

Name of Proposed School *Academic Opportunities Academy: Anthony, NM*

Team Members:

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CAPACITY INTERVIEW TEAM ANALYSIS SCORE SUMMARY

Please note that Academic Opportunities Academy submitted five uniform applications for five distinct locations in New Mexico: Alamogordo, Anthony, Carlsbad, Deming, and Las Cruces. Because of the identical applications, and the same two school representatives for each applicant school, the two review teams assigned to these five schools asked the 12 standard questions first, then came up with 13 individual questions for these school representatives. As you will note, the review team wanted to provide the school representatives the opportunity to distinguish the five schools based on particular location or community. Finally, the review team left two open questions at the end of the interview in case more information needed clarification. However, the review team felt that they had adequate information at the end of the 25 question interview, and did not find a sufficient need for using the two more questions.

CAPACITY INTERVIEW SECTION	POINTS RECEIVED	APPLICANT SCHOOL'S POSSIBLE POINTS
12 STANDARD QUESTIONS	16.5	24
13 INDIVIDUALIZED QUESTIONS	5.5	26
OVERALL SCORE	22	50

Educational Plan	1. Describe a typical day for a student in your school. Please be as concise and specific as possible; consider the teachers, the materials, the class, the parents, ancillary staff, etc. If the typical day will differ by school, please describe those differences.
1	Comments: The review team determined that the group did not fully answer the question. Specifically, the review team still did not understand how classes and grades were separated, we did not understand the schedule, we did not understand exactly how the school day would be created by student need, or how can you manage something like this with 300 students.
Educational Plan	2. What is your plan if the school’s actual enrollment population is different from the targeted population you originally intended to serve? If your plan will differ by school, please describe those differences.
2	Comments: The review team agreed that once the question was clarified for the founders, they answered it well. They brought up the bilingual program, serving students coming from foster care etc.
Governance	3. Please explain the delineated roles and responsibilities of, and the relationships between, the founders, the governing body, and the school’s administration during the transitional period between the planning year and the first year of operations. Describe how those relationships evolve over the full term of the charter. If the evolving roles, responsibilities, and relationships will differ by school, please describe those differences.
1	Comments: The review team agreed that the founders’ responses demonstrated a lack of understanding of NM Charter School Governance Laws. They did not have a concrete plan for the transition or delineation of roles.

Governance	4. How does the school’s governing body exercise its oversight and accountability? What does the governing body have oversight of? If this will differ by school, please describe those differences.
2	Comments: The review team agreed that the beginning of the response was confusing, but as the applicants continued, their understanding of governing body (GB) accountability and oversight was correct and clear.
Facility	5. Describe your plan for acquiring a facility and ensuring that the facility meets educational occupancy standards required by applicable New Mexico construction codes. Whose responsibility is it to carry out this major piece of opening a charter school? If the plan will differ by school site, please describe those differences.
1.5	Comments: The review team decided that while the founders appear to have made progress on this aspect—they have a charter school real estate agent, they have visited buildings where businesses have closed—they never offered specifics regarding a potential facility in each location. Rather the answer was vague and never attempted to cover the specifics of Anthony, Alamogordo, Carlsbad, Deming, and Las Cruces.
Facility	6. If you cannot find a building that meets PSFA approval, what is your next steps plan? If the next steps plan will differ by school site, please describe those differences.
1	Comments: The review team agreed that the founders’ answer to this question demonstrated their lack of research and understanding in New Mexico facilities laws. While the applicants are coming from Texas, the review team agreed that they should have done more research

	regarding New Mexico Charter Schools prior to the interview (they were given the questions beforehand) .
Finance	7. How are you going to open your school without federal start-up funds? If the plan will differ by school, please describe those differences.
0	Comments: The review team agreed that the founders’ answer to this question revealed their unpreparedness for funding without start-up funds. The founders offered a “personal loan” from a friend as an option though they also admitted that this was not legal.
Finance	8. If something in your budget is not working as planned, for instance, you do not get the desired enrollment numbers for the first year, what will be your plan of action? If the plan of action will differ by school site, please describe those differences.
2	Comments: The review team agreed that the founders did have a plan in place regarding how to prioritize funding based on enrollment numbers.
Policies and Procedures	9. If your school requires a change to the original charter contract what is the process for your governing body to address that change? If the process will differ by school site, please describe those differences.
2	Comments:

Policies and Procedures	10. What role do policies have in the operation of a school? What triggers the need for a policy?
1.5	<p>Comments: The review team agreed that one of the founder’s ideas was sufficient. However, when the other founder spoke, he said things that raised concerns among the review team. This discrepancy among answers between the two founders became a trend in several of their answers.</p>
Policies and Procedures	11. What do you anticipate your process will be for developing policies? How will you ensure that your policies and procedures are not only compliant, but current and effective? If the process will differ by school site, please describe those differences.
1.5	<p>Comments: The review team determined that the founders were prepared to follow the legislature closely and are seeking legal counsel for understanding many of the issues. However, again, like the last question, the review team agreed that one of the founder’s ideas was sufficient. However, when the other founder spoke, he said things that raised concerns among the review team.</p>
Planning Year	12. What major challenges do you anticipate during the planning year as you work to open

	<p>a new school? How do you envision organizing yourselves to carry out the tasks required to open a school? If you anticipate the challenges to differ by school, please describe those differences.</p>
<p>1</p>	<p>Comments: The review team agreed that the founders were aware of the planning-year tasks. They mentioned the planning-year checklist. However, the review team agreed that they did not mention any of the substantial challenges regarding the obvious amount of work that comes with opening five schools at once in an unfamiliar state.</p>
<p>Review Team's Individualized Question: Organization</p>	<p>13. Please distill the Academic Opportunities Academy educational model into a brief description, explaining how the combination of programs and approaches that make up the model ensure high student outcomes. Describe any adjustments or adaptations of the model that you plan to make for any of the five target communities to ensure that it will serve the various student populations that will be served.</p>
<p>.5</p>	<p>Comments: The review team agreed that some of the description of the model helped the team better understand the way the school would function. At the same time, many questions about their model, considering all of the ideas proposed within their application, remained unanswered.</p>
<p>Review Team's Individualized Question: Mission & Vision</p>	<p>14. In AOA's responses to the PSFA Questionnaire (in Appendix I of the application), Mark, you wrote that you opened a private school to "test [your] ideas" ... "until [your] charter schools opened." Please describe what ideas specifically were being tested, and how will the lessons you learned from those tests be applied to the proposed New Mexico schools. What is the future of the private school in El Paso, should your charters in New Mexico be approved?</p>
<p>0</p>	<p>Comments: The founders described 90% student mastery of the idea that they were testing. Then, they turned the question over to parent representatives of the EL Paso, private AOA to</p>

	testify to the effectiveness of that model; however, it was clear that the effectiveness of the model is based on the educational outcomes of approximately 9-20 students in a private school setting. The review team agrees that this model’s effectiveness may not translate well in a public charter school serving 300 students.
Review Team’s Individualized Question: Organization	15. There are impressively high expectations for student achievement (academic, attendance, graduation, etc.) described in the Academic Opportunities Academy application. What is your plan of action to ensure that all AOA students will meet these expectations?
1.5	Comments: The founders emphasized attendance monitoring in their response to this question. They also discussed addressing the gaps and IEPs for each student. However, the review team agreed that the founders did not address other challenges beyond attendance that realistically accompany this goal.
Review Team’s Individualized Question: Organization	16. How will you support and sustain the Academic Opportunities Academies’ graduation requirement of 34 high school credits, in terms of staffing, scheduling, and budgeting?
0	Comments: The review team agreed that the founders did not appear to know what their graduation requirements were as proposed in the application. The review team would also note that there was a difference in opinion among the two founders regarding the credit requirement. The founders also revealed that they did not have a sound plan in place to fully staff this requirement. They mentioned volunteers to teach classes who were essentially without certification.
Review Team’s Individualized Question:	17. Charter Schools are often scrutinized for the way they support – or fail to support – the success of students with disabilities. Please describe the specific plans and structures you have decided to implement that will ensure that all Academic Opportunities

Organization	Academies support students with disabilities, ensure their graduation, and facilitate success in college and careers.
1	<p>Comments: The review team agreed that the answer was inadequate and uninformed. They proposed one special education teacher for each school of 300-400 students. The review team would note that the founders did not appear to understand how to establish a special education program that is in accordance with federal and state law.</p>
Review Team's Individualized Question: Organization	18. Please elaborate on the role or roles of the Community Advisory Groups, explaining not only their function, but to whom they answer and how they fit into the Academic Opportunities Academies' decision-making processes.
1	<p>Comments: The review team would like to note that the founders appeared to have different ideas regarding the answer to this question. The review team agreed that while their answer included important concepts such as community, parent, and student involvement and support, the founder's plan to carry out this complex process was lacking.</p>
Review Team's Individualized Question: Organization	19. Please describe the existing support for Academic Opportunities Academies in each of the five target communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anthony
0	<p>Comments: The review team agreed that in order to get any substance in these answers the team had to continuously ask for clarifying questions of the founders. Even when prompted, the review team agreed that the applicants did not have efficient responses demonstrating community support.</p>

<p><i>Review Team's Individualized Question: Organization</i></p>	<p>20. Please describe the existing support for Academic Opportunities Academies in each of the five target communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alamogordo
<p>0</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>The review team agreed that in order to get any substance in these answers the team had to continuously ask for clarifying questions of the founders. Even when prompted, the review team agreed that the applicants did not have efficient responses demonstrating community support.</p>
<p><i>Review Team's Individualized Question: Organization</i></p>	<p>21. Please describe the existing support for Academic Opportunities Academies in each of the five target communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlsbad
<p>0</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>The review team agreed that in order to get any substance in these answers the team had to continuously ask for clarifying questions of the founders. Even when prompted, the review team agreed that the applicants did not have efficient responses demonstrating community support.</p>
<p><i>Review Team's Individualized Question: Organization</i></p>	<p>22. Please describe the existing support for Academic Opportunities Academies in each of the five target communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deming

Organization	
0	<p>Comments: The review team agreed that in order to get any substance in these answers the team had to continuously ask for clarifying questions of the founders. Even when prompted, the review team agreed that the applicants did not have efficient responses demonstrating community support.</p>
Review Team's Individualized Question: Organization	<p>23. Please describe the existing support for Academic Opportunities Academies in each of the five target communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Las Cruces
0	<p>Comments: The review team agreed that in order to get any substance in these answers the team had to continuously ask for clarifying questions of the founders. Even when prompted, the review team agreed that the applicants did not have efficient responses demonstrating community support.</p>
Review Team's Individualized Question: Organization	<p>24. Describe the envisioned structure for managing and governing the five proposed schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a single managing organization that oversees all five schools? • Is there one board for all five schools, or a separate board for each school and an over-arching board for Academic Opportunities Academy? • Is each school entirely autonomous, with only a shared mission and vision to connect them? <p>Please describe institutional relationships and reporting lines.</p>
.5	<p>Comments: The review team agreed that the applicants appeared to have thought about several viable options for how to set up their governance. However, their plan does not represent a site-based school but instead represents an EMO. Again, the review team agreed that their answer to this question showed a lack of research and understanding of NM Charter School Law.</p>

Review Team's Individualized Question: Organization	25. How will these five schools work together to establish and support the Academic Opportunities Academy vision? Describe how they might collaborate or share resources.
1	Comments: The review team agreed that the applicants' response was partially adequate. However, like their answers to many questions, they do not seem to fully understand what they are legally allowed to do in accordance with State law. It appeared that the applicants had not come up with a strategic plan to effectively coordinate the schools' work.