



Cornville Regional Charter School  
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Dear Charter Commission,

Last month I submitted a formal request to extend our enrollment cap from 132 to 135 and I would like to amend that to 144 students. There are two main reasons for this increase which include:

- Diversifying the peer groups by having more opportunities for our learners
- Meeting the growing demand in our geographic area within a 40-mile radius

As I have mentioned previously in my original request:

*For the past two years we have been very strategic in making certain that each age level (ages 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14) has 15 or more peers. We pride ourselves on the fact that we put the social emotional needs of our learners at the forefront and every decision that we make keeps this in mind. When the school first opened we had multiage classrooms but there was not sufficient numbers for certain age groups. [For example], there were learners who were going through the developmental stage of playing with "fairy houses" and they lacked having a wide enough peer group that they could identify with and thereby reduces peer to peer conflict. At this point we have been able to broaden each peer group to approximately 15 learners and next year we want to add 15 age 5 learners and in order to do so, we will be forced to go above the 132 cap. We have 3 learners who will be moving onto High School next year and each subsequent age level will have approximately 15 learners. This increase would not sacrifice or strain our resources nor would it negatively impact the level of programming and I would argue that it could only strengthen the social emotional supports for our learners.*

Having a wide range of peers ensures that there are ample social relationships that can be fostered and nurtured and it is why balancing each age group has been a priority for us. In the fall we want to have 15 age 5 learners and if we accept any more students this year, we run the risk of having a smaller group in the fall.

There is a definite social emotional component to increasing our student population to at least 135, but going to 144 gives us the flexibility to add siblings and meet a growing demand in our geographic area. Such an increase will still allow for our homerooms and instructional classes to be 16 or less. We use our staff in very unique ways and leverage our resources to meet the needs of our learners and therefore we are able to maintain small class sizes.

When we have space and there is no negative impact on programming how can we turn away families that are crying out for their children? How do we turn them away because of a cap that is arbitrary in many ways? There is nothing programming wise nor space wise that are preventing us, only a cap established 4 years ago. The cap was originally established because of the number of traditional classrooms (we have added 1 more physically) and also 120 was the largest population the building had ever had previously. Who could have imagined that we would have 120 students and 20 students on the waitlist, of which, 16 do not have a spot in the fall because of our cap.

Here are 4 snippets that I have received recently from interested parents. I will have to decide which students to turn away because we don't want to jeopardize the size of our incoming 5 year-old group in the fall.

- *"We are aware that families don't typically transfer their children's school at this time of the year, however, we have been unhappy with our daughter's experience (both educational and social) at her current school, and recent events have brought the situation to a head. We are now at the point where the notion of returning to the current school following the February vacation is intolerable."*
- *"He has struggled more and more at \_\_\_\_\_ School. We feel he would benefit from a alternate format. The friendships he's made are with students who are very quick witted, enjoy robotics, reading and imaginative play. He has had a hard go this again this year due to those friends not being in his class and having a difficult social sect to handle."*
- "I would like to submit this application for next school year AND I would be willing to transfer him after February break THIS year if there is an opening. \_\_\_\_\_ has been struggling with his classes and I'd hate to see him fall behind."
- "\_\_\_\_\_ is very social, respectful, young man with potential to succeed in smaller setting with more hands on methods. \_\_\_\_\_, though in 4th grade struggles with most of the 4th grade academics."

There is a growing demand in our area and we are getting near our cap but not our capacity. How did we settle on 144? It is the maximum number of students that we can comfortably sit in the cafeteria. There are certain things that are non-negotiable in our culture and one of them being that we all eat together for snack and lunch. We also need to come together at the end of each day as a community for closing circle and celebrate our learning, our relationships, and our community. When that ability is taken away we then begin to infringe on our sense of community.

We are aware that funding may not be available beyond our 132 students until the following year, but isn't that true of any public school? We are willing to assume the financial risks because we believe that they will be absorbed. If there is not a significant financial burden and we have physical space, programming resources, then why not? It is true that increasing more students may increase the odds of enrolling a "high needs" learner, but that is true with our incoming 13 students next year. It is a risk we take every time there is a slot open, but it is not one that deters us from making the right decision.

If our mission is to "create a safe, respectful, nurturing, and active learning community where every child is given the opportunity to thrive academically, to be accepted, to celebrate accomplishments, and to develop a lifetime love of learning" should we turn away learners and families that are searching for such a place?

I will be present for the next monthly meeting to answer any questions. I appreciate your time and consideration of this request so that we may continue to serve our 16 communities from Belgrade, Farmington, Moscow, Hartland, St. Albans, Newport, Fairfield, and all points in between.

In the Service of Children,



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