

Southland College Prep Charter School

Abstract

Southland College Prep Charter School (Southland) opened its doors in the fall of 2009 to 125 ninth grade students. The school currently serves a diverse student population of 9th and 10th grade students in south suburban Chicago and will eventually serve grades 9-12 with an anticipated total enrollment of 500 students by school year 2013-14. As it completes its second full year of operation, Southland has doubled its enrollment, added 15 new faculty and professional staff, and expanded its special education services.

Southland was created to provide a high-quality flexible charter school alternative to available public school choices that would be open to all students and enable them to reach challenging State performance standards. The local public high school district has a seven-year trend of not meeting state and national academic standards as measured by the No Child Left Behind legislation. This performance data was so convincing, that in the summer of 2009, Southland, the first charter school in Chicago's south suburbs, became only the second high school in Illinois outside of the City of Chicago to be issued a charter by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

Southland has a rigorous college preparatory curriculum and a nine-hour school day. The extended-day model allows Southland to distinguish itself from other local high school options. Assessment strategies are on-going and differentiated for all subject areas. Southland's leadership team has over 500 years of combined experience in the academic arena. Southland is strongly supported by all nine south suburban communities and parents within its enrollment boundaries.

Southland is committed to this implementation grant's three Competitive Priorities: improving achievement and high school graduation rates, promoting diversity, and improving productivity. The focus of this proposal is to purchase start-up equipment and expand services for Southland's growing student enrollment. The media center and fine arts need additional funds to implement core and after-school programs. Additional funds would strengthen the growing responsibilities of the science department, the broadcast journalism class, and the life skills curriculum to meet the needs of a larger student population.

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