

Name of Proposed School: Electus Academy

Date of Capacity Interview Team Analysis: July 25, 2012

Team Members:

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CAPACITY INTERVIEW TEAM ANALYSIS SCORE SUMMARY

CAPACITY INTERVIEW SECTION	POINTS RECEIVED	APPLICANT SCHOOL'S POSSIBLE POINTS
12 STANDARD QUESTIONS	22	24
3 INDIVIDUALIZED QUESTIONS	6	6
OVERALL SCORE	28	30

<p><b>Educational Plan</b></p>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Score: 2</b></p>	<p><b>Team Comments:</b>                  The team is impressed with the school’s mission of providing structured and guided choice to students who can focus their learning in ways that meet their interests and needs. The “seminar” is the distinctive feature of the school’s model, as it is designed to be cross-curricular and differentiated. [NOTE: The founders identify “differentiated curriculum” as a subset of “differentiated instruction”.] The school can design several “seminars” that cover identical state standards, but approach them in different ways. The seminars are paired with related lectures.                   The team is concerned that the paired lectures, offered on alternate days, is not an efficient delivery / learning system, even though lectures are typically used in colleges and universities. The founders justify this choice as a way for the proposed school to help prepare students for college and university work.                   In practical terms, the founders have developed a workable school time-table/schedule, as well as student and teacher schedules that can be scaled up or down as enrollment or other considerations need to be addressed.</p>
<p><b>Educational Plan</b></p>	<p>2. What is your plan if the school’s actual enrollment population is different from the targeted population you originally intended to serve?</p>
<p><b>Score: 2</b></p>	<p><b>Team Comments:</b>                  The school founders understand that their model will have broad appeal and welcome all students. The team is concerned that the founders take care to ensure that in developing seminars, the interests and learning needs of all student groups are represented, including those with special needs. Also, the school has chosen to rely on online social media to recruit students. The team appreciates that this method is free, but may not provide equal access to all segments of the population, particularly those families who do not have online access in their homes. (See Question 15, below.)</p>
<p><b>Governance</b></p>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Score: 2</b></p>	<p><b>Team Comments:</b>                  The team heard the principal founder’s passion for the mission of the school. But it also heard his passion for teaching and curriculum development, as distinct from administration work. The team believes that the founders have the evolving relationships between founder, governing council, and administration clear and workable.</p>
<p><b>Governance</b></p>	<p>4. How does the school’s governing body exercise its oversight and accountability? What does the governing body have oversight of?</p>
<p><b>Score: 1</b></p>	<p><b>Team Comments:</b>                  The founders have a fundamental grasp of the governing council’s role in providing oversight in critical areas. But discussion served to support the team’s understanding that the two founders at the interview are more knowledgeable about the classroom than of the mechanics of governance and administration.</p>

<b>Facility</b>	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?
<b>Score: 2</b>	<b>Team Comments:</b> The founders recognize the challenges that they face in acquiring a facility, but having engaged the process very early on, they are optimistic of success.
<b>Facility</b>	6. If you cannot find a building that meets PSFA approval, what is your next steps plan?
<b>Score: 2</b>	<b>Team Comments:</b> Again, the founders recognize the challenges they face in securing a facility. This is especially true given the absence of federal start-up funds. (See Question 7, below.) Nevertheless, the founders have worked and will continue to work on this critical aspect of the school, including the development of “Next Step” or contingency plans.
<b>Finance</b>	7. How are you going to open your school without federal start-up funds?
<b>Score: 2</b>	<b>Team Comments:</b> The team recognizes that the lack of available federal funds for start-up schools makes opening a school extremely difficult. The founders appear to have a strong organizational base with assigned roles or responsibilities and clear targets. The founders are doing all that they can be reasonably expected to do to ensure a successful start.
<b>Finance</b>	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?
<b>Score: 2</b>	<b>Team Comments:</b> The founders are an admirable blend of idealists and pragmatists. They are committed, mission-driven public school educators who understand how to implement their vision, even with uncertain financing. The founders have good budget strategies with a model that can be scaled to meet demand and resource.
<b>Policies and Procedures</b>	9. If your school requires a change to the original charter contract what is the process for your governing body to address that change?
<b>Score: 2</b>	<b>Team Comments:</b> The team was impressed with the founders’ commitment to the mission of the school as a core value while recognizing the need to evolve as an institution. The team was also impressed with the founders’ commitment to broad community input on material changes to the charter.
<b>Policies and Procedures</b>	10. What role do policies have in the operation of a school? What triggers the need for a policy?
<b>Score: 1</b>	<b>Team Comments:</b> The team was also looking for additional, important triggers, such as statutory requirements and rule changes, as well as the distinction between policy and procedures.

<p><b>Policies and Procedures</b></p>	<p>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?</p>
<p><b>Score: 1</b></p>	<p><b>Team Comments:</b>                  The team was also looking for the need for the governing council to vet policies through legal counsel to help ensure that policies are compliant; and to pay attention to changes in the law or administrative code in order to ensure that its policies are current.</p>
<p><b>Planning Year</b></p>	<p>12. What major challenges do you anticipate during the planning year as you work to open a new school? How do you envision organizing yourselves to carry out the tasks required to open a school?</p>
<p><b>Score: 2</b></p>	<p><b>Team Comments:</b>                  The team is impressed with the level of organization that has been developed to accomplish tasks. The founders do appear to have a grasp of the major challenges, though no mention was made of who is moving the funding agenda forward.</p>
<p><b>Review Team's Individualized Question: Organization</b></p>	<p>13. Electus Academy's differentiated curriculum, as described in the application as seminars, neither fits easily within the state's more unified grading and reporting systems or nor is readily understood by other schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will the school report student/school schedules and courses in STARS?</li> <li>• How will Electus course credits transfer to other schools?</li> <li>• How will Electus interpret transcripts of students who transfer in for placement purposes?</li> <li>• What will the Electus transcript look like?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Score: 2</b></p>	<p><b>Team Comments:</b>                  The school has a reasonable way of running a dual system, but the team stressed with the founders the need to consider more fully all of the data that STARS requires and how to accommodate those reporting requirements without losing its innovative model.</p>
<p><b>Review Team's Individualized Question: Mission &amp; Vision</b></p>	<p>14. The school's stated mission speaks to student performance through the power of choice, i.e., choice in how to learn and meet standards. The illustration of "Choice in Action" provided in the application is a program in which students participate in seminars that are characterized as cross-curricular and differentiated, and attend paired or related lectures. Is this described program only an illustration of "Choice Theory in Action", one of many possibilities that Electus might consider; or is it <u>the</u> interpretation of how choice theory will work at Electus Academy?</p> <p>If it is one illustration only, what other program possibilities might Electus consider that would still support its mission of "Choice Theory in Action"?</p> <p>If it is <u>the</u> interpretation of how choice theory will look at Electus Academy, how will Electus preserve its distinctive model, even when pressures or other practical considerations could lead school personnel to consider program choices that might dilute its model with fewer meaningful seminar choices for students, or increased reliance on more traditional forms of instruction?</p>
<p><b>Score: 2</b></p>	<p><b>Team Comments:</b>                  The founders demonstrated a significant knowledge of research on choice-theory, including practices in schools across the country. The founders are committed to choice-theory and</p>

	bringing it to public school students in New Mexico, even if over time what that might look like may evolve.
<b>Review Team's Individualized Question: Organization</b>	15. How will the school ensure equal access to students/parents who do not have computer access in their homes?
<b>Score: 2</b>	<b>Team Comments:</b> The team was reassured that the school founders were attempting to provide open access for all students.