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OPTION FOR PARENTS
CHARTER SCHOOLS DIVISION

NOTICE OF INTENT TO SUBMIT CHARTER APPLICATION

INSTRUCTIONS

According to NMSA § 22-8B-6(B) the Notice of Intent to Submit a Charter Application ("NOI") must be filed by the organizers of a proposed charter school to the Public Education Commission at the address below **AND** to the superintendent of the school district in which the charter school is proposed to be located. *Failure to notify may result in your application being rejected.*

This year the NOI must be submitted by 5:00 PM Mountain Time on **the second Tuesday of January of the current year**. Notices of Intent that are not received by the Public Education Commission and the superintendent of the local school district by the deadline may result in the application being rejected. When you send the NOI to the superintendent of the school district in which your charter is to be located, you are strongly encouraged to send it by certified mail return receipt requested, or request a signed receipt when you deliver the NOI. Contact the local district regarding electronic filing.

Notice to the Public Education Commission should be delivered by one of the following methods:

- Electronically to:

Linda.Olivas@state.nm.us

- By mail or personal delivery:

PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
c/o New Mexico Public Education Department
Attn: Ms. Linda Olivas, Administrative Assistant
Options for Parents/Charter Schools Division
300 Don Gaspar, Room 301
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

The NOI is intended to provide the Public Education Commission with the primary point of contact among the charter developers, and preliminary information about the charter proposal, such as the school's mission statement, the school's focus, target student population to be served, enrollment projections, key innovations, etc. (not to exceed 5 pages)

1. General Information

- Name of Proposed School

Academic Opportunities Academy

- Grade levels to be offered and enrollment projections

Grade Levels to be Offered	Projected Total Enrollment
6 th - 8 th	400

- Primary Point of Contact

Name	Mark Casavantes				
Mailing Address	817 East Missouri Avenue, Suite B				
City	El Paso	State	Texas	Zip	79902
Phone	(915) 471-7104				
Email	AOA1USA@gmail.com				

- ## 2. Names, roles, and current employment of all persons on the applicant team, and qualifications of the team members to establish a high-quality charter school

Name	Role on Team	Qualifications: Education, Employment, Experience
Mark Casavantes	Application Writing	M.Ed., Administrator, Math Teacher, Architectural and Civil Engineering Designer
Ben Tice	Application Writing	Superintendent of El Paso Academy East and West for ten years, Teacher, Administrator
Wes Clarkson	Application Writing	M.Ed. Retired Central Office Administrator from the El Paso ISD. New Mexico Charter School Administrator
Elena Liberatori	Application Writing, Research, Grant Writing	Adjunct Professor at New York University, Writer, Researcher, Grant Writer, Consultant
Martha Molina	Application Writing	Business woman

- ## 3. Model or focus of the proposed school (e.g., performing arts, dual language, college prep, STEM, Montessori, IB):

Academic Opportunities Academy's proposed model of education is developed around solving the many problems our students will face. We strongly believe that part of the mission of any education is to really prepare our students to be able to earn a self-sustaining income for themselves and their families upon graduation. A self-sustaining income has been determined to be double of the poverty rate established by the federal government according to some states. We believe that every student needs an education in character to become an outstanding citizen able to interact with all they come in contact with in a positive and productive manner. We believe that every student must learn the skills needed in life to start, live and enjoy a long productive life and healthy life. These skills are sometimes taught by parents, but often they are not. We have called these skills Real World/Real Life.

Other issues that we believe need to be solved relate to the outdated education system that has not progressed to adapt to the changes of our world. Education is not individualized. Students are in a mass production model that is no longer working. Academic Opportunities Academy will individualize every student's education through the use of our Curriculum Mapping Database and Software system. Students will be given a choice of acceptable activities to learn from based on their current status in the learning continuum. Students will not have to sit in classes listening to things they have already mastered. We seek to eliminate as many of the time wasters that exist in the current educational model to improve teaching and learning for all our students. This alone will increase our student's educational performance significantly.

When a student fails a grade level they are placed at the beginning of their grade level to start over wasting a

significant amount of time. We propose to find out what the student knows and does not know and work to begin where that student left off, and as a result that student will be much further ahead.

4. Does the school expect to contract with another entity for either management, or substantial oversight or direction in the school's operation? Yes: ☐ No: ☒

If YES, describe the entity and the role it will have in the school's operational plan.

N/A

5. Does the applicant team or any members of the team currently operate any other schools? Yes: ☐ No: ☒

6. If the charter proposal is a replication, identify the school(s) you are replicating and the data that you have that support why this model should be replicated.

N/A

7. Vision/Mission statement. (2-3 sentences)

AOA's Vision:

AOA envisions a small-school, self-paced, student-centered, and multi-grade educational experience that employs a blended curriculum focusing on state and national standards with innovative tutorial and after school supports. AOA's campus will meet the educational needs of all classes of students and prepares its graduates for college and post-secondary opportunities which will enable students to succeed in the workplace and earn a self-sustaining income for themselves and their families.

AOA's Mission:

Academic Opportunities Academy's mission is committed to student success through academic achievement, civic engagement and experiential learning.

AOA's mission prepares students for the real world and real life challenges through a blend of self-paced, individualized instruction focusing on core curriculum and enrichment activities.

8. Student population and geographical setting of the school

Academic Opportunities Academy seeks to serve all students from Luna County, New Mexico. Our proposed school location is on the corner of 8th and Florida in Deming, New Mexico.

According to the [2010 U.S. Census](#) Bureau, Luna County, New Mexico's demographics are 77.7% [White](#) 35.9% White, non-Hispanic, 1.1% [Black](#) 0.8% Black, non-Hispanic, 1.3% [Native American](#) 0.6% Native American, non-Hispanic, 0.5% [Asian](#), 0.0% [Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander](#), 2.6% [Two or more races](#), 16.8% [Other races](#), 61.5% [Hispanic or Latino](#) (of any race) Median Age was 39.5. The American Community Survey estimates that 15.9% of the population is foreign-born & 46.1% were born in New Mexico.

Incomes in Deming are very low and the poverty rate is high, relative to both state and national averages. Very significantly, the unemployment rate in Deming is much higher than anywhere else in the state. Of the jobs available, there is a lack of good-paying blue collar jobs and very few white collar jobs. The 2006 estimated per capita income in Deming was \$13,811, nearly \$7,000 or 30 percent lower than the state. Median household income in Deming was \$25,049, versus \$41,539 in the state. Fifty-nine percent of households in Deming had incomes less than \$30,000, versus 37 percent of the state's households. The poverty rate in Deming was nearly double that of the state: 33 percent versus 18 percent. The low incomes in Deming are partly explained by the income structure in the city. In 2000, only 63 percent of Deming households had income from earnings, versus 80 percent of households at the state level.

UNM Bureau of Business and Economic Research

Sixty-eight percent of households in Deming received income from social security, public assistance, or retirement (combined), versus 47 percent of state households, while 21 percent of Deming households received income from interest, dividends or rent, versus 30 percent at the state level. The unemployment rate in Luna County in the 4th quarter of 2007 was 10.1 percent - the highest in the state. Only one other county (Mora County, at 8.1 percent) had a rate above 5 percent. The state's rate was 3.1 percent. Of the employed Deming residents in 2006, 36 percent were working in the retail, accommodations and food services, and food processing sectors. Jobs in these sectors are often very low-paying. Again, in spite of the fact that Deming is a county seat, there seem to be very few white collar jobs: only seven percent of Deming's jobs are in professional occupations like finance and insurance or professional, scientific, and technical services.

- Describe the targeted student population including key demographic data (academic performance, home languages, ELL, and special education populations).

We seek to serve all students in Luna County, New Mexico. We anticipate the demographics to be similar to what has been stated above.

Academic Performance:

Home Languages: English and Spanish

ELL: For many students, Spanish is the dominant language resulting in a bilingual curriculum district-wide. Over 31% of Deming Public School students are English Language Learners (ELLs).

Special Education Populations:

Deming Public Schools have 11.3 Gifted and Accelerated students.

According to the U.S. Department of Education Web site [Ed Data Express](#), 12.8 percent of the nation's K-12 students had disabilities in 2008-09.

The 5,783,406 students ages 6-21 that received special education services under IDEA, Part B, in the fall of 2008 were in the following diagnostic categories: 42.6 percent in specific learning disability, 19.1 percent in speech or language impairment, 8.1 percent in mental retardation, or 7.2 percent in emotional disturbance, or 2.1 percent in multiple disabilities, 1.2 percent in hearing impairments, 1.1 percent in orthopedic impairments, 11.1 percent in other health impairments, 0.4 percent in visual impairments, 5.0 percent in autism, 0.03 percent in deaf-blindness, 0.4 percent in traumatic brain injury, and 1.7 percent in developmental delay.

Academic Opportunities Academy anticipates similar percentages.

- Identify where these students are most likely being educated currently and why they are expected to choose the proposed charter school for their future educational needs.

We anticipate our students are currently being educated in the Deming Public Schools.

9. Provide evidence that the applicant team has assessed community need for a school of the nature that will be proposed in the application (e.g., objective surveys or other measures of local demand for the proposed educational program).

We studied the various school districts in New Mexico and believe we can do the most good within Luna County. The Deming Public Schools have made significant progress under the direction of Dr. Dan Lere. We believe we can complement to Deming Public Schools with an alternative for those students who have not been successful. Mark Casavantes has visited the Deming, New Mexico area and has communicated with numerous members of the community. Students who attend Deming Public Schools complain of bullying, racism against Hispanics, teachers who do not care about the students in at Deming High School. Parents indicate similar issues particularly from the Spanish speaking community where teachers are not able to communicate with them regarding their children's progress. These parents also tell me they do not feel welcome in their children's schools by office staff and administrators. Mark Casavantes has had several community meetings and have communicated with a few of the board members from Deming Public Schools. I think I provided a good amount of detail about our proposed school in Deming. Most of the students and parents are content with their elementary schools, but are not content with their middle schools or high school. We know that Dr. Dan Lere is working diligently to address these problems we seek to work together with him and Deming Public Schools to help the students in Luna County.

10. Identify significant innovative features that the school will implement in order to help it realize its vision / mission (e.g., non-traditional school year, longer school day, partner organizations, etc.).


Much of this was addressed in 3. above and other areas within this document. Academic Opportunities Academy seeks to provide financial literacy education so students will be able to earn a self-sustaining income not only for themselves but for their families, provide real world/real life education, provide a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Fine Arts, and Mathematics) after school enrichment program, provide a self-paced education, individualized instruction, student choices of assignments, a Curriculum Mapping Database and Software system to provide close to real time student performance, provide unique metrics to measure student performance, provide an opportunity for student who are behind to catch up, to not fail students to the beginning of the school year should they not progress to the next grade level, to allow students who complete a grade level to advance immediately to the next grade level and additional innovations as we develop them.

11. Describe how the school will be more effective than the schools currently serving the targeted student population, and/or plans to improve student achievement and exceed the academic performance of existing public schools in the targeted service area and any data you have to support this assumption.

We believe that our model is more efficient than traditional models of education found in other public, private and charter schools. We seek to eliminate the time wasters that most students need to endure. We provide individualized, self-paced instruction to provide the education each student needs to comply with all state mandates as well as prepare them to be excellent citizens able to thrive in the world. We will provide excellent data for students, parents, and staff to provide help to students when they need additional help, to evaluate all aspects of the education process, to give teachers real time data to make quality educational decisions regarding lessons needed for our campus and our students, to give parents real time meaningful data so they will be able to provide better and ongoing support for their children, to provide real, meaningful, fun after school activities, to have an extended day so students are supervised in order to minimize many problems our young face such as pregnancy, drugs, alcohol abuse, gangs, and related problems.

Please Note: Should your charter be awarded, the founding governing body could undergo a background check to determine if it qualifies to be a board of public finance in the state of New Mexico.

Signature of founder(s)


Mark Casavantes

Mark Casavantes M.Ed.

Date: January 7, 2015