



**New Mexico Public Education Commission
Charter Schools Division**

**2014 New Charter School Application Kit
Part B. Executive Summary**



Part B: Executive Summary

This section should be two to three pages long and address in a narrative form the following points:

- Your proposed school's name and a description of the targeted student population including key demographic data (academic performance, home languages, special populations) and the targeted geographical area of the proposed school.
- Where the targeted students are most likely being educated currently and why they are expected to choose the proposed charter school for their future educational needs.
- Evidence that there is a community need for a school of this nature in the location proposed. Note: NMSA 1978 § 22-8B-6(L)(5) provides, “[a] chartering authority may approve, approve with conditions or deny an application. A chartering authority may deny an application if...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.” Evidence of community need is required. Specific data and evidence is required in the application itself. Therefore, specific statistical information does not need to be provided here.
- The key innovative and unique programmatic features the school will implement to accomplish its mission (non-traditional school year, longer school day, partner organizations, etc.).
- How you project that the school will be more effective than the schools currently serving the targeted student population, or the founder(s)' plans to improve student achievement and exceed the academic performance of these existing public schools in the targeted service area. Provide a brief summary of any data you have to support this assumption.
- The founders of the proposed school, their background, and expertise.
- If different from the list provided above, the founding governing board.

To complete the following form, click on the text box and begin to type.

Executive Summary

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The proposed charter school name is Sh'eh Wheef Shu-neen and looks to establish within the geographical boundaries of Isleta Pueblo. Isleta Pueblo is one of the nineteen Pueblos which is located south of Albuquerque, New Mexico in a farming and agriculture community along the Rio Grande Valley. According to the 2010 US Census the population of Isleta is 3400. However, according to the Pueblo of Isleta Census department, the population of Isleta is over 5000. Based on 2013 data collected by the Isleta Census Department there are 1086 members between the ages of 0-18 and 339 members between the ages of 10-14.

The traditional home language of Isleta Pueblo is Tiwa. However, recent surveys indicate the primary spoken language of the students to be served is English. Data from a 1980 census document, "Native Language Revitalization: A Manual for Native Language Communities", calculated the number of Tiwa speakers under the age of 18 at 67%. Since then, the number has decreased dramatically.

Currently, members and descendants of Isleta Pueblo who reside within the Pueblo attend schools in the Los Lunas Public School (LLPS) District, the Albuquerque Public School (APS) District and private schools. Isleta students have a desire to learn their history, language and culture as evidenced by the waiting list of students for the Isleta language retention program and students who attend Tiwa language classes offered through APS. Community members have also expressed a desire for the expansion of Tiwa language classes at a language summit held in April of 2010. The only options for middle and high school are in the LLPS and APS Districts. However, the proposed charter school is different in that history, culture and language of the Isleta community will be integrated into the curriculum.

Based on the New Mexico Public Education Department data certified on May 31, 2013 for SY2012/2013 the number of American Indian HS Students Ever Enrolled for One or More Semesters is 3,204. Of this cohort, the percentage of American Indian students attending Los Lunas Public Schools who have graduated on time is 64.8%, while this percentage is 49.4% in the Albuquerque School District.

According to New Mexico Public Education Data from SY2012-2013, American Indians students in the 6th grade tested at 33.4% in Reading Proficiency and 27.2% in Math Proficiency. American Indians in the 7th grade students tested 31.1% proficiency in Reading and 27.8% proficient in Math. 8th grade American Indian students tested 43.9% proficiency in Reading and

29.1% proficiency in Math. The school mission includes strengthening students achievement levels in Math and Reading using research-based methodology.

Currently, there are only two schools at the Pueblo, the Pueblo of Isleta Head Start which serves early childhood through pre-school and the Isleta Elementary School which is operated by the Bureau of Indian Education and serves kindergarten through sixth grade. Both of these schools offer education in the Isleta Tiwa language. Thereafter, students must choose to attend schools in either the Albuquerque Public School or the Los Lunas Public School Districts.

Each year the Pueblo of Isleta Language Program hosts a summer language program for students between the ages of 5-18. The maximum capacity of the program is for summer 2014 is 90 students. The summer program continues to have a long waiting list of students who are unable to benefit from the program because of program constraints. The desire for students to learn their history, language and culture is also evident.

A Native Language Summit was held on April 29, 2010 in Isleta Pueblo. Attendees included Tribal Leaders, community and non-community members of all ages who expressed a desire for a continuum of language and community-based education. During the language summit, a panel of high school students expressed the need for the integration of culture and language into a classroom setting fearing that without this immediate integration, language and culture would be lost. Most panel members admitted they did not have fluent speakers within their home setting and felt it was necessary for the Tiwa language to be offered in an educational setting.

The Head Start and Elementary school in Isleta bring families together through community based activites. Once students move on from the elementary school to higher grades they become dispersed into schools where the culture and language of Isleta is no longer present within the school setting. The sense of community is lost to those children when they move onto higher grades off tribal lands. These students no longer have the option of attending a community-based school located within the Pueblo of Isleta. Parents, Grandparents, tribal elders, Tribal Leaders and students have expressed a desire for a continuum of language education through adulthood.

The mission of the school is to provide students with an educational opportunity cultivated with a focus on the environment, Pueblo culture and language through a curriculum that is sensitive and responsive to the community; which will allow students to excel academically while strengthening the students sense of identity.

The founders of the school look to accomplish the mission using culturally and community relevant curriculum, low teacher to student ratios, cooperative teaching and consistent use of

assessments. The school will also host community meeting, family planning nights, curriculum development nights in order to gain feedback, guidance and direction.

Founders:

Charlene Lucero, BA and MA in Elementary Education University of New Mexico. Educator for 6 years; licensed K-8 and highly qualified in Math and Science. Teaches 6-8 grade in the subject of Science at the Native American Community Academy; Board member of the Pueblo of Isleta Department of Education; Chairperson of the Isleta Elementary School Student Parent Staff Pride; Parent Policy Council, Member of the Isleta Head Start and Childcare; Founder, Isleta Little League, New Mexico Native American Education Task Force.

Joseph Lucero, BS in Electronic Engineering Technology, New Mexico State University. Director of Information Management at Indian Health Services for 22 years; Board member of the Isleta Elementary School; Co-founder of Isleta Little League; Saint Augustine Parish finance committee; Pueblo of Isleta Appellate Court Judge (Appointed); Fluent Tiwa speaker.

Denise Zuni, BBA and JD. Owns Sh'eh Wheef Law Offices, P.C. which specializes in Indian housing and community development, non-profit incorporations, and creation of native financial institutions . Policy development of indigenous language programs; Advisory Board member of the American Philosophical Society, Native Studies Program. Does training in board roles and responsibilities of non-profit entities and employment law. Develops management, operational and financial policies for Indian housing authorities and native financial institutions. Fluent Tiwa speaker.