



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

Technology Leadership High School

Technology Leadership High School (TLHS) is committed to providing the best education for the students who need it the most. Roughly 1/3 of students will have dropped out of high school and the majority of the remaining 2/3 will be off-track to graduation. The school is designed to meet the needs of students in the Southeast Heights, in or near the International District of Albuquerque compared to those from the Northeast Heights:

	<i>Southeast – Highland Cluster</i>	<i>Northeast – La Cueva Cluster</i>
<i>Math Proficiency</i>	<i>33.2%</i>	<i>73.3%</i>
<i>Reading Proficiency</i>	<i>41%</i>	<i>79%</i>
<i>Science Proficiency</i>	<i>38%</i>	<i>77%</i>
<i>English Language Learners</i>	<i>46.1%</i>	<i>4%</i>
<i>Special Education</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>10%</i>

The list of troubling social conditions in this community is long. Below are a few examples of why this area leads the city in every at-risk category affecting school performance:

- Highest percentage of students over 25 years of age who have been to high school but do not have a diploma*
- Highest teenage birthrates*
- Highest percentage of students entering 9th grade with one or more Fs and five or more absences in 8th grade core classes.*
- 51 percent dropout rate in 2013*

These students are in need of a relevant highly personalized approach to learning. Many studies have documented the need for relevancy and purpose in their learning for at-risk students and the school is committed to making school directly related to their future ambitions to work in the technology sector.

These students who would ordinarily drop out of our high schools will be reengaged in their education and be marketable in the workforce. A new technology-focused high school could increase the number of highly qualified professionals in the sector. This school will be located in a community where marginalized young people are the norm and it will be incumbent to capitalize on the assets that these students bring to a sector where they are underrepresented.

Prospective students will come from communities that are traditionally underserved as evidenced by chronically low graduation rates and high rates of poverty. We expect that these young people will choose TLHS because of the direct connection to the workforce development plans of the fastest growing industry in New Mexico. Our partnerships with employers are a fantastic opportunity to change their future by putting them on a course to become leaders in the industry.

Support for TLHS is strong in the community. The founders have reached out communities in the Southeast Heights, particularly the International District and the reception has been enthusiastic. The community's embrace has been mirrored by technology sector employers in Albuquerque. They have worked with us to create a blueprint for the curriculum that will guarantee that a diploma from the school will have currency in the marketplace. The promise of real and authentic learning that is connected to workforce development represents a change that has long lasting impact on our city.

The TLHS mission is to create a group of aspiring professionals who are able to build a career and create a prosperous community. Our challenge is complex because it is rooted in preparing young people for the future of our economy. Our ambition is to create future workers who are sophisticated thinkers operating in complex systems that value creative thinking and adaptability.

Over the course of two daylong meetings with technology sector leaders, we learned that the future of successful human capital is rooted in adaptability, curiosity, investigation, persistence and other attributes that are not easily quantified or taught. In fact, if we think about the "profile of a graduate" for TLHS, there is no text book that will prepare young people for the future. Instead, we see that that the attributes needed can only be created through real life experiences that are built with the insights of practitioners. After all, developing a student's "critical eye" happens by actually solving real-life problems that come directly from real life. We began the day thinking about the way technology is used to solve problems as a step-by-step process with a beginning and end. Our understanding of this cycle was in a linear and iterative frame:

1. *Problems are identified and solutions proposed,*
2. *The solutions are then engineered,*
3. *Interfaces to the ultimate users are built,*
4. *Ultimately the products are brought to scale or manufactured for the market, and*
5. *Innovations sparked from new learning and unanticipated usage.*

This five step cycle was a starting place and our goal was to understand how we could help young people experience these elements of technology development in a deep and nuanced way. If they see the process as a whole, and develop the intellectual habits needed engage throughout, then they will be adaptable and able to solve problems and move any process forward.

The Model—Three Pillars of Effective School Design

The skills, knowledge and attributes of a graduate from our school are cultivated through an architecture that includes three inter-dependent functions: 360 Degree Support, Curriculum and Assessment, and Community Engagement. Each plays a role in ensuring that students are cared for and fully engaged in their learning.

360 Degree Support—This pillar is responsible for developing school culture. Specifically, it leads mental and physical health, fitness, and nutrition programs at the school. This is a leadership role that collaborates with the Community Engagement Center (CEC) to engage families and create partnerships with community-based service providers who can support our students and families (i.e. immigration services, mentorship programs). Finally, this pillar ensures that Positive Youth Development practices are present in order to build a culture that has high academic expectations and is intellectually and emotionally safe for students.

Curriculum and Assessment—This pillar is responsible for “Learning by Doing, Every Day in Every Class.” We believe that engaging project-based learning is the pathway to higher levels of student performance. Also, we are committed to a “Mastery” based system where students demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessments as opposed to traditional “grading,” which is concerned with coverage and seat time. Teacher development and industry partnerships are central to a responsive and adaptable curriculum that keeps the school on the cutting edge of teaching and learning.

Community Engagement—This pillar is responsible for creating relationships with external partners that are reciprocal in nature. The Director shares an office with a community-based organization (i.e. Sawmill Advisory Council at ACE Leadership) and together they leverage partnerships that are attentive to community and school needs. Service, mentorships, and off-site programs are under this person’s purview. Finally, this person is responsible for understanding community assets and connecting our faculty to partners that can further our mutual interests.

The mission-driven goals of the school are rooted in preparing young people for a prosperous future in the technology sector. They focus on the employability of graduates and the social and emotional conditions that allow students to succeed.

Mission Specific Goals:

- Demonstrate mastery through student exhibitions, which are culminating evaluations of learning that is rooted in real-life technology industry projects. Students are expected to solve complex problems and demonstrate mastery of Common Core Standards.*
- Social and emotional growth based on an established list of developmental assets that predict success in school (relationships with caring adults, respecting boundaries, engaging in positive and enriching experiences outside of school, etc.).*

The Founders of TLHS are school development experts:

Tony Monfiletto is the Director of the New Mexico Center for School Leadership (the Center) at ACE Leadership High School. He has 20 years of public school experience. He cofounded Amy Biehl, ACE Leadership, and Health Leadership High Schools. Each of these institutions is highly regarded for its innovation and quality.

Dr. Paola Peacock Friedrich, Deputy Director of the Center is a recent graduate of the Doctoral program in Education Leadership at Harvard University. Since joining the Center staff she has been responsible for providing technical support to Leadership High School Network members. Dr. Peacock Friedrich is also an expert in non-profit development.

Kara Cortazzo is the Principal of Technology Leadership High School. She has 14 years of experience in education. She has taught elementary students, served as an Instructional Coach, and administered a middle school. Ms. Cortazzo has a dedicated focus in the Southeast Heights and the International District of Albuquerque, and has participated in all levels of students’ education.