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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
- 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

Raíces del Saber Community School

- Grade levels to be offered and enrollment projections

Grade Levels to be Offered	Projected Total Enrollment
K-5	200

- Primary Point of Contact

Name	Lucia V. Carmona				
Mailing Address	1565 5th Street				
City	Las Cruces	State	NM	Zip	88005
Phone	(575) 571-2177				
Email	Lucia@nacainspireschoolsnetwork.org				

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
Lucia Carmona	Lead Coordinator	NACA Inspired School Network Fellow; Bachelor's Degree in Sociology. Expert in Community Engagement. Extensive experience in nonprofit work. Rural community development; leadership development and parent engagement.
Carlos Aceves	Curriculum Development	Master's Degree in Educational Psychology, Certified Elementary Bilingual Educator, 23 years of experience as a bilingual elementary school teacher, author of Mesoamerican-based Curriculum, and Published Writer.
Ray Reich	Board Development	Life Coach. Bachelor's Degree in Science, with specialization in Social Psychology; Media Spokesman; and retired senior entrepreneur.
Laura Flores	Founding member	Vice Principal at an elementary school in Las Cruces. Bachelor of Science in Education with a specialization in Special Education & Elementary Education; Master of Arts in Teaching Elementary Mathematics; Master of Educational Administration; nonprofit work, and parent engagement work,
Irene Oliver-Lewis	Founding member	Bachelor's and Master's of Arts Degrees in Theatre and Journalism, Founder and Artist Producer for Court Youth Center/Alma d'Arte Charter School in Las Cruces, 1 st arts based charter in Southern NM. Writer, Producer, Artist in Resident in NM, USA, and Asia. Community arts advocate in arts integration, creative economy, and arts through social justice. Knowledge in all aspects of charter school management, development, and assessment.
Wanda Tamez	Founding member	New Mexico State University College of Education Co-PI and Project Director the Mathematically Connected Communities (MC2) Project. Was principal investigator and Project Director for the Gadsden Math Initiative and project coordinator on the Austin Collaborative for Math Education, both of which were Local Systemic Initiatives. Currently serves on the Advisory Board of the National Science Foundation Discovery Research K-12 program, <i>Teachers' Use of Standards-based Instructional Materials</i> . Has been a PI for MC2 for five years.

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

Community School Model, early elementary, culturally responsive pedagogy, bilingual

<i>Raíces Del Saber Community School</i> will be an elementary school (K-5) in Southern New Mexico which provides a new pedagogical approach to early childhood education through an innovative curriculum basis based on Mesoamerican tradition,
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cultural, and language. While incorporating the best practices of education to include heritage language instruction, STEM, Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (Naturalistic and Existential), multi-age classrooms, team teaching and planning, community and parental collaboration, arts integration, and high expectation of excellence for staff and students. *Raíces* will help children to understand and apply a metaphoric process to literacy, art, mathematics, science, and social studies. The school will adapt Mesoamerican tradition, culture, and the use of numbers as metaphors and mnemonic devices to explore a variety of natural phenomena. The school will integrate oral storytelling in the curriculum using indigenous mythology, cultural anthropology, and multicultural education. Students will be exposed to high-level vocabulary, big ideas, science, math, and art. The pedagogical framework will help students make sense of the world in which we live, articulate and construct a natural way of learning.

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: **XX**

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: **XX**

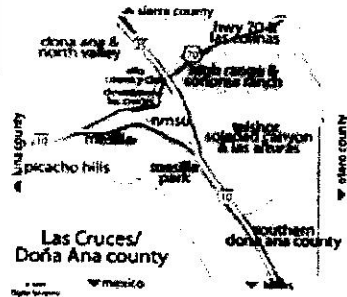
6. Vision/Mission statement. (2-3 sentences)

The **Vision** of *Raíces* is to re-awaken and utilize the wisdom, knowledge, and talents of Mesoamerican heritage in our contemporary environment of early childhood education. The **Mission** is to educate students in a Mesoamerican process of learning through myth (stories about human history and culture that use fiction and fantasy to convey a moral lesson) and metaphor (identifying an idea or a process with something else for the purpose of expressing or illustrating its meaning) to achieve excellence in literacy, art, mathematics, science, and social studies in a Community School environment.

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 school will be located within the Las Cruces Metropolitan Area.



The targeted population resides in the Las Cruces Metropolitan Area. This is located at the center of Dona Ana County. According to US Census Data 2016 and the Las Cruces Public Schools Websites: (<http://www.census.gov/quickfacts> <http://lcp.s.k12.nm.us/>).

Total Population in Las Cruces	101,643
Children Under 5 years old	7,115
Total Public Elementary Schools in Las Cruces	27
Total Charter schools	5 - Only one of these schools is Elementary level
Total Elementary Students in LCPS	12,010

- 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.

Las Cruces is the second largest school district in the state of New Mexico, located 45 miles from the Mexican border; Las Cruces serves a majority of population of Mexican American/Hispanic students. According to the NMPED's 2015-16 Report Card, Las Cruces Public School earned an overall grade of "C". Student achievement results on the PARCC show proficiency levels in ELA, math and science slightly higher than state averages with the vast majority of elementary students not proficient in any grade or in any subject. The tables below provide specific numbers and illustrate the need for academic improvement.

Demographic data according to the Las Cruces Public School District (based on data certified with the NM Public Education Department for the December 2015 reporting period).

LPS 2015-16 enrollment	Hispanic	Economically Disadvantaged	English Language Learners	Special Education
Elementary students	77.9%	88.5%	15.4%	14.4%
Total enrollment	75.7%	74.3%	10.8%	14.6%

NMPED Accountability Data: **PARCC ELA, Math and Science Results Las Cruces Public Schools 2015-16**

Grade Level	LCPS % proficient ELA	LCPS % proficient Math	LCPS % proficient Science	State averages ELA/Math/Sci
Grade 3	31%	32%	N/A	25%/30%
Grade 4	26%	24%	45%	25%/23%/43%
Grade 5	27%	27%	N/A	25%/26%

NMPED Accountability Data: **Dibels ELA Results All Las Cruces Public Schools 2016**

Grade Level	Total Tested in LCPS	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Kindergarten	1577	7.98%	10.59%	81.42%
Grade 2	1656	15.46%	12.26%	72.28%
Grade 1	1719	18.21%	13.39%	68.41%

- 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.

Las Cruces Public School System has 27 elementary schools; there are two parochial schools in Las Cruces and one charter school that serve elementary students. This elementary charter school provides a bilingual program, serves 200 students, and has a waiting list of over 250 students*. Clearly, there is a strong demand for elementary school options in the community. Currently in Las Cruces no school offers ongoing indigenous heritage learning. In fact, *Raices'* pedagogy will be one of a kind in Southern New Mexico. It will appeal to families that want to expand dual language/Spanish heritage courses into the area of indigenous culture. Parents from surrounding areas of Las Cruces will have the option to offer their children a start in their school life in an environment where they will be participants in the creation of their knowledge through constructivist approaches, feel valued as contributors through dialogue circles, learn the value of cooperation in a classroom setting design based on learning stations, and explore all aspects of Mesoamerican heritage in partnership with teachers and their parents. Parents from the Las Cruces area have described the desire for bilingual learning opportunities for their children, more parent engagement with the school, and opportunities to further their knowledge and skills in supporting and advocating for their children in achieving academic success. Parents will be drawn to the school that welcomes them as partners in the educational process.

*<http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/PEC/docs/121015%20PEC.pdf> (see page 22).

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).

Doña Ana County has a significant Mexican American population and at least two communities in Las Cruces are focusing to reestablish their Native American status. These include the Tortugas Pueblo and the Piro Manso Tiwa Pueblo. In several meetings and interviews with residents from these populations, participants were exposed to examples of Mesoamerican mathematics, storytelling, and dialogue circle and expressed an enthusiastic response to the inclusion of a strong indigenous component to the curriculum. The Lead Coordinator of *Raíces* has engaged in a significant number of conversations with parents and potential partners, including other interested organizations, community leaders, and cross-sector representatives for their input in the development of this school. For example, New Mexico State University (NMSU) is looking to develop an Ethnic Studies Minor offering in the College of Arts & Sciences that would take a critical, historical, and locally-relevant practice and approach to community. Faculty members of NMSU's College of Education also see our proposed school as an opportunity to contribute in their plans to restructure and consider how teachers can be trained in this model to help improve educational outcomes for children, especially in southern New Mexico. We have held discussions with different participants from NMSU about our partnership for implementing a community school approach and plan to continue discussions with the Dean's office representatives in the College of Education.

Over the last 6 months, our lead coordinator has been organizing sessions and workshops to introduce the content of this future school and discover the level of interest in it. We have held three gatherings with parents from different areas of the region with the participation of a total of 35 people. We have facilitated five sessions and several individual interviews with stakeholders and members from different sectors and institutions including: nonprofit organizations; city council members; county commissioners; the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; Educators; the Las Cruces School Board; local Indigenous groups; New Mexico State University College of Education Dean's office representatives; including the Dean; Faith Based Community representatives, the Las Cruces Head Start Program Director; representatives from the Arts and Culture sector; and other interested community Leaders. In a total, we have had one-on-one conversations about the school with of 74 people.

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.)

In addition to teaching a rigorous common core aligned ELA and Math curriculum, *Raíces* would be the only school in Southern New Mexico to offer a unique and specific curriculum for early childhood education by integrating myth and metaphor through story into the core curriculum of literacy, math, science, and art. This approach invites parents and students to engage in the exploration and creation of knowledge that will foment dialogue in family circles, give parents new tools to evaluate how their children engage with their academic, social, and intrapersonal challenges, and lead to the formation of individual and group definition of what it means to be educated as whole person. Thirty minutes at the end of each day will be reserved to give parents an opportunity to participate in a community dialogue circle with their children and teacher. In this model parent involvement includes parents functioning as intellectuals, partners in their children's learning, and teachers as facilitators to integrate the flow of knowledge construction among all three. Students will learn in multiage classroom settings (K-1st; 1st-2nd; 2nd-3rd) with an approximate 50/50 ratio. Research shows that a multiage classroom has two advantages: older students help the younger ones and as the younger transition they are exposed to a repetition of the curriculum. This will facilitate implementation of a rigorous as well as innovative curriculum. The community school concept will be a place where parents, teachers, and administrators act in a set of values of equal partnership. Taking ownership in a process of integration of academics, health and social services in a holistic approach. Community engagement leads to improved student learning outcomes, strengthen families and together become a healthier community.

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.

Students will experience an approach that focuses on their indigenous heritage and ways of knowing through an integrative, multi-language process. Parental involvement at all levels will support the children achieving high standards of excellence in a rigorous yet individually responsive curriculum. Texts and programs aligned with common core standards will be augmented through the use of oral storytelling, relying on the body of Mesoamerican indigenous stories that have historically been used to teach the concept of metaphors, symbolic interaction, and moral lessons. These stories will be told and discussed through a classroom community circle patterned after indigenous discussion circles that include a talking stick and other objects that facilitate symbolic

interaction. The community circle will be a format for learning the base-20 Aztec and Mayan counting system and will be used to teach basic math concepts such as zero, place value, geometry, and algebraic reasoning, and its application to computation tasks. Nahuatl will be used as a heritage and enrichment language in learning about the Aztec Calendar, exercises of personal self-reflection and sharing, and projects such as gardening, creative writing, and art.

Students will be empowered through the learning of holistic health practices that include: 1. mindfulness meditation/ chi-gong/ tai-chi, 2. Aztec dancing, 3. Identifying and exploring the nutritional value of ancient Mexican cuisine such as cocoa, papaya, amaranth, agave honey, chile, beans, squash, and corn. 4. Exploring and applying Mesoamerican practices of hydroponic and permaculture through school gardening. Efforts will be made to include these foods in the children's lunch meals. Parents will be included through pre-school, afterschool, and weekend activities.

While Nahuatl will be used as an enrichment and heritage language, instruction will be in Spanish and English in an immersion model that over three years will be 20/80 (English/Spanish); then 30/70; and finally 50/50 so students will achieve grade level proficiency in both languages by the end of the 3rd year, with the ability to use Nahuatl to contextualize their explanation of concepts rooted in Mexican indigenous tradition.

Raices will incorporate the seasons and significance of the Aztec calendar originally used in planting and understanding metaphor to create a year-round school calendar. In addition the Aztec/Mesoamerican concept of relevance to community and family will be a foundation for the school. Families are invited to help plan and attend specific events throughout the year that culminate in project-based learning exhibitions/fiestas/cultural presentations of myth and metaphor integrated into the core curriculum. Community resources providers of agriculture, arts, culture, numeracy, water, education, and commerce will be invited to collaborate in a variety of lessons and experiences throughout the year. The teaching will be dual language (Spanish/English) with an integration of Nahuatl. Since the classrooms are multi-aged, the staff will team-teach and plan for a general school curriculum, articulation method, and interaction between classrooms. The entire school community—staff, educators, parents, education partners—will receive on-going in-service training in the pedagogy of myth and metaphor as a way of teaching and learning. School gardens, culinary lunches, and artistic creations highlighting the Mesoamerican culture, tradition, and anthropology will be major aspects in the school environment. In addition, the myth and metaphor pedagogy curriculum fosters character building, cultural competency, empathy for nature and humans relationship to the earth creating a critical consciousness and involvement in learning, understanding, and embracing Mesoamerican culture, tradition, and teachings.

This curriculum and teaching approach will be both highly engaging and allow children to feel valued for who they are, something that traditional schools often do not achieve during the most formative years of a child's educational development. This development in the early years can dramatically impact the later years of a child's schooling in terms of positive education outcomes. Thus the Raices del Saber School will prepare children for success in later years of school and life.

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)

(Print Names)

Lucia V. Carmona 1/9/17

Lucia V. Carmona

Carlos Aceves 1-9-17

Carlos Aceves

Ray Reich Jan 1, 2017

Ray Reich

Laura Flores 1-9-17

Laura Flores

Irene Oliver-Lewis 1-9-17

Irene Oliver-Lewis

Wanda Bulger-Tamez 1-9-17

Wanda Bulger-Tamez

Date: January 9, 2017