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HANNA SKANDERA  
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

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Governor

**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

Hozho Academy

- Grade levels to be offered and enrollment projections

Grade Levels to be Offered	Projected Total Enrollment
K-8	138

- Primary Point of Contact

Name	Rachel E Mason		
Mailing Address	104 E Aztec Ave		
City	Gallup	State	NM
Phone	214-280-6978		
Email	<a href="mailto:Rachel.simpson88@gmail.com">Rachel.simpson88@gmail.com</a>		

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
Patrick T Mason	President	J.D.; Lawyer; board member/director of multiple non-profits
Rachel E. Mason	Secretary/Treasurer	M.S. in Elem. Ed. (May 2016); extensive ed. exp. with
Arita Yazzie	Vice-President	Navajo Nation DOJ Lawyer, involvement in Navajo schools

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

Our academic program is best defined as a Classical Liberal Arts curriculum. Classical education is time tested and upholds a standard of excellence. We believe that high standards and a rigorous curriculum, will provide students a complete education that will challenge them to excel both in learning and in character. Students graduate from Classical academies highly literate and excellent individuals, ready to become active and responsible members of their community.

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:

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

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

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

Hozho Academy is committed to the tradition of a Classical education. We are committed to a rigorous program that will develop students who are educated in all of the liberal arts and sciences as well as in moral character and civic virtue. Our goal is to provide the best education possible which will permit a full understanding of all students' cultures in the four corners area.

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.

The targeted geographical area will be Gallup, McKinley County, and the Navajo Nation.

- 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.

According to the 2014-2015 district report card, GMCS is comprised of 11,975 students. 79% are American Indian, 14% Hispanic, 1% Asian and 5% Caucasian. There are 28% who are considered English Language Learners. Ninety percent are economically disadvantaged. Home languages include Navajo, English, and Spanish. Academic achievement is much lower than the state average. Reading proficiency for all students is 14.9% and 9.5% for math. 20.4% of students are proficient in science.

- 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.

Students are currently attending BIE or GMCS schools, which are not providing adequate education for Native American students, and show a lack of cultural responsiveness in their curriculum and environment. Hozho Academy will fill the educational and cultural gap through the implementation of a classical liberal arts curriculum (encompassing a complete regimen of the sciences, arts, and humanities). The Academy will achieve measurable academic achievement, and become a top choice for those looking for a better alternative for their children.

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).

Pursuant to an in depth and comprehensive study conducted by the Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation:

Scores at Gallup-McKinley schools are low across the board. These include proficiency scores and ACT scores. Proficiency scores are 20 points less than the state average, and more than three points less than the larger cities in the state: Albuquerque, Las Cruces, and Rio Rancho.

Graduation rates are close to the state average but less than the major cities in the state. Many young adults are unprepared to enter the workforce and to enter post-secondary schools. Gallup-McKinley does not have a program to "track" the graduating students from their high schools. Therefore, it is difficult for prospect companies to analyze where their potential workforce might be.

The school district has very little in the way of vocational technical training. There is very little ability for young people to get any training for future work in the community.

A common problem between the school district and the Native American population is the continual movement of young children in and out of the school districts, or changing from public schools to Native American schools. This causes problems in the progress of the children in the two different learning environments.

Enrollment in Gallup McKinley County Schools is 11,975. According to the districts 5 Year Facilities Plan, some schools are disproportionately overcrowded due to the location and availability of local housing. HoAc intends to operate in the most crowded area of the school district in the heart of Gallup's North Side.

According to the districts own numbers only an average of 13% of students in the District are proficient in reading, and only 8% are proficient in math.

According to the HoAc survey, which received significant community response, the following was learned:

Where do you live?

61% - City of Gallup

14.6% - McKinley County

24.4% - Other

Do you have children or close relatives of school age (K-12)?

82.9% - Yes

14.6% - No

2.4% - Other

How would you rate the public schools in Gallup-McKinley County?

31.7% - 1

31.7% - 2

19.5% - 3

12.2% - 4

4.9% - 5

Would you be interested in a school with an extended school day (8 am - 5 pm with part of the day being dedicated to extracurricular activities)?

70.7% - Yes

24.4% - No

4.9% - Other

What extracurricular activities would you like to see offered in schools (select as many as applicable)?

92.7% - Music

48.8% - Photography

78% - Sports

75.6% - Drama

65.9% - Arts and Crafts

63.4% - Computers and Technology

65.9% - Mechanics, Wood and Machine Shop

58.5% - Cooking

70.7% - Choir

75.6% - Nature and Outdoors

9.8% - Other

Would you be interested in a school with a half-day Kindergarten option?

65.9% - Yes

24.4% - No

9.8% - Other

What languages would you like to see offered in schools (select up to 4)?

53.7% - Navajo

85.4% - Spanish

51.2% - Latin

19.5% - Mandarin

39% - French

26.8% - German

12.2% - Other

Are you familiar with classical education?

70.7% - Yes

29.3% - No

We also received significant narrative input on the following questions:

What are your thoughts on classical education (optional)?

What else would you like to see in our public schools (optional)?

What are your thoughts on cultural integration into school curriculum (optional)?

What is the most important thing for a school to provide for a student (optional)?

Finally, we have built up an electronic mailing list of 2100 subscribers from our outreach efforts.

From the various community outreach activities undertaken above, we have determined that there is strong community support for improved educational options and opportunities in Gallup-McKinley County. They are interested in an intensive and rigorous curriculum, with extensive learning opportunities besides “just math and reading”. There is widespread support for trying something new in Gallup, which is considered a loved but broken education system by most of the community. The ideas and curriculum proposed by HoAc have received widespread community support and enthusiasm, and many of our partners are ready to go “all-in” on education reform through HoAc.

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.).

Our academic program is best defined as a Classical Liberal Arts curriculum. Classical education is time tested and upholds a standard of excellence. We believe that high standards and a rigorous curriculum, will provide students a complete education that will challenge them to excel both in learning and in character. Students graduate from Classical academies highly literate and excellent individuals, ready to become active and responsible members of their community.

HoAc will be supported in our development of a Classical Liberal Arts program by Hillsdale College’s Barney Charter School Initiative (BCSI). They currently support 16 successful charter schools across the nation and have put together a successful and cohesive curriculum for Classical schools. There is one other BCSI-supported school

in New Mexico—Estancia Valley Classical Academy (EVCA). Based on the most recent PARCC assessment, EVCA scored well above the state average in most areas and grade levels. To list a few examples, the EVCA percent proficiency for third grade reading was 76.3% compared with 24.9% statewide; the EVCA percent proficiency for fifth grade math was 34.3% compared with 20.4% for the state; and for 10th grade ELA, the EVCA percent proficiency was 88.2%, compared with 31.2% for the state. We strongly believe that a Classical Liberal Arts curriculum will also increase academic achievement for our students.

HoAc will ground education in the humanities, the sciences, and the arts in several current and research-based curricula/programs in the elementary and middle schools. These include: The Core Knowledge Sequence — a specific, grade-by-grade core curriculum of common learning; Riggs Institute’s The Writing & Spelling Road to Reading & Thinking — a multi-sensory, brain-based approach for teaching “explicit” phonics, reading and language arts; and Singapore Math — a conceptual approach to mathematical skill building and problem solving.

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.

The GMCS school district is large and it is difficult to provide for the needs of such a diverse group of students. Currently, there is a generally uniform academic program being offered to students across the district. There are a limited number of charter schools in the school district, and only two currently in Gallup proper (a third will open next year). None of the charter schools in the district are providing the type of program we are proposing. See previous question for additional details.

*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)

Date: 01/10/2017

/s/Patrick T. Mason and /s/Rachel E Mason

[PRINT NAME]