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August 31, 2016

Katie Poulos
300 Don Gaspar
Santa Fe, NM, 87150

Dear Public Education Commissioners:

Enclosed is the Final 2016 Charter School Application Final Analysis and Recommendation for Students That Aspire to Teach (STAT) applying for a state charter in Bernalillo County, NM in the Albuquerque Public Schools District to serve grades 7-12 and represented by founders, Rhonda Cordova, Dr. Chris Jones, Gloria Velasquez, Dr. Amy Atkins, Mae Araujo, Dr. Carlos Abeyta, and Dr. Analee Maestas. The staff at the Charter Schools Division (CSD) along with a team of independent reviewers gave full consideration to the information gathered in this process.

The CSD has provided evidence and rationale gathered in the team analyses and interviews in this evaluation to fully support the recommendation.

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication to ensure that New Mexico's Charter Schools provide innovative, quality education to New Mexico's students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Katie Poulos".

Katie Poulos
Director of Options for Parents

I. Recommendation

APPROVE

Overall the application is complete and adequate; and during their Capacity Interview, the applicant(s) demonstrated a clear capacity to implement the academic, organizational and financial management plans as described in the application. Nothing was identified that would indicate the applicant(s) do not have the experience, knowledge, and competence to successfully open and operate a charter school.

APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

Overall the application is complete and adequate; and during their Capacity Interview, the applicant(s) demonstrated a general capacity to implement the academic, organizational and financial management plans as described in the application. However, the CSD has identified some specific concerns that would need to be addressed during the planning year. The CSD has listed the noted concerns and conditions to address the concerns below. If the PEC determines that there are any additional conditions that need to be addressed, those should be noted during the public hearing and all approved conditions negotiated in the final contract.

DENY

Overall the application is either incomplete or inadequate; or during their Capacity Interview, the applicant(s) did not sufficiently demonstrate the experience, knowledge, and competence to successfully open and operate a charter school.


The Charter Schools Act, in paragraph 1 of Subsection L of Section 22-8B-6 NMSA 1978, states that a chartering authority may approve, approve with conditions or deny an application. A chartering authority may deny an application if:

- (1) the application is incomplete or inadequate;
- (2) the application does not propose to offer an educational program consistent with the requirements and purposes of the Charter Schools Act;
- (3) the proposed head administrator or other administrative or fiscal staff was involved with another charter school whose charter was denied or revoked for fiscal management or the proposed head administrator or other administrative or fiscal staff was discharged from a public school for fiscal mismanagement;

- (4) for a proposed state-chartered charter school, it does not request to have the governing body of the charter school designated as a board of finance or the governing body does not qualify as a board of finance; or
- (5) 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.

CHARTER SCHOOLS DIVISION

By:



Katie Poulos, Director of Options for Parents

I. Overall Score Sheet

Section	Points Received	Applicant School's Possible Points
Application Overall Score	<i>149</i>	<i>271</i>
• Education Plan/Academic Framework	58	72
• Organizational Plan and Governance/Organizational Framework	54	131
• Business Plan/ Financial Framework	16	40
• Evidence of Support	19	24
• Required Appendices	2	4
Capacity Interview Score	53	84
• Education Plan	8	12
• Leadership & Governance	12	24
• Facility	3	4
• Finance	8	12
• Planning Year	2	4
• Individualized Question	20	28
Total	202	355

II. Explanation Regarding Use of the Score Sheet

In the Recommendation and Final Analysis the CSD has considered the overall score in the written application, as well as the score in each individual section and Capacity Interview. Additionally, information obtained during the Community Input Hearing, and information obtained from the letters of support or opposition received after the Community Input Hearing was considered.

Also please note two additional considerations:

- First, the CSD does not score the community input hearing, but may reference it in the Recommendation and Final Analysis and if pertinent information was offered that contradicts or affirms what was found in the application or capacity interview.
- Second, if the applicant school did not answer any prompt because that prompt did not apply to the applicant school (e.g., the applicant school will be an elementary school and so did not provide responses to graduation-related prompts), then the CSD adjusted the total possible points in the application section where the non-applicable item(s) is found as well as in the final score. For this reason, you may see varying possible total points from application to application.

III. Final Analysis

Application Section	Points Received	Applicant School's Possible Points
EDUCATION PLAN/ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK	58	72
<p>Evidence/Statements Supporting Score in this Section:</p> <p>The CSD found this section to be complete, but identified some inadequacies as noted below.</p> <p>11 responses were evaluated as “meets” or “exceeds.” The school provided complete and adequate answers in the areas of: school size, school mission, indicators/goals, curriculum, graduation requirements, educational philosophy, serving English language learners, use of assessments, how assessment data will be reviewed, the process for how assessment data is communicated, and how the school will monitor and evaluate students with disabilities.</p> <p><i>The applicant scored “partially meets” in 4 areas in this section. The following areas of the applicant’s response were found to <u>not</u> meet the application requirements, for the reasons described.</i></p> <p>Areas in this section that were inadequate were the school calendar, instructional methods to support RtI processes, how the school will provide services and support to students with an IEP, and the school’s process for evaluating and monitoring the progress of English Language Learners.</p> <p>The applicant provides goals that contain a limited amount of the key elements. While the applicant does provide measures and metrics for all of its proposed goals, it does not provide goals that are all in the SMART format. Specifically, the applicant provides some goals that are not specific and are not time bound. Additionally, the applicant does not provide sufficient information to understand if the goals are rigorous or attainable.</p> <p>The applicant’s rationale for the proposed goals is general and unclear. Specifically with regards to the goals that are set as averages, CSD feels the applicant’s rationale is not clear and reasonable. The applicant stated in its letter of support after the community input hearing that the rationale for this is the focus on community achievement. CSD does not find this to be a reasonable rationale as averages can hide poor performance of some students.</p> <p>The applicant provides limited plans and methods for assessing each of the proposed goals. The methods lack clear actions, timelines, or pieces of data to be collected.</p> <p>The applicant provided a yearly calendar and daily schedule that do not align with the applicant’s school information and/or enrollment timelines and how the school proposed serving ELL students or students with disabilities. Also, the school calendar does not address how the schedule will support the educational program or how it is conducive to supporting educational growth.</p> <p>The applicant’s response provides a limited explanation of how the school will provide services and support to students with an IEP. The school provided limited information on how gifted students will be served. Additionally, the applicant does not clarify if the services and supports differ if a student is identified with a disability or classified as gifted.</p> <p>The applicant provides a limited description of the school’s process for evaluating and monitoring the progress of English language learners.</p> <p><u>Overall, the section is inadequate because more than 3 responses were rated “partially meets”.</u></p>		

Application Section	Points Received	Applicant School's Possible Points
ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN AND GOVERNANCE / ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK	54	131
<p>Evidence/Statements Supporting Score in this Section:</p> <p>The CSD found this section to be incomplete and inadequate.</p> <p>5 responses were evaluated as “meets” or “exceeds.” The school provided complete and adequate answers in the areas of: governing body self-evaluation, hiring a head administrator, community grievance process, waivers, and facilities.</p> <p>The applicant scored “partially meets” in 15 areas and “does not meet” in 6 areas in this section. The following areas of the applicant’s response were found to not meet the application requirements, for the reasons described. Evaluations from both the application analysis and capacity interviews indicate that the applicant was unable to provide detailed information on the specific roles and responsibilities of the Governing Board.</p> <p>The applicant does not provide complete descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of their Governing Board members. Additionally, CSD is concerned that the applicant has given Governing Board members responsibilities beyond their purview. Additionally, the applicant did not include the required audit and finance committees.</p> <p>The applicant provided an incomplete list of Governing Body members and, for the three members listed, the applicant did not describe their expertise or qualifications.</p> <p>The applicant provided a limited description of how Governing Board members are selected and how new Governing Board members are recruited. Also, CSD is concerned that the applicant did not provide a complete plan or timeframe for how and when Governing Body members will be replaced.</p> <p>The applicant provided an incomplete plan on how Governing Board members will be trained. Also, the school did not submit a budget; therefore, it is unclear if the cost of Governing Board members training and travels was incorporated into their budget.</p> <p>The applicant describes a limited plan of how the Governing Body will monitor outcomes and the plan is not clear on how the Governing Body will ensure the school is meeting its mission and providing a quality education. Also, the applicant does not provide the types of committees the governing Body will have, to include the required audit and finance committees.</p> <p>The applicant provided a list of duties and responsibilities that the head administrator would complete. However, the school did not describe how the Governing Body will carry out and delineate the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Director.</p> <p>The applicant provide a limited description of how the Head Administrator will be evaluated, but did not provide detail on the process for evaluating the Head Administrator or the data that would be reviewed to demonstrate his/her effectiveness.</p> <p>The applicant provide a limited description of how the Head Administrator will be evaluated, but did not provide detail on the process for evaluating the Head Administrator or the data that would be reviewed to demonstrate his/her effectiveness.</p> <p>The applicant does not provide adequate responses that demonstrate the capacity to develop an organizational structure for a public school. The applicant provided a limited organizational chart that does not identify all</p>		

relationships and external agencies that are essential to the school.

The applicant provides a chart that outlines the staffing plan for the next five years. Since a 5-year budget is not available, the response cannot be evaluated against the budget. In addition, the applicant does not address a plan to hire and evaluate highly-qualified staff. The school did not submit a budget, it is unclear if the school can support their professional development plan.

The applicant is missing critical information in this section.

The applicant's response does not include benefits, work schedules, annual number of contract days, and pay terms for all classes of employees. In addition, the applicant does not provide an explanation of how the school will address employees' recognized representatives.

The applicant provides a limited process for outreach and recruitment of students and does not provide details to this process. Also, because a budget was not submitted, CSD is unable to verify if the school's enrollment processes will be supported by budget.

The applicant does not address how the lottery plan supports equal access to the school and does not provide timeframes or dates for the lottery process.

The conflict of Interest plan is incomplete as it minimally addressed the statutory requirements.

CSD is concerned that the school marked this section as "not applicable." The school has a relationship with La Promesa and states that La Promesa will provide a venue for students to conduct their practicum.

The applicant indicated it plans to provide transportation, but did not provide a plan or a budget. Also, the applicant indicated it plans to participate in lunch programs. However, without a submitted budget, this cannot be evaluated.

Overall, the section is inadequate because more than 3 responses were rated "partially meets", more than 1 response was rated "does not meet", and less than 70% of the responses were rated "meets" or "exceeds."

Application Section	Points Received	Applicant School's Possible Points
BUSINESS PLAN/ FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK	16	40
<p>Evidence/Statements Supporting Score in this Section:</p> <p>The CSD found this section to be incomplete and inadequate.</p> <p>2 responses were evaluated as “meets” or “exceeds.” The school provided complete and adequate answers in the areas of: 910B5 calculation and governing body oversight.</p> <p>The applicant scored “partially meets” in 2 areas and “does not meet” in 3 areas in this section.</p> <p>The applicant was unable demonstrate the capacity to implement New Mexico School funding and budget for long-term sustainability. While the applicant submitted an Appendix G, it does not contain the 5-year budget plan. Instead the appendix includes 80 pages of the Uniform Chart of Accounts.</p> <p>The applicant did not provide a budget narrative that addresses the prompt of “Provide a clear, comprehensive, cohesive, and reasonable budget narrative. Instead the applicant provides a brief overview of the process for preparing a budget for the “upcoming fiscal year” and indicates “STAT” plans to comply with standards and follow budget requirements.</p> <p>The applicant’s provided a limited description on the internal control procedures and Appendix K makes references to other policies not described in the response.</p> <p>The applicant provided a limited description of the job responsibilities for the Business Manager and Business Office Assistant and includes a few qualifications for both positions. However, the response was limited and not supported by a budget. The applicant did not provide a plan on how the school would hire and evaluate these two staff positions.</p> <p><u>Overall, the section is inadequate because more than 1 response was rated “does not meet”, and less than 80% of the responses scored as meeting or exceeding.</u></p> <p>Additionally, as noted above, the application does not include a 5-year budget.</p>		

Application Section	Points Received	Applicant School's Possible Points
EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT	19	24
<p>Evidence/Statements Supporting Score in this Section:</p> <p>The CSD found this section to be complete and adequate; all 4 responses were rated "meets" or "exceeds".</p>		

Application Section	Points Received	Applicant School's Possible Points
APPENDICES	2	4
<p>Evidence/Statements Supporting Score in this Section:</p> <p>The applicant includes most of the significant appendices in the application, but did not submit Appendix D. Also, Appendices E and G are incomplete. Appendix E does not show the PSFA has been reviewed and approved. Appendix G does not include the 5-year budget plan.</p>		

Other Pertinent Information
<p>During the Community Input Hearing no members of the community or local school district expressed opposition to the application. The applicant had approximately eight supporters present who made remarks in support of the applicant. Many of the supporters identified themselves as parents of potential students, community members who supported the school, or potential collaborators with the school.</p> <p>At the current time, CSD believes the application is contrary to the best interests of the charter school's local community. At least one of the members of the founding team, who was present for the community input hearing and capacity interview, is under investigation for fiscal mismanagement. Further, several members of the founding team are associated with La Promesa Early Learning Center charter school, which recently had its Board of Finance authority revoked by the PED for fiscal mismanagement concerns.</p>