

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - Academic Opportunities Academy – Las Cruces**

Academic Opportunities Academy – Las Cruces is committed to continuous improvement of our educational model to obtain outstanding educational success for all our students. We seek to be the world wide leader in excellent education that never stops improving. We seek all like minded partnerships with government agencies, businesses, communities, parents, students, volunteers, individuals, non-profits, and our staff to find the creative, effective, real world solutions to our worlds educational problems.

During the first 4 years of serving New Mexico school aged students, Academic Opportunities Academy will open up to five Grade 1-12 campuses. Our schools will be located in the areas served by the Gadsden Independent Schools, Las Cruces Public Schools, Alamogordo Public Schools, Deming Public Schools, and Carlsbad Municipal Schools. The students in the target area are 73% Hispanic, 25% ELL's, 32% live below the poverty line, and 79 out the 100 schools in this area are rated as SI-1, SI-2, CA, R-1 or R-2 levels of AYP. The students who will attend our schools currently attend schools in the three districts mentioned above, two charter schools in Las Cruces and one district charter school in Anthony. The parents of these students will choose our schools based on a desire to find a better education for their children.

In a March 2008 presentation, The State of K-12 Education in New Mexico, 2008, Dr. Veronica C. García stated that New Mexico was ranked 4th nationally for standards, assessments, and accountability, (Education Week, "Quality Counts 2007") and was recognized in June 2007 by the US Dept. of Education for having high academic standards aligned to the NAEP. However, as evidenced in the previous question, 79% of the schools in our target area are not capable of meeting those standards. A Public Education Survey conducted by Research & Polling, Inc. in 2009 indicated that 88% of the citizens were concerned about public education in the state and rejected plans to reduce funding to schools and teachers.

We are trying to create an educational model which is connected to the community, university programs, trade and adult education programs, industry, the media, local businesses, mentors, skilled artisans, musicians, tutors, teachers, students, and parents. We are also building our curriculum around languages, science, math, technology, and computer sciences, engineering, health care, law, business, and entrepreneurship. Employment will be in these areas. We want our students to be prepared for better paying jobs than their peers attending other schools.

Our model is a self-paced, individualized, multi-grade educational program which offers all students choices to better fit their desires, strengths, learning styles, interests, and educational needs. Our model uses a very detailed curriculum mapping database that provides real time data to everyone involved in each child's education. This database has algorithms we designed to offer several instructional activity options to each student based on their current educational needs. This database provides real time reports with unique metrics we have developed to measure student success more effectively. Students, parents, teachers, tutors and administration have real time data on their performance. This data will be used to improve every aspect of our educational model. Teachers, tutors and administration will have real time data to know which students have immediate needs to address and what those needs are on a real time basis. Parents and guardians will also have access to their child's data on a real time basis. We are working on a "dash board of sorts" to present data in an easy to understand format for our parents and students.

Our instructional design is an application of "Tiered Instruction" that allows students to choose learning activities from a list of possibilities using the concept of "Mastery Teaching" for assessment that moves kids along at an appropriate pace while guaranteeing that they really learn the content and skills of the state standards. Everything is tied together by mapping their progress to specific standards using a curriculum mapping database.

In order to meet the needs of students with a wide variety of educational needs, Academic Opportunities Academy will employ an instructional system characterized by clear learning prescriptions written for each student, student choice, self-paced mastery learning with tutoring, and engaging and creative activities. All of the elements of the curriculum will be derived directly from the TEKS and the CCRS, whose content and organization will form the outline for the development of specific lessons. Our instruction is designed to be an integrated program defined by the following elements:

- A. Two-way Immersion Dual Language Instruction
- B. Tiered Instruction Based on UDL Principles
- C. Cutting Edge Technology Usage
- D. Cross Curricular Integration
- E. Practical, Experimental and Career oriented experiences

By using benchmark exams and continual assessment of student progress we will be able to regularly diagnose educational gaps throughout the school year and provide appropriate learning activities and tutoring to ensure that 100% of the students achieve the highest level of proficiency on the state exams. We will have several teams of members from our learning community working on our continuous improvement program to be the world's best educational model. Our teams that include parents and students will have a ratio of one staff member to seven or more parents or students to insure they know they have a voice that is welcomed and valued. Teams will work on every aspect of our educational model. We will study and consider all aspects to learning, many of which are often overlooked, such as the best architecture, smells, background sounds, furniture, etc... . Our teams will develop and continuously improve all routines, procedures, policies, dress codes, discipline plans, etc.