



**NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
OPTIONS FOR PARENTS
CHARTER SCHOOLS DIVISION**

**2011 CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION
SUMMARY EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION**

School Name and Location: Uplift Community School, Gallup, NM

Date: September 2, 2011

Grade Levels and Total Enrollment Cap: Grades K-8, 216 enrollment cap

General Premise: Each application is unique and was evaluated on its own merits. No comparisons were made or should be made with other applications. The overriding question on each application was whether the application was complete and adequate to deliver the educational plan aligned with the mission of the proposed school.

Process: This Summary Evaluation and Recommendation is a result of a thorough process of examining the Charter School Application by an experienced review team, a rigorous Capacity Interview, the applicant's responses at the Community Input hearing before the Public Education Commission (Commission), and any written response by the applicant or other community members following the Community Input hearing.

Criteria: The information collected throughout the Process provided the evidentiary basis for the Charter Schools Division's assessment of whether the Charter School Application is complete and adequate and, thus, whether it should be approved, approved with conditions or denied.

The following definitions of the criteria were applied:

1. COMPLETE:

- a. The explanation to each prompt is sufficiently detailed and fully developed.
- b. Response addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation and presents a clear, realistic approach to the requested information.
- c. No additional information is required to provide the reviewer with an understanding of key components of the requested information or the school's plan.

2. INCOMPLETE:

- a. No information provided in response to some or all of the prompts.

- b. Prompts are met, but overall the responses lack meaningful detail or would require *additional* information to demonstrate an understanding of the key issue or concept to be addressed.
- c. Section not thoroughly explained and demonstrates a lack of preparation.
- d. Information is inaccurate that reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the key concept to be addressed by the section.

3. ADEQUATE:

- a. The response flows and makes sense and presents a clear, realistic plan for how this prompt or section fits into the school’s overall operations.
- b. The information provided is evidence that the applicant understands the concept/issue to be addressed in response to the application requirement.
- c. The response aligns with the rest of the section, addresses the concept/issue, and identifies clear and measurable outcomes where applicable.
- d. Where applicable, the response is consistent and aligns with the mission and vision as well as the other sections of the application.

4. INADEQUATE:

- a. The response raises concerns about whether the applicant understands the request and the basic issue raised by the request.
- b. Response raises substantial concerns about the applicant’s ability to meet the requirement in practice.
- c. The founder’s overall plan for the school is difficult to comprehend and/or presents an unrealistic plan for the operation of a school or any aspect of the school.
- d. The response is difficult to comprehend.
- e. The section does not align, or the reviewer cannot ascertain whether the response aligns with the overall plan articulated.

EVALUATION

IV. CHARTER SCHOOL MISSION AND STATEMENT OF NEED

The Charter School Mission Statement should communicate the essence of the school to stakeholders and to the public and should provide the focal point to which all other sections of the school’s plans align. In addition, the proposed charter school and its mission must be in the best interest of the students and community that it proposes to serve.

**SECTION IV. CHARTER SCHOOL MISSION AND STATEMENT OF NEED
SUMMARY**

Inadequate or Incomplete	Adequate and Complete
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING EVALUATION OF THIS SECTION:

Statements in support of Conclusion.	Reference(s)(application, responses to interview questions, public comment)
<p>Uplift Community School has provided a clear statement of mission and clear organizational goals to measure achievement of its mission. The Statement of Need is clear, to the point, and provides a number of different data points to describe the population that the school intends to serve. A clear rationale is provided for how Uplift Community School is in the best interest of the Gallup community.</p> <p>During the 7/29/11 interviews, the applicants noted that much research had been done in regard to making certain the Expeditionary Learning Model was a good match for the students Uplift Community School intends to serve. In addition, the applicants sought the expertise of a language arts specialist who has found success in working with Navajo students through a whole language and reading workshop format. This was a determining factor in selecting the balanced literacy and reading workshop approaches for implementation at Uplift Community School.</p> <p>During the 8/12/11 Community Hearing held in Gallup, NM, the applicants noted that the intent to establish Uplift Community School is based in a “grass-roots effort”. The applicants also noted that the youth of the Gallup community tend to leave and do not generally return to the area. Establishment of this school is one effort to instill pride in the community, and encourage students to stay in Gallup and change the community from within. The applicants also noted the limited options for education in the area. Although the Superintendent of Gallup-McKinley County Schools raised some concerns regarding safety of the proposed downtown location and the need to independently fund transportation, the applicants provided responses that demonstrated their understanding of the issues. They discussed their research and preparation in regard to identifying a facility and identified several options for transportation that will be based on the needs of the students attending the school.</p> <p>The Uplift Community School founders have demonstrated their capacity through their responses during the applicant interview, the community hearing presentation and responses, and the content of the charter application. They have</p>	<p>p. 12</p> <p>p. 12-14</p> <p>7/29/11 Capacity Interview</p> <p>8/5/11 Community Input Hearing</p>

demonstrated the knowledge, experience, and appreciation for the work required to successfully open and operate the school.	
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V. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

The educational plan should describe who the school expects to serve; what the students will achieve; how they will achieve it; and how the school will evaluate performance. It should provide a clear picture of what a student who attends the school will experience in terms of educational climate, structure, materials, schedule, assessment and outcomes.

SECTION V. EDUCATIONAL PLAN SUMMARY

Inadequate or Incomplete	Adequate and Complete
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING EVALUATION OF THIS SECTION:

Statements in support of Conclusion.	Reference(s)(application, responses to interview questions, public comment)
Uplift Community School has provided an educational plan based on the Expeditionary Learning Model that is detailed and fully developed. Clear and relevant research supports the educational philosophy and curricular approach. The application builds a strong case for selection of Expeditionary Learning as a “fit” for the Gallup-McKinley student community and presents a realistic approach to achieving academic success for all students.	p. 15-21
Development of the Expeditionary Learning Model at Uplift Community School will be well supported through professional development provided by an Expeditionary Learning School Designer. Curriculum development, with teacher involvement, will begin with a three-week Summer Institute prior to the opening of the school. Development of the curriculum will include a focus on cultural relevancy. Alignment of the curriculum with state standards is built into the planning process.	p. 21-28 p. 30-38
Reading and Math will be taught separate from as well as integrated into the Expeditionary Learning projects. An	

<p>uninterrupted block of time is planned in the morning to focus on language arts and math and an extended period of time is planned in the afternoon to focus on interdisciplinary learning expeditions. A strong description of strategies and methods to be used in delivering the curriculum to meet student learning needs is presented.</p> <p>The student performance expectations (SMART Goals) include evaluation of Reading, Math and student performance on Expeditionary Learning rubrics that evaluate students' understanding and mastery of the New Mexico Standards and Benchmarks. The assessment tools and process for evaluating student performance are identified.</p> <p>The fully-developed and well-articulated Educational Plan demonstrates the capacity of the founders in designing curriculum, instruction and support services to meet the needs of the students of the community that the school intends to serve. The Educational Plan is clearly aligned to the school's mission.</p>	<p>p. 42</p> <p>p. 15-49</p>
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FINANCIAL PLAN

The Financial Plan should provide a description of how the school leadership intends to manage the school's finances, including assurances that public funds will be used appropriately and in compliance with all applicable federal and state requirements and laws. It should present a clear picture of the school's financial viability including the soundness of revenue projections; expenditure requirements; and how well the school's budget aligns with and supports implementation of the mission and educational plan.

SECTION VII. FINANCIAL PLAN SUMMARY

Inadequate or Incomplete	Adequate and Complete
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING EVALUATION OF THIS SECTION:

Statements in support of Conclusion.	Reference(s)(application, responses to interview questions, public comment)
Uplift Community School's financial plan aligns with and supports implementation of the mission and educational plan.	p. 50-72

Revenue and expenditure assumptions demonstrate a clear understanding of the key components required in budgeting to support implementation of start-up plans as well as the general operation and phase-in plans. Strong Internal Control Procedures to support fiscal management are well-thought out, providing confidence that public funds will be used appropriately and in compliance with applicable laws.	
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VIII. GOVERNANCE /MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Governance/Management Plan should provide an understanding of how the school will be governed and managed. It should present a clear picture of the school’s governance and management practices, what roles and responsibilities various groups and individuals will have, and how those groups will relate to one another. The plan should outline how decisions are made at the school site, and provide a convincing picture of the school leadership’s capacity to successfully operate the school. In addition, the governing body of a charter school is, first and foremost, publicly accountable for student academic performance and the expenditure of public funds.

SECTION VIII. GOVERNANCE / MANAGEMENT PLAN SUMMARY

Inadequate or Incomplete	Adequate and Complete
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING EVALUATION OF THIS SECTION:

Statements in support of Conclusion.	Reference(s)(application, responses to interview questions, public comment)
The Governance/Management Plan describes clearly how the school will be governed and managed. A strong and knowledgeable Governing Council is in place, policies/procedures are provided, and the organizational structure is well defined. Positions, job descriptions, a realistic staffing plan, salary schedules and a process for staff evaluation provide a needed foundation for management and employee relations. The enrollment procedures, including a lottery process are defined. Thorough consideration has been given to facility needs, transportation, food services, and other student services. Overall, the Governance/Management section of the application is well-articulated, in alignment with the school’s mission, and supports the educational plan.	p. 73-100

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IX. REQUIREMENTS

The Requirements section of the application addresses the necessary arrangements that school leaders must make to define the respective legal liability and responsibility of the governing body and the Public Education Department. These requirements include, but are not limited to, securing appropriate insurance coverage and identifying waivers that will be sought by the school from the Public Education Department.

REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

Inadequate or Incomplete	Adequate and Complete
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING EVALUATION OF THIS SECTION:

Statements in support of Conclusion.	Reference(s)(application, responses to interview questions, public comment)
All requirements of this section were fully addressed. Uplift Community School will comply with requirements to carry insurance and has listed the waivers for which they will apply.	p. 101-102

IX. APPENDICES

The contents of the appendices will be analyzed as they pertain to the appropriate sections IV through VIII of the application.

REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

Inadequate or Incomplete	Adequate and Complete
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING EVALUATION OF THIS SECTION:

Statements in support of Conclusion.	Reference(s)(application, responses to interview questions, public comment)
<p>A completed Form 910B5 and a completed 5-Year Budget Plan were included in the Appendices.</p> <p>Proposed personnel policies and student discipline procedures are scheduled to be developed by the school’s Director and completed prior to the opening of school. During the interview on 7/29/11, the applicants indicated that as a Community School, they intend to involve the Advisory School Council and the Director with the development of personnel policies and student discipline procedures that will be reflective of the school culture. Therefore, proposed personnel policies and student discipline procedures were intentionally not included in the application. Although the applicants did not attach proposed personnel policies, they clearly demonstrate an understanding of the issues regarding public employment. Additionally, because Expeditionary Learning incorporates a specific student behavior code, the reviewers concur that waiting to develop a proposed student behavior policy is appropriate. The reviewers do not consider the lack of these drafts to be a material weakness of this application.</p>	<p>Appendix A, Appendix B</p> <p>p. 88, 93</p> <p>7/29/11 Capacity Interview</p>

RECOMMENDATION

Approve:

Overall the application is complete and adequate; and during their Capacity Interview and public input hearings, the applicant(s) demonstrated the capacity to implement the education and governance/management plans as described in the application. No serious deficiencies were 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 and public input hearings, the applicant(s) demonstrated the capacity to implement the education and governance/management plans as described in the application. No serious deficiencies were identified that would indicate the applicant(s) do not have the experience, knowledge and competence to successfully open and operate a charter school, however, the conditions recommended below are necessary to correct minor concerns raised by the reviewers.

Deny:

Overall the application contained serious deficiencies and is, consequently, incomplete and/or inadequate. The deficiencies were not or could not be clarified or corrected by the applicants

during the Capacity Interview, the presentation during the community input hearing, or through written input subsequent to the hearing.

PROPOSED CONDITIONS

1. The Applicant will complete the Planning Year Checklist as developed by the Charter Schools Division according to the timelines set forth therein.

PROPOSED CONDITIONS

Granting of the charter contract is conditioned upon the Applicant expressly agreeing to the following conditions:

1. **PLANNING YEAR CHECKLIST:** The Applicant will complete the *2011-12 Planning Year Checklist* as developed by the Charter Schools Division according to the timelines set forth therein.

2. **BOARD OF FINANCE DESIGNATION:** The governing body of the charter school must submit an application to the Public Education Commission to be designated as a board of finance pursuant to 6.80.4.16 NMAC on or before the end of its planning year; June 30, 2012. The Applicant acknowledges that it shall not be entitled to receive any state or federal funding until such time as it has been granted board of finance status by the PEC.

3. **PSFA CERTIFICATION OF FACILITIES:** The charter school will demonstrate to the CSD that prior to commencing operations that it has sought and obtained certification from the New Mexico Public Insurance Authority that the facility the charter school intends to occupy will receive a condition rating equal to or better than the average condition for all New Mexico public schools for the year the charter intends to occupy the facility or the charter school can demonstrate that within eighteen months of occupancy that it has a plan for achieving the wNMCI. NMSA 1978 Section 22-8B-4.2(C)(2011).

4. **FEDERAL STANDARDS:** The Applicant acknowledges that for NMPED to comply with recently adopted changes in federal law that affect New Mexico's eligibility for federal charter school program grant funds, 1) all charter contracts must be legally binding, 2) require that the NMPED conduct an independent and timely annual independent audit of the charter school's financial statements that are filed with the school's chartering agency, 3) require the charter school to **demonstrate improved student academic achievement**, and 4) **that the PEC shall use increases in student academic achievement for all groups of students as the most important factor when determining to renew or revoke the school's charter**. This federal requirement shall apply regardless of the current language in the Charter Schools Act, whether implied or explicit.

5. **WRITTEN ACCEPTANCE:** The charter shall be effective upon the Applicant indicating by a signed statement by the founders that he/she or they accept(s) the conditions of approval set forth herein. Written acceptance of this condition must be mailed, sent by facsimile or email to:

Patricia Matthews, Director
Options for Parent
300 Don Gaspar, Room 301

Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501
(505) 827-6725
patricia.matthews@state.nm.us

6. **COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATIONS:** Prior to the end of the planning year (June 30, 2012), the charter school shall demonstrate that it has satisfied any condition stated herein or by operation of law before commencing full operation for the remainder of its charter term. NMSA 1978 Section 22-8B-12.

OPTIONS FOR PARENTS – CHARTER SCHOOLS DIVISION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia Matthews", written over a horizontal line.

By: _____
Director of Options for Parents, or Designee