

2010 CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION ANALYSIS

School Name: Aspen Grove Academy

Review Date: 8/27/10

**I. 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.

**ANALYSIS: CHARTER SCHOOL MISSION AND STATEMENT OF NEED**

Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions	Reference
<p><b><u>Mission Statement</u></b></p> <p>The stated mission is solely focused on establishment of a school environment emphasizing immersion in democracy, transformational leadership, and mentoring. No student academic results of those practices are identified.</p> <p><b><u>Achievement of Mission/Goals</u></b></p> <p>The stated goals reflect the school mission, but are measured solely by presence, attendance, and participation by staff, students, parents and community members with no other measurement of “engagement” or any result mentioned in the mission statement. The goals reflect attendance but not achievement. There is no connection between attendance and/or participation in the programs (e.g., mentorship, museum, and processes of democracy) and the results expected because of these programs. The results are never articulated.</p>	<p>p. 35</p> <p><i>[The written response was a repetition of the contents of the application that identified certain methods and desired student characteristics, but did not address the concern for the absence of academic results in the mission statement.]</i></p> <p>p. 36-38</p> <p><i>[The written response confirms that the applicant equates attendance to “engagement” and contained new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process. Only clarifications that were requested in the preliminary analysis are</i></p>

<p><b><u>Explanation of Need</u></b></p> <p>The Explanation of Need asserts that a “lack of engagement” is the cause of poor academic proficiency, low graduation rates, and other problems among Albuquerque students. However, the application does not attempt to define or describe “lack of engagement” or any means by which those students might be identified. Further, no data is provided to establish that a “lack of engagement” is correlated with the various problems mentioned or that the proposed programmatic elements will alleviate these conditions. Thus, the argument is more an assumption based on a philosophical position than a solution based on a clear cause-and-effect relationship.</p> <p>The application asserts that “many parents of preschool-age children in the greater Albuquerque area seek a less coercive educational model than is currently provided in any current local school” but does not provide any survey or other data on parent opinions to support the claim.</p> <p>The application attempted to bolster the value of the democratic school notion through numerous professional references, but those consisted mainly of positive opinions and conclusions rather than actual student growth data or any information on the successful implementation of the referenced programs that would support a case for replication. There is no quantitative data from previous applications of the methodologies to indicate potential success, nor are there consistent anecdotal reports to establish the instructional viability of these innovative methods.</p> <p>This section is incomplete because the required student demographic data was not provided.</p>	<p><i>permissible.]</i></p> <p>p. 48-53</p> <p><i>[The written response reiterated the symptoms and results of a lack of engagement which, as indicated in the analysis, are not a definition nor do those allow identification of a target population. The response also contained new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process. Only clarifications that were requested in the preliminary analysis are permissible.]</i></p> <p>p. 51-52</p> <p><i>[Written response did not provide data to address this issue.]</i></p> <p>p. 48-53</p> <p><i>[The written response also contained new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process. Only clarifications that were requested in the preliminary analysis are permissible.]</i></p> <p><i>[The written response contained no information to refute the failure of the applicants to provide this information.]</i></p>
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<p>In place of actual supporting data for information provided in many points throughout the application, the applicants have inserted the phrase “please see” and referenced various external sources of information such as specific websites and books. This does not provide the data, or research-based information that is requested in various sections of the application.</p>	<p><i>[In the written response, the applicant cited data, analysis, research-based information, and peer-reviewed research from sources however, the actual content of the supporting research must be included in the appropriate section of the application.]</i></p>
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**II. 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.

**ANALYSIS: CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK**

Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions	Reference
<p><b><u>Philosophy and Approach to Instruction</u></b></p> <p>The information entitled “Introduction to Aspen Grove Academy” appears to present much of the school’s philosophy and approach, and therefore is also referenced in this section of the analysis.</p> <p>It is stated that “the processes of democracy are embedded in every aspect of the school’s structure, in its classes, committees, and advisory as well as decision-making bodies.” However, the curriculum does not describe such processes in the instructional plan.</p> <p>The statement that “Students may make confidential recommendations to the principal teacher about teacher candidates, who will be required to give a sample lesson to students as part of their hiring process” raises a concern as to how these student recommendations will actually be used in the selection process and whether a legal issue could arise if student recommendations are used as a basis for qualification or selection.</p>	<p>p. 39-47</p> <p>p. 39</p> <p><i>[The written response asserts that the missing processes exist in other sections of the application; however the referenced information does not satisfy the concern. ]</i></p> <p>p. 46</p> <p><i>[The response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process. Only clarifications that were requested in the preliminary analysis are permissible.]</i></p>

Although there is much discussion regarding student choice, this section lacks meaningful detail as to how the philosophy and approach to instruction will result in improved educational student performance and how it will address student needs.

p. 54-62

*[The written response reiterates the information in the application as to how the philosophy and approach to instruction will result in improved educational student performance and how it will address student needs.]*

There is no explanation of the diagram titled “Aspen Grove Academy Model for Instruction” that would relate the diagram to the subsequent text or the school program.

p. 55

*[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process. Only clarifications that were requested in the preliminary analysis are permissible.]*

The application refers to assessments that “track a student’s growth without unnecessary comparison” but does not indicate what comparisons are being made or what comparisons are considered to be unnecessary. Consequently, it is not known if student growth is compared to state standards or to some other measure.

p. 58

*[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process. Only clarifications that were requested in the preliminary analysis are permissible.]*

The application states that the museum supports the constructivist model by “providing real-world, case-based learning environments, rather than pre-determined instructional sequences and enabling context-and content dependent knowledge construction.” There is no information to show that the museum program “supports the constructivist model” given in previous references other than the assertion given here. No information or argument is given to show that “pre-determined instructional sequences and enabling context-and content dependent knowledge construction” are necessarily detrimental to a student’s learning or achievement.

p. 60

*[The written response adequately clarified the intent of the quote.]*

The purpose and goals of the “museum forum” are not adequately explained or linked to student achievement. A strong relationship

p. 59-60

*[The written response asserts a “relationship between the*

<p>between the museum forum and the other elements of the school program is not demonstrated.</p>	<p><i>museum and the constructivist element of the school program” but the absence of an adequate connection between the museum forum and student achievement remains.]</i></p>
<p><b><u>Description of the Curriculum</u></b></p> <p>The description of the curriculum committee process does not explain how the time and effort required by this process provides a greater benefit to students as compared to the savings in effort and funds if a curriculum was set by experts without this process. The review process information refers only to “how it serves the needs of the student population” without specification of those needs and there is no mention of academic considerations in this review process. It was not demonstrated how the collaborative, student-selected approach described here will meet state standards.</p>	<p>p. 63-64</p> <p><i>[The written response addresses only funding but this was not the focus of the concern in the analysis. New information and/or revisions cannot be accepted at this stage in the process. Only clarifications that were requested in the preliminary analysis are permissible.]</i></p>
<p>The curriculum development plan that indicates “Our curricula will be developed and approved in much the style of a college course catalog,” lacks significant detail that explains how this approach would meet the needs of an elementary curriculum that is not divided into specific courses.</p>	<p>p. 63</p> <p><i>[The written response cites information that does not resolve these apparent conflicts between general and elementary curriculum design.]</i></p>
<p>The application introduces the notion of “structured, collaborative, or self-directed learning” without previous explanation of their differences or how these types of learning fit into the curricular structure. It is not demonstrated that the collaborative, student-selected approach will meet state standards.</p>	<p>p. 65</p> <p><i>[The written response did not address the concern which appears in the Description of the Curriculum section. The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p>
<p>The application states “At the curriculum level, teachers and students</p>	<p>p. 66</p> <p><i>[The written response did not identify any information in the application as being the</i></p>

<p>will be expected to assess the effectiveness of a given course, to determine whether or how often it should be offered again.” No criteria to evaluate “effectiveness” are provided.</p>	<p><i>criteria for determining effectiveness. The assessments listed in the application are data sources, not criteria.]</i></p>
<p>It is not stated whether the evaluation of a course will be based on individual student success and response or group success and response; i.e., will there be any consideration given to the types of students who did well, versus those that did not?</p>	<p>p. 66</p> <p><i>[The written response cites a quote on p. 66 that makes no mention of whether course evaluation will be based on individual or group success. ]</i></p>
<p>The curriculum development component described in the application lacks significant detail regarding the timeline and structure that such development will occur. Although time is set aside for periodic review, the application does not elaborate on how this time will be utilized, or how the ultimate decisions will be made with regard to curriculum development and revision.</p>	<p>Pp. 66-68</p> <p><i>[The written response does not clarify the timeline and structure of the curriculum development.]</i></p>
<p>Overall, a clear connection is not articulated between how the school will provide an instructional program that meets state standards and how it will adhere to its student-centered curricular process. That is, how much weight will student interest be given when determining the content of a specific course?</p>	<p>Pp. 66-68</p> <p><i>[The written response reiterates a quote.]</i></p>
<p>The statement, “Besides the Curriculum Committee meeting time, which will be built into the school day as needed, teachers will have one week on campus without students preceding every nine-week quarter,” raises concerns as to the applicant s’ understanding that adding four additional weeks to teacher contracts will result in substantial increases in teacher salary due to increased contract days.</p>	<p>p. 69</p> <p><i>[The written response asserts the claim that the salary schedule includes additional teacher pay for four additional contract weeks. This is not indicated in the schedule.]</i></p>
<p><b><u>Alignment with NM Standards</u></b></p>	<p>P .57</p>
<p>It is not shown how the design principle of “Instructional goals and objectives should be negotiated and not imposed;” will align with NM standards considering that meeting these goals and objectives is key to student academic progression.</p>	<p><i>[The written response did not address the concern.]</i></p> <p>p. 69</p> <p><i>[The written response contains new information and/or</i></p>

<p>The application states “In the cases where a course is delivering content to students in multiple grade levels, the proposing committee will have to show how the course curriculum is meeting state standards at all grade levels to be considered for approval and admittance to the school’s course catalog.” The information given is not adequate to explain how or why courses through the K-8 grades would have multiple grade levels or how it would be feasible to include in any single course curriculum the state standards for this wide range (or even a smaller range) of grades.</p>	<p><i>revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process. Only clarifications that were requested in the preliminary analysis are permissible.]</i></p>
<p>The discussion provided focuses solely on the requirement for future alignment and methods of course development but does not describe the process or give the required, specific timeline to be used for aligning the curriculum with the New Mexico Standards.</p>	<p>p. 69-70</p> <p><i>[The written response reiterates the information from the application.]</i></p>
<p><b><u>Strategies and Methods</u></b></p> <p>The application states “students are able to request courses with teacher and/or administrator partnership as well as choose their courses and students are full partners in their learning experience. They will always participate in the review and assessment of not only their achievement but the courses themselves.” It was not possible to discern a clear or consistent pattern or policy by which student decisions are given substance in some cases, or less importance in others.</p>	<p>p. 71</p> <p><i>[The written response expressed a policy that is new information and/or a revision to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p>
<p>The section on Mentorship contains no process or measurable result. Relationship of the mentorship program to achievement of standards and/or application of curriculum is not explained.</p>	<p>p. 71-72</p> <p><i>[. The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p>
<p>It seems that all courses are designed to lead to successful museum presentations. Throughout, there are no examples of what, exactly, is going to be exhibited. There is no evidence to show how the “museum-quality standards” will exceed state standards as claimed.</p>	<p>p. 72-73</p> <p><i>[The written response contains revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p>
<p>The terms ”Curriculum that reflects student interests” and “will have access” are never reconciled with the requirements of state standards</p>	<p>p. 73</p> <p><i>[The phrase “will have access” does not reconcile curriculum to state standards.]</i></p>

<p>and expectations of high student achievement. It is not shown how the curriculum will insure or even result in student achievement other than the preceding assumption that these forms of “engagement” are expected to result in improved student academic success.</p> <p>The description of the K-2 grade curriculum raises a considerable concern in the areas of student choice in the afternoon of the school day. The application states, “Students will then, with teacher guidance, be able to choose afternoon courses that focus on enrichment and remediation while giving them access to the standards in subjects such as music, art, and physical education.” It is not clear how remediation will be provided for those students who need it in grades K-2 if they do not choose it.</p> <p>Although it is stated that “The commitment students must make to enjoy this freedom of choice upon enrollment with the school is to always be enrolled in enough courses to complete a school day, and to meet core standards in the areas of language arts, math, science, and social studies,” no procedure for course assignment when students fail to enroll in enough courses or meet core standards is indicated.</p> <p>The discussion dealing with the opportunity for students to ‘access’ above-grade-level standards and additional multilevel classes does not appear to take into consideration the limited staffing plan of 13 teachers for 13 grade levels as given in that section of the application. It is not shown how there will be sufficient staff to teach the many curricular options indicated. Also, no convincing explanation is offered to show how students will have the knowledge and judgment needed to outline a curriculum plan for their school year that addresses all required grade-level state standards.</p> <p>It was not shown how the “mentorship program and processes of democracy that build self-esteem and encourage student voices in constructive ways” will achieve the goal of creating “a culture where multiple grade levels can be housed in the same class.” The need to create a “culture” in order to have multiple grade levels in the same class was not explained.</p> <p>The Independent Study option allows “Students who for whatever reason choose not to participate in their class on a given day have the option to continue their coursework in an alternative, teacher-supervised setting such as the library, computer lab, writing lab, or outdoor classroom” which may eventually develop into a permanent individualized “open course.” Although a defined process for student</p>	<p>p. 73</p> <p><i>[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p> <p>p. 74</p> <p><i>[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p> <p>p. 75</p> <p><i>[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p> <p>p. 75</p> <p><i>[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p> <p>p. 79-81</p> <p><i>[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p>
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<p>reflection is provided, the lack of a well-defined structure to accommodate the “independent study” option (the independent study option relies on “one or more teachers and/or administrators and/or substitute teachers available during each block session to provide such supervision and guidance”) demonstrates a lack of understanding of the resources necessary to make such an option successful.</p> <p>The value of allowing students to exempt themselves from classes more or less at will in order to pursue independent studies was not well established. The practice as described casts significant doubt on the ability of those students to pursue and complete the state’s educational standards. The several assurances that selected and/or self-directed programs would adhere to state standards did not alleviate this concern as, again, there was no systematic methodology to coordinate or reconcile those types of programs with the required content of scheduled classes.</p>	<p>p. 80-81</p> <p><i>[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p>
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**ANALYSIS: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

<b>Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns &amp; Additional Questions</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<p><b><u>Length of School Day and School Year</u></b></p> <p>It is stated that Intersession funding may include parent fees and some programs may count towards graduation requirements. Fees may not be charged for any course that is required for graduation.</p> <p><b><u>Grade Levels, Class Size and Projected Enrollment</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Graduation Requirements (if applicable)</u></b></p> <p>The eleventh and twelfth grades projects are included with “Alternative Pathways to Graduation” but it is also stated that these projects are required of all students. Consequently, it is not known why these are referred to as “Alternative Pathways.”</p>	<p>p. 92</p> <p><i>[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process. Only clarifications that were requested in the preliminary analysis are permissible.]</i></p> <p>p. 94-95</p> <p><i>[The written response explained the lack of clarity in this section.]</i></p>

**ANALYSIS: STUDENT PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS**

Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions	Reference
<p><b><u>Student-centered SMART Goals</u></b></p> <p>Goal #1 does not indicate a baseline indicator from which student progress will be measured. If the goal is to be measured after the first year of operation (2011-2012), a baseline measure would be needed in order to determine if the increased proficiency goal has been met. The subsequent discussion on p. 96 also provides no indication as to how a baseline measure will be determined.</p> <p>The application does not explain how a minimum gain of 3 percent per year averaged across all annual tests in a content area can be considered an ambitious goal.</p> <p>The application also states that proficiency will be assessed based on “all test scores averaged together in each content area to yield an average minimum gain of 3 percent per year separately in each content area.” This methodology will allow sporadic higher and lower scores from year to year to result in a computed average of 3% growth even if student proficiency levels were actually declining over time. The stated method of measuring student performance is inadequate to accurately assess consistent academic improvement, would not provide the necessary information for determining remediation needs, and would present an inaccurate picture of student progress.</p> <p>Goal #2 does not indicate what kind of data will be used to determine a student’s placement on the scale of “Beginning, Approaching, Meets, Exceeds” or the measurable definitions of the steps.</p> <p><b><u>Alignment</u></b></p> <p>The required information on the alignment of student performance goals with the school mission and educational plan was not provided.</p>	<p>p. 96; p. 99</p> <p><i>[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p> <p>p. 96</p> <p><i>[The written response proposes revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p> <p>p. 96</p> <p><i>[The written response refers to the previous proposal of revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p> <p>p. 96</p> <p><i>[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p> <p><i>[The written response asserts a misunderstanding on the part of applicant that the alignment of goals section was not required and contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p>

**ANALYSIS: PLAN FOR EVALUATING STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions	Reference
<p><b><u>Types of Assessments</u></b></p> <p>It is not clear as to whether the described portfolio assessment will satisfy the state requirement for a short-cycle assessment.</p> <p>In its discussion of annual baseline and goal assessment, the application states “Parents may be invited to this meeting if the student, who leads these meetings, wants to include their parents in this aspect of their assessment conversations.” There is no provision to allow parent attendance or participation if so desired by the parent and, as such, this practice will exclude the parent from important educational decisions involving his or her child.</p> <p><b><u>Timeline for Achievement</u></b></p> <p>The application states “It is our expectation that Aspen Grove students will make <u>sufficient progress toward proficiency</u> in all subject areas in the New Mexico and national standards and benchmarks in first through twelfth grades <u>throughout the first five years of our charter</u>. [Emphasis added]” This statement does not define how “sufficient progress” will be determined and therefore it must be assumed that the aforementioned “average minimum gain of 3 percent per year separately in each content area” is the school’s measure of sufficient progress. [See discussion above] The application offers no actual timeline for achievement other than a general reference to “the first five years of operation”.</p> <p>Furthermore, the statement that “This expectation has been met by the alignment with the New Mexico standards ... etc.” implies that curricular alignment is equivalent to actual achievement and that no further attention need be given to address student progress over time. However, no such curricular alignment has yet taken place according to the stated future requirement on p. 69. As such, this section is inadequate and incomplete due to the lack of any measurable</p>	<p>p. 97-98</p> <p><i>[The written response fails to demonstrate that the portfolio assessment satisfies the state requirement for a short-cycle assessment.]</i></p> <p>p. 99</p> <p><i>[The written response offers a revision to the application as well as new information that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p> <p>p. 108</p> <p><i>[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p> <p>p. 109</p> <p><i>[The written response cites the applicant’s earlier information regarding curricular alignment, short-cycle assessments and SMART goals which do not address this section.]</i></p>

<p>expectations or timeline for student achievement.</p> <p><b><u>Corrective Action</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Remediation</u></b></p> <p>The Remediation plan includes the option of tutoring during the afternoon elective periods but does not indicate how the student would be able to complete the elective courses, particularly in cases where the elective course is offered for credit towards graduation.</p> <p><b><u>Additional Assessments</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Documentation and Reporting</u></b></p> <p>The required information on documentation and reporting was not provided.</p>	<p>p. 104</p> <p><i>[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process. Only clarifications that were requested in the preliminary analysis are permissible.]</i></p> <p><i>[In the written response, applicants confirm the omission of this required information and attempt to provide new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process. .]</i></p>
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### III. 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.

#### ANALYSIS: FISCAL MANAGEMENT

<b>Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns &amp; Additional Questions</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<p><b><u>Fiscal Management Plan</u></b></p> <p>The fiscal management plan provided in the application represents a lack of understanding as to how the assurances provided will be met at</p>	<p>p. 125-127</p>

<p>the school site. The plan provides statements that demonstrate an understanding of the responsibility that the school must have, however, a description of how the structure that will be necessary to appropriately safeguard public funds is missing.</p>	<p><i>[In the written response, applicants confirm the omission of this required information and attempt to provide new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p>
<p><b><u>Internal Control Procedures</u></b></p> <p>The description of internal control procedures is limited to the following paragraph in the application: “All checks require at least two authorized signatures; all expenditures are reviewed and approved by the principal before payment by the business manager. All bank statements are reconciled by the business manager, and submitted to the principal for review prior to submission to the Governance Council.” This brief description does not demonstrate the applicant’s understanding of how these processes will occur, nor does it provide a clear indication of how the positions identified will ensure that fiscal accountability will be maintained.</p>	<p>p. 127</p> <p><i>[The written response fails to address the concern.]</i></p>
<p><b><u>Annual Audit of Financial Operations</u></b></p> <p>It is stated that the school will contract an independent auditor to perform an annual audit; however, the auditing firm for state –chartered school is selected by the PED.</p>	<p>p. 127</p> <p><i>[The written response asserts a misinterpretation of the term “contract” by stating that the term was used to indicate financial responsibility and not the selection of the auditor. ]</i></p>

**IV. 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.

**ANALYSIS: GOVERNANCE/MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions	Reference
<p><b><u>Governance and site-based management structure</u></b></p> <p>The application refers to the wrong citation of law as the basis for charter school governing board authority. The cited sections 22.5.1 to 17 refer only to local district school boards. Charter school rights and responsibilities are set forth in 22-8b-4.</p> <p><b><u>Organizational chart and narrative description</u></b></p>	<p>p. 130</p> <p><i>[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p>

**ANALYSIS: DESCRIPTION OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions	Reference
<p><b><u>Governing Body policies and procedures</u></b></p> <p>An erroneous citation -“NMSA 25.5.4”- is given to establish the powers and responsibilities of the governing board. (NMSA 25-5-4 deals with the enforcement of the Flour and Bread Act.) If the intended citation was NMSA 22-5-4 (as erroneously cited above), that statute applies only to district school boards, not to charter school governing boards. The text given in this section, however, does not appear to match either the language in NMSA 22-5-4 or NMSA 22-8B-4 (the applicable statute).</p> <p>The application states: “The Governance Council is composed of members at large who take on the role of school board members in a typical public school district.” This statement illustrates a lack of capacity on the part of the applicant to comprehend the scope and limitations of the governing body of a charter school.</p> <p>“The principal teacher will serve as the leader of the School Assembly which is made up of parents and members of the School Congress ... this community body will be responsible for recruiting and electing Governance Council members.” This practice places the principal and possibly other school employees in the position of selecting and approving the governing board members to whom they will be held accountable and creates an unallowable conflict of interest in the board member selection process. Also, on p. 143 the application refers to voting by “appropriate school stakeholders” and “members of the School Assembly who can vote” without identifying those persons.</p>	<p>p. 137</p> <p><i>[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p> <p>p. 142</p> <p><i>[The written response contained no information to clarify applicant’s lack of understanding of the scope and limitations of the governing body of a charter school.]</i></p> <p>p. 134</p> <p><i>[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p>

<u>List of governing body members and qualifications</u>	
<u>Staff, families, and community involvement in governance</u>	

**ANALYSIS: SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

<b>Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns &amp; Additional Questions</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<p><b><u>Description of site-based management structure and job descriptions for all organizational chart positions</u></b></p> <p>There is no job description for the principal, called the principal teacher within the job descriptions.</p>	<p>pp. 156-159</p> <p><i>[In the written response the applicants refer to a job description for the principal that was included in a section 24 pages earlier.]</i></p>
<p><b><u>Years 1-5 staffing plan with pupil-teacher ratio supporting educational plan</u></b></p> <p>The staffing plan consists of a brief chart that lists only the grade levels and FTE numbers associated with the grade level configurations. No information is given as to how this plan supports the educational plan in the middle and high school years. There is no indication of teacher subject assignments, e.g., the number of Math teachers needed, etc. Given the addition of grades 9 and 10 in the third year and grades 11 and 12 in the fourth year as indicated on p. 92, the information given is not adequate to explain how a total of only 4 new teachers in those years will enable students to receive instruction in the full range of required high school subjects. Also, see the concerns mentioned above regarding the inadequacy of the staffing plan for executing the curricular plan and other aspects of school operation.</p>	<p>p. 159</p> <p><i>[The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p>

**ANALYSIS: STUDENT ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES AND DISCIPLINE POLICY**

<b>Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns &amp; Additional Questions</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<b><u>School enrollment policies and procedures</u></b>	

<p>It is stated that “Aspen Grove Academy will accept all students that come to the school in “good standing” and with all proper records.” The term “good standing” is not defined.</p> <p><b><u>Lottery process</u></b></p> <p>When a lottery is required, “The applications will transferred [sic] to an electronic format and will be randomly sorted. The students randomly selected to attend will be informed of their selection within a week of the lottery selection.” This automated process, if not conducted with public scrutiny raises concerns about the transparency of the lottery process. A charter school is expected to be able to assure a random and unbiased result.</p> <p><b><u>Description of proposed student discipline policy</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Proposed student discipline procedures (appendix)</u></b></p>	<p>p. 168</p> <p><i>[At the public meeting, applicants satisfied the concern by explaining that “good standing” referred to appropriate records after lottery selection.]</i></p> <p>p. 168</p> <p><i>[The written response gives an assurance but does not provide a process by which an automated lottery can be conducted with public scrutiny and transparency.]</i></p>
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**ANALYSIS: FACILITIES – IF “NO”**

<b>Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns &amp; Additional Questions</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<p><b><u>Explanation of needs of a facility that will support educational plan</u></b></p> <p>In describing the facility to be sought, the application refers to “an open-concept model” and “open-concept teaching methods” which are not described or related to the educational plan.</p>	<p>p. 176-177</p> <p><i>[In the written response, the applicants refer to mention of the open-concept model and methods that appear 91 and 86 pages earlier in the application and within the context of a “virtual tour” rather than as a part of the explanation of the school’s facility needs. The written response contains new information and/or revisions to the application that cannot be accepted at this stage in the process.]</i></p>

<p><b><u>Reasonable plan to identify and secure an adequate facility</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Proposed capital outlay needs</u></b></p>	
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