

MEMORANDUM

Staff Summary No. 8

Date: March 28, 2024

To: Members of the California School Finance Authority

From: Katrina M. Johantgen, Executive Director

Subject: Resolution No. 24-07 – Approving the Charter School Facilities Credit Enhancement Grant Program (CDFA #84.354A) Award in an Amount Not to Exceed \$2,000,000 to University Park and Watts LLC, on behalf of New Designs Charter School and New Designs Charter School - Watts, located in Los Angeles County

Background: The California School Finance Authority (Authority) received a grant award in 2021 under the U.S. Department of Education’s Expanding Quality Charter Schools Program – Credit Enhancement (CE) for Charter Schools Facilities (CFDA # 84.354A), which, for purposes of the Authority’s implementation, has been permitted early access funds to the Charter Finance Enhancement Program (Charter FinE). This federal grant, authorized under Title IV, Part C, Section 4304 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), provided \$10,000,000 to support financing through the Authority’s Conduit Bond and Note Financing Program.

Application: University Park and Watts LLC (the “Borrower”), on behalf of NDCS, is applying for an enhancement award in the amount not to exceed \$2,000,000. *The final award amount will be finalized at the time the bonds are priced and sold.* According to information provided by the Borrower, by helping to finance a debt service reserve fund that would otherwise be financed with bond proceeds, the CE Grant allows the Borrower to reduce its borrowing costs. Additionally, the Grant will reduce the overall lease costs for NDCS.

Eligibility Requirements: The applicant meets and has demonstrated all eligibility and evaluation requirements of the Program, including without limitation:

- Applicant is in Good Standing with its Authorizer - Good standing certification from the Authorizer, Los Angeles Unified School District, is on file with the Authority;
- Applicant is located in a school district and/or county where at least 50% of students do not meet the State standard for proficiency in either math or language on the state assessment, or is located in a school district and/or county with more than 50% of the student population eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (Los Angeles Unified School District and Los Angeles County, where New Designs Charter School is located, are substantially above this threshold), or has more than 50% of current or projected student enrollment who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch; and/or
- Ability to secure placement of its debt with an investor(s), secure an investment grade credit rating from a national credit rating agency in conjunction with a public sale, or other evidence, satisfactory to the authority that the transaction will be completed.

Recommendation: Staff recommends the Board adopt Resolution No. 24-07, awarding the Borrower, on behalf of the operator of New Designs Charter School and New Designs Charter School - Watts, a Charter Finance Enhancement Program (CDFA #84.354A) Award in a not-to-exceed amount of \$2,000,000.