed institutional use, on surrounding residential uses can be sufficiently mitigated to levels consistent with residential livability and pedestrian and motorist safety:

- (i) Adds 300 or more trips per day to a local residential street at least once per week on a regular basis;
- (ii) Adds 100 or more new trips per day on a local residential street, such that the total trips on that local residential street add up to a total of over 1,000 trips per day at least once per week on a regular basis; or
- (iii) The proposed use or expansion is expected to produce 100 or more trips per hour on a local residential street during the peak hour of trip generation for the proposed site, at least once per week on a regular basis.

Success Academy is seeking a Hybrid Program enrollment of 50 students who will be on Campus Monday through Thursday only. Based on the trip generation data in the traffic study dated July 11, 2018, as amended June 16, 2020 (“Traffic Study”), the Hybrid Program will not reach any of the above thresholds with an increased enrollment of 50 students.

### **CUP Application**

Success Academy’s request is consistent with the CUP findings required under City Code Section 21.501.04(e)(1)-(5), as follows:

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**1. The proposed use is not in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan.**

The use of the Property as a community center, school and place of assembly is consistent with the Quasi-Public and Public Land Use designation under the City's Comprehensive Plan. The proposed Greenhouse and expansion to add 50 students to Hybrid Program do not conflict with the Comprehensive Plan policies for the Property.

**2. The proposed use is not in conflict with any adopted District Plan for the area.**

There is no adopted District Plan for the area.

**3. The proposed use is not in conflict with City Code provisions.**

Neither the Greenhouse nor the proposed increase of 50 Hybrid Program students conflicts with City Code provisions. As described in the Traffic Study, the Hybrid Program enrollment will not reach any of the mitigation-requiring thresholds under the City's Institutional Use Standards.

**4. The proposed use will not create an excessive burden on parks, schools, streets, and other public facilities and utilities which serve or are proposed to serve the planned development.**

The Greenhouse and proposed increase of 50 students in the Hybrid Program are not anticipated to place an excessive burden on parks, schools, streets, and other public facilities and utilities which serve or are proposed to serve the planned development provided the mitigation measures are undertaken. Mitigation measures implemented after the 2018 CUP approval included the roadway safety improvements recommended by the City engineering department. These measures were successful in reducing the burden on public facilities associated with the proposed use.

**5. The proposed use will not be injurious to the surrounding neighborhood or otherwise harm the public health, safety and welfare.**

The Greenhouse and proposed increase of 50 students in the Hybrid Program are not anticipated to be injurious to the surrounding neighborhood or otherwise harm the public health, safety and welfare of the community. Numerous Mitigation measures were implemented after the 2018 CUP approvals, including roadway safety improvements identified by the City engineering department. These measures were successful in mitigating negative impacts to the surrounding residential uses associated with the student enrollment expansion. Pursuant to the Traffic Study, the additional enrollment will not increase students on Fridays, the day upon which traffic is currently highest.

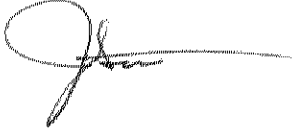
Pursuant to the above findings, the Property is consistent with the required standards under the City Code for the issuance of the CUP request and we respectfully request the City approve Success Academy's application accordingly.

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Please contact me with any questions about this letter or the enclosed materials.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Steen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jacob W. Steen, for  
Larkin Hoffman

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cc: Magdy Rabeaa, Success Academy

## Success Academy Charter School

8201 Park Avenue  
Bloomington, Minnesota 55420



### **Success Academy – Proposed Middle School Hybrid Learning Expansion (2020-2021)**

**Success Academy Charter School mission:** The Mission of Success Academy is to prepare students to become excellent questioners, scientific thinkers and responsible citizens. Students will work respectfully and collaboratively applying scientific, technological, and mathematical concepts to develop a strong work ethic and critical thinking skills needed to solve problems in the real world and to prepare them for future academic success.

**Success Academy Charter School vision:** The vision of Success Academy Charter School is to embrace multidisciplinary and blended curriculum with an emphasis on science, technology, engineering and mathematics to provide a challenging learning environment that values creativity, diversity, and multiculturalism to prepare its students for life-long learning, collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving.

**Background and Overview:** Success Academy will start its fifth year of operations in August 2020. The school is located at 8201 Park Ave. S. in Bloomington. The school started in its current location with an initial approved student enrollment of 60 students and has increased enrollment to 84 students and then to 130 students for the 2019-2020 school year.

Success Academy is conscious of the concerns about traffic on the residential streets where the school is located. The school has added several mitigation measures to reduce impacts, including an entrance to the parking lot, a one-way directional traffic system within the parking lot; and a dedicated individual directing traffic in the lot on Fridays when there is increased traffic due to worship activities at the Mosque on-site.

Since it relocated to the property, Success Academy has been receiving requests from the community to change the grade levels that the school serves from K-6 to K-8. In order to accommodate the demand for increased enrollment, in 2018 we received approval from the City to allow up to 130 students. For the 2019-2020 school year the enrollment was consistently between 125 and 130.

The school is seeking to amend its CUP and expand the school to middle school grades, beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, with an increased enrollment of an additional 50 students. In order to accommodate the increased enrollment without causing traffic congestion, school leadership has developed a hybrid learning plan that will result in no increase in the number of students in the building on Friday, the busiest day for traffic each week.

### **Success Academy Hybrid Middle School Format:**

In accordance with Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) hybrid education guidelines, Success Academy proposes a hybrid middle school model for the school year, with a minimum of 50 hybrid middle school students grades 6-8, for a total of 180 students school-wide. Hybrid students will have a traditional school day Monday – Thursday with class from 7:15 AM–2:30 PM. On Fridays, middle school teachers will deliver hybrid education in online virtual classes from 7:15 AM–11:30 AM. Attendances

will be taken as normal Monday – Friday in accordance with state guidelines, with hybrid attendance based on student participation in online sessions and assignment completion.

A virtual class is defined as a distance learning program in which students work at home on assigned classwork. Teachers connect with students throughout the morning via ZOOM or Google Meets to check in, present lessons, and to assist students as needed. As with traditional learning, attendance is taken and students are responsible to return work to their teacher virtually or on the following Monday. In addition, students will be assigned work in an online learning program that can be self-paced, allowing for them to advance at their own rate.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Success Academy was forced to develop and implement a distance learning model that met the needs of students. Success Academy has determined that a distance learning hybrid model can be beneficial to middle school students without the need to attend campus five days a week. It is important to note that the hybrid middle school learning proposed is a permanent curriculum at the school that will continue beyond the COVID-19 pandemic even after Success Academy returns to a traditional school schedule.

### **Are other schools using a hybrid model?**

The hybrid model as described above is used in schools across the United States, especially at the middle and high school level. Some districts use the model to save the cost of transportation of students, reducing busses down to three or four days a week. Other districts use the hybrid model to encourage middle and high school students to take initiative for their own learning and for them to pursue learning at their own pace. In all situations, however, this model is supported by a teacher working from school or home to motivate and assist students.

Locally, Cybervillage Academy Charter School uses a hybrid model. Their K – 5 program operates on a 3 days in-school and 2 days online program. Cybervillage approaches this model from the perspective of serving all students in ways that they are comfortable, allowing them to pursue their individual interests in learning.

As a result of successes experienced during the recent distance learning necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, other districts are considering moving to this model as part of their student calendar year with either a three – two or two – three model.

**Curriculum:** Success Academy teachers in middle school grades will be using some or all of these online programs to assist with the Friday online program: ZOOM or Google Meet, iXL, Homeroom, Flipgrid, Newsela, Reading A to Z and others to be determined.

The school's English Language Learner instructor works in collaboration with the classroom teacher to review lessons for vocabulary instruction as well as other consultations. Special Education students in middle school grades will receive intervention services as written into the student's Individual Education Plan. Students who need support from contracted service providers will receive that support virtually.

Success Academy teachers use a Minnesota standards-based curriculum. For math, teachers use a combination of Go Math!, Eureka math and teacher made curriculum to help guide students. For language arts, Success Academy teachers use Journeys for comprehension, vocabulary and prosody. For writing the school uses Writable, a writing curriculum for grades 3 and up.

**Access:** Students in middle school grades will be allowed to take home their laptops for the weekend to ensure access to our teachers on Fridays. The parent liaison already works with families to support their getting internet access if they do not already have it.

**How will we determine student success?** Success Academy teachers use daily formative assessment strategies to learn more about student progress to direct teaching. The content that is covered during the four “in school” days works hand in hand with the content covered during the hybrid learning days.