



# INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Indiana State Board of Education  
**From:** Timothy Schultz, General Counsel, Assigned Hearing Officer  
**Date:** June 1, 2016  
**RE:** Spirit of God Accelerated Education Grade Appeal 11-22016

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**Recommendation: Deny Spirit of God Accelerated Education (“SGAE”) Grade Appeal.**

This matter concerns SGAE’s appeal of its 2014-2015 performance and improvement category grade (“grade”) pursuant to IC 20-31-8-6 and 511 IAC 6.2-6-12.

SGAE acknowledges that prior to recent efforts the school was suffering from low performance factors, which contributed to failing grades for the school. As stated in documentation presented during the hearing, SGAE suggests that the causes of the low grades were a lack of leadership, student hunger, inadequate curriculum, and delays and inconsistencies testing procedures. In response to these areas of concern, SGAE has enacted a number of measures, including but not limited to updating its curriculum to adhere to core standards, creating numerous parent and student outreach programs, ensuring that reduced cost or free meal programs are available to students, placing additional emphasis on teacher professional development and performance, and greater student access to technology with new computers expected at the school in advance of the 2016-2017 school year. Furthermore, SGAE has provided documentation from parents who have commented on the recent improvements at the school. Based on SGAE’s representations and documentation presented during its appeal, it is apparent that the school is making significant progress and it should be commended for such progress.

Unfortunately, SGAE’s appeal lacks legal support to amend the school’s 2014-2015 grade. While it is evident that SGAE’s administration is committed to improving the school’s grade, it appears that many of the programs and efforts at improvement were put in place during the current (2015-2016) school year. Given that SGAE has appealed its 2014-2015 grade, the programs that were enacted during the current school year cannot be the basis to alter the prior year grade. SGAE’s score was calculated in the same manner as all other schools. While SGAE’s 2014-2015 grade might not reflect the recent progress the school is making, it is not feasible to create a unique grading system for only one school. For the reasons stated above, the State Board of Education should deny this appeal.

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Timothy Schultz, General Counsel  
Indiana State Board of Education