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OPTION FOR PARENTS  
CHARTER SCHOOLS DIVISION

2017 NOTICE OF INTENT TO SUBMIT CHARTER APPLICATION

**INSTRUCTIONS**

According to NMSA § 22-8B-6(B) the Notice of Intent to Submit a Charter Application (“NOI”) must be filed by the organizers of a proposed charter school to the Public Education Commission at the address below **AND** to the superintendent of the school district in which the charter school is proposed to be located. *Failure to notify may result in your application being rejected.*

The NOI must be submitted by 5:00 PM Mountain Time on January 10, 2017, **the second Tuesday of January**. Notices of Intent that are not received by the Public Education Commission and the superintendent of the local school district by the deadline may result in the application being rejected. When you send the NOI to the superintendent of the school district in which your charter is to be located, you are strongly encouraged to send it by certified mail return receipt requested, or request a signed receipt when you deliver the NOI. Contact the local district regarding electronic filing.

Notice to the Public Education Commission should be delivered by one of the following methods:

- Electronically to: [Charter.Schools@state.nm.us](mailto:Charter.Schools@state.nm.us)
- By mail or personal delivery: PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION  
c/o New Mexico Public Education Department  
Attn: Options for Parents/Charter Schools Division  
300 Don Gaspar, Room 301  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

The NOI is intended to provide the Public Education Commission with the primary point of contact among the charter developers, and preliminary information about the charter proposal, such as the school’s mission statement, the school’s focus, the representative student population in the intended location, enrollment projections, key innovations, etc. (not to exceed 5 pages).

1. General Information

- Name of Proposed School  
Altura Preparatory School

- Grade levels to be offered and enrollment projections

Grade Levels to be Offered	Projected Total Enrollment
Kindergarten – 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	396

- Primary Point of Contact

Name	Lissa Hines				
Mailing Address	6532 Glen Oak NE				
City	Albuquerque	State	NM	Zip	87111
Phone	(505)821-3717				
Email	lissahines@gmail.com				

2. Names, roles, and current employment of all persons on the applicant team, and qualifications of the team members to establish a high-quality charter school

Name	Role on Team	Qualifications: Education, Employment, Experience
Lissa Hines	Co-Founder	<p>Lissa is a twenty-year educator that began her career in the Albuquerque Public Schools' Highland Cluster. For the past 11 years, she has been an urban school administrator in Oakland, California, and has recently relocated with her husband and family back to Albuquerque. In 2016, Lissa and her team at Hillcrest Elementary school were recognized by the US Department of Education, being awarded the National Blue Ribbon –a distinct honor bestowed to only 329 schools throughout the nation. At the time of her departure, Lissa was one of only five Executive Principals in Oakland—part of Superintendent Antwan Wilson's team of exceptional school leaders that devoted a portion of their professional time to coaching and developing aspiring leaders at schools across the city of Oakland. This important leadership was widely regarded as some of the District's most important work. Lissa was recognized by Oakland Unified School District in 2015, being bestowed the Education Leadership Award.</p> <p>Lissa holds a BA in Elementary Education and MA in Multicultural Special Education from the College of Santa Fe, with endorsements in TESOL and Modern/Classical Languages. She holds educator and administrator credentials in both New Mexico and California.</p>
Meaghan Stern	Co-Founder	<p>Meaghan is an Albuquerque native, with 7.5 years' experience as a teacher, and urban charter school administrator in both San Jose, California and in Memphis, TN. Meaghan was the Academic Director of Cornerstone Academy Preparatory School that was recognized by the state in 2014 as a California Distinguished School -an honor granted to only 5% of schools statewide. Meaghan led the school-wide transition to Common Core State Standards, and initiated the school's technology integration program that equipped each student with a Google Chromebook, commonly regarded as a 1:1 program. An Independent Non-profit organization, Innovate Public Schools, named Cornerstone one of the California schools that is "beating the odds" for low-income and English Language Learning students. Meaghan was also Assistant Principal at Wooddale Middle School, a transformation school in Memphis that is outperforming all other schools in its' network.</p> <p>Meaghan has a BA in American Studies and Spanish from Amherst College and an M.A. in Education Leadership from Stanford University. She holds NM educator credentials in Social Studies, with a bilingual endorsement, and K-12 Administration.</p>

3. Model or focus of the proposed school (e.g., performing arts, dual language, college prep, STEM, Montessori, IB):

Altura Preparatory Elementary School (Altura Prep) will provide a comprehensive college preparatory educational program. Our focus will be on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM), which will become a vehicle for accelerating progress in reading, and math. Beginning in kindergarten, all Altura Prep students will master 21st Century Skills in all core content areas, developing problem solving, communication, critical thinking, and collaboration. Altura Prep will purposefully embed technology at each grade level, kindergarten through fifth grade, in developmentally appropriate ways, in order to differentiate and personalize instruction and to prepare students for using technology as a tool for learning, researching and presenting information. In upper grades, students will use technology as part of their interdisciplinary projects and experiential learning opportunities. To this end, Altura Prep will be a 1:1 school: every student will have access to and use current technology each day (iPads, Chromebooks, PCs, and Macintosh computers) to engage with portions of the curriculum.

The Founders believe high-quality instruction is integral to making sure each student has a solid foundation in all content areas. Our unique departmentalization model will give teachers at Altura Prep the opportunity to be "specialists" in no more than two core content areas, allowing them to focus on and master one or two subjects, which we believe will lead to a greater level of teaching expertise and more rigorous instruction. This model will allow teachers to have an increased ability to differentiate their lessons to meet the diverse needs of all learners, as well as an opportunity to become more effective and invested in their craft.

This rigorous program and comprehensive approach to learning provides the students the necessary competencies to succeed in middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

4. Does the school expect to contract with another entity for either management, or substantial oversight or direction in the school's operation? Yes: No: **X**

If YES, describe the entity and the role it will have in the school's operational plan.

N/A

5. Does the applicant team or any members of the team currently operate any other schools? Yes: No: **X**

6. Vision/Mission statement. (2-3 sentences)

Altura Prep will provide each and every student with a comprehensive and exceptional college preparatory education. Every child who walks through our doors has the potential to succeed in both college and life, and we will foster their development. Students at Altura Prep will leave the school ready to be agents of their own education: they will be prepared to seek opportunities, persevere through challenges, and succeed at high academic levels in middle school, high school, and postsecondary pursuits.

7. Student population and geographical setting of the school

- Define the targeted geographical area of the proposed school from which you expect to draw a significant number of your students.

Altura Prep will be located in the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) region known as the Highland Cluster. This cluster currently serves approximately 7,550 students in eighteen traditional APS elementary, middle and high schools, and an additional 1,120 students attending nearby charter schools. Our targeted geographical area within this cluster is a portion of Southeast Albuquerque East of Carlisle Boulevard, West of Juan Tabo Boulevard, North of Gibson Boulevard, and South of Constitution Avenue.

- Describe the student population including key demographic data (academic performance, home languages, ELL, and special education populations in the location in which the school intends to locate.

There are currently twelve elementary schools in the Highland cluster neighborhoods, and six in our proposed region. This area is informally regarded as Albuquerque's 'International Zone', because of the diverse background and cultures represented in this population. For example, there are more than 27 languages spoken by families in this catchment area, and most of the 70 different ethnicities in Albuquerque are represented in this particular school cluster.

In the six identified elementary schools within this cluster, 78% of students are performing below grade level in reading and math. Five of the six elementary schools have between 40% to 60% of their students identified as English Language Learners and Special Education population averages hover between 8% to 14% of the students served.

- Identify where these students are most likely being educated currently and why they are expected to choose the proposed charter school for their future educational needs.

In the Highland cluster of schools, there are currently seven elementary schools with a D or F rating, based on three year grades from the New Mexico Public Education Department. Our hope is to attract families whose children would otherwise attend the schools in our targeted geographical area: Emerson, Hawthorne, La Mesa, Wherry, or Whittier Elementary Schools.

Emerson, Hawthorne and Whittier all rank in the bottom 5% of schools in New Mexico (based on 3-year points), and, statistically and historically speaking, these five schools have not shown improvement. While acknowledging that these schools are working hard to serve their students, we firmly believe it imperative we do better. Our expectation is that we will provide our students with a high-quality school option in an area where the majority of students will only attend neighborhood schools with a State Rating of a "D" or an "F" for their entire educational career.

Beyond becoming just another alternative to historically underperforming schools (or to charter schools that are at full capacity), we will offer families and students an opportunity to attend a school intentionally focused on comprehensive skill development necessary for our student's future success. Altura Prep will take an expanded view of student progress: it is not enough for our students to achieve academic excellence, but we will prepare all students with the skills and mindsets that are necessary to lead successful lives both in and out of the classroom in a rapidly changing environment. We believe that a deliberately planned academic scope and sequence includes embedded technology, interdisciplinary projects, and an emphasis on continuous growth and improvement through data analysis and data-driven instruction. Our intentional planning and implementation with fidelity will ensure that our students have a well-rounded, rigorous, and college-preparatory educational experience.

8. Provide evidence that the applicant team has assessed community need for a school of the nature that will be proposed in the application (e.g., objective surveys or other measures of local demand for the proposed educational program).

Our future students are zoned to D and F rated schools, with 22% of students at these schools performing at or above grade level in reading and math. Preliminary interviews and conversations with various stakeholders have led us to believe that there are families living in our targeted area who are seeking more rigorous educational opportunities for their children.

Conversations with personnel from Sandia National Laboratories and the University of New Mexico have highlighted the urgent need to better prepare New Mexico's youth for future careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The US Department of Education also emphasizes a current need for STEM-related education: "Right now, not enough of our youth have access to quality STEM learning opportunities and too few students see these disciplines as springboards for their careers." ([www.ed.gov/stem](http://www.ed.gov/stem)) A strong elementary foundation in mathematics and technology will set all of our students up for success in middle and high-school: research shows that students persevere in STEM- related fields if they build sense of success and self-efficacy in these areas early in life. (Burwell-Woo, et al. 2015) However, our discussions have also illuminated the need for students to be adaptable, creative, and self-motivated problem-solvers. For this reason, among others, we believe that a STEAM-focused curriculum, adding the "Arts" to STEM, will give our children a well-rounded, quality education, allowing for a fuller impact in the world in which they live.

9. Identify significant innovative features that the school will implement in order to help it realize its vision / mission (e.g., non-traditional school year, longer school day, partner organizations, etc.)

**Mission/Vision:** We at Altura Prep will provide each and every student with a comprehensive and exceptional college preparatory education. Every child that walks through our doors has the potential to succeed in both college and life and we will foster their development. Students at Altura Prep will leave the school ready to be agents of their own education: they will be prepared to seek opportunities, persevere through challenges, and succeed at high academic levels in middle school, high school, and postsecondary pursuits.

To realize our vision, Altura Prep will implement the following innovative features:

- Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) will form the core curriculum, with intensive reading instruction
- 1:1 Technology ratio integrated to maximize personalized learning and accelerate progress in reading and math
- Character education focused on building scholarly behaviors and student agency
- Interdisciplinary, project-based learning
- Teacher development based on continuous improvement inquiry cycles and coaching
- School-wide departmentalized grade level instruction to maximize teacher expertise and collaboration
- Extended school-day

10. Describe how the school will be more effective than the schools currently serving the targeted student population, and/or plans to improve student achievement and exceed the academic performance of existing public schools in the targeted service area and any data you have to support this assumption.

In our targeted service area, there are currently six elementary schools, each of which has received a grade of D or F from the State of New Mexico Public Education Department. APS has stated that the predominant reasons for these failing grades are twofold: changes in the state accountability system focusing on student performance using the PARCC state assessment, as well as a low percentage of students participating on these identified tests. While both the Public Education Department and Albuquerque Public Schools have noted that there are improvements to be made within the system, we believe that high expectations are crucial to ensuring that students receive a high quality education and that a key measurement of school effectiveness is students' academic growth, and their preparedness for the next grade level by the end of the year. The schools in our target area have shown a yearly decrease in student proficiency in the areas of English language arts and mathematics, a trend that began in 2011 when the state introduced the school report card system for the 2010- 2011 academic year. These results highlight the ever-increasing achievement gap between students from families with low and high incomes. Altura Prep will focus on reversing this trend to prepare our students for success at the college level. To meet this goal, we will need and expect a high degree of flexibility from our educators to ensure that all students have access to instruction that will be differentiated to meet students' needs and accelerate their academic progress.

We have designed key components of our program to allow for regular data analysis and adjustment, so that we consistently know what our students have mastered and whether or not they are on track towards grade level proficiency, particularly in reading and math. Two of these core strategies will be personalized instruction and teacher coaching. Our 1:1 technology to student ratio gives teachers the opportunity to differentiate instruction in multiple ways. Our reading and math time will include a "station- rotation" model: students are placed in flexible, data-based groups, and they will cycle through multiple learning stations designed to meet their instructional needs. In addition to direct, whole-group instruction, teachers will also teach targeted-small group lessons to flexible groups of students, which gives teachers real-time data about what the student knows and an opportunity to quickly correct any misconceptions. While the teacher instructs in the small group, other students will work independently: some on computer-based programs that adjust to meet individual levels, and others in small groups with their peers. Along with an extended school day, this rotation model allows students to have more opportunities to practice and master content and skills.


Following student progress is yet only one side of the coin. We must ensure our students receive lessons that have been prepared and use the most current and effective teaching approaches for the respective content area. Developing the skills of our teachers is thus a priority, and we will be closely monitoring progress via several mechanisms:

- consistent observation and feedback
- ongoing data and student work analysis, linked to instructional practices that yield results
- weekly, school-wide professional development on research-based best practices, including ample time for teachers to integrate focus strategies into upcoming lessons

We do not only use data to reflect on student progress, but on teacher progress as well. Without great teachers and leaders, little else matters and a core activity of the Altura Prep Leadership Team will be to observe and coach teachers. We will use an ongoing cycle of observation and feedback to continuously improve instruction, with the goal of reaching all learners. This means that each teacher will be observed weekly or bi-weekly, and meet with an instructional leader to review the lesson data, instructional practices, and co-plan future lessons. While other schools may also use an instructional coach to facilitate teacher improvement, Altura Prep's model will focus on coaching for *all* teachers on a regular basis, tailored to the individual teacher's practice and engineered to develop great teachers quickly, based on research-proven strategies.


*Please Note: Should your charter be awarded, the founding governing body could undergo a background check to determine if it qualifies to be a board of public finance in the state of New Mexico.*

Signature of founder(s)

  
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 HISSA HINES  
 [PRINT NAME]

Date: 1/10/17

Signature of founder(s)

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Meaghan Stern  
 [PRINT NAME]

Date: 1/10/17