



## New Mexico Public Education Commission Charter Schools Division

### 2015 New Charter School Application Kit Part B. Executive Summary



## Part B: Executive Summary

This section should be two to three pages long and address in a narrative form the following points:

- Your proposed school's name and a description of the targeted student population including key demographic data (academic performance, home languages, special populations) and the targeted geographical area of the proposed school.
- Where the targeted students are most likely being educated currently and why they are expected to choose the proposed charter school for their future educational needs.
- Evidence that there is a community need for a school of this nature in the location proposed. Note: NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-6(L)(5) provides, "[a] chartering authority may approve, approve with conditions or deny an application. A chartering authority may deny an application if...the application is otherwise contrary to the best interests of the charter school's projected students, the local community or the school district in whose geographic boundaries the charter school applies to operate." Evidence of community need is required. Specific data and evidence is required in the application itself. Therefore, specific statistical information does not need to be provided here.
- The key innovative and unique programmatic features the school will implement to accomplish its mission (non-traditional school year, longer school day, partner organizations, etc.).
- How you project that the school will be more effective than the schools currently serving the targeted student population, or the founder(s)' plans to improve student achievement and exceed the academic performance of these existing public schools in the targeted service area. Provide a brief summary of any data you have to support this assumption.
- The founders of the proposed school, their background, and expertise.
- If different from the list provided above, the founding governing board.

To complete the following form, click on the text box and begin to type.

New Charter Application Executive Summary

*New Mexico Gateway Academy (NMGA) will provide a statewide online learning environment with a comprehensive career readiness focus that begins in kindergarten and, upon graduation, prepares its students to enter directly into the workforce or continue their postsecondary education. NMGA's motto will be: "Educating the whole child for the whole world."*

*NMGA plans to enroll 260 students in grades K-10 during its first year of operation in 2016 growing to 845 students in grades K-12 in Year 5. NMGA expects that its demographics will reflect the State's public school student demographics including at-risk, special education, and English language learners. NMGA will serve students throughout the State who wish to be educated outside of a traditional brick and mortar school. The School expects to attract students from rural communities lacking access to either public school choice or to a career readiness focused school; students who are far ahead or behind their peers in school; and students coping with social issues or disabilities that may benefit from individualized instruction.*

*To determine evidence of broad based support for the School among residents in New Mexico, the NMGA founders researched inquiries that were made to online virtual curriculum providers in New Mexico. One provider indicated that during 2014 and 2015, 7408 families, from 32 of the 33 counties in the State, directly expressed interest in online education for their children via phone calls or emails. These inquiries represent approximately 2 percent of school age children in New Mexico<sup>1</sup>.*

*NMGA's model is wholly unique to New Mexico's education landscape. The current limited options for career readiness schools in New Mexico are site-based and only accessible to students and families who are able to physically access the schools on a daily basis. There are no options in New Mexico for a K – 12 college readiness and career focused school.*

*Elementary students will be introduced to career clusters. When students are in middle school, they will work with advisors on in-depth career exploration. NMGA expects that by the time a student is in ninth grade, they will have the knowledge to choose a career pathway that will lead to graduation, certification, employment, and/or postsecondary education.*

*Instruction at NMGA will be provided by New Mexico licensed teachers who will work in partnership with universities and industries in high demand career areas in New Mexico. This will result in students graduating with either the preparedness to take national competency tests in their chosen pathway, a career certification, and/or postsecondary education readiness.*

*To ensure student achievement, NMGA will use the following strategies:*

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<sup>1</sup> (2015). Retrieved June 29, 2015, from <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/it/schoolfactsheets.html>

- **Career Pathways Program:** *The Career Pathways Program will be designed to engage students in selecting coursework that piques their interest in a future career and makes coursework relevant. Curriculum will be aligned to the New Mexico Content Standards. NMGA intends to develop partnerships with business, industry, and colleges throughout the state to enhance core curricular offerings with work-related experiences and internships as well as dual credit opportunities. NMGA will closely monitor student progress with a variety of formative and summative assessments that are aligned to the curriculum as well as portfolios, Individualized Learning Plans, Next Step Plans, project based activities, internships, and results from skill assessments such as ACT and COMPASS.*

*National studies indicate the clear effectiveness of Career Pathway (career readiness) programs), especially in graduation rates among participants. Studies from California indicate a 10 percent increase in graduation rates from students participating in career readiness programs<sup>2</sup>, and in Wisconsin the state has seen a 6 percent increase above the state's graduation rate<sup>3</sup>.*

- **Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs):** *NMGA's ILPs will begin in kindergarten and transition through a student's senior year in order to provide documented, effective, and sequential learning approaches unique to every student. NMGA will use a learner-centered model that puts individualized learning at its core. The ILP will be aligned to New Mexico's Next Step Plan to ensure that all students are on track for graduation.*
- **Comprehensive Support Programs:** *NMGA will offer comprehensive services and programs including special education and ELL, counseling, social support, and onboarding to orient students to online education and ensure a quality start and progress in the program.*
- **Parental Involvement:** *One of the basic tenets of online learning is direct parental involvement. Communication among teachers, parents, and students will occur often, sometimes daily. Parental involvement in their child's education is an established as an effective means to improve student achievement and help students stay in school longer.*

### **Founders**

*NMGA has three founders. All three have either served on charter school boards or worked in charter schools in New Mexico.*

***Susan Unser** is the co-founder of the Unser Discovery Campus, Inc. in Albuquerque. Her background is in political administration, nursing, restaurant management and ownership, and real estate development. She has served on the Governing Council of Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School and New Mexico Virtual Academy.*

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<sup>2</sup> Dayton, C., Hester, C, and Stern, D (2011). Profile of the California Partnership Academies 2009-2010. Retrieved on June 9, 2015 from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/hs/documents/cpareport2010.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Why Career and Technical Education?, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, February 2014.

**Janet DeVesty** is the Director of the Unser Racing Museum in Albuquerque. Ms. DeVesty served for five years as the Director of Operations for Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School. This work has led her to become passionate about charter schools and the opportunity to reach students virtually and introduce them to available career opportunities in the State.

**Mari Adkins** is the Assessment and Special Programs Manager at the New Mexico Virtual Academy. She was instrumental in the planning and implementation of NMVA and is a member of the original administrative team. Prior to serving at NMVA, Adkins worked at the Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School. Adkins holds two Master's degrees and an alternate certificate in Special Education.

### **Governing Council**

In the spring of 2015, the founders hosted community outreach meetings to introduce the industry, labor, nonprofit, economic development, and education communities to the NMGA mission, gather their input, and start building relationships. As a result of the outreach meetings, several attendees have agreed to serve on the NMGA Governing Council. They are:

**Katherine Kegel** has taught business education in grades 7-12 for 17 years and has been a guiding force in helping students gain the knowledge and experience necessary to pursue postsecondary education or career. She has her NM Level 3-B Pre K-12 Administrative License and her NM Level 3-A Instructional Leader 7-12 License with endorsement in business education and serves as the Chama Schools District coordinator for K-3 NM Reads to Lead program and the K-12 SAT/RTI/504 Coordinator.

**Christopher O. Lyons** is the President of Santa Teresa Land, LLC, a land developer in southern New Mexico. He has worked in real estate development in New Mexico since 1993. Mr. Lyons was also the Vice President of Capital Markets at First Interstate Bancorp and began his career at Lehman Brothers Kuhn Loeb. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics.

**Linda Richins** has worked as a financial advisor since 1987 and is currently employed by Morgan Stanley. From 1982 through 1987, Ms. Richins worked in Operations at the Sunwest Bank. Ms. Richins will bring to the Governing Council many years of business and economic related experience.

**Roann G. Sexson** is a Senior Healthcare Executive with over 20 years of medical management experience including: clinic and facility operations, revenue operations, business development, strategic planning, finance, human resources, risk management, clinical research, and new systems development and integration. Ms. Sexson holds a B.S. in Nursing and a M.B.A. in Healthcare Administration.

**Tim Sheahan** is the President and CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central New Mexico and has served this organization in various capacities for the past 40 years. In his roles at the Boys & Girls Clubs, Mr. Sheahan has been building partnerships with local school districts, the University of New Mexico, and Central New Mexico Community College.