External Observation
Of
Roots & Wings Community Charter School

Submitted at the request of Superintendent Valerie Trujillo

Questa Independent School District

Prepared by Danny Trujillo, Ed.D.

Contractor

June 1, 2015

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Roots & Wings Community Charter School

This report is prepared as a contractual agreement between the Questa Independent School District, Ms. Valerie Trujillo, Supt. and Dr. Danny Trujillo acting as the contractor to perform an external observation of the Roots & Wings Community Charter School as authorized by the Questa Independent School District. The purpose was to gather information prior to the reauthorization of the charter presentation to the Board of Education, Questa Independent School District.

The Staff. Students, Community, Parents and Contractor were very accommodating and willing to share information for this on-site observation. It is noted that this occurred at the end of the year when the school was basically closing down and preparing for their graduation ceremonies. Therefore, some in-depth opportunities were non-existent or evident. A S.W.O.T analysis was used in as much as possible that is supported by the New Mexico's Public Education Department and the North Central Accreditation, Advanced-Ed process. It involves observing the school through four sets of lenses: S – Strengths; W- Weaknesses; O- Opportunities; and T- Threats or Barriers.

It is noted that POMS & Associates had conducted a Risk & Loss Assessment of the Facility and a report is also forthcoming. It is also noted that PED also conducted an audit of the PARCC testing requirements based on some possible test irregularities.

The following were the agreed upon Focus Areas for the External Observation as they relate to the Charter and authorized agreements between the District & the Charter School:

- Budget/Finance/Audit Report
- Special Education
- Personnel
- Instructional Program
- Operational Program
- Facilities
- Federal Programs
- Management/Governance

The dates of the on-site observation were as follows:

1. May 21, 2015
2. May 22, 2015
3. May 28, 2015

The documents requested of the Roots & Wings Community Charter School were as follows:

- Charter or Application or proposed 2015-2016 Charter
- 2015-2016 Budget
- Most Recent Audit Report (2013)
- Master Schedule
- Instructional Curriculum
- Registration Packet
- 40D/80D/120D Stars Data
- School Calendar
- Safety Plan/Fire Drill Reports
- Special Education Student Files
- Personnel Files
- Educational Plan for Students

The process used for the external observation was as follows:

- Focused conversations with Staff, Students, Community, Parents, Contractor

- 1 Principal, 7 instructional/support staff, 5 Students, 2 Community, 2 Parents, 1 Contractor (Localology)

- Document reviews of requested documents (Note: some documents were not made available)
- General Environmental Scan of the Facility, daily Operations, and Instructional Program

The on-site observation is prepared as a table inclusive of Focus Area, Finding, & Recommendation:

Focus Area	Finding	Recommendation
Budget/Finance/Audit	Charter has requested a Budget extension, District has provided technical assistance in preparation of the Budget, Budget appears to be adequate for future sustainability of Charter. Audit revealed some concerns relative to finances: staff is improving on cash checks/balances; however, only one staff counts, receipts, deposits cash in money bag and Principal deposits to Bank. 3 Possible Conflicts of Interest: 1. Landlord is Teacher's Husband – School is looking at possible purchase of property 2. Water is delivered by Principal's	In conversation, with Charter Staff, they are considering submission of a State Charter for 2015-2016 Staff needs to include other staff, parents to ensure checks/ balances. Harshwal will continue the audit. Questa Independent School District needs to have a conversation with an attorney as to possible Conflicts of Interest. Charter needs to formally disclose during a public meeting.

	Husband – Charter Board is aware 3. Localolgy Contractor is Teacher's significant other	
Special Education	District staff conducted an on-site review of SpEd files/process & Contractor concurs with findings: Files not complete (i.e. Vision statements, written invitations to parents, students, Signatures missing) On-line ancillary support is a plus. Continuity in staffing	District needs to conduct frequent reviews to ensure compliance or Charter needs to contact or contract for technical assistance.
Personnel	Eight personnel files were not complete (i.e. Letters of Interest, Applications, I-9, W-4, copies of License, Background checks, Transcripts, Evaluations) Instructional Staff are very professional and knowledgeable in the curriculum; however, turnover appears to be a problem this year – loss of Business Mgr, 2 teachers.	Principal is aware of Audit finding and is working towards reviewing every file to ensure completeness Principal has started the recruitment process.
Instructional Program	Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS) has not been updated for 3 Years Excellent EL curriculum, evidence that it is being	Major PED non-compliance – needs to be addressed immediately R&W needs to develop some research/

	followed. Staff and students are able to speak competently with vertical & horizontal articulation. Possible PARCC irregularities. PED is investigating	development and share with NM Coalition of Charter Schools. PED needs to disclose findings to the District.
Operational Program	No evidence of a Maintenance Prevention Plan No evidence of a complete Safety Plan Minimal evidence of complete Fire Drill Reports or Safety procedures compliance. No evidence of use of School Dude software Parents provide transportation. RTD provides transportation - Students are escorted from RTD bus stop to school on a wilderness trail or dirt road. Parents prepare lunches, except during Wed. Frito-pie Fundraiser. Students walk around barefoot/socks in the building No evidence of	Requires PED compliance. Requires PED compliance. Requires Fire Marshall review. Requires PED compliance. Requires PSFA review. Requires PED review. Recommend PED review to provide technical assistance with “healthy foods/ snacks” program. Requires Dept of Health review.

	Technology Plan	Requires PED compliance
Facilities	POMS Audit Facility appears adequate for 38 students currently enrolled, however, capacity is 50	Contractor supports all POMS findings An increase in enrollment to capacity of 50 would require a PED/PSFA review to determine sq.ft. per student.
Federal Programs	Opportunity for Charter to request Federal Funding. Staff have not submitted for funding.	If the Charter becomes a state charter, they will be afforded the same programs as a public school.
Management/Governance	Charter Board = 3 members Inconsistency with Administration, staffing 2015-2016 Calendar indicates a "modified 4-day"	Based on the original Charter, Charter Board = 5 members, possible non-compliance. Consistent administration and staffing is key to continuity in program. Requires PED compliance for Time Required

In summary, Roots & Wings Community Charter School needs to consider a state charter for 2015-2016 as this might assure them of additional resources to support their needs. Furthermore, the Charter needs to solicit the assistance of the Coalition of Charter Schools and the New Mexico Public Education Department to ensure state and federal compliance.